MEDIA, EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION: PRIMARY EDUCATION OF THE GIRL CHILD

Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

SMITA VATS SHARMA

ZAKIR HUSAIN CENTRE FOR EDUCATIONAL STUDIES
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI – 110067

INDIA

ZAKIR HUSAIN CENTRE FOR EDUCATIONAL STUDIES
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
New Delhi-110067

DECLARATION

Certified that the dissertation titled, "Media, Education and Communication: Primary Education of the Girl Child" by Smita Vats Sharma, is in partial fulfilment of eight credits out of the twenty-four credits required for the award of the DEGREE OF MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY of this University. This dissertation has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this University and is her own work. We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

03.4.2000

(Dr. Binod Khaderia)
Chairperson

Chanana 31.3.2000

(Prof. Karuna Chanana)
Supervisor

Tel. : (011) 6107676, 6167557/2420, 2492 Gram : JAYENU Fax : 91 (011) 6165886, 6198234

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am immensely indebted to my supervisor, Prof. Karuna Chanana, for her invaluable guidance, remarkable patience and unstinted support in guiding my work. Above all, her constant encouragement and motivation helped me to override rather unusual personal circumstances in completing this work. It is indeed a blessing to have a fine human being like her guiding you through the process of learning.

I am also thankful to my husband, Siddharth, who was ~~not only~~ my friend, philosopher and guide in this endeavour ~~but~~ also my greatest critic, on line- editor and researcher-in -arms.

A word of thanks for my friend Nidhi who cheerfully assisted me whenever I needed books, material or plain encouragement. I would also like to thank my parents and my brother for the efforts they put in completing my dissertation.

Finally, I am thankful to Mr. K. Kumar for his immense cooperation in typing this dissertation.

Smita V. Sharma.

(Smita V. Sharma)

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The basic purpose of communication is to help us in becoming an affecting agent, to affect others, our physical environment and ourselves to become a determining agent and to have a vote in how things are. In short, we communicate to influence - to affect with intent.

The word communication comes from The Latin verb, 'communicare' which means to make common, to share, to impart, to transmit. Communication is at the core of all social intercourse and can broadly be seen as a manifestation of the inner human urge of interaction and cooperation with others.

Given its broad sweep, communication is defined as the transmission of information, ideas, attitudes, or emotions from one person or group to another (or others) primarily through symbols (Theodorson and Theodorson, 1969). In the most general sense, we have communication wherever one system, a source, influences another, the destination, by manipulation of alternative symbols, which can be transmitted over the channel connecting them (Osgood et al, 1957). "Communication may be defined as social interaction through messages' (Gerbner 1967). According to C. Wright Mills, "Between consciousness and existence stand communications, which influence such consciousness as men have of their existence." (1951:333)

Communication can therefore be described as an act of transmission of information, ideas and experience from source to the target group. It is an essential link between the individual and innovation. It is a pre-requisite for change and development.

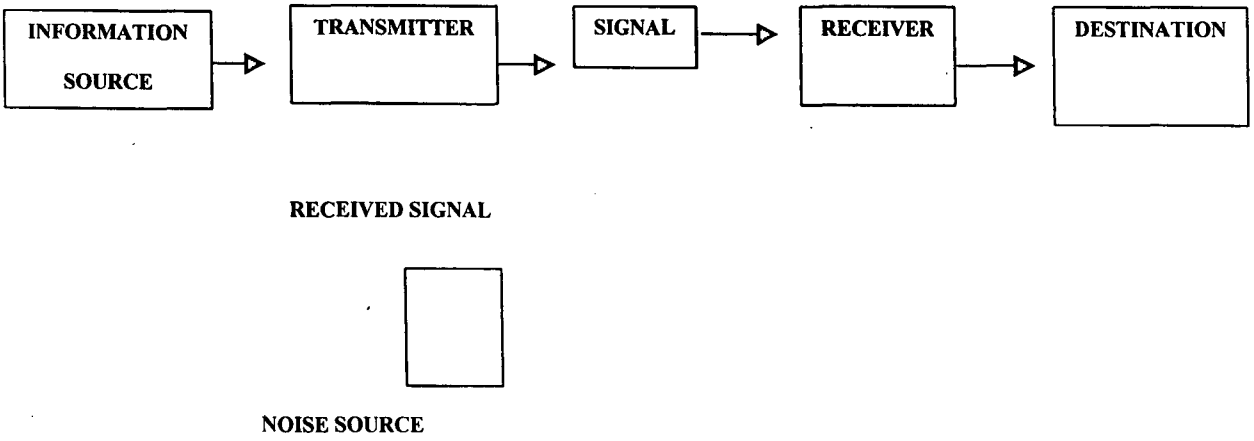
Thus, communication is a very vibrant process and given its indispensable position in human society many attempts have been made by philosophers,

psychologists, sociologists, political scientists and communication experts to describe the complexity of this process through various models. Aristotle perhaps constructed the earliest, albeit a simple, model of communication which had only three elements essential for communication to happen - speaker-speech-audience-and in which the basic function of communication was to 'persuade the other party'. Another model developed during the Second World War (1939-1945) visualized communication as a magic bullet that transferred ideas, feelings or knowledge almost automatically from one mind to another.

However, this and other one way models of communication became increasingly redundant as more research on the subject during the post- war period showed communication as a dynamic two-way process. By the 1950s, models became more elaborate and adequate contributing significantly to the understanding of the communication process.

One of the definitive formulations was given by Claude E. Shannon and Warren Weaver (1949). As diagram 1 indicates, this communication model comprises four elements: a source of information, with a greater or lesser number of messages to communicate; a transmitter or sender with the capacity to transform a message into a signal; a receiver which decodes the signal in order to retrieve the initial message; and finally , the destination - a person or a thing to whom the message is intended.

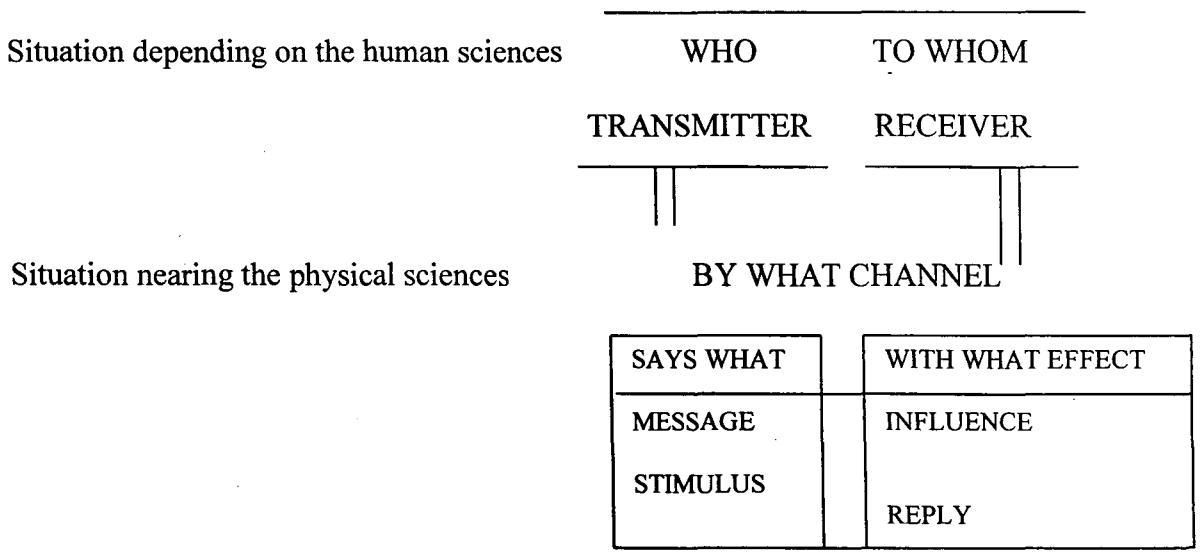
Diagram - 1



Source: Many Voices, One World, UNESCO, Kegan Page, London, 1980: 284.

Credit, however, goes to Harold Lasswell (1948) as the first thinker in the field to precisely delineate the various elements which constitute a "communication fact". According to him, "Communication action" cannot be adequately described without answering the following question: who said what, by what channel, to whom and with what effect? Therefore identification of transmitters, analysis of message content, study of transmission channels, audience identification and evaluation of effects; these are the five parameters of communication studies. Michael Buhler represents the Lasswell model as:

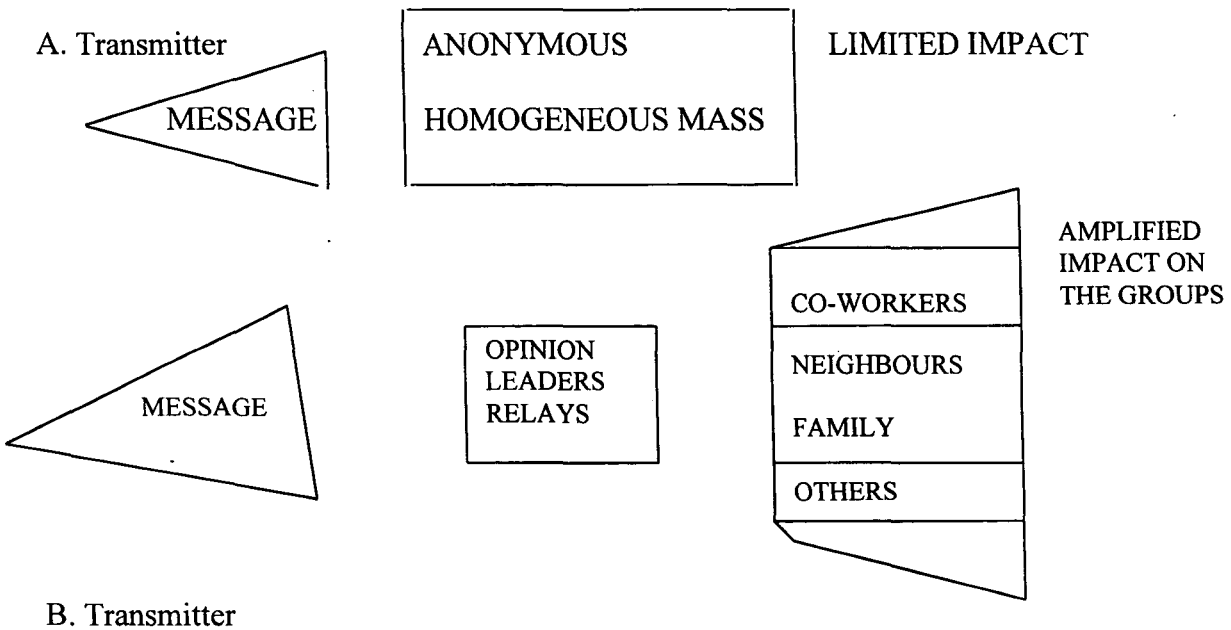
Diagram - 2



Source: Many Voices, One World, UNESCO, Kegan Page, London, 1980:285.

Katz and Lazarsfeld (1949), based on their studies of the electoral campaigns in the United States, elaborated a concept known as two-step theory of communication. According to them, media messages first reached persons more involved and more influential than others; then these opinion leaders retransmitted and amplified the information received within the framework of small group, face to face relations. Later research however revealed that opinion leaders did not always act as a simple relay between the media and the public at large and influence networks were far more intricate and complex. Buhler schematically represented Katz -Lazarsfeld theory as shown in diagram 3:

Diagram - 3

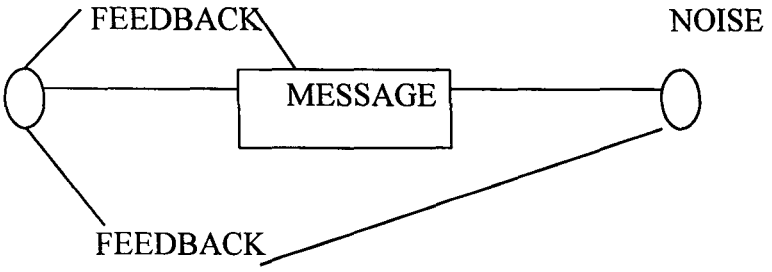


Situation A: Classic diagram of mass diffusion

Situation B: Model of the modifications made in the message by opinion relays.

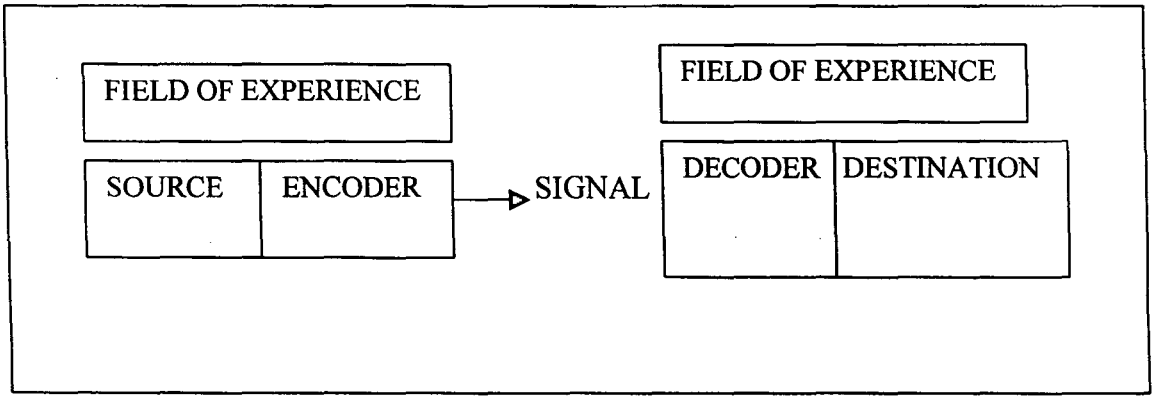
Source: Many Voices, One World, UNESCO, Kegan Page, London, 1980:285.

Wilbur Schramm (1971), a leading authority in the field of communication, adapted Shanon and Weaver's model of human communication and presented a comprehensive overview of the process of communication. Schramm's model is as follows:



In this model, the concepts of feedback and noise are very important - the former being the response of the recipient to the message received in the light of which the message is suitably modified while the latter refers to the unintentional disturbance which may creep in diluting the efficacy of the message.

Schramm further viewed the communication process as a complex one in the context of personal, social and cultural factors. He visualized communication essentially as a process of sharing of experience which leads to the shaping and reshaping of an individual's experience. This is represented by him in a model as:



In another view, Matilda Riley adopts an intentionally sociological perspective to communication and emphasises on the diverse influences which prevail upon the "communicator", the message sender, as well as on its receiver, each of them being situated in primary groups like the family, and working environment, which themselves are integral parts of a broader social structure. Therefore, according to her, "in such an all-encompassing system, the mass communication process appears...component of a wider social process which affects it and is in turn affected by it."

Marshall Mcluhan (1964), in a radically different view point in his book, 'Understanding Mass Media' reversed the customary perspective, affirming that the medium is the message. According to him, what matters is not the content of messages, but the manner in which they are transmitted. Thus, the means of transmitting a culture influence and transform it. The important factor is the "message" exercised by the media on the modes of comprehending and perceiving the world and its realities.

Francis Balle (1969), on the other hand, sets out to evolve a more comprehensive understanding of the communication process in his 'Communication: A Plea for a New Approach'. He views communication as a double inequality as it is more than simply techniques labeled media but is less than the totality of social exchange. This dual inequality implies that communication has to be located within the multiple relationships of influences, complementaries and exclusion between different means of social exchange while focussing on the different means of social communication - interpersonal, institutional and through the media.

Means of Communication - The Media

The spectrum of communication today has an immense variety and range of components. It includes: human capacities, simple communication and media serving individuals, groups and masses, complex infrastructures and systems, advance of technologies, materials and machines which collect, store, produce, receive and retrieve messages.

Beginning with the powerful impetus given by the development of language and then writing and in the medieval ages by the invention of the printing press, human communication has progressed manifold. The modern age has seen an accelerating development of new resources, techniques and technological devices in communication particularly for transmitting and receiving signals and messages. This, as specialists in the field argue, has given communication a 'mass' character. Janowitz (1968) defines mass communication as "comprising the institutions and techniques by which specialized groups employ technological devices (press, radio, films, etc.) to disseminate symbolic content to large, heterogeneous and widely dispersed audiences". This age of mass communication has seen a burgeoning of mass media viz., the newspapers, telegraphy, cinema, radio and television among others.

The mass media also called big media have continued to proliferate. The advances in space technology have opened new possibilities for communication purposes. The internet with its information superhighway has added a totally new dimension to the process. Nonetheless, the importance and originality of this process lies not only in the expansion of transmission facilities and the size of coverage but chiefly in the fundamental transformation in the nature of the language of human communication brought about by this communication revolution. However, the process of 'mass communication' is not synonymous

with the mass media. There are other common uses of the same technologies and other kinds of relationships mediated through the same networks. Amidst this explosion of mass media which characterizes the communication scenario today, little media, also called the group media, continue to occupy an important place. The little media which attempt to utilize the communication technology in a more focussed manner at the group level, come into play at the level of social communication within groups and local communities. They are highly effective in achieving group cohesion, mobilizing local resources and in solving problems affecting smaller or larger groups. These means cover a wide range of media from local and wall newspapers, memographed leaflets, posters, slides, exhibitions, local fairs, information vans to local radio.

Alongside these media flourish the traditional means of communication which have evolved with human society since time immemorial. Even today, messages and ideas continue to be transmitted in many countries by means of dance and mime, local theatre forms, puppet shows and other folk media which serve not only to entertain but also to influence attitudes and behaviour. Thus these means of interpersonal communication continue to play a significant role especially in communicating with the rural inhabitants of developing countries comprising as much as 60-70 per cent of the world's population. The modern media should be seen as adding and enriching the existing communication networks and rich dividends, especially in the developmental context, can only be achieved if means of communication are utilized in a holistic manner without eclipsing one or the other.

Thus, as the modern world has become increasingly complex, communication has increasingly become a vital need for collective entities and communities. Lerner argues that mass communication today serves as the great

multiplier in development, the device that can spread the requisite knowledge and attitudes immeasurably more quickly and widely than ever before. The media act as vehicles of social change and impinge on every sphere - education is no exception.

Education has long been one of the decisive life chances of any individual, the key to equal opportunity and advancement. Its intrinsic worth lies not only in its own value but also in its empowering capability. Education is not only essential for social well being and advancement but is also a powerful instrument for individuals to achieve upward mobility, both in social and economic terms, as well as political empowerment. It has been persistently observed that without education and especially without equal educational experience and skill a large number of individuals, both men and women, all over the world have been forced to lead a life where not only are their choices in the personal sphere limited but their participation in society and the polity at large is severely curtailed. Thus, one of the basic convictions of our times is that neither sound government nor economic prosperity are possible in a country unless its entire population has some basic schooling.

It is perhaps pertinent to point out here that education is a much broader and indeed more demanding social goal and schooling can only be seen as one of the means of acquiring education. As eloquently argued by Rabindranath Tagore, education has to be viewed as a right which enables individuals and communities to act on reflection. But the right to education is usually understood in terms of a certain number of years of schooling which equip an individual with both essential learning tools (such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy) and basic learning content (such as knowledge, skills, values and attitudes). Primary education is a precondition for providing these basic empowering skills to an

individual and is, therefore, the basis on which the entire edifice of education is built.

Linkages between Education and Social Development

Given the importance of primary education as an effective developmental strategy, and also as a crucial human development indicator, the Directive Principle of the Indian Constitution (Article 45) states that "the state shall endeavour to provide within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years". Although the goal has remained elusive till date, universal elementary education which aims at universal access, enrolment, participation and learning attainment has become the challenge of Indian educational policy. An explicit recognition of the fundamental right to elementary education is embodied in the proposed 83rd Constitutional Amendment.

Education is also seen as a means of economic advancement and recent research reveals that poor parents are keen to educate their boys in particular, for greater economic security (Probe Report, 1999). There is also evidence to show that education greatly helps to achieve good health and protects children from disease. It also contributes to the well being of an individual as illiterate people tend to have low esteem and a low social status. The same logic applies to out-of-school children, many of whom endure further deprivation such as the physical and psychological stress of child labour. Education is of value not only for the person who acquires it but also for others. Thus, education of a young person from a deprived community becomes an asset for the entire community. Basic educational skills also enable people to participate effectively in democracy. Also in the Indian context, Universal Elementary Education (UEE) is a requirement of

social justice as, historically, educational disparities have been used to consolidate social inequalities based on class, caste and gender by groups privileged enough to have access to education.

A case for girls' education

While education may not be a panacea for all individual and social ills it certainly is a necessary enabling condition which facilitates access to a broad range of other individual rights and social goals. These arguments buttressing a need for education apply with special force to the education of girls. This holds true particularly in the Indian context where the problems of girls are not only the problems faced by children in general arising out of poverty and other social deprivations, but they also refer to situations arising from their being simply girls. Majority of the Indian girls are caught in a vicious cycle of more burden and less care which starts at birth and continues unabated during the prime years of growing up as a girl, leading to an oppressed womanhood. This is amply brought forth by a negative sex ratio, higher female child mortality, lesser access of girls to food, health, education and recreation and their early induction into domestic work, marriage and motherhood.

Education of girls is, therefore, looked at as a key variable in breaking this cycle of deprivation and discrimination. Access to primary education is of key importance especially for girls. If the parents can be motivated to enrol their daughters in school it is a major achievement and further, if they can be persuaded to retain them in school, it is more than half the battle won. Although the education of girls, be it at the secondary or higher level, is fraught with problems if some improvement is made at the primary level enrolment and retention, especially in rural areas, female non-literacy can be significantly reduced. There

is evidence to show that four to five years of primary education or its equivalent is a must for ensuring permanent literacy which is the highest common factor that influences social indicators of development.

International studies of economic returns for education suggest that these are highest for primary school and decline with rising levels of education.

Further, education for women has a multiplier effect in advancing social and economic development-education of women facilitates better use of family planning techniques and results in a fall in birth rate. A study carried out in 28 countries by the Demographic Health Survey in 1990 covering Africa, Latin America, the Carribbean, Asian and the Arab nation states noted that the tendency for smaller families increased with the educational level of women (Women and Literacy, Women and Development Series, 1991).

Women's education also plays an important role in child care especially in relation to infant mortality levels. The Research Triangle Institute (1990) in a study carried out in 80 developing countries indicated that an increase of 70 per cent in girls' enrolment in primary schools, together with a comparable growth in secondary education, would after 20 years result in a decrease in the infant mortality rate of 40 per 1,000 live births.

In fact, educational levels of women are of paramount importance in ensuring the overall quality of child care and health. Educated mothers are also instrumental in ensuring school enrolment and retention of their children, especially girls.

Women's participation in the labour market is also concomitant to their level of education. This is true not only of the formal sector of the economy but also the informal sector wherein education enables them to engage in self-

employment opening several new possibilities of income generation and enhancement of status and capability.

However, most critiques of schooling point out that universalizing elementary education and ensuring access to schooling for girls is pointless as long as the school pedagogy does not have a more liberating character. It is argued that teaching methods in most schools, especially in India, are extremely stultifying and schooling is all but geared towards personal development and critical inquiry. Schooling in the country, whether religious or secular in orientation, is dominated by ideals of role learning and submissive respect to the teacher. Girls in particular, both through the curriculum content and broader teaching practices, are expected to be docile and modest rather than self-assertive and confident. Schooling is also very variable in quantity and quality. The form of schooling also varies enormously, from elite urban schools teaching in English to a single-teacher rural school with vernacular schooling and minimum provisions. Some authors, on the basis of research findings, also caution against establishing a simplistic causal relationship between girls' education, female autonomy and fertility (Basu and Jeffrey, 1996).

Nevertheless, there is a broad agreement on the liberating influence of the very act of attending a school on children. Some educationists, in fact, take the view that this socialization experience has much greater educational value than the formal curriculum. In the context of girls' education, empirical evidence reveals that schooling results in deliberate changes in behaviour of girls. Basu writes, "what the fact of schooling is believed to do is to increase the receptivity to new information and the ease with which information is obtained and then used" (1996:63). Thus, schooling helps in improving knowledge thereby facilitating a woman's ability to make informed decisions. A woman's autonomy

is also enhanced through schooling as an educated woman's ability to influence the decisions of others is substantially more than that of her non-literate counterpart. The very fact of their education does, there is no doubt, improve what Sen (1987) has called their fall-back position; that is their ability to withstand opposition and even rejection. More importantly, other family members are keenly aware of the educated woman's stronger bargaining position and are generally more willing to concede her some freedoms.

But the key question of ensuring girls' access to education still remains. Access is rooted within a specific complex of socio-political, economic and cultural factors in a given society which act as powerful intervening variables. The challenge is to make mass schooling of girls a workable proposition in a setting where a large section of the populace is ambivalent or indifferent about the value of formal schooling for girls. Promoting universal schooling of girls is also a daunting task in strongly patriarchal settings like the northern Indian states where indices of gender equality are uniformly and abysmally low. In such a scenario, any educational breakthrough cannot occur through governmental decree or imposition alone. On the one hand, the educational system has to mould itself according to the local cultural sensitivities in terms, for example, of single sex schools, female teachers or flexible timings and, on the other hand, there is a need to create an active demand on the part of the parents for education of their girls. It is here that communication can and does step in.

Education and Communication: Exploring Linkages

Education in the modern world is not an isolated activity concerned only with traditional intellectual categories but nowadays education and its recipients are rooted in knowledge and influences of different kinds and diverse origins.

Thus the very horizons of the term 'education' are expanding and as Bengo succinctly puts it, "education now has to be taken as knowledge which... must concern itself with everything that passes for knowledge in society."

The rapid expansion of the various forms of mass communication seems to bring to education a new dimension. Communication was quick to develop its new vectors like press, radio, television among others in most countries at a time when education was emerging as an aspiration of all categories of population and the ideas of democratization of education, lifelong education and equality of opportunity were becoming widespread. The two phenomena inevitably came into relation with each other and communication is seen as bringing about an educational environment.

Moreover, in an attempt to make education available to the masses in the shortest possible time span, with a view to optimum utilization of their scarce and over stretched resources, developing countries have attempted to utilize media in a big way.

If an educated and aware populace is seen as a national asset, the media in their endeavor to spread education were assigned the task of speeding and casting the long slow social transformation required for economic development. Besides, it was observed that the obvious advantages of media (apart from the power of the message that they disseminate on a massive scale on a daily basis) viz., their emotional content, their accessibility, their ability to arouse interest constantly, the pleasure they give, and an entirely innovative dimension they bring to learning will create a felt need for education.

But by far the most challenging task before the media is to change attitudes which in the context of education means combating traditional reluctance to impart education to certain sections of society, significantly the women. It was

realised that no amount of infusion of new techniques and even resources can make any educational programme or campaign a success unless the desire for change does not come from within the community. The role of communication is therefore to encourage and indeed bring about the requisite attitudinal changes.

India was no exception to this utilization of communication for educational purposes. Education at the very outset was identified as a sin qua non of national development. But given the nation's limited resources, which would necessarily constrain the spread of the formal educational system, communication media were readily incorporated as a means of reaching out to a vast illiterate section of society. Simultaneously, it was assumed that the media while discharging its functions of information, entertainment and teaching at the informal level would also help in overcoming attitudinal barriers to education which kept the vulnerable sections of society like women away from the ambit of the educational system.

This policy pronouncement was reiterated by the National Policy on Education, 1986 which stated: "Modern communication technologies have the potential to bypass several stages and sequences in the process of development in earlier decades. Both the constraints of time and distance at once become manageable. In order to avoid structural dualism, modern educational technology must reach out to the most distant areas and the most deprived sections of beneficiaries simultaneously with the areas of comparative affluence and ready availability." (1986:27)

But in a significant broadening of perspective, NPE 1986, besides stressing the use of communication technology inside the classroom also advocated the use of media to promote awareness among masses of the importance of girls' education. This was in tune with its assertion that the national

educational system would play a positive interventionist role in the empowerment of women.

The leitmotif of Gender

Nevertheless, the use of communication as a vehicle of awareness cannot be viewed in a simplistic manner. As is the case with education, communication policies also emanate and operate within a socio-economic and cultural setting. The media in their content, access and audience reflect a strong gender bias and are more often than not guilty of perpetuating the existing and well entrenched gender stereotypes. As the media have rapidly increased their reach and influence the battle to gender-sensitize them has also increased in its intensity. Gender, or more specifically, gender-bias runs as a strong under- current in the operation of both educational and communication policies the world over, and specially so in India, where the birth, survival and nurturing of a girl child is threatened at every stage because of the low value placed on female life and dignity.

The concept of gender imputes values on biological differences between men and women. Thus, while sex connotes the physical differences of the body, gender concerns the psychological, social and cultural differences between males and females. Gender is, hence, the cultural definition of sex-role appropriate behaviour.

As Van Zoonen succinctly puts it, "the meaning of gender is never given but varies according to specific cultural and historical settings... and is subject to ongoing discursive struggle and negotiation" (1991:45). Gender roles are learned largely through the process of socialization wherein individuals internalize norms, values, attitudes and expectations of the society, community and social groups to which they belong. Socialization is an interactive process, the earliest and most

important part of which, takes place within the family. Research suggests that from the moment of birth, parents and elders interact with the child on the basis of perceived gender and organize the socialization process accordingly. Children soon learn that acting and thinking in ways appropriate to their sex meets with parental approval. This is not to deny that cultural differences exist among various social groups such as castes, tribes, religions, etc. with varying emphases on values, attitudes and behaviour patterns. Therefore, women are heterogeneous in several ways, yet they also share many characteristics which are common to them cutting across class, ethnicity, caste etc. Therefore, it is possible to generalize about them for heuristic purposes.

For example, girls are considered fragile and in need of protection and docility and conformity in behaviour is appreciated. Boys, on the other hand, are seen as strong and active. Attributes like aggression and assertiveness are encouraged among them. The division of labour within the family also forcefully brings home to children gender differences in roles and status of their significant others. Toys, stories and games also serve to communicate to children subtle and often overt messages of culturally approved qualities of 'masculinity' and 'feminity'. The media, is also found to be increasingly important in the construction of gender identity and the stereotypical images of men and women conveyed through it reinforce the societal gender bias.

Gender relations are mediated through economic and social structures. Stromsquist (1990) argues that the gender division of labour and control of women's sexuality reinforces women's subordination in society. Patriarchal ideology plays an important role in defining gender roles. It emphasises a woman's primary role as that of a mother and a wife. Social acculturation of men and women, sanctioned by religious and cultural practices, reinforces gender

division of labour. The Indian society in its cultural mores and expectations regarding women's roles is a vivid example of such a patriarchal system in operation, barring a few exceptions.

The state of education of the girl child in India has to be probed in the backdrop of these unusual societal parameters that continue to persist. A case in point is the state of Haryana, a state which inspite of having the third highest State Domestic Product in the country, continues to register consistently poor performance on well established social indicators having a bearing on the status of girls and women. According to the 1991 census, Haryana has a sex ratio of 865, the lowest in the country, as against a national average of 934. The sex ratio in the 0-6 years age group is 879. According to the census, there were 55 districts all over the country with a sex ratio between 870 and 909 for this group, and 11 or twenty-percent of these were in Haryana. Incidentally, the state has 17 districts in all. The Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR; 1992-93) was 435 while the Infant Mortality Rate (IMR; 1988-89) was 80 for males and 102 for females. The female literacy rate (1991) of 40.5 per cent dovetails with other indicators of status of women (NCERT, 1993). In the Gurgaon district, the female literacy rate is 34.94 per cent which goes down to 26.12 per cent for rural women (MHRD, 1997). In this district there is a region called Mewat inhabited chiefly by the Meos, a community of recent Muslim converts from Hinduism. A poor disadvantaged community, it has the lowest female literacy rate in the country - 1.8 per cent (Probe Report, 1999). Mewat perhaps symbolizes the challenge of girls' education in India.

The Study:

The educational profile of girls at the primary level of schooling in Haryana will be analyzed to understand the role of gender in blocking educational access of girls. The next step in this analysis will be to study the strategies being adopted to counter this persisting problem. It is in this context, that the prime focus of the study viz., the role played by communication in operationalizing such strategies will emerge. The key research objective will be to study the linkage between education and media with the emphasis being on media advocacy of education of the girl child in the Indian context. To arrive at this understanding, the interaction between gender and education, and gender and communication, will be analyzed as a backdrop to the role of gender in the challenge of girls' education in India. The overall developmental communication policy will be studied to see how far the media have been harnessed for advocacy of education in the context of the Indian society and its specific problems and needs. This dissertation will therefore be an attempt to critically review the linkages between education and communication with a special focus on India. As an academic exercise it would be purely exploratory utilizing secondary sources as its reference points, the purpose of this analysis being to provide a theoretical grounding for further research.

The objective of this dissertation will therefore be to study the linkages between communication and education and explore the role of media in promoting education, especially education of the girl child. Given the problem, the study shall consist of the following chapters:

Chapter one will discuss the theories of mass communication and the role of media in society. The role of media vis-à-vis women and their position in society will also be enunciated. Chapter two will focus on gender and education and how gender affects educational access. Chapter three will explore the linkages between education and communication in the Indian context with special reference to the girl child. The concluding chapter will sum up the discussion. In the process role of education and communication working in tandem, especially in a developing country, will emerge and the possibility of using this synergy for ensuring education of the girl child will also be probed.

Chapter One

COMMUNICATION - A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

Communication is a fundamental social process because man is above all an information - processing animal and therefore a major change in the state of information and a major involvement of communication always accompanies any major social change- the rate of change in the style and form of human communication is therefore in itself a social dictum of importance. The means of communication viz., the media have been involved in every significant social change ever since they came into existence - be it intellectual revolutions, political revolutions, the industrial revolution or revolutions in tastes, aspirations and values.

Although the growth of mass communication is usually linked to the beginning of printing in Western Europe in the fifteenth century, this invention is only a benchmark in the history of a phenomenon the roots of which go much earlier and which reached its peak much later.

According to Schramm, media may be the resultant of forces set in motion when groups of manlike animals came together for a common pursuit. The development of language and the invention of writing which may seem rather commonplace today were landmark events in human communication giving a new dimension to man's capacity to process, preserve, share and exchange information. Ingenious ways of communication like smoke signals and drumbeats added to the various ways by which social groups communicated. The Romans published a sort of wall newspaper and during the Middle Ages many books and shorter documents were printed from wood blocks. Printing from movable metal type was in vogue in China much before it reached Europe. But the Gutenberg method of

printing revolutionized the communication process by expanding infinitely man's capacity to share information.

As soon as books and documents came into mass circulation, the new tool of print became a weapon of power and a weapon of revolution. The British, the American, the French revolutions would have been unlikely, if not impossible, without mass communication. Political democracy, economic opportunity, free public education were woven together in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to make a great change in human life. The technical revolution, in turn, added the telephone, the camera, the projector, the microphone, the tape and disk recorders, the transmitter and the computer to the available tools of communication - all within a little over a hundred years.

And in the developing regions today, where the entire process has been a foreshortened, communication has pushed back horizons and information media have stimulated a revolution of rising aspirations and are themselves among the goals of these aspirations. The impact of this revolution is perhaps most visible in the sphere of education - spread of education is at once a cause and an effect of the growth of communication media. Without an expansion of media, there is less reason for people to learn to read and without widespread literacy there is little market for printed media. Research reveals that the presence of communication media makes a significant difference in the level of information even among people who are unable to read. Therefore, the resources of the audio-visual media harnessed both, at the national and local levels, are being systematically utilized to spread awareness about the need for education as an essential tool in today's world.

Theory of Media

It is widely recognized that media are the main vehicles of production and distribution of knowledge in the widest sense of the word. In today's world different media have come to interpose themselves between us and any experience of the world beyond our direct sense of observation.

They also provide the most continuous line of contact with the main institutions of society in which we live. Experts in the field therefore use the metaphor of mediation to explain the role played by media in intervening between ourselves and reality. Mediation can mean different things, ranging from neutrally informing through negotiation to attempts at manipulation and control. Among these different versions of the mediating process, there is scope for choice concerning the role assigned to the media ranging from a model of opinion and diversity to one of direction and control, or from a neutral and reflective to a participant and active version of the media task.

This very general notion that mass communication mediates in some way between reality and our perceptions and knowledge is perhaps the take- off point for different kinds and levels of theory about media and society. Theorists of mass communication have often shared with sociologists an interest in how social order is maintained and in the attachment of people to various kinds of social units. One school of opinion views mass communication as a process which is predominantly individualistic, impersonal and anomic, thus conducive to lower levels of social control and solidarity. The media are also seen as portraying an alternative value system potentially weakening the hold of traditional values. An alternative view of the relationship between mass media and social integration holds the media capable both of supporting and of subverting social cohesion.

At issue is a contrast between the notions of change, freedom, diversity and fragmentation or centrifugal tendencies of the media, on the one hand, and those of order, control, unity and cohesion or centripetal tendencies of the media, on the other. Different theories of media stem from whether one takes a positive or negative view of the different outcomes of these alternative tendencies (McCormack, 1961; Carey, 1969).

Functionalism emphasises the positive version of the centripetal effect stressing the media as integrative and unifying. The critical theory, on the other hand, represents this effect as one of homogenization and manipulative control. The positive version of centrifugalism stresses modernization, freedom and mobility as the effects to be expected from media while the negative version points to isolation, alienation, loss of values and vulnerability.

Attempts have been made to answer questions relating to issues of social power, integration and change and the role of media through these distinctive theoretical standpoints. If one proceeds to present these theories in a broadly chronological order of their formulations, then ' Mass Society' theory was perhaps the first to ponder over the role played by media in society. Today, it is more interesting for historical reasons than for its current relevance. This theory which came to fore in the early twentieth century emphasizes the interdependence of institutions that exercise power and thus, the integration of the media into the sources of social power and authority. Media content, it holds, is likely to serve the interests of political and economic power-holders.

The vision of society projected by the mass society theory is pessimistic, perhaps a reflection of the then contemporary society which developed out of industrialization and urban migration and was characterized by family privatization, competitiveness and low levels of solidarity and participation. Mass

society theory gives primacy to the media as a causal factor. The theory posits that media will be controlled or run in a monopolistic way and will be an effective means of organizing people in masses - as audience, consumers, markets, electorates. Mass media are usually the voice of authority, the givers of opinion and instruction and also of psychic satisfaction. According to the most influential and articulate theorist of mass society, C.W. Mills (1951-1956), the mass media lead to a form of non-democratic 'control from above' with few chances to answer back.

This mass society is certainly integrated but not in any healthy way. Kornhauser (1968), opines that the lack of strong social organization and the relative isolation of individuals encourage efforts of leaders to mobilize and manipulate. One solution to increased massification and privatization that has been proposed has been by way of emancipatory uses of new media from below (Enzensberger; 1970), or as a result of new developments of technology (Neuman, 1991). Research in recent years has helped to modify some of the large claims of mass society theory by reasserting the potential resistance of the audience to manipulation.

Although Karl Marx only knew the press before it was effectively a mass medium, it is possible to analyze modern media according to his ideas. The media as an industry conform to a general capitalist type with factors of production and relations of production in the monopolistic ownership of a capitalist owning class, and are nationally or internationally organized to serve the interests of that class. Media work ideologically by disseminating the ideas and world views of the ruling class, denying access to alternative ideas, which might lead to change or to a growing consciousness on the part of the working class of its interests and by

hindering the mobilization of such consciousness into active and organized political opposition.

Marxist theory, therefore, posits a direct link between economic ownership and dissemination of messages which affirm the legitimacy and the value of a class society. Revised versions of Marxist media theory which concentrate more on ideas than on material structures emphasize the ideological effects of media in the interests of the ruling class, in 'reproducing' the essentially exploitative relationships and manipulation and in legitimating the dominance of capitalism and the subordination of the working class.

Louis Althusser (1971), conceived this process to work by way of what he called 'ideological state apparatuses' (various means of socialization including the media) which worked insidiously as opposed to 'repressive state apparatuses' (such as the army and the police) and enabled the capitalist state to survive without recourse to direct violence. Gramsci's (1971) concept of the hegemony refers to ubiquitive and internally consistent culture and ideology which are openly or implicitly favourable to a dominant class or elite and in the perpetuation of which media plays a role. Marcuse (1964) interpreted the media, along with other elements of mass production systems, as engaged in 'selling' or imposing a whole social system which is simultaneously desirable and repressive. The main contribution of the media is to stimulate and then satisfy 'false needs' leading to the assimilation of groups who have no real material interest in common into a 'one dimensional society'.

Although the Marxists broadly agree on the function of media in capitalist society they differ in explaining how the power of the media might be countered or resisted. The original Leninist model of vanguard press leading the revolutionary class struggle is no longer realistic and Marxists now hope for some

form of collective ownership of alternative media as a counter to the media power of the capitalist class.

Functionalism claims to explain social practices and institutions in terms of the 'needs of the society and of individuals' (Merton, 1957). As applied to the media, the theory postulates that 'presumed needs' have mainly to do with continuity, order, integration, motivation, guidance and socialization among others. Society is viewed as an ongoing system of linked working parts or subsystems, of which the mass media are one, each making an essential contribution to continuity and order. In this scheme of things, it is by responding to the demands of individuals and institutions in consistent ways that the media achieve unintended benefits for the society as a whole. Thus, structural-functional theory requires no assumptions of a particular ideological direction from the media. Nonetheless while being apolitical in formulation it has a definite conservative bias to the extent that the media are likely to be seen as a means of maintaining society as it is rather than as a source of major change.

Lasswell (1945) was the first thinker to spell out the main functions of communication in society. According to him, these included surveillance of the environment, correlation of the parts of the society in responding to its environment and the transmission of the cultural heritage. Wright (1960) developed this basic scheme to describe many of the effects of the media and added 'entertainment' as a fourth key media function. Over the years, mobilization has been added to this list as the fifth function of the media.

Thus media are seen as performing an important information function by providing information about events and conditions in society and the world and facilitating innovation, adaptation and progress.

Media also explain, interpret and comment on the events happening in society thereby facilitating socializing and consensus building. A sense of continuity in society is also maintained by the media by expressing the dominant culture and recognizing subcultures. In the process a commonality of values is forged and maintained. Means of communication also act as sources of amusement and diversion thereby reducing social tension. Media act as active sources of mobilization while campaigning for societal objectives in the sphere of politics, war and economic development.

Functional theory is however criticized for its inadequacy in dealing with question of power and conflict although the media are presumed to play a necessary part in processes of social control.

The 'critical political economic theory' focuses primarily on the relationship between the economic structure and dynamics of media industries and the ideological content of media. Thus, the theory views media institutions as part of the economic system with close links to the political system. The predominant character of the 'media produce' is largely determined by the exchange value of different kinds of content under conditions of pressure to expand markets and by the underlying economic interests of owners and decision- makers.

Resultantly, the media product or content and even audiences are commodified. Thus, there is a sharp reduction of diversity in the media field and there is a reduction of independent media sources, concentration on the largest markets, avoidance of risks and neglect of smaller and poorer sectors of the potential audience. There is a marginalisation of opposition and alternative voices. Above all there is a decline in the public sector of mass media with public interest in communication being subordinated to private interests.

In recent years there has been a growth in media concentration worldwide with more and more power of ownership being concentrated in fewer hands and with tendencies for mergers between electronic hardware and software industries (Murdock, 1990). There has also been a decline in the public sector of media and in direct public control of telecommunication with growing 'deregulation' or privatization (Mcquail, 1990). Thus, today there is greater scope for application of this theory.

'The Communication Technology Determinism' attempts to search for links between the dominant communication technology of an age and key features of society. The first significant theorist in this tradition seems to have been the Canadian economic historian, H.N. Innis, who founded the 'Toronto School' of thinking about the media in the post- Second World War period. Innis (1950,51) attributed the characteristic features of successive ancient civilizations to the prevailing and dominant modes of communication.

In the economic sphere, communication leads over time to monopolization by a group or a class of the means of production and distribution of knowledge. Thus, the sequence of invention and application of communication technology influences social change. He also argued that each technology has a bias to particular communication forms, contents and uses. Communication revolutions according to this theory lead to social revolutions.

Most informed observers are now wary of such single factor explanations of social change and do not really believe in direct mechanistic effects from new technology. Development, it is pointed out, takes place within a particular social and cultural context, which also determines how communication media are harnessed and channelized.

The 'Information Society Theory' probes new linkages between media and society and can be seen as a further development of media technological determinism. The term 'communication revolution' along with the term 'information society' has almost come to be accepted as an objective description of our times and of the society which is emerging. The term 'Information Society' itself seems to have originated in Japan (Ito,1981). In the information society, 'information work', predominates and information is the most valuable resource, tending to displace capital in this respect (Rogers, 1986).

There is an exponential increase in the production and flow of information of all kinds in information societies (in effect all modern economies). The mass media are only one kind of information production but they are increasingly integrated with other flows. In fact, Neuman (1986) referred to this interconnection as 'the logic behind this cascade of new technologies'. This results in sharp reduction in distance and cost with simultaneous increase in speed, volume, interactivity and interconnectivity. The proponents of this theory hold that this augurs well for democratic pluralism.

It is emphasized that this bourgeoning communication potential will promote a more participatory and active social life. There will be the growth of free participant, flexible and democratic local communication systems as distinctions between interpersonal and mass communication and between public and private communications blur.

But the growing trend of globalization especially in the transcendence of time and space barriers has made many theorists doubt these expectations especially as new technologies extend the power and reach of large transnational corporations rather than that of individual citizens. Besides the old issue of access

still remains since access to interactive communication technology is unevenly distributed among the individuals.

Any discussion of communication theory is incomplete without the theory of media and development, which came to the fore in the years after the Second World War. This approach was based on the belief that mass communication could be a potent instrument in economic and social development by effectively spreading the message of modernity and strengthening democratic functioning in the rapidly expanding post- colonial world.

There is an underlying assumption of the superiority of 'modern' (that is, secular, materialist, and individualist) ways and of individual motivation as the key to change. The media can contribute in very many ways. They can help to promote the diffusion and adoption of many technical and social innovations, which are essential to modernization (Rogers; 1962, 1975). They can teach literacy and other essential skills and techniques. These ranged from creating a desire for education, better health facilities, and population control among others. The media can also encourage a 'state of mind' favourable to modernity (Lerner, 1958). Mass communication was also seen as essential in nascent nations (Pye, 1963) and in the emergence of a participant democratic polity.

Much of this thinking has now been either set aside or re-evaluated as orginal developmental goals could achieve only limited success. Rogers (1976) has described it as 'the passing of a dominant paradigm' and suggested the development of an alternative based on participation and convergence.

This has led to a renewed attempt at developing rational and dynamic links between communication and development. One aspect of this approach deals with redefining development with a definite shift away from the earlier post- second world war thinking of viewing development only in the material and economic

spheres. Today there is a more comprehensive understanding of the concept of development with greater emphasis being placed on human aspects of development linked to improvement of the quality of life, facilitating and increasing participation by the people in the decision making process.

This has led to rethinking about the concept and role of communication in the new developmental context. There is a rejection of the earlier mechanistic model of communication, which tended to disseminate information to make people aware of 'benefits' to come from, and 'sacrifices' required, for development. Today, communication has to integrate within the overall development plans and evolve communication policies, which go beyond information to interrelate with varied sectors like education, health and environment. In fact, access to communication and free and unhindered flow of communication between men is fundamental to the qualitative improvement of human life and human societies.

Mass Communication and Culture

This overview of theories of media and society remains incomplete till an understanding of the concept of culture, which is both an essential part of human society and of communication discourse, is arrived at. The relationship between media, society and culture is very complex as mass communication can be considered as both a 'societal and cultural' phenomenon. The media as an institution are part of the structure of society and their technological infrastructure is part of the economic and power base, while the ideas, images and information disseminated by the media are evidently an important aspect of our culture. Perhaps a more suitable point of departure would be an acceptable definition of what constitutes culture. The domain of 'culture' refers primarily to other essential aspects of collective social life, especially to meanings and

practices (social customs and institutional ways of doing things). Fiske (1989:1), therefore, defines culture as the 'constant process of producing meanings of and from our social experience'.

Mcquail holds that culture must have all of the following attributes - 'It is something collective and shared with others, it must have some symbolic form of expression, whether intended as such or not, it must have some pattern, order or regularity and therefore some evaluative dimension, there is (or has been) a dynamic continuity over time (Culture lives and changes, has a history and potentially a future). Perhaps, the most general and essential attribute of culture is communication, since culture could not develop survive, extend and generally succeed without communication ' (1994:95). Culture, thus defined, can broadly be located in people, in things (texts, artefacts) and in human practices (socially patterned behaviour). Each of these cultural locations can be a focus of study. Media theory over the years, has, however, focussed on some of the main questions and theoretical issues of this large canvass. Historically, the first cultural question on the agenda of media theory was that of the character of the new mass culture made possible by mass communication. The issues relating to the content and impact of the popular culture stimulated the rise of critical cultural theory which has now been extended to consider issues of gender and subculture in relation to mass communication. The theory also probes the potential consequences of the new technologies emerging in the communication field for the experience of meaning in the modern world. Besides, the political-economic aspects of the organized production of culture represented by mass media industries is also an area of analysis.

A socially based critical concern with the rise of mass culture which goes back at least to the mid-nineteenth century and in the mid-twentieth century was

represented in England in the work of F.R. Leavis. But the origins of 'critical theory' can really be traced to the work of a group of post-1933 émigré scholars from the' Marxist School of Applied Social Research' in Frankfurt. Members of the group like Horkheimer and Adorno, attempted to examine the apparent failure of revolutionary social change as predicted by Marx. They argued that the superstructure (especially ideas and ideology represented by the media) had exerted a powerful influence to subvert historical forces of economic change. The universal and commercialized mass culture was seen as an important means by which the dominant class had succeeded in promoting a false consciousness among the working class. The whole process of mass production of goods, services and ideas had more or less completely sold the system of capitalism. Many of these ideas were put forth by Adorno and Horkheimer in the 1940s in their sharp critique of mass culture for its uniformity, monotony and production of false needs, reduction of individuals to consumers and the removal of all ideological choices.

Marcuse (1964) gave the description of 'one-dimensional' to the mass consumption society founded on commerce, advertising and spurious egalitarianism. The commodity is the main instrument of this process since it appeared that both art and culture would be commodified and marketed for profit at the cost of losing critical power. The theory of commodification originates in Marx's Grundrisse, in which he noted that objects are commodified by acquiring an exchange value, instead of having merely an intrinsic use value. A broader notion of 'hegemony' was evolved to account for effects of media on consciousness. Gramsci (1971) initially used the concept of 'hegemony' for a ruling ideology and the critical theorists borrowed it to represent a loosely inter-related set of ruling ideas which permeate a society in a manner that the

established order of power and values appears natural and acceptable. The media do not define this reality on their own but give preferential access to the definitions of those in authority.

Ideology, therefore, as Althusser (1971) argued is not dominant in the sense of being imposed by force by a ruling class, but is an all-pervasive and deliberate cultural influence lulling the subordinate class to accept a distorted definition of reality. The media play an important role in the legitimazation of capitalism, according to the critical theorists.

From the 1970s onwards, the critical cultural theory has considerably widened its concerns and one important shift away from the pre-occupational concern with ideology embedded in media texts was to the question of how this ideology might be 'read' by its audience. Hall (1980) proposed a model of 'encoding-decoding media discourse' which represented the media text as located between its producers, who framed meaning in a certain way, and its audience, who 'decoded' the meaning according to their rather different social situations and frames of interpretation. Thus, it was recognized that ideology as sent is not the same as ideology as taken. These ideas not only stimulated a rethinking on the theory of ideology and of false consciousness but were also effective in 're-empowering' the audience. It also shifted the focus to the social and cultural influences which mediate the experience of the media, especially ethnicity and gender.

In fact, gender is one area where the theory of differential cultural reading of media texts has made significant progress, in collaboration with feminist research. Today, communication studies have come a long way from the early days of being 'gender blind' to a vast body of work touching and dealing with the complex gender -media-culture relationship. Research enumerates how gender

differences and distinctiveness are signified by the media. Another general aspect of the struggle is over the differential values attached to the concepts of masculinity and feminity in the media and over the related question of an 'all pervasive patriarchal' ideology prevalent in many mass-oriented cultural forms. It is pointed out that many media texts are deeply and persistently gendered in the way they have been encoded, usually according to the view of the anticipated audience. Fiske (1987) provides extensive evidence of what gendered television means in his analysis of popular television programmes.

Studies of media audiences and the reception of media content have also shown that there are relatively large differences according to gender in the manner of use of media and the meanings attached to the activity. This is largely due to the patterned differences in social roles and also due to the manner in which gender shapes the availability and use of time for media use. It also relates to power roles within the family and the general nature of relationships between women and male partners or of women in the wider family (Morley, 1986).

A gender-based approach also raises the question of whether media choice and interpretation can provide some lever of change or element of resistance for women in a social situation still generally structured by inequality.

The 'theory of communication technology' attempts to establish a linkage between technology and culture. Mcluhan (1964) was one of the first to look at the process by which we experience the world through different media of communication and not just at the relation between communication and social power structures. He proclaimed that all media (by which he meant anything which embodies cultural meaning) are 'extensions of man' and thus extensions of our senses. Mcluhan also focussed on 'how' we experience the world, not on 'what' we experience (thus not the content). Each new medium, he argued, transcends the

boundaries for experience reached by earlier media and contributes to further change. He visualised different media working together and predicted, albeit a little idealistically, the attainment of a 'global village' in which information and experience would be freely available for all to share.

Most other relevant theories of communication technology have focused on possible influences on the form or content of given media messages and thus on the meanings they make available. Even so, no technology culture effect can be established, because the technologies themselves are also cultural artefacts, and there is no way of breaking this circle.

One of the few effects of new communication technology, on which there is wide agreement, is the trend towards internationalization of mass communication. The question of potential cultural effects flowing from this trend has been much debated. The process of cultural 'transnationalization' which is assumed to be taking place has a variety of meanings, aside from the observable move towards interconnected infrastructure for reception and towards multinational ownership and operation. It refers both to the dissemination of certain broad kinds of media cultural content and also to some potential effects on the receiving culture. The general direction of effect is assumed to be towards displacing the original culture of receiving countries and/or causing it to imitate the international model.

Experts, like Sepstrup (1989), have however, warned against drawing straightforward conclusions about cultural effects from the different character of the product transmitted and consumed. He points to the distinction between 'international' media content as sent, content as actually received and actual consequences for the receiving culture. This is because the process of global flow is shaped and mediated by many factors. Differences or affinities of languages and

culture between partners to any exchange can either encourage or discourage flow. The media production capacity and relative strength of national media systems are also relevant since smaller, poorer countries are more vulnerable to foreign media reception than vice versa. In general, the terms of flow and exchange are far from fair or balanced.

Opinion is sharply divided over the cultural impact of this transnational flow. One school of thought, looking at it positively, views it as a 'mobility multiplier' spreading modern ways and democracy. Global communication is also seen as extending the shared symbolic space, helping people to overcome constraints of time and space. It is, therefore, heralded as a potential basis for a new world order of international peace and understanding. The critics, on the other hand, hold media cultural internationalization to be a manifestation of worldwide US imperialism. The roots of this critique, can be traced to an influential movement of resistance which developed during the 1970s, on behalf of the developing countries in their struggle to retain their cultural integrity and political autonomy, said to be threatened by Western media cultural imperialism.

According to Tomlinson (1991), 'cultural imperialism' refers to several different things almost interchangeably: a communication flow imbalance, a threat to national identity; a consumer/capitalist assault on older ways; and the growth of 'modernity' and its challenge to traditional culture. In view of this degree of conceptual confusion, it is not surprising that the question of the cultural impact of the international flow remains unsettled. Much modern theory and evidence supports the view that media-cultural invasion can sometimes be resisted or redefined according to local culture and experience. Often the 'internationalization' involved is self-chosen. Lull and Wallis (1982) use the team 'transculturation' to describe this process of 'mediated cultural interaction'. Media

content, are hence, decoded differentially according to the culture of receivers, and audiences can probably tolerate several different and inconsistent worlds of cultural experiences (such as local, national, sub-group and global) without one having to destroy the other. The bottom-line perhaps lies in the strength of a given cultural identity. Strong cultural identities will survive and weaker ones give way. Media may be a necessary, but are unlikely to be a sufficient, condition in this process of cultural resistance or submission.

In conclusion, relations between media and culture can be summed up in terms of dimensions of time and space. Within this terrain, different types of media can have different types of impact on the decay, endurance or flourishing of cultural identity and experience. In general, local, ethnic and more personal media help to support enduring identities and cultural autonomy, while international media content has more impact on superficial and short-term cultural phenomena. Actual effects of media cannot be predicted and depend on circumstances of case, time and place.

Media Effects

In fact, the entire study of mass communication is based on the premise that the media have significant effects, yet there is little agreement on the nature and extent of these assumed effects. Although we live in a world saturated by media sounds and images, and media derived information constantly shapes our social experience, yet it is very difficult to attribute particular effects to a particular media. The media are rarely likely to be the only necessary or sufficient cause of effect and the relative contribution is extremely hard to assess. Despite the obstacles and the inevitable inconclusiveness, the quest for media effect has accompanied the development of communication theory since the very beginning.

At the outset, media effects can be said to be embedded in the socio-economic-political milieu. Thus, media effects are influenced in an interactive way by several factors, including the interest of government and law makers, changing technology, the events of history and the ongoing concerns of time, among others. The development of media effect research and theory can broadly be divided into four phases.

In the first phase, which extends from the turn of the century until the late 1930s the media, where they were well developed, were credited with considerable power to shape opinion and belief, to change habits and mould behaviour actively, more or less according to the will of those who could control the media and their contents (Bauer and Bauer, 1960). These views stemmed not from scientific investigation but from the immense popularity and acceptability of the press and new audio-visual media of film and radio. In Europe, the use of media by advertisers, by war propagandists and by dictatorial states in the inter-war years and by the new revolutionary regime in Russia, all appeared to confirm what people were already inclined to believe - that the media could be immensely powerful. Against the background of such beliefs, systematic research drawing heavily on social psychology was begun during the 1920s and 1930s aimed largely at either improving the media or harnessing them to some desirable 'pro-social' goal such as education or increasing public information.

This transition to empirical inquiry led to a second phase of thinking about media effects which continued until the early 1960s. Many separate studies were carried out into the effects of different types of media content, of particular films or programmes and of entire campaigns. Initially, researchers began to differentiate possible effects according to social and psychological characteristics; subsequently, they introduced variables relating to intervening effects from

personal contacts and social environment, and latterly according to types of motive for attending to media. This flurry of research activity led to a disillusionment with the earlier belief in an all powerful media and researchers reached the conclusion that mass communication effect is mediated by a nexus of factors.

The media were seen as operating within a pre-existing structure of social relationships and a particular social and cultural context. These factors took primacy in shaping the opinions, attitudes and behaviour of the audience and also had a role to play in shaping media choice, attention and response on the part of audiences.

These findings of limited media effect were, however, contested by those scholars who were reluctant to dismiss the possibility that media might indeed have important social effects and can be an instrument for exercising social and political power. In their view, the current assessment of media effect was because of undue concentration on a limited range of effects, especially short-term effects on individuals, instead of focussing on broader social and institutional effects. Thus, there was a shift of attention towards studying long term change, cognition rather than attitude and affect, intervening variables of context, climates of opinion, structures of belief, ideology and cultural patterns among others. Noelle-Neumann's (1973) slogan return to the concept of powerful mass media seems to identify this research phase. The upsurge of left-wing political thinking in 1960s also made an important contribution by crediting the media with powerful legitimating and controlling effects in the interests of capitalist or bureaucratic states.

Work on media texts and audiences, beginning in the 1970s, brought about a new approach to media effects which can best be termed 'social constructivist'

(Gamson and Modigliani, 1989). The media are now perceived as having their most significant effects by constructing meanings and offering these constructs in a systematic way to audiences, where they are incorporated (or not), on the basis of some form of negotiation, into personal meaning structures. This emerging paradigm of effects has two main thrusts: first, that media 'construct' social formations and history itself by framing images of reality in a predictable and patterned way; and secondly, that people in audiences construct for themselves their own view of social reality and their place in it, in interaction with the symbolic constructions offered by the media. The approach allows both for the power of media and for the power of people to choose, with a terrain of continuous negotiation between the two.

Moving beyond the processes of short-term changes, there is an area of longer-term and indirect change which is much more difficult to probe. Yet it is of great relevance especially in the context of communication in the field of economic and social development, where the media are consciously applied to promote long-term change. Many of the developing countries gaining independence after the second world war attempted to harness the media to campaign for technical advance or for health and education. Media effect, in this context, was seen as a mass educator in alliance with officials, experts and local leaders, applied to specific objectives of change.

A principal chronicle of this tradition has been Rogers (1962; Rogers and Shoemaker, 1973), whose model of information diffusion envisaged four stages: information, persuasion, decision or adoption, and confirmation. However, the role of the media is concentrated on the first (information and awareness) stage, after which personal contacts, organized expertise and advice, and actual experience take over in the adoption process. This school tended to emphasize

organization and planning linearity of effect and hierarchy (of status and expertise). But these very characteristics and its over-reliance on 'manipulation' from above proved to be its major shortcoming and Rogers (1976) has himself signaled the passing of this 'dominant paradigm'. Rogers and Kincaid (1981) have put forward an alternative 'convergence model' of communication which emphasizes the need for a continual process of interpretation and response, leading to an increased degree of mutual understanding between sender and receiver.

Newer theories of development allot to mass media a more limited role, with success depending on their remaining close to the base of the society and to its native culture.

This also resulted in significant emphasis being placed on inter relations between the modern and traditional media in many grassroots situations. It is increasingly recognized that interesting and meaningful results especially longer-term effects are achieved when different components of various media are compounded in such a way as to complement one another. Hence such varied means - both modern and traditional- as cable television, local radio and television stations, local and rural press as well as data processing applications may all serve to facilitate involvement on a much wider scope going beyond centralized distribution of news and information.

Developing countries are now opting for synergy of efforts between the big and little media to maximize the communication impact while optimizing the use of their scarce resources. It is in this context that the linkages between media and communication in overcoming barriers to education, especially education of girls, can be probed. This is particularly relevant as more than awareness on the part of the population, a felt need for social change is vital for any change to take place. The challenge before communication is to whittle down the resistance to change.

The Media Audience

It is in this context that the 'audience' - the recipients of media messages gain significance in communication. The response of the audience, is in reality, the true test of the efficacy or otherwise of any communication. The audience has, therefore, been an object of inquiry and debate in the field of communication theory for long. The origins of the present-day audience for mass media are presumably to be found in the public theatrical and musical performances as well as games and spectacles of ancient times. With the spread of mass literacy, the growth of newspaper industry and societal changes accompanying urbanization and industrialization, the word "audience" in the nineteenth century began occasionally to be applied to the bourgeoning reading public as well. But it was only with the motion picture that the term "audience" became applicable to a mass medium in the classical meaning.

The first theoretical formulation of the media audience concept stemmed from a wider consideration of the changing nature of collective life in modern society. Blumer (1939) provided an explicit framework in which the audience could be located as an example of a new distinct form of collectivity. His ideal type of the concept of the 'mass audience' described it as large and widely dispersed; its members could not know each other; its composition was always shifting; it lacked any sense of self-identity, it appeared not to act for itself but to be acted on from outside, and just as its own internal relations were impersonal, so were the relations between any media and the mass audience also necessary impersonal. The communicative relationship involved was typically calculative as well as being impersonal.

There was a significant turning point in the history of mass communication theory, during the 1940s and 1950s, when the autistic conception of the mass audience was challenged by researchers (especially Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955). They asserted that the group was of prime importance, and that actual audiences consisted of many overlapping networks of social relations based on locality and other interests, and that the media themselves were incorporated into these. The interaction of the audience with the media was guided, filtered and interpreted by a variety of social contacts.

Despite this, the set of ideas equating media audiences with a faceless and manipulable mass, have continued to exert some influence. Nevertheless, recent developments both in the media themselves and in thinking about them, which affect the nature of the audience, refute such claims. Foremost among them is the ongoing revolution of delivering television and radio broadcasting through satellite and cable. This has freed these media from the limits imposed by terrestrial transmission resulting in abundance of supply and a greatly increased choice at any one moment for most individuals. A consequence of greater choice is also a potential decline in the homogeneity of audience experience as a result of individualization in behaviour and personalization of choice. Thus, there is multiplication, fragmentation and segmentation of audiences which is simultaneously accompanied by a greater differentiation of the target groups by source, medium, content, time and place.

Another significant innovation is the possibility of interactive use of various media, as a result of computer based systems, a trend exemplified by the internet superhighway which has helped the media user acquire control of the information environment.

There is more interconnectedness between users and content received, accompanied by an increased internationalization of transmission and reception. These developments have had a profound impact on the concept of audience. The audience, today, has become much more diverse, active and interactive but this is only a change in its manifestation, a move away from an earlier homogeneous entity to a more localized, issue and interest-specific entity.

Traditions of research into audiences

In keeping with the theoretical diversity which characterizes the study of the audience, there are several varieties of approach. The earliest audience research was a product of the needs of media industries to obtain some reliable estimates about the size of radio audiences and the 'reach' of print publications. In addition to size, it was important to gauge the social composition of audiences. The structural tradition of audience measurement arose to fulfil the need for this form of feedback. Besides, it was also used to study communication effects and to establish typologies of viewers, listeners and readers. The structural approach has also been adapted to explore group relations within the audience, patterns of influence (Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955), and later, studies of diffusion of innovation (Rogers and Kincaid, 1981).

Almost as old as the structural approach were the many research variants, originating primarily in the field of social psychology, which sought to establish the effects of media messages on individual behaviour, opinions, attitudes and values. The appeal of and response to portrayals of violence and related phenomena in the media have mainly been investigated within this behaviouralist tradition. A distinctive sub-tradition (with links to sociology) later crystallized out in the form of research into the motives for media choice and the perceived uses

and gratification of media behaviour (Blumler and Katz, 1974). There is a much stronger inclination (strengthening over time) in this tradition to treat the audience as an active participant in the interaction between media sender and receiver.

The social-cultural tradition of audience research which had its roots in the critical-cultural theory of media rests on the premise of 'differential decoding' of media texts by the audience according to their social or sub- cultural position. An added strand of this approach is the analysis of media use within a particular social context. Media reception research, therefore, emphasized the study of audiences as sets of people with unique, though often shared, experiences. Thus, it aimed at 'reading' the media texts through the perceptions of its audience which constructs its own meanings from the media texts offered. The central focus of interest is on the very process of media use as a set of practices and the way in which it unfolds. Audiences are never passive but actively participating within their particular social and cultural contexts.

The perceptions about the audience may differ, but most mass media use, most of the time, continues to have a strong social character, according to a number of criteria. These include: sociability of media use; normative controls or systematic social evaluation applied to media content and use; media uses in personal and social life; and the structuring of media use activity according to other dynamic principles of social and interpersonal relations - for instance those based on class, gender or age. Bausinger's (1984) study of domestic media consumption summarized several points which are relevant to understanding the social character of media use on part of the audience and these included that the use of one medium is related to that of others; media are rarely used in a single-minded, concentrated way- their use is integrated into other every day activities;

media use is a collective activity, taking place in relation to family, friends and colleagues, and media and interpersonal communication are interconnected.

One of the clearest demonstrations of the social regulation of media use comes from the manner in which gender mediates the use of media. Several qualitative and ethnographic studies of television use which take their starting point in gender differences have brought this to the fore. Thus, according to Morley (1986, 1992), television viewing in general is strongly gendered, especially because of the relation with social power in the family. There are clear patterns of difference between men and women power over choice of viewing, in amount and style of viewing and in content preferences. Such research findings can be easily applied to access and use of other media also. It is interesting to note that a whole range of communication technologies, including computers, video recorders and telephones are gendered in use in more or less consistent ways (Silverstone, 1990). The key, if any, to these patterns lies in the great degree to which societies, social life and even the nitty-gritty of everyday life are still differentiated by gender and by related and deeply rooted assumptions.

The audience situated in a particular social context, therefore, exercise a great amount of influence in receiving and assimilating the media messages they receive, rather than being mere passive and inert recipients. Research has shown that people tend to expose themselves selectively to mass communication material that is in accord with their existing attitudes or interests and avoid exposure to communications that express contrary attitudes or are outside their fields of interest. The differences in cognitive factors such as interests, beliefs, needs and values, lead individuals to also perceive, that is attribute, meaning to virtually any media message differently. Consequently, the audience also selectively retain a media message according to their own existing views. These selective patterns of

attention, perception and recall also decide how the audience will act upon any given media content.

The understanding of the various theoretical perspectives of communication and society serves as a backdrop to the utilization of various media of communication in solving various societal problems viz., educational backwardness. Moreover, an insight into major components of communication - the sender, the message and the audience as well as diverse forms of media in contemporary societies - television, radio, newspapers, films, music, cable and satellite technologies, not to mention the still relevant traditional media, helps in evolving more flexible and innovative communication policies. An informed analysis of the mediation between gender and communication, the globalization of communication, the research on audiences and media effects would help in giving further depth to communication initiatives.

The next chapter focuses on the theoretical understanding of the field of education. The various perspectives from which the discipline of education and its interaction with society is analyzed are probed with the primary focus being on the interface between education and gender.

Chapter Two

EDUCATION – THE CHANGING DYNAMICS

This chapter begins by outlining the changing perceptions about education in the post-second world war period as a contextual background to the emergence of a body of work on education and gender. The latter is discussed in detail. The feminist perspectives on education sum up the discussion.

Education has been seen, since the Enlightenment, as necessary to human progress, not only technically and economically but also in terms of emancipation. This belief was strongly reinforced in the advanced industrial societies in the post-second world war period when education took a central position in the functioning of these societies as it was seen as a key investment in the promotion of economic growth as well as a means of promoting social justice. The primacy assigned to education stemmed from two widely held assumptions about the nature of education in these societies. Firstly, economic efficiency in advanced industrial societies depends on getting the most talented people into the most important and technically demanding jobs, regardless of their social circumstances. Secondly, educational opportunities needed to be extended, given that the vast majority of jobs were predicted to become increasingly skilled, requiring extensive periods of formal education. During this period, education was also seen as contributing to the foundations of democracy. The link between education and democracy has long been established in Western thought and was given particular impetus in the twentieth century by the work of John Dewey in the United States and in Britain by R.H. Tawney, as well as during the 1950s and 1960s through the writings of Anthony Crosland , A.H. Halsey, and others.

Changing Perceptions about Education:

The ideological buttress to this line of thinking was provided by the structural - functional school of thought.They viewed the society as an interconnected system of structures, each performing a fixed set of functions to maintain societal consensus and equilibrium. Thus, the family helped in solving the problem of providing new members; economic institutions looked after the basic needs of food and shelter of the population while political institutions coordinated the activities of the different sectors of society. Education was seen as performing the vital task of selecting and promoting the pool of talent required to run the engines of industrial growth. Besides, education as an institution also assisted in the very vital function of socialization.

Socialization, according to the functionalists, is the key to role performance by individuals and societal stability. For the institutions to perform their roles effectively and for society to survive, people have to perform the tasks assigned to them diligently and this requires a basic acceptance of certain core values and norms by all. The process of socialization helps the people to internalize such values and norms. They therefore fulfill the 'expectations' associated with their roles and as a consequence social institutions function effectively. Socialization into culture thereby ensures order in society (Blackledge and Hunt, 1980).

Education is seen as a key element in this socialization process. Talcott Parsons, one of the most influential functionalist authors, stressed this function of education. In his essay 'The School Class as a Social System' (1961), and the book 'The System of Modern Societies' (1971), he argued that education is a major socializing agency developing in individuals the 'commitments and capacities' necessary for role-performance. It must develop commitment to

society's broad values (especially achievement and equality of opportunity) and to the performance of a specific type of role within society. In addition, it must ensure that people are able to do what they are committed to. They must acquire, through education, a range of technical and social skills. In this way, education sustains the common culture of a society and provides the appropriate 'human material' for the social structure. Parsons also tries to show how the socialization and allocation functions are linked together in the school class. He argues that all pupils begin school as more or less equal and the American system of a common or comprehensive school is the embodiment of the fundamental value of equality of opportunity. Equality of opportunity, however, inevitably brings differences in attainment as children progress through school. These differences may arise from differences in ability, individual motivations or family orientations. This leads to their gradual differentiation on the axis of achievement which firms up into their differentiation into academic and vocational streams in secondary school.

This process of differentiation, however, is also a process of socialization. The value of achievement – which Parsons sees as being shared by family, school and community – is reinforced in pupils by the system of differentiation on the axis of achievement. Education, therefore, inculcates the view that inequalities of income and status, which are a consequence of differences in educational attainment, are acceptable. It, thus, helps to spread the ideology of 'equal opportunity' and 'achievement' which is one of the key elements of the 'common culture' which exists in modern society.

However, this policy consensus on education in contemporary society was considerably shaken by the civil rights movement of the 1960s in the United States, the wave of students' protests in the western world and the rise of the new Left. In this new climate of opinion, questions were increasingly asked about the

'actual role' played by education in society. Not only was there growing disillusionment over the apparent failure of education to fulfil its avowed aims in society but a number of thinkers now pointed out that the emphasis on equality and consensus negated the importance of competing interests, values and power relations. They pointed out that indeed, on many of the key issues confronting the education system, including funding, testing, curriculum, school management, educational selection and teacher training there is significant conflict rather than consensus.

The conflict theorists, questioning the value- free ideology of structural functionalism, argued that the educational system is likely to remain a site of struggle due to what Parsons himself defined as the dual problems of 'socialization' and `selection' (Parsons, 1959). Collins (1968) utilized the Weberian concept of `status groups' to put forth the conflict theory of educational stratification. Status groups are associational groups sharing common cultures (or "subcultures") whose members share a sense of status equality and identity due to shared styles of languages, values and opinions among other traits. Stressing that status groups should be regarded as ideal types, Weber outlined three main sources of status groups: (a) differences in life style based on economic situation (i.e., class) (b) differences in life situation based on power position; (c) differences in life situations deriving directly from cultural conditions such as religion and ethnicity. He visualized these status groups as being continuously engaged in a struggle for wealth, power or prestige in society with the status group membership considerably strengthening an individual's bargaining power.

Collins uses this framework to argue that education serves as a vital input of status culture in this struggle and the main purpose of schools is to teach particular status cultures, both in and outside the classroom. Thus, according to

him, the public school system in the U.S. was founded mainly under the impetus of WASP elites with the purpose of teaching respect for Protestant middle – class standards of cultural and religious propriety, especially in the face of Catholic, working-class immigration from Europe. Furthermore, education also serves as a mechanism of occupational placement and employers use education to select persons who are socialized into the dominant status culture.

This cultural role of schools has been highlighted in a number of studies. Bernstein (1961), focussed on the varying linguistic skills of children from varying backgrounds to analyse the nature of modern education and the inequality implicit in it. The speech of lower-class children, Bernstein argues, represents a restricted code – a type of speech which is tied to the cultural setting of a lower class, community or district. The language development of middle class children by contrast, according to Bernstein, involves the acquisition of an elaborate code – a type of speech which enables them to generalize and express abstract ideas. This places them in an advantageous position while dealing with the demands of a formal academic system of education rather than those confined to restricted codes. The working –class children then tend to grow into `under-achievers'.

Bourdieu's concept of 'cultural reproduction' (1986, 1988) is another theoretical position of analysing the role of schools in perpetuating the dominant culture. This concept directs our attention to the means whereby, via the hidden curriculum, schools influence the learning of values, attitudes and habits by children. Schools reinforce variations in cultural values and outlooks picked up early in life; when children leave school, these have the effect of limiting the opportunities of some, while facilitating those of others. Thus, schools, in conjunction with other social institutions, help perpetuate social and economic inequalities across generations.

The writers analyzing education from a marxist perspective, argue that education helps to `reproduce' or maintain the capitalist economic system. Bowles and Gintis in their book `Schooling in Capitalist America' (1976) argue that education cannot be understood independently of the society of which it is a part. This, the writers argue, is true of both the `capitalist' societies of the West and the then `state socialist' societies of Eastern Europe. But their main focus of analysis is the Western capitalist society. In particular, the United States educational system, they point out, helps to perpetuate or `reproduce' the capitalist system, education being one of the key institutions which helps in reinforcing the existing social and economic order. Modern education, they suggest, should be understood as a response to the economic needs of industrial capitalism.

Bowles and Gintis, therefore, argue, that "education and state policy are relatively powerless to rectify social problems within the framework of a capitalist economy" (1976). Hence, anyone who thinks that education can contribute to the solution of social problems has "an incomplete understanding of the economic system". Capitalism, according to them, is characterized by severely unequal ownership of productive and financial resources which results in relations of dominance and subordination in the economic sphere. However, the dominance of the capitalist class is under constant threat of a potential opposition by a united movement of the oppressed and alienated working people. As direct use of force may prove counter-productive, more subtle means are used to justify the social order - education is one of the means employed for this purpose. It helps in the reproduction of the prevailing class structure of society by fostering the belief that economic success depends essentially on the possession of ability and the appropriate skills or education. Besides, it prepares young people for their role in the economic sphere by socializing them into the qualifications, ideas and beliefs

which are vital for a capitalist economy. Thus values of perseverance, dependability, docility are encouraged while 'independence' and 'creativity' are penalized in school, keeping in mind the future roles of the students in the labour market. Bowles and Gintis, therefore, conclude that economic structure is a major determinant of educational structure although some other factors like political factors may at times impinge upon it.

Apart from the methodological criticism of their work, one of the major faults pointed out by the critics is a lack of focus on the content of education. Critics assert that the knowledge transmitted by education and the ways of thinking which underlie it, are very important contributions to people's views of themselves and their society and therefore knowledge transmitted by school also helps in legitimizing the existing social order.

In sharp contrast to the functional and the marxist focus on structure and organization of the educational system, the 'new sociology' of education, therefore chose to focus on the `content' of education. The theorists, like M.F.D Young, belonging to this school of thinking argue that the terrain of education has always been a focus of struggle between those with power to define what constitutes legitimate knowledge and those excluded from educational decision making. The exponents of this approach focus on the curriculum, on the 'educational knowledge' imparted by the school, and on the school's conception of `what it is to be educated'. As G.Whitty puts it, the new sociology of education is `concerned to question the prevailing taken-for-granted assumptions in the world of education' (1977:33).

The theorists of this tradition emphasize that knowledge is socially constructed. Young argues that one must recognize that such forms of knowledge are `no more than the socio-historical constructs of a particular time' (1971:23).

In addition, they argue that one must explore how the forms of knowledge that make up the school curriculum are related to the interests of particular classes and professional groups. The curriculum of schools in the western societies, they believe, is biased in favour of the middle-class child and this fact helps to explain the failure of working class children in school. Moreover, the concepts of `ability' and `intelligence' are also social products and educational failure can be seen to derive directly from them. The new sociologists of education also take the view that the thought systems embodied in the curricula of educational institutions should not be assumed to be superior to common sense knowledge with the latter being as valid as the former.

Critics of this perspective however argue that in their zeal to question the prevailing taken- for -granted assumptions, these sociologists end up rejecting these assumptions in totality although some of these practices may be well founded. The new sociology is also criticized for ignoring the fact that knowledge is built by human beings in an attempt to solve problems and is constantly modified in light of new experiences, and therefore, to narrowly define it as no more than a historical construct is to undermine its intrinsic worth and value.

The Feminist Perspective:

The most decisive shift in the perspective on education came to the fore with the re-emergence of feminism in the turbulent decades of the 1960s and 1970s. Feminists provided an entirely new orientation to the hitherto much debated issues of access, selection and equality of opportunity while also putting issues of knowledge, pedagogy and the politics of difference on the forefront of the educational discourse.

Feminism, began as the struggle to defend and expand the rights of women and in the years to come went on to become a school of thought espousing an

ideology of social transformation. It aimed at creating a world for women beyond simple social equality.

One of the earliest works to advance feminist ideas was Mary Wollstonecraft's book ' A Vindication of the Rights of Women', first published in 1792. She believed individuals had natural rights to self-determination and opposed arbitrary and hereditary rule. She optimistically assumed that human beings – including women- were capable of perfecting society themselves and that equality would be the basis for new relations among people (Rowbotham, 1992). The first groups actively organized to promote women's rights date from the period immediately after the French Revolution in 1789, inspired by the revolutionary ideals of freedom, equality and justice. The response from the male revolutionary leaders was less than sympathetic. Feminist groups and women's movements have been formed and reformed repeatedly in Western countries since then, almost always encountering hostility, and sometimes provoking violence, from the established authorities.

In the nineteenth century, feminism became more advanced in the United States than elsewhere and most leaders of women's movements in other countries looked to the struggles of American women as a model. In the period from 1830 to 1850, American feminists were closely involved with the anti-slavery movement although the lack of formal political rights hindered their participation. The struggle for full voting rights became in the years to come, especially in the early years of the twentieth century, the focus of the feminists. The British Society for Women's Suffrage, not only spearheaded the struggle in their own country but the suffragists, as they came to be known, exerted considerable influence on the development of similar movements in other western countries together with Australia and New Zealand. Besides, the demand for suffrage also involved a

more fundamental challenge to the denial of autonomy to women as citizens. Feminists argued that if liberalism meant every individual standing alone be endowed with equal rights that were universally comparable, women could not be included within the male franchise. Feminism came to be an all inclusive term by the 1920s and 1930s and was being used to describe not only political campaigns for the vote but also economic and social rights ranging from equal pay to birth control for women (Rowbotham, 1992).

For several decades after this period the feminist movement fell into decline partly due to the very achievement of the right to vote in most of the western countries and partly because the feminists tended to shift their focus to issues like combating fascism and other horrors of the world raging around them. Thus, as a distinct movement combating male – dominated perspectives on key issues of socio–economic–political importance feminism became less prominent. Yet, the achievement of equal political rights did little to extend equality to other spheres.

It is in this context that the resurgence of feminism, influenced by the civil rights movement in the U.S.A, and by the student activism of the period gains significance. Dillusionment with the politics of Civil Rights and the anti-war movement led American women, followed by those in Britain and Germany, to form their own consciousness – raising groups, unleashing what Lear (1968) called the 'second wave' of feminism, the first wave having ended in the 1920s. The main shift in focus in second wave feminist theory since 1920 has been the move away from minimizing differences between men and women to celebrating a woman-centered perspective. Second wave feminism is committed to radically extending egalitarianism based on a sophisticated understanding of the oppressiveness of imposed gender divisions (Humm, 1989).

The women's movement now addresses a much wider range of issues than their earlier counterparts. They have pressed for economic equality, the availability of abortion and alterations in laws concerning divorce, among other concerns. In addition to significant practical achievements, feminists today have made an intellectual impact far beyond any thing previously achieved. Throughout the social sciences, and in many other fields, feminist authors have forced a rethinking of pre-established notions and theories. Much of the research carried out in recent years into historical and cultural factors affecting the position of women and into how gender mediates almost every sphere of social activity has been prompted by the influence of modern feminism. Unique to feminist theory is its insistence on the inextricable link between theory and practice and between public and private. Theory and experience have a very special relationship within feminism encapsulated in its slogan 'the personal is political'. It analyses how sexual difference is constructed within an intellectual and social world and builds accounts of experience from these differences (Humm, 1989). Feminism's unconditional focus on analyzing gender as a mechanism that structures material and symbolic worlds and the women's experience of them is hard to find in other perspectives in the social sciences and the humanities. Feminists assert that although ethnicity, sexuality, class and a range of other factors interact with gender in various and contradictory ways, gender still remains an overriding factor influencing the course of a woman's life (Zoonen, 1994).

Education and Gender:

The field of education is no exception to the impact of feminist perspective. A theoretically viable approach to understanding the interaction between education and gender is to utilize the major sociological ways of

comprehending the structurally subordinate social position of women. Acker (1984) divides these into two categories of fundamental approaches (further sub-divided into functionalist, marxist-feminist and radical-feminist forms) and implementary approaches. Fundamental approaches seek to explain why subordination exists while implementary ones focus on processes and practices which perpetuate it.

Alongside is the perspective offered by the feminist theory to understanding the field of education. Acker grappling with the issue of defining feminist theory believes that the term feminist theory should be used to refer to perspectives that guide the search for answers to a central series of questions and dilemmas about sex and gender. Feminist theoretical frameworks address, above all, "the question of women's subordination to men: how it might be changed and (sometimes) what life would be like without it... feminist theories serve a dual purpose, as guides to understanding gender inequality and as guides to action." (1994:43-44).

Eisentein provides a short summary of the three main approaches within contemporary Western Feminism "recent analysts seem to agree on the distinction between radical feminism, which holds that gender oppression is the oldest and most profound form of exploitation, which predates and underlies all other forms including these of race and class: and socialist feminism, which agrees that class, race and gender oppression interact in a complex way, that class oppression stems from capitalism, and that capitalism must be eliminated for women to be liberated. Both of these, in turn, would be distinguished from a liberal or bourgeois feminist view, which would argue that women's liberation can be fully achieved without any major alternations to the economic and political structures of contemporary capitalist democracies." (1984:xix-xx). Education has been analysed from these

varying stand points as part of the feminist attempts to probe the mediation of the factor of gender in this crucial field of human life.

Within the ambit of the fundamental approach, the functionalist and the Marxist- feminist theorists focus on the social structure to explain the continuing differences between sexes in society. They begin by arguing that when the sexes occupy characteristically different roles within societies, they do so as a consequence of social interpretations of biological differences, not because of the biological differences themselves. The functionalists then proceed to explain this sexual division of labour as an outcome of the functional necessity of optimal production and distribution of societal resource. The sexual division of labour within the family is viewed as efficiently matching the capacities of each sex with the tasks required. In turn, a strong family socializes its children more adequately and contributes to social solidarity.

Education is seem as contributing to a clear- cut division of labour between husbands and wives through curricular specialization of the sexes in school. Parsons (1954; 1961), a major functionalist theorist, argued that sound education for future mothers would result in better care and education for their children and better companionship for their husbands. 'Woman power' versions of human capital theory have usually encouraged education for women stressing that a society can ill afford to neglect the education of half its population if it is to 'keep pace' with its competitors. But functionalist and human capital approaches have lost much of their appeal in recent years. Expanding schooling does not necessarily increase opportunities for women nor does it necessarily reduce occupational sex segregation. Feminists also object to the rather restricted lifestyle assigned to women in the functionalist perception of the family.

Somewhat similar to this is the stance taken by the Liberal feminists. They tend to believe that sex differences are really gender differences. Mary Wollstonecraft's 'A Vindication of the Rights of Women' (1989) is the first full statement of Liberal feminism. She argues that women are rational agents whose 'inferiority' is due primarily to inferior education (Humm, 1989). Contemporary Liberal feminism shares Wollstonecraft's optimism that the roots of women's oppression lie simply in our lack of equal civil rights and educational opportunities. Liberal feminism argues for individual fulfillment far removed from the strictures of highly defined sex roles. It limits itself to reformism, seeking to improve the status of women within the system but not fundamentally contesting either the system's operation or its legitimacy. Elshtain claims that liberal feminism reduces human motivation to a utilitarian calculus of self interest (1982).

Liberal feminism views education as an important area of securing equal opportunities for the sexes. Their intent is to remove barriers that prevent girls from reaching their full potential, whether such barriers are located in the school, the individual psyche or discriminatory labour practices. 'Equal opportunities' is the leitmotif of the liberal-feminist perspective. 'Equal means the same' claims Eileen Byrne (1978:19) arguing that separate educational provisions for girls have usually meant inferior facilities and restricted features. Yet, the same treatment may produce unequal outcomes, if for example, prior socialization ensures that sexes have differential initial competence or interest in a given subject; or that the labour market may treat equally qualified boys and girls differently. This contradiction is a major flaw in the liberal feminist conceptualization of education.

A second major concern of liberal feminists in education is to focus on socialization, sex roles and sex stereotyping. Girls (and boys) are assumed to be socialized (by the family, the school, the media) into traditional attitudes and orientations that restrict their future options to sex-stereotyped occupations and family roles. Simultaneously, socialization encourages patterns of interpersonal relationships between the sexes that disadvantage females, who are placed in a position of dependency and deference. There is a third theme within liberal feminism, focussing on notions of discrimination, rights, justice and fairness. The theorists who grapple with these themes come close to acknowledging the impact of `structures'. As Arnot (1981) points out, Byrne (1978) recognized the impact of policies as well as attitudes in creating a structure of disadvantage for girls, especially for those from rural or working class origins.

Strategies for educational change, emanating from liberal feminism follow from the conceptual base. In general, there is an attempt to alter socialization practices, change attitudes, use legal processes. To change the attitudes of teachers and children, they suggest reviewing aspects of school organization such as the timetable, analyzing curriculum materials for stereotyping and organizing training in gender sensitization for the teachers.

The liberal-feminist stance on education has attracted sharp criticism from other feminists. The critics generally point to the limitations of the conceptual framework, especially ideas about equality of opportunity and the reliance on socialization and sex-role models. It is pointed out that sex equality is mistakenly approached as if solutions might be wholly educational (Arnot 1981) and the market focus and capitalism are not subject to any scrutiny. Liberal feminism is accused, above all, of ignoring the impact of patriarchy, power and the systematic

subordination of women by men ('O' Brien, 1983) as well as the effects of racism and class hegemony (Arnot 1981, 1982).

Like the functionalists, marxist theoreticians have typically regarded the family as a unit linked to the labour market by the husband's relationship to production. Many writers now see this model with its invisible women as deeply flawed (Garnsey, 1978). Some theorists have analysed the ways in which women's subordinate position in general and their domestic role in particular may benefit capitalism (Mitchell, 1971, Sharpe, 1976). Women are seen within the family as reproducing the labour force by giving birth to and rearing children, together with socializing them into orientations to authority and work appropriate for future workers (Chodorow, 1979).

With the increasing participation of women in the labour market, the marxists have also brought to the fore the fact that their actual participation remains largely confined to the secondary labour market where opportunities for career advancement are limited and pay and autonomy are also low. This not only adversely affects their bargaining power in the field of work but also ensures their continued economic dependence on men (Barron and Norris, 1976; Hartman 1979).

Education, as seen by this perspective, plays a prominent role in the reproduction of class relations under western capitalism. In case of women, it translates into unequal outcomes and differential experience through the process of schooling that seems consistent with the sexual division in the labour market and the expectation that women will have prime responsibility within the family. Thus, girls in Britain are less likely than boys to go into advanced levels of education and less likely to study science and technology. Vocational courses in colleges and government training schemes tend to be highly sex segregated

though not by any legal requirement. Besides, there are other subtle and hidden ways in which schools reinforce the sexual division of labour prevalent in the wider world outside. Schools are characterized by what MacDonald (1980) calls 'Gender codes' which are organized around the assumption that the sexes have different needs and interests.

Nonetheless, the marxist approach falters in explaining as to what extent the education system is necessary as it is, in order to serve the requirements of capitalism, nor does it make clear as to what sort of reform in education or revolution in economy would change women's participation in either. Moreover, it is a sad reality that economic and educational reforms do not necessary alter ideologies about domestic life and the subordination of women.

The radical feminist approach seeks to locate the sex -based differentiation in society in the differing life experiences of men and women. In doing so, they go beyond the maxists and argue that it is not capitalism but patriarchy which is a more ancient form of oppression with its own logic and its own beneficiaries and victims. They hold patriarchy to be analytically independent of capitalist or other modes of production. Although there are several meanings attached to the word patriarchy but broadly it can be used to describe a system whereby men are dominant and women are subordinate. It is a system of social relations in which the class 'men' have power over the class 'women' because women are sexually devalued (Humm, 1989). Prevalence of patriarchy in most corners of the world with a few exceptions, implies that women are subordinate under all kinds of economic systems. Their links with the class system may vary but women share certain sorts of oppression simply because they are women. The common experience of suppression and discrimination which women face in every strata in one form or the other cuts across the class divide.

In sharp contrast to the liberals, the radical feminists stress the validity of sex differences-accepting and enjoying women's capacity for nurture and cooperation. Radical feminism focuses on the roots of male domination and claims that all forms of oppression are extensions of male supremacy. The other central thesis of radical feminism is the belief that the personal is political and that woman-centredness can be the basis of a future society. The focus of their analysis is on the psychic, sexual and ideological structure which differentiate the sexes in relation to the lived inequalities of gender.

The radical feminist perspective utilizes a literature similar to the marxist-feminists to explore ways in which schools and colleges shape female identity and encourage subordinate roles for women. They challenge the basic structure and practice of education by linking the sex inequalities of education directly to the general subordination of women (Humm, 1989). But the radical – feminists also add two additional elements which are a by-product of the experience of schooling of girls. Firstly, lowered self- esteem and acceptance of inferiority, as derived from this experience and secondly, men's control over and definition of knowledge itself. In-depth studies of class rooms and the functioning of schools reveal that teachers and the day- to- day life of the school reinforce, maybe unconsciously, the gender bias of the wider society. Girls, from an early impressionable age, believe and internalize these messages about their own inferiority. Thus, the education system itself disadvantages girls through sex-role stereotyping and the use of a hidden curriculum which privileges boys' interests.

Perhaps, this perspective on education is best summed up by Spender who suggests that it is a mark of our sexist education system that we could believe that sexism in education is something new (1982). Another educational area which the radical feminists have stressed is the curriculum, or more broadly the creation and

transmission of knowledge in educational institutions, and through educational material which carries a lot of sexist assumptions. The radical feminists therefore want to see a fundamental change in social structure, one that will eliminate male dominance and patriarchal structures.

'The goal of a feminist education', writes O' Brien (1983: 13), is not equality in knowledge, power and wealth, but the abolition of gender as an oppressive cultural reality. With this aim in mind, they do not attempt to relate school life to the economy or to the family but instead set out to explore the male monopolization of culture and knowledge which denies girls and women full access to knowledge resources, self-esteem and freedom from discrimination. Thus, Spender (1980,81,82) argues that what we 'know' is dangerously deficient, for it is the male perspective which is presented in the guise of human knowledge. Womens' contributions and understandings have been historically ignored or disparaged, notwithstanding female resistance. Spender's intent is to uncover the logic of male dominance and the contribution schools make towards it.

The other main concern of this perspective is exploring the sexual politics of daily life in educational institutions. Here too, Spender has made a significant contribution by delineating two aspects of the problem: teacher attention unequally divided between the sexes to the advantage of boys (Spender, 1982) and the potential, although not unmixed benefits of single sex schools for girls (Spender and Sarah 1980; Spender 1982). These and other such studies bring to light the dominance of males over females in mixed sex settings, as also the harassment faced by girls in such schools. Exposing these practices through publications is clearly one radical-feminist strategy. This not only initiates debate on the hitherto neglected topic of sexuality and sexual harassment but serves as

the basis for remedial action. They also stress revisions of curricula and pedagogy and participatory teaching methods among other initiatives.

Radical feminism attracts considerable criticism. Middleton (1984) argues that radical feminism is the least articulated of the three perspectives within the feminist tradition with regard to education and that it is descriptive rather than explanatory. Murphy and Livingstone (1985) charge radical feminists of making broad generalizations about men and women thereby neglecting other divisions of class, race, nationality and age.

They are also criticized for indulging in reductionism, portraying women as inevitable victims of evil men. Their endeavour is to make visible the invisible by bringing into focus the gender structures of society. This perspective is also faulted for presenting a somewhat static picture of the world because it does not provide causal explanation.

Some authors working within the feminist tradition undertake a socialist analysis of women's position in the world. Socialist Feminism begins by arguing that women are second-class citizens in patriarchal capitalism which depends for its survival on the exploitation of working people, and on the special exploitation of women. Socialist feminism argues that there is a need to transform not only the ownership of the means of production but also social experience because the roots of women's oppression lie in the total economic system of capitalism. It goes beyond the conventional definition of 'economy' to consider activity that does not involve the exchange of money, for example by including the provocative and sexual work done by women in the home. In analyzing all forms of productive activity, socialist feminism joins the analytic tool of gender to that of class. However, Social Feminism is in turn attacked by radicals for failing to do justice to the myriad ways in which men dominate over women. They are in particular

criticized for failing to understand the role played by the institution of heterosexuality in the oppression of women.

The socialist feminists, working in the field of education have focused on the role played by education in the reproduction of gender divisions within capitalism. They have made extensive use of the neo-marxist perspective of education, particularly the work of reproduction theorists in their analysis of the role of schools in reproducing a sexual as well as a social division of labour in the family and the workplace. Thus, Gaskell (1986) examines the notion of skill in the Canadian school system and reaches the conclusion that the curriculum is so differentiated that girls are trained in office skills such as work processing but not in allied areas such as computer science or management that might allow entry into alternative careers. This partnership between education and economy, therefore, ensures that a large number of girls and women remain in restricted, low paid sectors of the economy.

Other socialist-feminist analysts have explored the links between school and motherhood. Miriam David (1984), has focussed on multiple ways in which British primary schools operate with the expectation of mothers' participation in school activities. Thus, schools make use of, and simultaneously perpetuate, a sexual division of labour in the home. However, the socialist-feminist work in education, is largely lacking in empirical studies of school processes, choosing instead to concentrate on theoretical arguments, historical research or policy analysis. The absence of this vital input is reflected in the weakness of the socialist-feminist writing in their strategies for educational action. They only go to the extent of pointing out the need for radical pedagogy but no concrete plan of action like strategies of resistance or development of an alternative curriculum is forth coming.

The socialist-feminists are criticized for the social determinism implied in reproduction accounts. Culley and Demaine (1983) argue that if each and every attempt by the state to improve matters is to be dismissed as 'really' for control purposes and ultimately reproduction, constructive political action becomes impossible. Connell (1985) recommends moving towards a theory of practice that would avoid voluntarism and pluralism (as in liberal feminism) on the one hand and over determinism by `categories' on the other.

The implementary approaches, essentially argue that given the prevalence of capitalism and patriarchy and given the fact that it is futile to wait or work for their demise before addressing the question of discrimination, it is much more productive to find solutions now and within the existing societal framework. As Acker puts it, "their motto is opportunities must be increased, discrimination fought, stereotyping abandoned" (1984:72). Thus, the implementary approaches, tend to have a lot in common with the liberal version of feminism.

The theorists working within this tradition focus on the concept of `socialization' through which children are prepared for specific `roles' and the girls grow up to face discrimination in later life. Education is seen as playing a significant role in this entire process. The parents and the school (with the aid of the media) socialize girls towards traditionally feminine personality characteristics such as compliance and dependency, traits which significantly restrict their schooling experience and go on to prevent their public career success in later life. Thus, Lee (1973) argues that the school ethos favours girls, especially in early years, for they have already been socialized into habits compatible with the needs of teachers for order and conformity. In the long run, however, he believes girls lose by this system, because when the time comes for achievement via autonomy and independence, they falter. Others, especially the feminist writers, who have

probed the question of school socialization in the 1970s and 1980s tend to disagree with this observation. They contend that, far from favouring girls/women, schools overtly or covertly discriminate against them, often from early years.

Despite these discrepancies, the implementary studies have the advantage of bringing forth some of the gaps left by fundamental approaches, especially the explanation of how the survival of capitalism or patriarchy or society itself is accomplished by everyday events.

As far as the feminist analysis of education is concerned, it is evident that the issue of universality and diversity is one of the paradoxes of feminism. All women are same at one level as distinct from all men but the fact remains that women's gender identity is criss-crossed by several others viz., ethnicity, religion, class, age to name a few. This overlapping of several identities acts as a handicap for girls and women and hampers their access to education. For example, despite a steady expansion of schooling in most of the Third World nations of Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East, it is well established that girls do not attend schools at rates equivalent to those of boys. Even in countries where public policy and government programmes reiterate the importance and the urgent need of educating the girls, the situation on the ground remains grim.

Kelly (1984) argues that although ethnicity, social class background, religion, culture and the state of the nation's economic development are all contributory factors in determining whether girls will attend school or not but by far the greatest determinant is access to schooling. The girls, in these societies, each with its own unique socio-economic-cultural background but with a strong undercurrent of sex-differentiation and gender bias require social access to schooling to become educated. Parental motivation, sensitivity to community

demands for relating the organization, timing, staffing and nature of instruction to the pace of girls' lives, building linkages between education of girls and gainful employment are but a few of the variables which have to be worked upon while evolving strategies for educating girls. Isabelle Deble (1980) succinctly pointed out that one reason why women do not receive as much education as men is because governments do not perceive gender inequality as a problem, much less as a problem which they can solve.

In India, it took the government four decades after independence to acknowledge that gender disparity in educational access and achievement exists and to unequivocally assign education the task of acting as a powerful interventionist tool in promoting womens' empowerment. The next chapter focuses on how the Indian state has responded to the challenge of girls' education, both at the level of policy and at the level of implementation. The fact that gender continues to act as a formidable barrier to access to education for girls in India, even today, is probed in detail.

Chapter Three

EDUCATION OF GIRLS IN INDIA

This chapter begins with focussing on the policy framework of girls' education in India and its changing orientations. The programmes and strategies used to implement it are also focussed upon. Further the state of girls' education in India is assessed in terms of the success of the strategies adopted for this purpose. The various educational indicators viz., the enrolment and dropout rates are looked at to assess the progress of girls' education in India. It is argued that the education of girls, and its widespread acceptability or otherwise, is embedded within the overall status and position of women in society. Thus, the still unsatisfactory socio-economic educational profile of Indian women is both a cause and an effect of low levels of girls' education. The formidable barrier of gender, which manifests itself in a number of socio-cultural practices and a traditional mindset, continues to block access to education for a large number of Indian girls. Its various manifestations and their widespread impact on the overall life of girls and particularly their schooling is probed. The fact that even economic prosperity is not able to override attitudinal barriers is brought forth in the educational profile of girls in Haryana, one of the states with a high GDP. It is another matter that it languishes nearly at the bottom in terms of the socio-economic and educational status of its women largely due to a highly sex differentiated society. The state of girls' education at the primary level in Haryana amidst this contradictory situation is highlighted to emphasize the role played by gender bias in preventing the educational empowerment of girls and women. The chapter concludes with the broad outlines of a strategy to change the

scenario with a key role assigned to media advocacy of girls' education in this endeavour.

India placed the greatest hope on education as a long term strategy for guaranteeing equal opportunities to women. The notion of equality between women and men with liberation from traditional constraints was embedded in the Indian Constitution itself. The Preamble to the Constitution of India resolved to secure for all its citizens justice-social, economic and political; liberty of thought, expression, faith and worship; equality of status and of opportunity to promote fraternity among all, assuring dignity of the individual and the unity of the nation. The Constitution besides guaranteeing equality before the law and equal protection of the laws under Article 14, also guarantees equality of opportunity for all matters pertaining to employment to any office under the State (Article 16.1), and forbids discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, descent, place of birth, residence or any one of them (Article 15). Simultaneously, the Constitution also empowers the state to make affirmative discrimination in favour of women (Article 15.3).

These provisions read in conjunction with the fundamental right to life and personal liberty guaranteed under Article 21 and the Directive Principle of State Policy laid down in Article 45 which makes it the duty of the state to endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years alongwith other constitutional provisions aimed at ensuring a dignified quality of life to all citizens free of hunger, prejudice and ignorance form the bulwark of the Indian state's vision of the right to education and educational equality for its citizens.

Accordingly, after the attainment of independence in 1947, women's education received a new impetus. Even though this appeared to be a continuity with the era of the social reform movement in respect of the concern for promotion of women's education, it also brought with it a new conception of the goals of women's education, as is evident from the philosophy of the Constitution. Education was no longer seen exclusively as an instrument for inculcating values, appropriate to women's role in society but was now perceived as a means of providing equality of opportunity to women.

As the country's socio-economic progress unfolded over the years, the education of women was gradually incorporated as a vital input of the developmental strategy. It was recognised that education is a necessary pre-condition for the development of human resources and for equality, and that no developmental initiative can succeed unless the education of women is given special attention. The most definite shift in the policy perspective was enunciated in the National Policy of Education (NPE) 1986, wherein education was conceptualised as an effective tool of women's equality and empowerment.

The Policy Framework

To achieve the aim of women's education at the earliest, a number of commissions and committees were appointed to look into the various aspects of women's education and to make recommendations for its improvement and expansion. The first committee appointed by the Government of India in 1958 was the National Committee on Women's Education. It criticised the Sargent Report of 1944 for making a suggestion that women's education should not be treated as a special problem. Its main conclusion was that the education of girls and women had been sadly neglected in the past and, consequently, there was a wide disparity

as between the education of men and women and boys and girls at all levels and stages. It, therefore, forcefully asserted and recommended that "the education of women should be regarded as a major and special problem and that a bold and determined effort be made to face up to its difficulties and magnitude and to close the existing gap between the education of men and women in as short a time as possible" (Government of India, 1959: 38).

The Hansa Mehta Committee (1962-64) appointed by the National Council of Women's Education (NCWE) to find a solution to the ongoing debate about a differentiated curricula for boys and girls set at rest the controversy by suggesting that co-education along with a common curricula for boys and girls at the elementary state is vital to give a boost to girls' education. To further chart out specific strategies for popularising girls education the NCWE appointed the Bhaktavatsalam Committee in 1963, to investigate the causes for lack of public support for girls' education particularly in rural areas and to suggest suitable measures to secure public cooperation for it. The committee reiterated the need for special programmes as recommended by the National Committee on Women's Education to give attention to the education of girls at all stages and in all sectors as part of the overall educational strategy.

This need to make education of women a major programme of educational development was again emphasised by the first Indian Education Commission (1964-66) set up under the chairmanship of D.S.Kothari. The National Policy on Education 1968, formulated on the basis of the commission's recommendations reiterated the need to focus on education of women. The policy stated that the education of girls should receive emphasis, not only on grounds of social justice, but also because it accelerates social transformation.

The five year plans, which were the chief instrument of policy implementation, attempted to operationalise the measures suggested by these various committees and commissions. The overall strategy of the first five 5- Year Plans was to follow a distinctly welfare approach to women's development, where women's education was seen in relation to their family roles leading to the neglect of the critical, albeit unacknowledged, economic role of women. There was also a lack of depth in the programmes adopted to tackle the rather complex issue of girls' education.

This neglect of the girls was again reflected in the National Policy Resolution on Child (1974). The policy asserting that the nation's children are a supremely important asset recognised the need to focus on their health, nutrition and education. It again reiterated the constitutional objective of providing free and compulsory education for all children upto the age of 14 years. In the wake of this policy resolution, the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) and several other programmes for children were started in 1975. But the greatest drawback of the policy was that it visualised the child as a gender neutral category and ignored the need for segregated targets and strategies for reaching out education and health services to girls in a social setting where gender bias and consequent discrimination is a fact of life.

The consequences of this lack of concerted attention being paid to girls' education and indeed their overall development were forcefully brought forth in the Report of the 'Committee on Status of Women in India' titled `Towards Equality' in 1975. The committee appointed in the wake of the International Women's Year, noted with concern poor female literacy, the declining sex ratio and declining work participation rates along with a denial of basic needs of health,

nutrition , education and employment of women. This placed half the population in a situation of total powerlessness with no share in decision making.

The lagging behind of girls in the field of education attracted special attention. The educational profile in 1975 indicated that formal schooling had failed to achieve even modified goals for women and that it had not alleviated inequalities. Though girls' enrolment had grown rapidly only two out of three primary-school age girls were enrolled. Among the Scheduled castes and Tribes, enrolment of girls was still lower at 40 per cent. Worse, the drop out rate was much higher for girls; only 30 per cent of girls enrolled were able to complete primary school, most of the wastages arising in class one.

This finding was later reconfirmed by the Education Ministry's Working Group on Universalisation of Elementary Education which reported in 1979 that 'the high proportion of drop outs has remained unchanged during the post-Independence period and the problem has become quite intractable' (Quoted in Karlekar, 1983:194). The committee went on to assert that "in our opinion, any plan for educational development of women which does not take these imbalances into account will contribute to the increase in inequalities between different sections of the population" (Government of India, 1975:369). It, therefore, suggested that a special focus on girls' education has to be an integral part of the urgent need to achieve the hitherto elusive target of universalisation of elementary education. It recommended sustained mobilisation of public opinion and community support for creating a favourable climate for girls' education and creating adequate infrastructure like primary schools within walking distance, large scale recruitment of female teachers and giving special incentives to girls in areas of low female enrolment. (Nayar, 1990).

The report 'Towards Equality' was a benchmark in more ways than one. Firstly, it heightened awareness about the adverse socio-economic-educational and health conditions of a majority of Indian women nearly three decades after independence. This revelation coming in the International Women's year (1975) and the commencement of the UN Women's Development Decade (1975-85), when the concerns of women were coming into sharp focus both at the national and international fora, led to a major revamping of national policy towards women and children and also brought about a shift in focus. This was because, now onwards, due to this report, it was increasingly recognised and emphasised that women did not constitute a homogeneous category whose problems could be resolved in a simplistic manner. Women face discrimination not only due to their gender but also bear the brunt of poverty, rural-urban divide, caste, among other hardships which further compounds their oppression.

It was also realised that for raising the status of women, it was necessary to intervene early enough for obtaining the necessary results. Education of girls, therefore, needed strong intervention. Girls had till now been neglected in the overall development strategy with the focus being either on women or the child. But given the fact that in India, a child is not a gender neutral category and gross discrimination and neglect is faced by female children, in fact, by all females from before birth and after birth to death, the plight of the girl child has to be addressed separately. In the years to come, the girl child received heightened attention as 'The Lesser Child'. The declaration of 1990 as the SAARC year of the Girl Child and 1991-2000 as the SAARC Decade of the Girl Child succeeded in further highlighting the poor educational, health and nutritional status of girls in the South-Asian region.

Meanwhile the impact of the UN Development Decade was felt in terms of a distinct shift in developmental planning with the ideology towards women shifting from welfare to development to empowerment and a large number of educational, training, poverty removal and employment programmes being directed at them. Their scope and reach continued to increase in the plans to come.

The educational philosophy and planning also underwent a significant change in the decade of the 1980s. The realisation that the top down system of educational planning was not yielding satisfactory results (and girls continued to be outside the system) led to a shift towards evolving decentralized, disaggregative, participatory and grassroots oriented educational strategies. But by far the most important shift was in terms of conceptualisation. The problem of UEE was now defined as the challenge of bringing the girl child within the ambit of the educational system, a task which had been carried out only in fits and starts so far. More significantly it was acknowledged that the challenge did not end at enrolment but education had to serve as tool of fighting gender-discrimination, a major cause of educational and overall deprivation of the girl child.

The National Policy on Education, 1986, therefore declared that; "Education will be used as an agent of basic change in the status of women. In order to neutralise 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 foster the development of new values through redesigned curricula, textbook, the training and orientation of teachers, decision-makers and administrators and the active involvement of educational institutions." (Government of India, 1986: 6)

The Ramamurthy Committee appointed to review NPE, 1986 cautioned that the policy cannot succeed unless the education of women is addressed in the

larger context of the socio-cultural reality in which women live. It went on to point out that, "the prevailing cultural norms of gender behaviour and the perceived domestic and reproductive roles of women tend to adversely affect the education of girls... these are reflections of the patriarchal values and attitudes which are dominant in society." (1990: 29)

Gender-sensitization, therefore emerged as a dominant theme of the Programme of Action (POA) formulated to operationalise the NPE, 1986. The POA, 1992 aimed at developing gender sensitive curriculum and organising gender-sensitization programmes for teachers, educators and administrators as part of the overall strategy to use education as a means of women's empowerment.

The POA set out to achieve the target of universal access, enrolment and retention through district planning keeping in mind the specific needs and possibilities of the area. Effective UEE was sought to be achieved as a part of major reconstruction of primary education as a whole in the district through reduction of existing disparities in educational access, a substantial improvement in the quality of schooling facilities and building up local community participation in educational planning and implementation. POA also attempted to build linkages between programmes of pre-school and primary education along with evolving a comprehensive system of incentives and support services for girls and children of the economically disadvantaged sections of society to facilitate their participation in schooling.

Programmes of Primary Education

With the changing policy perspective in the past decade or so, a few specific efforts have been initiated towards quantitative and qualitative development of primary education. These include Minimum Levels of Learning

(MLL), Operation Blackboard and District Primary Education Programme (DPEP).

The 'operation blackboard' programme targeted at improving the infrastructural facilities and quality of primary education was started in 1987-88. It aims at building a school building with two reasonably all-weather rooms and separate toilet facilities for boys and girls and also ensuring appointment of at least two teachers in every school, as far as possible one of them being a woman. Besides it includes provision for essential teaching/learning materials including blackboards, and other class room material and equipment. Beginning with a corpus of Rs.110 crores in 1987-88, its allocation increased to Rs.150 crores in 1993-94 (Tilak 1995: 394).

Another important strategy adopted for the improvement of quality in primary education relates to minimum levels of learning. It involves laying down norms regarding learning outcomes expected from primary education at a realistic, relevant and functional level and evolving a workable strategy so as to ensure that all children completing primary education achieve at least the minimum levels. The programme involves assessing the existing level of learning achievement and then laying down minimum levels of learning for each given area to be achieved in a given time frame, through reoriented teaching practices and text books. The NPE, 1986 incorporated achievement of essential levels of learning as one of the thrust areas.

DPEP evolved as part of the new emphasis on micro grassroots level planning in the field of education. The programme attempts to 'universalize' primary education by revitalizing the existing system through an 'area-specific approach' with the district as the unit of planning and the active participation of the local community as one of its key strategies. It focusses on reducing

differences in enrolment, dropout and learning achievement between gender and social groups to the minimum possible. Given the magnitude of the task involved, the programme began by concentrating on backward districts with female literacy below the national average as well districts where Total Literacy Campaigns (TLCs) had generated a demand for elementary education. Since its initiation in 1994, when DPEP covered 42 districts in 7 states, its reach had spread to 149 districts in 14 States by 1998. However, Sen perceives these schemes to an over-simple response to a particular, often narrow aspect of the larger more endemic problem of educational backwardness and suggests that instead priority should be accorded to ensuring a free functioning, well-staffed and well-attended regular primary school in every village of the country (Sen, 1995).

Primary Education - the progress so far

India has succeeded, in the past fifty years, in building one of the largest primary education systems in the world. A broad and indicative picture of this system can be arrived at with the help of the official statistics available. According to the Sixth All Indian Education Survey (NCERT), 1995, there were 5,11,849 primary schools in the country in 1993 which is a phenomenal increase of 180 per cent in the number of primary schools available in the country between 1950-51 and 1993-94. Yet it leaves around 15 per cent of the rural population unserved by a primary school or section.

Nearly 110 million children were enrolled in primary schools in 1996-97 as compared to 19.2 million in 1950-51. Enrolment of girls at the primary stage has grown from 5.4 million in 1950-51 to 47.4 million in 1995-96 and the rate of growth of enrolment of girls has been higher than that of boys, but gender

disparities still persist, as girls accounted for only 43.2 per cent of enrolment at the primary stage in 1995-96 and 39 per cent at the upper primary stage.

Table 1: Enrolment at Elementary stage (In millions)

Stage	1950-51			1995-96		
	Total	**Boys**	**Girl**	**Total**	**Boys**	**Girl**
Primary	19.2	13.8	5.4	110.4	62.5	47.9
Upper-Primary	3.1	2.6	0.5	41.0	24.7	16.3

Source: (Selected Educational Statistics. GOI, MHRD, Department of Education, 1997: xxix)

The increase in enrolment compares favourably with the gross enrolment ratio (GER) in the 6-11 age group. It has increased from 24.9 per cent in 1950-51 to 93.3 per cent in 1995-96 for girls and from 60.8 per cent to 114.5 per cent for boys during the same period.

Table 2: Gross Enrolment Ratio at Primary Stage

	1950-51	**1995-96**
Total	42.6	104.3
Boys	60.8	114.5
Girls	24.9	93.3

Source: (Selected Educational Statistics. GOI, MHRD, Department of Education, 1997: xxxi)

However, there are marked inter-state variations in the enrolment of girls at the primary stage. It was 54.4 per cent in Bihar (95.9 for boys), 72.8 per cent in Uttar Pradesh (103.4 for boys), 125.3 per cent in Assam (134.4 for boys), and 100.8 per cent in Kerala (103.8 for boys) in 1993. But the overall trends showing parental willingness to enrol their boys in larger numbers in school as compared to

girls[1] amply reveal the gender disparity which still persists in enrolling children in school. There is also a marked rural-urban divide in girls' enrolment in schools. Thus, in 1993, girls accounted for 47 per cent of children enrolled in primary schools in urban areas but their share dipped to 42 per cent in rural areas. Their participation in schooling declined further to 36 per cent at the upper primary stage in rural areas while it was 45 per cent in urban areas (Nayar, 1999).

Even though enrolment has increased substantially, there still exists a persistent problem of dropouts. According to official statistics, the rate of dropout defined as percentage of the number of children to total enrolment who dropout of the school educational system, has been steadily decreasing. But the fact remains that nearly half the children who enrol in class-I drop out before completing class-V. The overall drop-out rate has decreased from 58.7 per cent in 1980-81 to 36.3 in 1993-94. In case of girls it has gone down from 62.50 to 37.79 at the primary stage during the same period while the corresponding rates for boys at this level have moved down from 56.20 to 35.18. At the middle stage, the dropout rate for girls has come down from 79.40 to 56.53 and for boys from 68.00 to 50.02 during the same period. Thus the problem of enrolment and retention of girls in schools remains despite some progress (Nayar, 1999).

---

[1] Gross Enrolment Ratio is the percentage of enrolment in class I-V and VI-VIII or class I-VIII to the estimated child population in the 6-11 and 11-14 or 6-14 age groups respectively. As gross enrolment ratio includes an estimated level of 25 to 30 per cent overage and underage children it invariably crosses the 100 per cent mark in most of the Indian States and at the national level too.

DROPOUT RATE AT ELEMENTARY STAGE

Primary	**1980-81**	**1994-95**
Girls	62.50	37.79
Boys	56.20	35.18
Middle		
Girls	79.40	56.53
Boys	68.00	50.02

Source : (Selected Educational Statistics, GOI, MHRD, Department of Education, 1997: xxxiv)

Besides, there are still children who are completely out of the educational system, that is, those who never enrol and are currently not enrolled. The 1991 census and the MHRD do not provide this data but Tilak quoting National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) data estimates that as many as 73 million were currently not enrolled in school. The percentage of boys and girls never enrolled in the 6-11 age group was 18.4 and 25.2 per cent respectively in 1986-87. The difference in the rural and urban areas is quite glaring, i.e., 22.7 per cent of girls in rural and 2.5 per cent in the urban area were never enrolled (1995:374).

Coupled with this is the limited availability of schools with there being only one middle school for every four primary schools according to the Sixth All India Educational Survey (NCERT), 1995. The survey went on point out that there were 4000 primary schools in rural India (1993) where there are no teachers, while as many as 1.12 lakh primary schools in the rural areas were single teacher schools. Moreover women teachers form only 23 per cent of total number of primary teachers in rural areas compared to 60 per cent in the urban areas.

Ironically, there has been a persistent demand since independence for more women teachers in the rural areas to facilitate girls education which is so far only partially met. It may be noted that the states having a lower proportion of female teachers are also low female literacy, low female enrolment states. Given this educational scenario, rural girls seldom reach the higher secondary and teacher-training stage, while in the absence of women teachers, parents continue to be unwilling to send their daughters to schools. And the rural girls are caught in the vortex of this vicious cycle.

Thus, in India, we still do not have complete primary stage educational facilities; especially for girls in rural areas. The skewed enrolment, retention and dropout rates of girls, especially rural girls, mean that they get eliminated either right at the beginning or at successive stages. They, therefore, have very slim chance of completing ten to twelve years of schooling. If regional and caste/tribe imbalances are added to this scenario, the situation becomes even more grim. Thus, in Madhya Pradesh and Orissa, states with a substantial tribal population, the GER for Scheduled Tribe (ST) girls was 59.07 per cent (93.95 for boys) and 58.15 (121.86 for boys) respectively in 1995-96 (MHRD, 1996-97).

Barriers to Access

That this state of affairs persists despite strong policy support to equalisation of educational opportunity and an emphatic assertion to make education a means of women empowerment points to a deep rooted problem of severely restricted access to education for a majority of Indian girls, the causes of which can be traced back to our social milieu. There are complex and diverse reasons unique to the Indian society which block access of girls to school. Gender

bias and gender discrimination is a part of life in India cutting across class, caste and even religious lines.

As 'Towards Equality', the report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India expressed it, "the deep foundations of inequality of the sexes are built in the minds of men and women through a socialisation process which continues to be extremely powerful. Right from the earliest years, boys and girls are brought up to know that they are different from each other and this differentiation is strengthened in every way possible...." (Government of India, 1974: 281).

The problem does not end at differentiation but is further compounded by the fact that traditionally Indian society has accorded a low valuation to women due to an interplay of religious, economic, social and cultural factors (Devasia, 1991). This deep rooted bias results in the girls being perceived as an undesirable burden by the family resulting in a neglect of their very survival, welfare, growth and development (Krishnamurthy, 1991).

The causes of the historically low social and economic value of women have been traced by feminists to her marginal role and relevance in the economy. There are also strong correlations between the female survival rates and the institutions of dowry, marriage payments, inheritance convention, etc. (Punalker, 1991). Thus, in India, a strong son preference, custom of early marriage, a well entrenched dowry system - all hallmarks of a strongly patriarchal society have coalesced together to have an adverse impact on the health, education, social and religious status and economic worth of a girl child. This is amply reflected in a falling sex ratio, higher female infant and maternal mortality rates and marked nutritional differences between boys and girls (Devasia, 1991).

The 1991 Census counted 407.1 million females against the male population of 439.23 million constituting just less than half (48.09 per cent) of the total population of 846.3 million. The sex ratio which was 972 females per thousand males in 1901 has declined to 927 in 1991. The decline has been sharper in the age group 0-6 years, from 976 in 1961 to 945 in 1991. Between every census, millions of females disappear. Every year 12 million girls are born in India. 1.5 million die before their first birthday, another 850,000 before their fifth and only 9 million will be alive at 15. (Devasia, 1991). The adverse sex ratio for females is attributed mainly to higher mortality among females, as compared to males in all age groups right from childhood through child-bearing age. Limited access to the health infrastructure and relative deprivation of the female child from nutrition, health and medical care especially in rural areas where girl child mortality is higher, are other contributory factors. A persistent bias in favour of the male child remains a constant cause of this adverse sex ratio.

Female literacy is seen as a very pertinent index of social development. As per 1991 census, the female literacy stood at 39.29 per cent as compared to 64.21 per cent for males. Besides there were sharp rural-urban and intergroup disparities in female literacy with 64.05 per cent of urban females being literate as against 30.62% of rural females, according to the 1991 census. The Scheduled Tribe women with a literacy rate of 18.19 per cent formed the bottom of the educational pyramid.

Employment is another indicator of overall status and the 1991 census reveals that the work participation rate of females has steadily increased from 14.22 per cent in 1971 to 22.27 in 1991. However, only 4 per cent of the total number of women are employed in the organized sector and nearly 90 per cent of the total marginal workers are females. (Nayar, 1996).

The overall picture of Indian women which emerges from this overview is far from satisfactory and from an educational point of view such structures as the health and literacy profile of women the organization of production and sexual division of labour, pattern of inheritance, social institutions and cultural practices, which devalue the position of women impinge on the status of girl children also and constrain their access to education. Stromquist (1990) argues that the gender division of labour and the control of women's sexuality, reinforces women's subordination in society and influences women's educational participation. Patriarchal ideology plays an important role in defining gender roles. It emphasises women's primary roles as mothers, wives and housewives. Social acculturation of men and women sanctioned by religious and cultural practices, reinforces the sex stereotyping in society (Patel & Dighe, 1997) The dynamics of schooling of girl children therefore, have to be seen as embedded within broader socio-cultural and economic structures which sustain gender inequalities. The interplay of variables like caste, community, rural-urban divide, with these structures has further ramifications for girls' education.

The traditional low priority assigned to girls education in the country can be linked to the small or zero returns anticipated from educating them. Education of girls is often viewed as a consumption expenditure in a society following largely patrilineal and patrilocal marriage systems, whereby married women usually live far away from their natal homes, unable to provide even emotional, leave alone economic security to aged parents.(Nambissan, 1995) In contrast, there are across the board parental expectations from sons regarding economic support and security, in tune with cultural norms, which prompt parents to display greater interest in educating their boys. Added to it is the practice of dowry and the ideology of hypergamous marriage, which is prevalent in large parts of India

and which turns education of girls into a liability. If an educated girl can only marry a more educated boy and if dowry payments increase with the education of the groom, then an educated girl is likely to be more expensive to marry (Sen, 1995).

This further dovetails with the fact that women in India still have fewer job opportunities and are discriminated against in the labour market, which in turn only adds to the parental reluctance to educate their girls. An increase in the income levels of families and the presence of educated parents (especially mothers) has been found to facilitate schooling. (Nambissan, 1995) However, even in well off, educationally oriented families parents are less likely to invest in the academic success of their daughters than their sons and often while the son is enrolled in an expensive co-educational institution, the sister is sent to a cheaper school (Chanana, 1996). Gender bias within the family in the allocation of resources for education is particularly striking when it comes to high status knowledge areas like the sciences which require greater investment in money and time (Nambissan, 1995).

In case of poorer strata of society, the traditional gender norms are mediated by the material circumstances in perpetuating discrimination against the girls. Where incomes are meagre, parents consider their son's education to be more beneficial and important than the education of their daughter especially in terms of future employment prospects. Moreover, young boys do not perform any economically gainful activities at home while girls are always looked upon as handy helpers to their mothers in cooking, fetching fuel, fodder and water and taking care of siblings (Patel and Dighe, 1997).

Furthermore, growing poverty and ecological degradation is pushing more and more families to migrate in search of work and wages denying their children

traditional systems of care and transferring a significant share of what is identified as women's work to the girl child. The oldest girl of the family, thus, becomes an extension of her mother sometimes as early as at 4 or 5 years of age effectively sealing her chances of schooling. A large majority of children, belonging to the rural poor, who are out of school and are referred to as 'nowhere children' or 'invisible children', contribute to the economic activity of their parents by performing household chores and looking after siblings. A large number of them, needless to add, are girls (Prasad, 1999). Besides, research studies and national sample survey reports suggest that young girls below the age of 14 also participate in cultivation, wage labour and household industry.

Cultural constraints against girls' education are likely to be more pronounced among upper caste groups particularly in rural areas where gender norms are more rigidly followed (Nambissan, 1995). Girls are culturally not meant to go to school beyond a certain age. The child marriage is a major causative factor. In fact the social practice of early marriage of daughters, affects both, the parental view of the level of education daughters need and women aspirations for future education (Patel & Dighe, 1997). These constraints are further compounded by the fact that nearly 15 per cent of the habitations in rural areas do not still have a primary school within a kilometre of the habitation. Besides, there is one only middle school available for every four primary schools. But 26 per cent of the rural population does not have middle schooling even within the stipulated distance of 3 kms. In habitations inhabited by Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities, the availability of schooling is even more meagre with only 38 per cent of SC habitations and 45 per cent of ST habitations having primary schools. (Nambissan, 1995). This lack of availability

of schooling within 'safe distance' only adds to the parental apathy to send their daughters to schools.

Added to it is the parental reluctance to incur any expenditure on educating the 'lesser child'. As the recent 'Public Report on Basic Education' (the Probe Report) has established elementary education in India is free only in a limited sense. This was also brought to the fore by the 52nd Round reports of NSSO which stated that only 77 per cent of the primary school children do not pay tuition fee while 35 per cent receive free/subsidized books, 5 per cent receive free/subsidized stationery and mid-day meal is available only to 29.5 per cent. Hence in a broader sense, education does involve a major financial burden, especially for poor families with several children of school-going ages. And if a child has to be retained at home because of economic constraints, it is invariably the girl child.

If, inspite of these barriers, some of the girls, especially in rural areas and those belonging to deprived sections are enrolled in schools, a number of 'pushout' factors come into play. The PROBE report has cited low quality of schooling as one of the main reasons for educational deprivation. The school infrastructure is inadequate especially in rural areas and in urban slums with minimum physical facilities for schooling such as classrooms, blackboards, learning material and so on. Lack of basic amenities in a majority of schools especially in rural areas particularly affect the access of girls to schooling. The fact that a majority of primary schools are not provided with toilets can hardly encourage the parents to continue sending their girls to school.

A rigid and fixed school calendar which is oblivious to the domestic and other responsibilities of girls, an acute shortage of female teachers, lack of adequate support services like anganwadis (although sibling care is a major factor

contributing to girls dropping out of schools), an irrelevant curriculum coupled with poor standards of teaching, all combine together to create a very poor learning environment. The Ramamurthi Committee set up to review NPE, 1986 noted that "the rigidity of the formal school in terms of the school hours and the school calendar is a deterrent to the enrolment and retention of girls involved in activities within and outside the home." (1990:38-39) A common response of parents to the poor functioning or non-functioning of a government-run village school is to send their sons to study in neighbouring villages or in private schools. But in case of girls, parents are neither keen to send them out of the village nor willing to spend on a private school education for them. Thus, the breakdown of a government village school only firms up the parental apathy to education of girls and leads to their dropping out of the educational system.

The State of Haryana is a prime example of how a well entrenched gender bias is able to nullify, to a large extent, even the gains of economic development in denying access to education to girls. The rapid economic progress achieved by the state since its formation in 1966 (after being carved out of Punjab) is in sharp contrast to its dismal performance in the area of gender equality which is reflected in the educational access and attainment of girls too.

The Case of Haryana

The state of Haryana situated in the Hindi heartland was one of the earliest beneficiaries of the green revolution along with Punjab and today with its largely agrarian economy has the second highest per capita net domestic product amongst all the states of the Union. The recent India Human Development Report (NCAER, 1999) reported this state along with Punjab as having the highest values for indices of both productive and utility assets. Landownership by rural

households was also among the highest in all the states and the incidence of poverty was also found to be low. The state since its inception has concentrated on developing its infrastructure in terms of roads, rural electrification, irrigation facilities and so on.

This progress was reflected in the findings of the India Human Development Report (1999) which revealed that 61 per cent of villages in Haryana were connected with pucca roads while 76 per cent had a bus stop within 2 kms. As many as 84 per cent of the villages in the state had at least 50 per cent of their gross crop area irrigated and potable water accounted for over 60 per cent of major sources of drinking water in rural Haryana

Even the educational infrastructure of the state is impressive with 97.8 per cent of villages having a primary school and 54.4 per cent a middle school within the village while 26.7 per cent of the villages have access to a middle school within 5 km. (NCAER, 1999). Given the fact that this relatively small state accounting for only 2 per cent of the country's total population has managed to achieve this level of economic development in the last three decades or so, it is indeed a revelation to discover that the economic prosperity is totally asymmetrical to its human resource development especially that of its women.

Women in Haryana

Sharp sex -differentials persist in all indicators relating to health education, participation in work-force, skills training, access to credit and acquisition of assets and so on.

The state fares poorly on all known indicators of status of women like female mortality, fertility, infant mortality rate, age at marriage and level of female workforce participation rate. The sex ratio in Haryana in 1991was 865

which is not only way below the national sex ratio of 927 but is in fact the lowest in the country. The female infant mortality rate in the state was as high as 102 per thousand as compared to 80 for males in 1988 in sharp contrast to All India figures of female IMR of 93 and male IMR at 95. The neglect of the female child is further manifest in the female child mortality rate of +20 in Haryana as compared to the national average of +10 (Mode, 1991). The preventive and curative health care of a female child is invariably neglected by the family.

The overwhelming son preference amongst all major communities lies at the crux of this widespread bias against the survival and care of the girl child. The most potent manifestation of this preference is the practice of selective abortion of the female fetus through sex determination tests which have become rampant in the state. The saga of neglect continues even in adult life with maternal mortality emerging as a serious problem. Girls are married off at a young age with the mean age of marriage ranging from 15.70 to 17.80 years across various districts (1981 Census) as against a national average of 18 years (1981 census).

According to the 1991 census, 90 per cent of women of Haryana are shown as non-workers with the work participation rate for women being pegged at 11.29 per cent as against 47.92 per cent for men. This is far from the truth in a strongly patriarchal rural society where the fruits of economic development seem to have completely bypassed the women, who are engaged in variety of tasks ranging from household chores, to looking after the livestock, to collecting fuel and fodder besides working in the agricultural fields to augment family income from an early age. Moreover women also have differential access to modern technology. Despite an overwhelming adaptation of new technology and devices in the countryside, no efforts have been made to provide labour saving devices to women to facilitate their work at home or in the agricultural field. In fact this

ceaseless burden of work is a major cause for non-enrolment and if enrolled, of drop-out of young girls from the schooling system (NCERT, 1993).

The entire socialization process of a girl child resolves around her lack of worth and her inferior social status. Early marriages, dowry and a patrilineal system of inheritance further restrict her development as a mature and confident adult. Indirectly, the girl child imbibes an inferiority complex by observing and experiencing these attitudes which work as impediments in her development and empowerment.

Lack of access to education is both a cause and an effect of this low societal and self-image of a girl child. The progress of literacy in Haryana in the past 3 decades can be enumerated as:

Table 4: Literacy Rates for Haryana 1961-1991

Census Year	Persons	Males	Females
1961	19.93	29.22	9.21
1971	26.89	37.29	14.89
1981	43.85	58.49	26.89
1991	55.33	67.85	40.94

Source: Study of Drop Out and Non-enrolment among girls in rural Haryana 1993: DWS, NCERT. (Note: Data for 1961 and 1971 is inclusive of all age groups where as figures of 1981 and 1991 show percentage of literates to estimated population aged 7 years and above).

Apart from the rather apparent gender disparities in literacy rates, rural-urban differentials in literacy are very glaring. Thus, the crude literacy rate of Haryana for 1991 reveals that while the overall rural literacy rate was 40.24 per cent only 27.09 per cent of rural females were literate. The urban female literacy was almost the double being 53.51 per cent.

Table 5: Crude Literacy Rate - Haryana-1991
Percentage of Literacy Rate

	Total	Male	Female
Total	45.54	55.97	33.61
Rural	40.24	51.77	27.09
Urban	61.61	68.65	53.51

Source: Study of Drop Out and Non-enrolment among girls in rural Haryana 1993: DWS, NCERT.

NOTE: Crude Literacy Rate includes all age groups.

Even in districts, which are the industrial hub of the state, viz. Faridabad and Gurgaon, rural female literacy rates were 22.79 and 26.12 per cent respectively in 1991 (MHRD, 1997). The rural Scheduled Caste women (Scheduled Castes constitute one-fifth of the state's population) fare even worse with only 22.48 per cent of them being literate in 1991 (MHRD, 1997).

Universalization of primary education has emerged as a key strategy in the state's policy to tackle the problem of illiteracy. The state first focussed on providing universal primary schooling and then moved on to achieve universal enrolment. Although in 1990-91, 113% boys and 91% girls in the age group 6-11 years were rather optimistically shown as being enrolled (NCERT, 1993), the situation in the field belied these figures, and statistics for later years have attempted to project a somewhat more realistic picture.

Table: 6 ENROLMENT RATIO in Class I-V and Class VI-VIII in Haryana

	Classes I-V (6-11 years)			Classes VI-VIII (11-14 years)		
	Boys	**Girls**	**Total**	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Total**
1996-97*	80.5	73.2	79.9	64.7	59.9	60.7
1997-98#	83.0	84.0	83.9	69.7	61.4	65.9

*Selected Educational Statistics, MHRD, 1997
#Annual Report, MHRD, Department of Education, 1998-99.

Thus, in 1996, 80.5 per cent of the boys and 73.2 of the girls in the 6-11 age groups were shown as enrolled in schools with the percentage of girls enrolled dropping to 59.9 per cent at the upper primary stage (See Table 6). In 1997-98, 84.0 per cent of girls in the 6-11 age group were enrolled while 61.4 per cent of them attended upper primary school.

Although the state acknowledges the problem of drop out of girls as the main hindrance in achieving Universal Primary Education (UPE) but intriguely the 1997-98 drop out rate in Class I-V for girls in Haryana is as low as 15.59 per cent, the third lowest among the states, after Kerala and Goa (MHRD, 1999). Even Himachal Pradesh which has achieved almost a revolution in universalising primary education has a drop out rate of 31.03 for girls at the primary level for the same period (Annual Report, MHRD, Deptt. of Education, 1998-99).

Thus, the dropout rate of girls in the state is said to have dropped from 31.61 per cent in 1987-88 to 15.59 in 1997-98 at the primary stage with the overall drop out rate touching a low of 14.90 per cent.

Table: 7 Dropout Rates in Class I-V and Class I-VIII in Haryana

	Class I-V			Class I-VIII		
	Boys	**Girls**	**Total**	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Total**
1987-88*	24.35	31.61	27.32	33.01	48.22	38.62
1997-98#	14.30	15.59	14.90	27.09	35.56	30.91

Source: * Status Paper on Women's Education and Development of Haryana State, 1993-94.
#Annual Report, MHRD, Department of Education, 1999

Official statistics apart, study after study both official and otherwise especially in low female literacy areas has shown a persistent problem of drop out and non-enrolment of girls in schools (UNESCO - 1993, NCERT, 1993; Probe

Report, 1999). A ready reckoner of universal primary education would be stable enrolments in all five primary classes at a given point of time. But the proportion of children in classes II, III, IV & V continuously diminishes, especially that of the girls.

A study conducted in Sirsa district of the state revealed that the percentage of girls in Class V to their total enrolment in class I was only 49.03 in 1992-93 (DPEP Gender Study Report, Sirsa District, 1993). This finding can safely be assumed to be by and large true of large parts of the state especially its rural hinterland. Besides, there is a sizeable number of never enrolled and currently not enrolled children, mostly girls. Thus, in 1986, there were a total of 569,048 girls in the age group of 6-14 years who were outside the school in the state. Of these, 81 per cent girls were rural and 19 per cent urban. (NCERT, 1993). These statistical indicators of girls' education at the primary level in Haryana lead us to conclude that there is inequality in participation in educational system. This is particularly true of girls especially girls from rural areas and low socio-economic groups. Social discrimination of girls in education coupled with poverty and a lack of social will to educate them leads to a denial of schooling for girls. (Malhotra, 1998).

The reasons for girls not being enrolled in school/or being pulled out of school run more or less along the macro-level trends. But what adds to the travails of a girl child in a highly sex differenciated society like Haryana is a singular lack of parental motivation to educate their girls. The lack of gender equality and low educational levels of mothers further adds to this apathy. This interplay between gender relations and schooling was reiterated in a recent study conducted as part of the PROBE surveys contrasting the educational achievements of Haryana and Himachal Pradesh (Probe Report, 1999). The study based on detailed interviews

conducted with a sample consisting of mothers from selected districts of the two states revealed that although the states shared a similar economic background and social customs but the pace and reach of schooling in the two states was strikingly different.

The study found that while the intrinsic worth of education, especially for girls was readily acknowledged by all the respondents, a majority of the mothers in Haryana visualised it as improving the marriage prospects of their daughters but in H.P. almost all the mothers expected education to assist their daughters to work outside the home after marriage. They were also more involved in the education of their children and displayed more knowledge about schooling matters than their counterparts in Haryana. A higher maternal literacy was perhaps responsible for the assertiveness of Himachali women. They also came across as having more say in household decisions especially in case of education. In contrast, many mothers in Haryana had no idea of the cost of schooling.

The roots of these varying responses can be traced to the continuing hold of patriarchal outlook in Haryana. Thus, the power of parents-in-law in the household, the study found out, was also much greater in Haryana than in H.P. Interestingly almost all the Haryana mothers consider it preferable for a young couple to live with the husband's joint family while most of the H.P. mothers were opposed to it. Again, while a majority of the mothers in Haryana wanted their daughters to marry before the age of twenty-one to some one more educated than them but the Himachali women were quite amicable to the idea of their daughters marrying someone less educated and they definitely wanted their daughters to enter matrimony at a much mature age.

Thus, the women in Haryana came across as not only being at the receiving end of a greater gender bias but the hold of patriarchal values seemed to

have pervaded their outlook. This was eloquently brought forth in the response of one of the mothers to a question about the age at which a daughter should be married who said, "Daughters are a burden - the sooner you get rid of them, the better" (1999:122).

Gender-discrimination, therefore emerges as a formidable barrier to access to education for girls. Poor schooling further adds to the parental apathy to send or to continue their daughters in schools. In Haryana, for example the quantitative expansion in the schooling infrastructure has not translated into a qualitative improvement also. Ramshackle buildings with no boundary walls and absence of toilets create an insecure environment to which parents are not willing to expose their girls. Added to it is lack of basic teaching material, teacher absenteeism and a persistent shortfall of women teachers. In rural areas of Haryana, women teachers accounted for 34.25 per cent at the primary level and 36.22 per cent at the upper primary level in1992-93.

The girls in the rural areas especially those belonging to the poor and disadvantaged families as well as those residing in pockets with abysmally low female literacy rates bear the brunt of this situation. Thus, in the Mewat region of district Gurgaon, which has the lowest female literacy rate of 1.8 per cent in the country, the traditional reluctance to educate girls coupled with poor quality of schooling has continued to deny education to girls. The Meos, a community of recent Muslim converts, who largely inhabit this region are a very poor disadvantaged community. Their economic backwardness is exacerbated by their educational backwardness. However, researchers like Zarina Bhatty point out that the parents can be motivated to send their children, especially girls, to school if a well functioning school responsive to local sentiments is provided, as is borne out by the successful running of a private girls school established by the young

Muslim Sarpanch with community help having nearly 200 students in the region (quoted in Probe Report, 1999).

The government schools, in contrast, present a sorry picture with a dilapidated physical infrastructure and disinterested teachers. The community's long standing basic demand for women teachers and the teaching of Urdu, their mother tongue have been consistently neglected despite special developmental programmes being drawn up for the region under the aegis of the Mewat Development Authority.

Removing Gender Barriers

As Chanana puts it, "the parameters of a social paradigm which limits women's role as well as the functions of formal education need critical examination because they continue to affect the programmes relating to primary education of girls. It is also not enough to formulate policies and programmes but to evolve strategies to neutralise or circumvent the ideological, structural and familial impediments so that the educational facilities are fully utilised" (1996: 377).

A two pronged strategy to combat the barriers of access seems to be needed. At the level of school, improvement in physical facilities and teaching standards can help in motivating the community to send its girls to school.

Furthermore, as the analysis of the societal situation, especially gender relations in Haryana and indeed the country as a whole has shown economic returns and parental self-interest provide very weak incentives for girls education but perhaps parental concern for the well being of a daughter in her own right and recognition of the contribution which education can make to the quality of her life (and that of others around her) can act as a more powerful incentive. Media can

play a crucial interventionist role in putting forth this perspective to the parents and the community at large.

It can also forcefully project the far reaching adverse effects of gender bias in spheres pertaining to the emotional, educational and social development of girls. Posters depicting the utility of girls schooling can be displayed at the Panchayat Ghar, the Health centre, Post office, Marketing Centres and other prominent public places to drive home the message of educating girls for their own sake and welfare. The traditional media can also be successfully harnessed for this purpose. In Haryana, for example, women have been traditionally lampooned or projected as inferior, slow witted individuals in the folk songs and ballads popular in the hinterland. The debilitating effects of such a projection can be countered by a systematic media intervention of projecting a positive self image of women, highlighting female historical figures and also recent achievers through street plays etc. Appealing to the parental sense of pride in bringing up an educated daughter can also be another media strategy.

Studies in Haryana show that parents respond favourably to the idea of incentives being provided to girls joining and continuing in school. (NCERT, 1993). The State does run a number of incentive schemes at the primary level, like free uniforms and text-books to SC and economically weaker section girls, attendance prizes to SC girls and grant of a stipend to denotified tribes children. But perhaps there is a need to extend some of these schemes to all girls, especially in the rural areas, to counter parent's reluctance to incur any expenditure on the education of their girls. The media can play a significant role in disseminating information regarding availability of various facilities, schemes and programmes.

Provision of infant care in all primary schools, single and co-educational, will improve attendance substantially (Chanana, 1996) and therefore apart from

successfully running anganwadis and balwadis, and a locally relevant and gender sensitive curriculum, communication also has to be woven in as part of the overall strategy to remove the parental and public inertia to the daunting problem of girls education. The next chapter will therefore explore how communication has been perceived and utilised in the Indian developmental context. Even before independence, the powerful role of communication in society was duly acknowledged by the nationalist leaders. (Joshi, 1989). Indeed the success of Gandhiji's strategy of non-violence hinged upon his ability to effectively communicate his ideas to a diverse and largely illiterate population using popular idioms and symbols like Charkha, Satya-Graha and Khadi to name a few. It is, therefore, pertinent to explore how the Indian State attempted to utilise the efficacy of new communication technologies to solve the many problems facing a nascent nation. The relationship between a traditional society like India having an ancient culture and the media has evolved in many different ways. Moreover, the media in India have to reach out to a vastly differentiated audience. Thus, harnessing the media for any developmental purpose, for example education, is not a simplistic exercise in the Indian context. The next chapter highlights this complexity.

Chapter Four

COMMUNICATION IN THE INDIAN DEVELOPMENTAL CONTEXT

This chapter begins by outlining the broad parameters of the development communication approach which was the dominant paradigm in utilizing communication for nation building when India gained in dependence. India's attempts at operationalizing this perspective are then analyzed and it is argued that despite conceptual clarity there emerged, in the years to come, considerable hiatus between the perceived and the actual role played by communication in developmental efforts. The manner in which this dichotomy impinged upon the media advocacy of education is then highlighted. The fact that despite the use of various media like radio, television as well as others no broad based momentum to tackle educational backwardness could emerge points to a major communication default. The renewed attempts at more effective use of media in education, in the light of the benefits of participative communication, are then probed. The heightened awareness of the need to fight gender bias to ensure access to schooling for girls is brought forth but it is argued that no media strategy to counter this bias can succeed unless the distorted representation of women in media and their lack of participation in communication initiatives is tackled. The chapter concludes by pointing out the broad areas that a strategy for media advocacy of education of girls can cover.

Given the vast scope and potential of communication, it has emerged as a key element of the developmental strategy of every nation. Its importance is particularly crucial in the developing nations where there is a shortfall of both time and resources in the task of achieving developmental goals. In this context, communication is visualised as a means of coalescing together a consensus in the

process of nation building amidst widespread socio-economic disparities and cultural and ethnic diversities. These development communication interventions can be broadly defined as those that originate from outside the control of the community or target group and are delivered through government or international development institutions and non-governmental organizations (Bernard, 1991).

The community's participation is encouraged in regard to certain specific goals viz., changing current critical practices through communication strategies that encourage public awareness and consensus. The aim is to solicit active support of the community for national or regional programmes of education, nutrition, sanitation among others. Participation is used as a tool to activate the acceptance of the programme by the intended beneficiaries. A mass mobilization of information through a media mix of mass media, intercultural communication and folk media such as traditional drama, folk songs, puppetry and indigenous dances is utilized as the means to achieve this end (Riano, 1994).

The development communication approach envisions participation of the community as an instrument to further a more community oriented development. Promotion of participation is also seen as improving the appeal and reach of development programmes and campaigns by directing their messages in a culturally appropriate language and by increasing the feedback from the public to the experts (Moore, 1986).

In the Indian context, the synergy between communication, planning and nation building was recognised and reiterated during the days of the freedom struggle itself. The National Planning Committee, appointed by the Indian National Congress under the Chairmanship of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in 1938 showed keen awareness of the role of communication in the modern world. It advocated the use of communication media as necessary components of modern

development visualising them as a link between the "vast majority of the population who are still illiterate and a large section of the women who do not go out into the public on one hand and the progressive part of India on the other." (Quoted in Report of the Working Group on Software for Doordarshan, Government of India, 1985:5)

India thus set out to evolve its own version of the communication revolution increasingly aware of the fact that the communication revolution unfolding in the world around can facilitate leaps over whole stages and epochs. Dr.Vikram Sarabhai who played a major role in shaping our approach to communication technology stated, "our national goals involve leap-frogging from a state of economic backwardness and social disabilities, attempting to achieve in a few decades a change which has historically taken centuries in other lands. This involves innovation at all levels." (Quoted in the Report of the Working Group on software for Doordarshan, Government of India, 1985:21) He proposed that the developing countries should engage in imaginative utilization of technology including communication technology for this purpose. Thus, they should "develop competence in advanced technologies and deploy them for the solution of their particular problems." (Quoted in Joshi, 1989: 45)

India, like other developing nations, had the potential of utilizing significantly the gains of new information society as we were making a fresh beginning, coincidentally at a time when new vectors of communication like television, video and computers were emerging. Besides, we were also not overburdened with obsolete technology and institutional structures like the west. Simultaneously, it was realized that the mere transfer of technology was not enough. It may be a necessary but not a sufficient condition for growth and development. Therefore, communication technology was envisaged to be

embedded within a philosophy which was aware of the specificities and complexities of Indian society and culture. Communication was perceived as playing an integrative, educative and informative role in a multi-ethnic, predominantly rural, highly segmented and class-divided society like India. It had also to avoid the pitfalls of creating pockets of affluence in a sea of deprivation by widening the hiatus between the elite and the masses, between those who had easy access to latest communication technology and those who were not so fortunate.

Thus, the communication system in India underwent a phenomenal expansion and modernization since independence partly because of new advances in the field of communication but largely because of a conscious policy of the state to build an adequate communication infrastructure. Media ranging from the radio to traditional media to newly emerging ones like T.V. were developed and expanded their reach. Today, India has one of the world's largest communication systems - radio reaches 97.1 per cent of the population, while television has a reach of 87 per cent (Annual Report, Ministry of I&B, 1998-99). Films produced by Films Division have an audience of five to six crores every week. In addition, there are more than 30,214 newspapers with a circulation of approximately 539 lakh copies in 16 major languages and dialects (Kapur, 1996). In fact, in the Indian context, the infrastructure of modern mass media and communication has preceded modern economic growth and thus one would have expected mass media and communication to play a major role in promoting development, acting as vehicles of information and awareness about developmental opportunities and above all fighting attitudinal barriers. But in actuality, they have faltered in fulfilling the role expected of them (Joshi,1989).

The lack of awareness of the communication dimension which can be vital to a country of India's size and diversity especially in fields like education, has

meant that there is not yet an adequate policy framework for an interface between communication and nation building and between different modes of communication. In fact, communication utilisation in India is far from rational and equitable. Joshi points out that the gap between promise and performance, growth potential and actual results in our developmental strategy has many causes but some of the most important relate to the default on the communication front. He writes, "the weakness of communication has contributed in a significant measure to the potential-actual gap and the underutilisation of our growth potential." (1989:133)

Communication technology and the media of communication can be configured in several alternative ways viz., they can be moulded to become need based, enhance social benefits and ensure more equitable participation. However, in the absence of a strong push to develop such alternative networks and relevant media content, communication can take a different path. Karnik writing in the mid 1980s, shows the selective impact of a communication boom on Indian society. He cites the example of the incredible expansion of the T.V. network, the change over to colour transmission, introduction of subscriber trunk dialling on a large-scale throughout the length and breadth of the country made possible by space technology, international and data networks, fascimile services and the video boom as ushering in a communication revolution in the country. Added to it was a phenomenal increase in magazine circulation and also in the technology of production in the case of the print medium.

But only a certain section of Indian society, according to Karnik, is living through this boom and the beneficiaries are not all sections of Indian society but "the upper crust of the Indian society." (Quoted in Joshi, 1989:90) If we add the advent of private channels on television, the rapid growth of cable television, and

the bourgeoning popularity of the internet to this analysis the picture becomes up to date. The most apparent consequence of this increasing importance of communication in commercial life and the tremendous impact of widening reach of various media of communication is the polarisation of the country into two non-overlapping sets: those who have access and those who do not have access to these media and technology (Karnik, 1987).

The people belonging to the first set tend to have greater interaction amongst themselves and communication for this segment is obliterating both geographical and cultural/linguistic boundaries. Furthermore, there is an emergence of a "transnational elite" alienated from its own country and people. A communication network spanning the globe has led to a growing community of netizens who have more in common with each other than with their own countrymen and it is now a phenomenon becoming visible in India. Communication software or the media content has served as a cementing force for this elite moulding it through a common set of values, norms and aspirations.

Karnik also draws attention to the striking fact of this communication network being market-driven rather than need-oriented, being dictated by 'ability to pay' rather than by real need - individual, group or social need. Moreover, given the concentration of these elites in cities (and perhaps some urbanised villages), the media content has a metropolis - centric view of reality. This also has serious implications in cultural terms for a country like India where the national culture is but a collective expression of vibrant local and regional cultures.

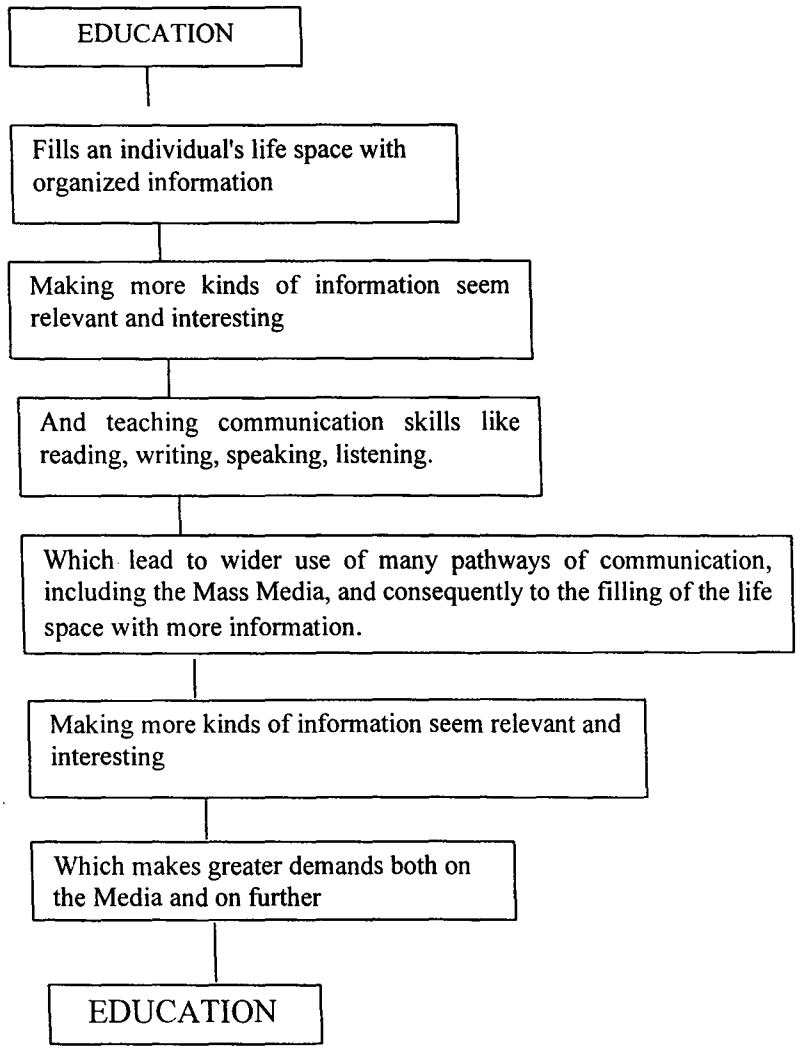
Nonetheless, this substantial dichotomy and alienation between a privileged minority and an under-privileged majority is not an inevitable outcome of the advent of communication vectors. The key lies in clearly defining, right at

the outset, communication for whom? Thus, access to communication system is of crucial importance and impinges upon the composition and quality of software which the system produces. Equitable distribution of access will not only remove elite bias and dominance but also ensure utilisation of communication as an investment input rather than the hitherto prevalent perception of communication as a consumption good, especially in the Indian context (Joshi, 1989).

Communication and Education - the Indian Experience

The dichotomy between the expected and the actual role played by communication media in the Indian developmental context serves as an important backdrop to understanding how communication media have been harnessed for educational purposes in the country.

Schramm (1973:184) has put forth graphically the relationship between education, mass media and information -seeking in the life of an individual as:



However, in the Indian context, the much more urgent task assigned to the media is in tackling endemic educational backwardness, related to neutralising the apathy and passivity of the masses to the question of their own literacy and education, and making them aware of its importance in fighting the forces which keep them oppressed and poor. The media were also seen as making a dent on the traditional caste and gender factors which come into play in denying education to all. It was entrusted with the task of creating awareness about the debilitating impact of educational handicap, so as to neutralise the resistance of traditional elites to mass literacy and education. Above all it was to mobilize a core of dedicated individuals who would act as motivators in rousing the others from their apathy (Report of the Working Group on Software for Doordarshan, 1985).

A urgency to the task at hand at the dawn of independence was provided by Mahatma Gandhi's statement to the effect that "mass illiteracy is India's sin and shame and must be liquidated." (Joshi, 1989: 114) Nonetheless, it was realised that there is no easy technological solution to the problem of illiteracy and educational backwardness. Centuries of inertia, ignorance and vested interests make it one of the most daunting human tasks requiring exceptional effort of the will.

The role played by media in the context of education can be identified as either promotional wherein a multimedia campaign is mounted to make education an issue for national debate and action, or an instructional or teaching role, wherein media inputs are utilised for making education far more meaningful. Media Advocacy of education was recognized as a major segment of the developmental communication efforts by Indian planners, development experts and people in the field right at the outset. The entire network of government controlled media was harnessed for this purpose itself. Innovative use of interpersonal communication and traditional media was made in this venture. This included the use of folk media (puppet theatre and dance), interpersonal communication between experts and community, and small-format media (including educational illustrations and texts displayed in areas of community gathering and photographs used as references for discussion). This use of indigenous channels reflects a belief that the interpersonal and informal levels are central when it comes to persuading people to change. Media function is in this context used to legitimize the centrality of the issue for public attention, to act as loudspeakers of the expert messages, and to assist in reinforcing the project's messages (Karnik,1988). India, realizing the value of interpersonal communication in the context of developmental publicity, set up the Directorate of

Field Publicity in 1953. Its aim is to reach the hinterlands sometimes with mobile vans but often by foot marches to organize community film shows, photo exhibitions, debates, etc. through its 268 field units. Creating awareness about the need to educate all has been a continuous thread in its campaigns. Traditional performing art forms of which there is a considerable variety in the country, ranging from puppet theatre, katha, tamasha to Nautanki are extremely popular and vibrant throughout the nation. Mukhopadhyay writes, "These are deeply rooted in village and folk culture and evolve a methodology of communication which is strictly regional at one level and universal at another on account of its abstraction... it is typically Indian in thought at its metaphysical as well as mundane levels." (1994: 114)

He goes on to note that given their widespread reach and acceptability as media whom the remotest villagers "could not only see and hear but even touch" they have been extensively adapted for development communication purposes. To tap their immense potential, the Song and Drama Division of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting was set up in 1954 as the biggest live entertainment organization in the country. The division utilizes not only its own departmental troupes but also 700 private troupes to disseminate messages through folk art forms. Information regarding rural health schemes, reproductive health care, agricultural technologies, small scale industries and also reiteration of the need for education for all are recurring themes of these performances. It is expected that these traditional performing arts, being functional, interpersonal and having a contextual base would be able to carry the message of change in rural India (Mukhopadhyay, 1994).

The mass media were also soon engaged in this task. The concept of people's access to the broadcast media emerged in India in the fifties in the

context of access to radio through community listening systems. The Software Committee on Doordarshan notes, "the scheme of community listening was introduced in 1954 on the basis of a Central subsidy and led to a peak figure of 210,000 community listening sets in the country in 1969." (1985:35-36) Given its vast reach cutting across geographical and regional barriers, and realising that most of its listeners were based in rural areas, radio witnessed a phenomenal growth of rural broadcasting in the fifties and sixties. By 1965, every station of All India Radio started broadcasting special programmes for rural areas. Creating awareness about education, especially for groups traditionally neglected like the women, has been a constant part of these programmes. Today, All India Radio reaches 97.3 per cent of the population spread over 90 per cent of the geographical area of the country through its 195 radio stations (Annual Report, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, 1998-99).

Television in India, began transmission in 1959 as an experimental service for school and rural telecasts. Right from its inception, television was viewed as a major weapon in the fight against poverty and educational backwardness. The Working Group on Software for Doordarshan observed, "It is important to put on record that India was the pioneer among the developing countries to evolve this novel communication approach and strategy for development. And yet the intervening period has witnessed a hiatus between principle and practice, between commitment to the idea of development - oriented communication and practice of utilising it for low-quality entertainment. In contrast, some developing countries which lagged far behind India in appreciating the developmental potential of television have taken big strides in the promotion of television as a powerful aid to development and mass education." (1985: 23)

Nonetheless, there have been a few experiences like the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) which have become landmarks in unravelling the communication potential of Television, especially for developmental aims. SITE which ran for a year in 1975-76, provided access to T.V. through Direct Reception Sets in 2,330 villages (150 of them without electricity) in backward districts of six states in India. The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) provided the hardware while Doordarshan was responsible for the software. The programmes, for school children in the morning and the general public in the evening, were prepared in four languages in three base production centres: in Delhi (in Hindi, for the States of Bihar, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh), at Cuttack (in Oriya, for Orissa) and at Hyderabad (in Telugu and Kannada for Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka).

Although the software was not specific enough to area and audience, either in content or in language, yet SITE proved to be a major success story. However, it was ISRO's experiment in research-based and need-based local programming, in local dialect, from its experimental terrestrial station in Pij in the Kheda district of Gujarat that proved the greatest success story in development communication during SITE.

Unfortunately this proved to be an exception rather than the rule in the manner in which Television was to evolve in the years to come. Assessing the performance of Doordarshan in the mid-eighties, the aforementioned Working Group, noted that the burgeoning reach of the medium through the INSAT series of Indian communications satellites, a systematic expansion of transmitters and the launch of colour transmission has not translated into equal and undifferentiated access for all, especially people in rural areas. Added to it is the growing irrelevance of the software of Doordarshan to the actual life of the

people. The group's report notes that "It is evident that ... (in) the quarter century since television made its advent in India there has been a shift away from the original intention of applying this medium for education and development, except for a symbolic use of satellite technology and terrestrial kendras for rural programmes." (1985: 33-34)

The committee's hope that public opinion and governmental initiative would act as effective correctives in the years to come have been belied in the last fifteen years or so, what with the coming in of private channels in the wake of growing globalisation and the policy of liberalisation. Doordarshan, has tried to keep pace with the changing scenario and growing competition through infusion of new technology like satellite uplinking and varied frequency transmitters. These have helped to increase its reach to 87 per cent of the Indian population. Coupled with it is the multiplication of channels with specialized news, sports and entertainment channels, along with 15 regional channels in languages like Marathi, Bengali, Telugu, Tamil to name a few. Nonetheless, the use of television as a medium of development and education has suffered. The private channels are focused on grossing revenue through entertainment while Doordarshan has failed to capitalize on its tremendous reach in evolving meaningful software. Joshi highlighting this lacunae writes "It is important to record that during the very period when the Working Group For Software Planning for Doordarshan completed its deliberations and submitted its recommendations, regarding the utilization of modern communication, especially television, for promoting awareness of the problems of development, education and social change, the Ministry of I&B choose to keep in abeyance this Report and launched full steam on the course of promoting commercially sponsored and commercially oriented software" (1989:56).

Doordarshan today with its reach and multiple channels is in a position to branch out into area-specific and local language, even dialect-specific, programming. Research has shown that programmes in standardized version of language be it Hindi or any other regional language, are not comprehended easily by the viewers. Moreover in a diverse country like India, programmes relevant to one region may be totally irrelevant to another. There is need for area-specificity not only in broad terms of the urban and rural context, but also as between one agro-economic linguistic rural area and another. Similarly, in tackling an issue like educational backwardness there may be specific socio-cultural reasons which can be most sensitively handled from a local perspective rather than a pan-national general programme on benefits accruing from education.

To make developmental communication more effective there is also need to build linkages between different media. Thus, if area-specific developmental programmes are produced by regional Doordarshan centres, field publicity units can take them further into the interior through screening of video cassettes of such programmes. The crux perhaps lies in innovation. Thus, even during SITE, the non-electrified villages were reached through battery/generators and even solar power- operated T.V. sets. The Development Broadcasting Unit of Kota Station of All India Radio,

which in the 1980s engaged in a highly successful experiment of linking programme production, especially on farming and other locally relevant issues with prior audience research, revealed the potential of media like radio in becoming partners in developmental efforts.

Today, a new technology has brought interaction and interconnectiveness within the realm of possibility. Even mass media like radio and television can visualize in terms of interacting with their audience, as in often done at least in

urban centres through telephone and now the internet. The same innovative programming techniques can be utilized right down to the district and perhaps block level if both the reach of technology like phones and software planning keep pace with the changing scenario.

Nevertheless, it is also true that development communication is a daunting task. The media input inevitably lessens, farther from the cities, as media especially mass media become less readily available (Schramm, 1973). Schramm goes on to note that, "most developing countries try to make up for this diminution of impact by making special use of mass communication – for example, printing posters, wall newspapers and similar documents full of development information – by planning radio programmes around rural discussion groups... or by making films of development topics for traveling film vans or other exhibitions.. (However) the special uses of mass communication tend to be too little and too scattered. The chains are often very long ones and so the posters don't get beyond the district level or the supply does not go around, or the particular information needs of a village aren't met by a general poster... And so, despite the best efforts of a development Ministry or Commission, the level of information on national development, like news and other information falls off away from the cities." (1973: 78)

This observation especially rings true if one overviews media advocacy of education in the Indian context. Added to it is a lack of coordination between various government agencies. Thus, the I&B Ministry which controls the communication infrastructure and programme production has no role in formulating the development approach and programmes. The Planning Commission and other development-oriented ministries which formulate the development approach and programmes have no control over communication

planning and management. This lack of synchronized effort results in several programmes and strategies being launched to tackle a particular problem but failing to achieve the desired result in a concerted and focused manner. Media advocacy of education seems to have fallen prey to this lack of clear conceptualization. This was sharply brought forth by the total lack of any concerted effort to advocate the case of education of women and girls on the part of the media engaged in developmental publicity and information dissemination.

CHANGING PERSPECTIVE

In recent years there has been a marked shift in developmental theory from its earlier emphasis on material capital to human capital formation. The various forms of human capital include health, education, information and skills and resultantly the concept of well being is now being defined not just in terms of provision of basic needs but of growth of these vital human capabilities. This shift in perception opens up vast possibilities of involving people in the developmental process. Simultaneously, if this new concept of development has to be operationalised, then there is a growing need to involve the media of communication for not only providing information and knowledge but also providing change in attitudes, motivations and perceptions of vast masses, especially in developing countries, where people are stricken as much by ignorance and prejudice as by poverty. Therefore, there arose another approach of incorporating communication into the development programme. This perspective arose out of the critique of the diffusionist and one-way tendencies of many development programmes which made no allowances for people's participation in communication for development. Thus, mass media like radio, television, film or print did not give any opportunity for audiences to use the media to communicate

responses to the messages received. Even when traditional communication media were utilized for disseminating messages on education, health etc., the audience remained passive recipients of messages formulated and imposed from above (Mlama, 1994).

Therefore, one of the main flaws of the earlier model of development stemmed from the considerable communication gap between the experts and the people whose real conditions, needs and perceptions remained uncommunicated to the decision-makers above. This resulted in vast wastage of resources, leakages to middlemen and intermediaries and also development disasters. Over the years, it has been realised that communication can act as a powerful corrective to distorted perceptions and priorities and can help in coveting any developmental programme into a productive partnership between the experts and the people. Participatory communication perspective points out the importance of conceiving development communications as a participatory process (Williamson, 1991; White, 1989). Media and overall development communication are used to motivate, educate and mobilize the target population to respond to planned programmes.

The focus of participatory communication strategies is to allow an interface of information flow not only downwards, from the government to the people, but across horizontally among the people and upward from the people to the government. It is aimed at altering communication processes and strategies and evolving those which take into account indigenous knowledge and self reliance gained through increased information, access and acquisition (Riano, 1994). The impact of this perspective coupled with the rapid infusion of new communication technology in the country in the decade of the 1980s has seen growing awareness about building a communication component into every development programme since then. Thus, the Seventh Five year Plan emphasized

the importance of establishing and strengthening "interlinkages between the existing communication infrastructure and development programmes". It also called for a "communication strategy involving Doordarshan, Akashvani and DAVP for creating awareness among the beneficiaries and the people..." (Joshi, 1989).

As far as media advocacy of education is concerned, the role of media in education was reiterated in a more focused manner in the National Education Policy, 1986. The policy stated: "Modern communication technologies have the potential to by pass several stages and sequences in the process of development encountered in earlier decades. Both the constraints of time and distance at once become manageable. In order to avoid structural dualism, modern educational technology must reach out to the most distant areas and the most deprived sections of beneficiaries simultaneously with the areas of comparative affluence and ready availability." (Government of India, 1986:27-28)

The Programme of Action (POA), 1992 also reaffirmed the effective utilization of the media both for advocacy and educational programmes to promote Education for All (EFA). In fact the rapidly increasing availability of new, improved channels of communication has contributed to a spurt in efforts to tap and harness the vast potential of the media in promoting the goal of EFA.

The Total Literacy Campaigns (TLC) launched by the National Literacy Mission (NLM) in the decade of the 1990s also amply demonstrated the highly effective role played by media in sensitization and mobilization of the people for these campaigns. The entire communication strategy was based on the belief that engagement in a communication process is mediated by social and cultural concerns and backgrounds of individuals. Therefore to solicit broad based participation narrative forms and visual codes which recognised indigenous

knowledge, communication forms and cultural traditions were widely used. The NLM set out to tackle illiteracy keeping district as a unit seeking to achieve comprehensive coverage by involvement of administration, the people's involvement in the form of volunteers, NGO involvement and grassroot level organization. Strong motivational strategies were a key and innovative aspect of TLCs. Before the actual campaign was mounted, the district underwent a literacy survey and environment building. Street theatre, posters, skits, songs based on folk media were widely used by Kala Jathas to generate awareness and enthusiasm among the people about the forthcoming literacy campaigns (Raghuvanshi, 1997).

The first district to successfully undertake TLC was Ernakulam in Kerala in 1989. It was followed in rapid succession by several others. Currently 429 districts are going through various phases of literacy. (Annual Report, MHRD, 1998-99). However, the initial momentum could not be sustained and the NLM seems to have lost its initial drive. Its objective and modus operandi have also been subject to criticism. Menon observes, "National Literacy Mission pretends its labours are going to 'revolutionize' this society. Education For All has become the comfortable slogan of ineffective governments that have not been able to deliver justice for all or jobs for all or food for all. Education is suddenly being projected as some delectable carrot to be dangled before the dispossessed to implicate them in their own continued enslavement (Quoted in Murthi, 1996: 13).

Their efficacy or lasting impact apart, from the point of view of utilizing media to raise levels of consciousness by highlighting educational matters and relevant issues and building linkages between education and overall social change, TLCs were quite successful. They demonstrated that folk media had immense potential in mobilizing and sensitizing public opinion. Another significant

outcome of these campaigns was the large-scale and active participation of women in them.

Subsequent educational programmes have, therefore, attempted to incorporate mobilization and motivation strategies based on extensive media use in their implementation. The DPEP, thus attempted to involve the community especially women through mobilization strategies. Posters, awareness marches, slogans and local media are widely used to create awareness about the need to educate children especially girls. However, as a large number of Indian girls continue to remain outside the educational system or drop out too soon to derive any benefit from it, it is evident that the focus of media advocacy of education has to be on fighting the persistent gender bias which is a major barrier in denying access to schooling to girls.

NPE, 1986 besides stressing the use of communication technology inside the classroom also advocated the use of media to promote awareness among the masses on the importance of girls' education. This was in tune with its assertion that the National Educational System would play a positive interventionist role in the empowerment of women. This was reiterated by the National Perspective Plan for Women (1998-2000). The focus of both these documents was on fostering a two pronged strategy of redesigned content and organization of education in an environment of heightened awareness among people about the need to educate their girls. The conceptualization of the challenge of UEE as the challenge of educating the girl child summed up the thrust of the education policy in the years to come. This policy pronouncement also clearly enunciated that the media had to be harnessed to create awareness among people about the necessity to send girls to school.

In fact, as the focus of development strategy in the social field has crystallized on women and girl child in the last decade or so, gender-sensitization and awareness has emerged as the key to its success. Therefore, a great deal of importance is attached to efforts which trigger changes in societal attitudes towards women. An integrated media campaign projecting a positive image of both women and girl child through electronic and print and film media has evolved as the most important component of the government's communication strategy. A large number of TV spots, quickies, documentary films, radio programmes with positive messages about the girl child and women are being produced and aired as part of this strategy (Das, 1998).

Women and Media – The Indian Experience

Nevertheless, these efforts cannot succeed unless suitable interventions are also made to change the overall projection of women in the media. The media in India, and indeed the world over, reinforces the gender bias and discriminatory attitudes prevalent in society and therefore any plan to use media to promote girls' education has a very limited chance of success in the present media scenario vis-à-vis the image of women it broadly portrays.

Twenty-five years ago, Towards Equality: The report of the Committee on the Status of Women, observed, "the content of communication at any given time reflects the pattern of values of the society. The way subjects dealing with women are treated indicate to a great extent the prevailing attitude of that society towards women. In any country women who are half the population are often half the audience. The success or failure of development plans in education, family planning, community development, health and nutrition depends upon the involvement and participation of women. The investigation shows that compared

to men, women are underprivileged in all walks of life and suffer from serious disabilities. Incidental studies on the impact of the mass media indicate that women's exposure to the media is often marginal and unsatisfactory. It appears that the mass media has not been an effective instrument to inform and prepare women to play their new role in society. The Committee's investigations indicate a general lack of awareness about the rights, problems, opportunities and responsibilities among both men and women." (Quoted in the Report of the working Group on Software for Doordarshan, 1985: 138)

A quarter century later, the situation has changed little. The media, far from being a medium for education and information, has just remained a means of cheap and popular entertainment devoid of any meaningful social purpose. Women continue to be portrayed either as commercial commodities promoting the sale of a product or are shown in the traditional mould of a housewife, mother or sister fulfilling a subordinate and subsidiary role in society. The recent media boom in the country especially in the wake of the satellite revolution of the 90s has only given a further impetus to the commercial depiction of women as a commodity. The entry of a number of private players – both domestic and foreign- in the hitherto Government-dominated and controlled electronic media, who are driven by commercial viability of their programmes, has resulted in an undue emphasis on depiction of vulgarity or undue importance to female sexuality. The Government-owned media cannot remain unaffected in such a scenario. On many occasions it falls prey to such portrayal as a backlash and as an unavoidable resort for survival in the burgeoning competitive atmosphere due to private sector participation (Farooqui, 1998).

Such a portrayal has a tremendous impact on the societal image of women especially in the wake of what Ray calls "Mediaisation of Culture" because of the

stupendous media explosion. She goes on to add, "most portrayals that attract our attention shape the contours of thinking of the dominant groups as well as that of others." (1998:52) This is particularly true of electronic media which is all pervasive and exercises influence in the urban as well as rural sectors cutting across the literacy barrier. Although it is true that the projection of women in media is reflective of, and is a corollary to, their overall social position such sex-stereotyped projection of women only helps and perpetuates the secondary position of women in society, more so because media as a mode of communication is singularly powerful because of its invisible operation. (Ray, 1998).

This fractured approach to women and women's issues extends to the print media also. Ray, quoting an analysis of the 'media and women's issues' spanning roughly a decade from 1979 to 1988 by Joseph and Sharma, points out that dowry deaths, rape and sati are the three major women's issues which really caught the media attention, apart from the highly complex Shah Bano controversy.

Since 1988, prostitution, sex determination tests and women's participation at the political decision making level have increasingly found more space in the papers. A women's page has appeared in some and yet the basic marginalisation of women remains. They have not made it to the center stage. The essence of the newspapers continues to be what it was from the inception of the industry – "Men talking to men in men's terms." (Ray, 1998)

It is in films, and in particular advertising that the commodification of women and their use as objects of sexual titillation comes to fore. Both print and electronic media carry advertisements where the female body is blatantly commercialized to promote a variety of products. Such media images lead to selective reinforcement of certain gender stereotyped values and attitudes among

the viewers. Farooqui argues that this rampant consumerism, which specially targets women, not only accelerates crime and violence against them but also fuels retrograde practices like dowry thus intensifying the social devaluation of women (1998).

Commenting on the highly biased programme content of Doordarshan, the Working Group on Software for Doordarshan wrote, "middle class ideologies of women's role as wives and mothers provide the underlying basis for most programmes. In a country, where 36 per cent of the agricultural workforce is female, women continue to be projected as predominantly non-producers and as playing a limited role outside the home. The plural nature of Indian culture and diverse role that women play is neither acknowledged nor communicated. This results in reinforcing of the stereotyped images and role specifications of women and in an uni-dimensional projection of their reality." (1985:36)

Echoing the same concern, the MacBride Commission surveying the global media scene, noted, "In general, inadequate attention is paid in the media to issues of specific importance to women, to the activities of the women's movement or to the social contribution made by independent and gifted women... A number of studies conclude that the overall effect of the portrayal of women in the media is to reinforce rather than reduce prejudices and stereotypes. This distortion tends to justify and perpetuate existing inequalities." (1980)

This has led writers like Zoonen to conclude that media are, (social) technologies of gender, accommodating, modifying, reconstructing and producing disciplining and contradictory cultural outlooks of sexual difference (1994:41). These operate, she goes on to argue, through media texts, such as movies, TV programmes, books, newspapers, records and so on. Nevertheless the problem does not end at portrayal but extends to access as well. Research on media

organizations has shown that the production structure is consistently gendered in terms of organizational culture and policy and in terms of the political economy of the media (Zoonen, 1994). Thus, despite a worldwide phenomenon of increasing visibility of women on media workforce, the same is not translated onto a restructuring of women's issues, as defined by the media. Hence, in India, as in the world over, concerns like denial of education and health to women or impact of environmental degradation and new economic policies on them are glossed over by the media.

Added to it is the restricted access of women to means of communication as viewers and users. In the Indian context, poverty and illiteracy keep a vast majority of women away from the print media even as readers. As regards the electronic media even where the community radio and television are available, either they are crowded by men, or on account of social inhibitions women are unable to view or listen. Furthermore, most of the women have no spare time to watch, or are too tired to do so or there is a maladjustment of the timings of the programmes relevant for them. As a result, a vast section of women, in rural areas in particular, are not yet related to the media even as readers, viewers or listeners, not to speak of their relationship with it in other capacities (Sawant, 1998).

In fact one of the flaws of the communication paradigm, especially communication media, harnessed for developmental purposes has been that gender has not been considered an analytical dimension in developing communication strategies (McAny & Storey, 1989; O'connor, 1989; Riano, 1990, 1991). Thus, references to gender are limited to identifying the gender of the participants and to describing the subordinate position of women in their communities and societies. Neither the ways in which gender influences the nature

of participation nor the mediation of gender in women's and men's subordination have been taken into serious consideration (Riano, 1994).

As Alfaro noted, "unconsciously, we considered our female recipients as objects and not as human subjects of communication who are producers of contents of real life, capable of interpreting and using communication. We even regarded them as mute and intellectually limited, simply listening to us and observing our efforts without thinking over our proposals." (1988:10) Accordingly, the traditional strategies of development programmes for the Third world have all overlooked women as active participants in communication processes. In addition, programmes to foster women's communication in development have misinterpreted the situation of women. The analysis of women in communication is built on an erroneous assessment of women's lack of participation in communication and their marginalization in the private sphere, just as women's absence from the male-dominated discourse has been equated with their total absence from community life (Steeves, 1990). Thus, the dominant metaphor of women's silence, which is used to refer to women's marginal position in public communication and in the communication industries, does not acknowledge the women's informal communicative interactions at the domestic and local levels (Riano, 1994). The stereotypical representation of women in media as well as mistaken generalizations about the absence of women from public communication activities has had an impact on communication strategies by generating proposals that instrumentalize, fragment, or deny women's reality.

This misrepresentation affects not only the societal image and perceptions about women but also has an adverse affect on their self-image. Above all, it leads to a lack of utilization of the very effective communication skills and networks which women build within their local communities and society. The widespread

mobilisation and participation of women in the literacy campaigns was one of the chief reasons for the success of TLCs in several districts of India pointing to the fact that women are effective communicators at the community and social levels. "The Mahila Dakiya", a newspaper started by neo-literate women for their village counterparts in the Bundelkhand district of U.P., is a pertinent example of the communication potential of women as far as print media is concerned. The media advocacy of the education of the girl child in India therefore has to be embedded within a broader media campaign aimed at overcoming the gender bias and attitudinal barriers amongst the majority of population in a highly sex differentiated society. One important point of departure should be that women should not be merely the subject of such a campaign but they should also be involved as active participants and communicators in initiating the necessary social change which is an essential pre-requisite of ensuring access to schooling for girls in India.

REORIENTING THE STRATEGY

There is thus the need for reorienting the entire approach to the media advocacy of education, especially education of the girl child. As Patankar puts it, "If the attitudes towards women and girls are to be changed and the social consciousness of the country is to be raised, a conscious strategic change is required in national media and communication efforts." (1991) Furthermore before formulating a strategy for media campaigning two crucial factors have to be borne in mind- poverty, which is almost in an endemic form in the country, and prevalence of patriarchy which imposes strict restrictions on females in the domain of their social and economic life (Verma, Verma & Kazmi 1995).

Dissemination of the message of education of the girl child has to be embedded within a broader media strategy aimed at undoing the gender inequality prevalent in Indian society. This strategy would need to incorporate such dimensions which lead to change in perceptions, attitudes and behaviour of people (Verma, Verma & Kazmi.1995). To a great extent, it has to be oriented towards educating males vis-à-vis their treatment of girls, instilling values of respect, equality and fairplay to replace the existing state of discrimination and exploitation of the girl child in all spheres (Patankar, 1991). Education, specially access to schooling, in the form of primary education has to be advocated as a prerequisite for developing the innate potential of the girl child in different aspects of life.

This can be done in the backdrop of a status report on the girl child in the Indian society wherein the contradictions inherent in the system should be highlighted with a view to sensitizing the people specially the parents. A careful analysis of the region-specific profile and needs of the people should be undertaken while delineating the relevant areas of inequality specially in the field of education (Verma, Verma & Kazmi, 1995).

Thereafter, a carefully worked out media campaign can be mounted for advocacy of the education of the girl child. A multimedia strategy needs to be adopted with a view to reinforcing the message. In the context of the media campaign, the use of folkmedia becomes an effective tool of sensitizing people. Moreover, as Bhasin and Aggarwal point out," Two crucial and interrelated aspects have particular relevance for third world countries. The first is that people rather than technology have traditionally been the media of communication when, within a largely oral tradition, songs and story-telling, folk drama and puppetry

were commonly used in these societies. Second, the content of such communication was taken essentially from religion and myth." (1984: 5)

This tradition can be successfully utilised while adapting and localising the national level broad based media advocacy campaign at the grassroot level. It is in this context that women can be actively involved as proponents of the message of the education of the girl child in their communities utilising their local informal communication networks as well as institutions like Mahila Mandals. Other important media that can be effectively used in campaigning are the print and electronic media. The former needs to be used preferably in the local language while the latter has to evolve into a community media to be really effective.

These media have the potentiality to act as a powerful instrument of social change. They can not only help in bringing about a change in the status of women but, even more crucially, in the attitude of society towards them. Media can act as an empowering instrument especially in educationally empowering women thereby making them aware of their capabilities and rights. In doing so, the focus has to be on the rural women who constitute 80 per cent of women in India. The media must talk to women readers, listeners and viewers in their language and dialects on matters in which they are interested as well as those in which it is necessary to interest them (Vyas, 1998).

T.V. and Radio can aim at "Education through entertainment" through a variety of programmes, films and plays specially designed both for women and for promoting gender equality. There is also need for stressing complete autonomy for local electronic media stations in production and relay of the software – which includes the content, the language or dialect and the hours of relay of the programmes (Sawant, 1998).

Summary

This dissertation has focussed on the interface between education and communication and has attempted to probe the contours of a media advocacy of education of the girl child in the Indian context as a strategy to counter the barrier of gender which is largely instrumental in blocking access to education for a majority of Indian girls. If education is conceived as being essential not only for social well-being and advancement of individuals but also their empowerment, then primary education is a precondition for providing the basic empowering skills to an individual and is, therefore, the basis on which the entire edifice of education is built.

Primary education, thus, emerges as a crucial human development indicator. Access to it is vital for all children but it is imperative for girls, especially Indian girls, who encounter not only problems faced by children in general arising out of poverty and other social deprivations, but also problems rooted in the reality of their being simply girls. Gender bias against girls is rampant in Indian society as is reflected in a negative sex ratio, higher female child morality, lesser access of girls to food, health, education and recreation and their early induction into domestic work, marriage and motherhood.

At the dawn of independence, India therefore placed the greatest hope on education as a long term strategy for guaranteeing equal opportunities to women and improving their overall status and position. Nevertheless, despite constitutional safeguards providing equality for women and even positive discrimination in their favour, especially in the educational sphere, and a number of commissions and committees reiterating the urgency of educating girls, the situation on the ground remains grim. Even today, girls account for 43 per cent of

students at the primary level and 39 per cent at the middle stage (Nayar, 1999). If the number of girls who drop out of schools and those who never get the chance to enter the schooling system is added to these figures the educational profile of girls in our society right at the primary stage becomes even more dismal.

The reason behind the situation is not far to seek as access to education is rooted within a specific complex of socio-political, economic and cultural factors in a given society which act as powerful intervening variables. In the Indian context these take the shape of a strong gender bias which leads to the very birth, survival and nurturing of a girl child being threatened at every stage because of a low valuation placed on female life. In a largely patriarchal Indian society, organization of production, division of labour, pattern of inheritance, social institutions and cultural practices are all heavily loaded against women and therefore impinge unfavourably on the status of the girl children and constrain their access to schooling. So much so that even economic advancement is no guarantee of a change in attitude towards girls' education as is amply borne out by the state of girls' education in Haryana. Here, a traditional mindset continues to have its hold amidst rapid economic prosperity and willingness to adopt latest technological advances in farming and allied activities.

The challenge which emerges, therefore, is to make mass schooling of girls a workable proposition in a setting where a large section of the populace is ambivalent, or indifferent, about the value of formal schooling for girls. In such a scenario, any educational breakthrough cannot occur through government decree or imposition alone. There is, therefore, an urgent need to create an active demand on the part of the parents for education of their girls by whittling down their reluctance to educate them. It is here that communication can and does step in.

Communication has been an integral part of human society ever since the beginning. As a means of exchange of ideas, information and knowledge communication has played a stellar role in human progress. The development of newer means of communication in every epoch, be it language, the printing press, or the proliferation of mass media like radio and television or the satellite communication explosion of the last decade or so; each advancement has contributed to the furthering of human enterprise and knowledge. In the post-second world war period, the media with their wide reaching accessibility, the power of the message they disseminate, their ability to arouse interest instantly and an entirely innovative dimension they bring to learning and are visualised as vital tools in creating an educational environment.

The third world countries in particular attempted to overcome their constraints of time and resource in educating the masses by harnessing the media in a big way in this endeavour. An understanding of the various theoretical perspectives of communication and society serves as a backdrop to this practical utilization of various media of communication – the sender, the message and the audience - as well as an informed analysis of the mediation between gender and communication, the globalization of communication, the research on audiences and media efforts further helps in providing depth to the communication initiative.

Accordingly, the developing nations today, keeping pace with communication research and their own experience have moved away from the earlier diffusionist 'top down' model of development and the related communication paradigm. They are now opting for a synergy of efforts between the big and little media to maximize communication impact as part of a more participative and interactive model of development. India, in fact, was a pioneer in realizing the immense developmental potential of various media and set out to

evolve a complementary network of different media as part of its nation building exercise right at the time of independence itself.

Thus, different media units, utilizing the group and the traditional media and the medium of films came into being. Simultaneously, the reach of newly emerging mass media like radio and television was sought to be systematically expanded with a clear mandate to harness them for development and education. Nonetheless, the lack of clearly enunciated policies especially communication policies and a failure to coordinate the development and communication initiatives has led to an underutilization of this network, the growth of which preceded even economic growth in the country.

The media advocacy of education has been one of the key areas to suffer from this lack of concerted effort. In a country, where endemic educational backwardness restricts the active participation of a large part of the population in the socio-economic-political aspects of society, this communication default becomes even more glaring. This is particularly true in case of women and other disadvantaged groups who have been traditionally discriminated against. The lack of access to education for women and girls is both a cause and an effect of the low status accorded to them in our society and the media can play a crucial role in bringing about attitudinal changes and ensuring their educational empowerment.

However, while it took the Indian state nearly forty years after independence to acknowledge that gender bias is a major bottleneck in the schooling of girls in the country and to forcefully enunciate, in NPE, 1986, that education would hereafter be used as a tool for empowering women in the field of communication the strategy of media advocacy of education of the girl child is still only crystallising. Even as the focus of the developmental strategy, specially in the social field, has in the last decade or so shifted to the empowerment of

women and the girl child, a forceful reiteration of the need to educate girls as an essential pre-requisite to enhancing their life chances is still not forthcoming. The need perhaps is to mount a national level multimedia campaign with specific local and regional inputs to drive home the message.

Thus, while the importance of the synergy between education and communication is acknowledged by all, its best manifestation would be the development of a successful and effective strategy of breaking down attitudinal barriers to educating girls especially in the Indian context. The question, therefore, is not about the relative importance or otherwise of utilizing the media for promoting primary education of girls but how quickly and effectively it can be done.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Acker, Sandra (ed.) (1984): World Yearbook of Education 1984 Women and Education, Kegan Page, London.

Acker, Sandra (1994): Gendered Education: Sociological Reflection on Women, Teaching and Education, Open University Press, Buckingham.

Anand Lakshmi, S. (1991): The Female Child in a Family Setting in The Journal of Social Work, volume LII, No.1, pp.29-36.

Annual Report (1998-99): Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India.

---------- (1998-99): Department of Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

Ballara, Marcela (1994): Women and Literacy, Women and World Development Series, Zed Books Ltd., London.

Basu, A Jeffrey R (ed.) (1996): Girls Schooling Women's Autonomy and Fertility Change in South Asia, Sage Publications, 1996, Delhi, India.

Basu (A) (1996): Girls' Schooling, Autonomy and Fertility Changes. What do these words mean in South Asia? In Basu and Jeffrey, opp cit.

Blackledge, D. and Hunt, B. (1985): Sociological Interpretation of Education, London: Croom Helm.

Chdorow, N.J. (1995): "Gender as a Personal and Cultural Construction" Signs Journal of Women in Culture and Society, Vol. 20, No.3, 1995, pp.516-544.

Chanana (K) (1996): Educational Attainment, Status Production and Women's Autonomy: A Study of Two Generations of Punjabi Women, in New Delhi in Basu & Jeffrey, Opp cit pp.107-132.

Chanana, K. (1996): Gender Inequality in Primary Schooling in India: The Human Rights Perspective, Journal of Education Planning and Administration, X (IV), pp.361-381.

Chitnis, Suma (1996): Educating Women for Development in Journal of Education and Social Change, Vol. X, No.1 and 2, pp.1-21.

Cobley, P. (ed.) 1996: The Communication Theory Reader, Routledge, London.

Daswani, C.J. (1999): Elementary Education in India: Issues and Perspectives, in ICWW Journal Oct. 98-March 99, pp.19-26.

Defleur, M. and Ball-Rokeach S. (ed.), 1989: Theories of Mass Communication, Longman, New York.

Devasia, L. and Devasia, V.V. (ed.) (1991): Girl Child in India, Ashish, New Delhi.

---------- (1991): The Survival of the Girl Child, in Devasia and Devasia opp cited.

District Primary Education Programme-Gender Studies Report (1994) : District Hisar, Department of Women Studies, NCERT, New Delhi.

---------- (1994): District Sirsa, Department of Women Studies, NCERT, New Delhi.

Education of the Girl Child in India: A Fact Sheet, (1996): Department of Women's Studies, NCERT, New Delhi.

Elgqvist – Saltzman, Inga, (1992) 'Straight Roads and Winding Tracks: Swedish Education Policy from a Gender Equality Perspective', Gender and Education, Vol.4, No.½ pp.41-56.

Elliot, C (1984): Women's Education and Development in India, in Acker (1984), opp cit.

Farooqui, Vimla (1998):	Gender Bias in Print, Electronic Media in Mathur, opp. cit.
Giddens, A (1989):	Sociology, Polity Press, Cambridge, U.K.
Gould, Carol (ed.) (1983):	Beyond Omination – New Perspectives on Women and Philosophy, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
Halsey, A.H. Lander, H., Brown, P. Wells, A. (ed.) (1997):	Education, Culture, And Society, OUP, UK,.
Hasan, Z. (ed.), (1994):	Forging Identities: Gender, Communities and the state, kali for women, Delhi.
--------- (1994):	'Contextualizing Gender and Identity in Contemporary India', In Hasan, opp cited.
Howitt, Dennis (1982):	The Mass Media and Social Problems, (International Seeis on Experimental Social Psychology: Vol. 2), Pergammon, Oxford, London.
Humm, Maggie (1989):	The dictionary of teminist Theory, Harvester Wheat sheaf, London.
India Human Development Report (1999):	National Council of Applied Economic Research. New Delhi.
Inglis, Fred (1990):	Media Theory – An Introduction, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, London.
Innovative Pilot Project on Promotion of Primary Education of Girls and Disadvantaged Groups in Haryana (1993):	Department of Women's Studies, NCERT, New Delhi.
Joshi, P.C. (1989):	Culture, Communication and Social Change, Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi.

Karabel J. and Halsey, A.H. (ed.) (1977): Power and Ideology in Education, New York: Oxford University Press.

Karlekar, Malvika (1983): Education and Inequality; in Andre Beteille (ed.) Equality and Inequality: Theory and Practice, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp.182-242.

Kelly G (1984): Women's access to Education in the Third World: Myths and Realities in Acker (1984) op.cit, pp.81-89.

Lips, H.M.: Sex and Gender – An Introduction, California Mayfield Publishing Company.

Malhotra, S.P. (1998): Impact of State Policy of Free Education to Girls in Haryana, Department of Education, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra.

Mathur, Pradeep (ed.) (1998): Women and Media, Indian Institute of Mass Communication and Press Council of India, New Delhi.

Mcquail, Denis and Windahl, Sven (1993): Communication Models – For the Study of Mass Communication, Longman, London.

Mcquail, Denis (1994): Mass Communication theory – An Introduction Sage Publications, London.

Megarry (J) (1984): Sex, Gender and Education, in Acker (1984) op.cit.

Mlama, Penina (1994): Reinforcing Existing Indigenous Communication Skills: The Use of Dance in Tanzania in Riano, op.cit.

Murthy, R.K. (1996): Speaking for the Child – Media Wakes up to the Task in ICCW Journal, Vol. III, No.3&4, pp.9-15.

Nambissan, Geetha B., 1995, 'Gender and Education: The Social Context of Schooling Girl Children in India'. 'Perspectives in Education, Vol.ii, Nos. 3 and 4, pp.199-209.

National Policy on Education (1986): Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Education.

Nayar, Usha (1991): Universalization of Primary Education of Rural Girls in India, Department of Women's Studies, NCERT, New Delhi.

--------- (1992): A Study of Factors for Continuance and Discontinuance of Girls in Elementary Schooling, Department of Women's Studies, NCERT, New Delhi.

--------- (1992): Study of Dropout and Non-enrolment Among Girls in Rural Haryana, Department of Women's Studies, NCERT, New Delhi.

--------- (1995): From Girl Child to Peason, UNESCO, New Delhi Office

--------- (1999): Saksham: Gender sensitive life skill Approach to Curriculum Transcation at the Elementary Stage in ICCW Journal, Oct.'98-March '99, pp.56-69.

Nooper, I.K. (1994): The War against Gender Bias, Sterling Publishers New Delhi.

Patankar, Meera (1991): 'The Girl Child and the Media', in Devasia and Devasia, op.cit.

Patel, I. And Dighe, A. (1997): Gender Issues in Literacy and Education – A Working Paper, Institute of Rural Management, Anand.

Peterson, V.S. and Runyan, A.S. (1993): Global Gender Issues, Westview Press, San Francisco.

Dr. Prasad, V. (1999): 'ECCE - An Educational Right' in ICCW Journal, Oct. 98-March '99, pp.12-18.

Programme of Action (1992): Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Education.

Public Report on Basic Education in India (1999): Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

Punalekar, S.P. (1991): 'Gender, Class and Culture: Situation of Girl Children in India', in Devasia and Devasia, op.cit.

Ray, Bharti (1998): Depiction of Women in Media in Mathur, op.cit.,

The Report of the Working Group on Software Planning for Doordarshan (1995): Vol. I & II Publications Division, Government of India.

Riano, Pilar (1994): Women in Grassroots Communication: Furthering Social Change.

---------- (1994): Women in Participation in Communication: Elements for a framework, in Riano, op.cit.,

---------- (1994): Gender in Communication: Women's Contributions, in Riano, op.cit.,

Rowbotham, Sheila (1992): Women in Movement; Feminism and Social Action, Routledge, New York.

Sawant P.B. (1998): Opportunities for Women in Media, in Mathur, op.cit.,

Schram, W. (ed.) (1960): Mass Communication, University of Illion Press, Urbana, USA.

---------- (1964): Mass Media and National Development, California Standford University Press.

---------- (1973): Man, Messages and Media: A Look at Human Communication, Standford.

---------- (1977): Big Media Little Media, London, Berverly Hills, Sage.

---------- (1988): The Story of Human Communication: Cave Painting to Microchip, Harper and Row, New York.

Selected Educational Statistics (1997): Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Education.

Situational Analysis of Children and Women in Haryana (1997): Economic and Statistical Organisation, Planning Department, Haryana.

Statistical Handbook of Haryana, 1997-98: Economic and Statistical Organisation, Planning Department, Haryana.

Stromquist, Nelly P. (1990). "Women and Illiteracy: The Interplay of Gender Subordination and Poverty", in Comparative Education Review: 34.1, pp.95-111.

Towards Equality (1974): Report of the Committee on the Status of Women, Government of India.

UNESCO – (1980): Many Voices, One World, Kegan Page, London.

---------- (1984): Media and Education, Paris.

UNESCO – (1987): Women and Media Decision Making: The Invisible Barriers, Sterling Publisher, New Delhi.

Vlassoff C (1996): 'Against the Odds: The Changing Impact of Schooling on Female Autonomy and Facility in an Indian Village' in, in Basu and Jeffrey, op.cit.,

Yadava, J.S. Mathur, P. (1998): Issues in Mass Communication – The Basic Concepts, Vol. I and II, Kanishka Publishers, New Delhi.

Zoonen, Liesbet Van (1994): Feminist Media Studies, Sage Publication, London.