

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 PREAMBLE

Equality is an article of faith in the Indian constitution and guaranteed by specific articles.

The preamble to the constitution of India resolves to secure to all its citizens : Justice - social, economic and political; Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; Equality of status and opportunity; and to promote among them all Fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity of the nation (Basu, 1996).

As the Committee on the Status of Women in India (GOI, 1974) points out in the report "Towards Equality", the constitutional guarantees would lead us to treat equality between sexes as a settled fact, for which no discussion was necessary. But there is still considerable ambiguity and ambivalence in the understanding of the need and implications of equality between sexes.

The truth in these observations is indisputable. Though improvement in the status of women was a pledge made by the constitution makers and admitted by the Government from the very beginning as one of the major tasks facing the country, women still suffer from considerable bias.

Manifestations of gender bias abound in Indian society in day-to-day experiences, so much so that most of the people accept it as something natural and unobjectionable - nothing worth noticing or questioning.

Laws and policies reflect gender bias and so do media, literature, customs and folk songs. Mythology and religious preachings play a crucial role in maintaining the gender myths and stereotypes. Societal attitudes, discrimination and double standards are the constant reminders of the persisting inequalities crossing the boundaries of time, nations and cultures. Men are also victims of gender bias but problems of women in patriarchal societies are more accute.

Thus, there is a wide gap between what is and what ought to be. This gap can be bridged only if the citizens, especially the future citizens, accept and cultivate gender equality as an essential moral value in society.

1.2 COMMUNICATION FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Significance of Communication as a catalyst for social change has long been recognised. Though the concept of development and the paradigms of Communication for Development have undergone major shifts in the last forty years, communication remains a key factor in the transformation of any social group. The effectiveness of communication as a catalyst for social change, however,

depends a great deal on the social and political will because without it communication can be as effectively used for reinforcing the status-quo.

Informal day-to-day communication within the family and community largely influences one's perspective of gender. Mass Media, however, have become a crucial influencing factor today. As Ramamurti Committee observed "Efforts by the education system to incorporate a gender perspective and promote women's equality need to be accompanied by intervention in the domain of media as well" (GOI, 1990).

1.2.1 Gender-bias in Mass Media

A review of various research studies on the media portrayal of women undertaken up to 1980 by Gallagher (1981), however, observes : "a consistent picture emerges from those research studies which have investigated the media's portrayal of women. At the very best, the portrayal is narrow; at worst, it is unrealistic, demeaning and damaging". In another study Gallagher (1983) has observed that the depiction of women in mass media is remarkably consistent throughout the world. Barring media controlled by governments with a strong commitment to social change, the overall picture highlighted the negative features of media treatment of women. These included media under representation of women and women's concerns; the use of women as a commodity in advertising; an ambivalent attitude

to women evident in certain stereotyped images in which women exclusively and unalterably are "good" and "pure" or definitely and unchangeably "bad" and "immoral".

Reviewing the multitude of articles and papers on the relationship between women and media on the Indian scene Krishnan and Dighe (1989) mention Joshi Committee* report condemning television's heavy reliance on feature films and film-related programs, emphasising the middle-class orientation of the program output and the near-eclipse of working class women. Chandiram and Agrawal (1982) also commented on the asymmetrical relationship between men and women on Indian television where the 'wife and other' image was predominant.

Bambawale (1994) conducted a study of women's image as projected on cinema screen. After analysing Hindi films produced between 1982 and 1992 and collecting data from 200 women viewers, the study concluded that woman's image was given the least importance in Hindi films. She emerges without a specific identity (her educational achievement or professional role or self-achieved status are never highlighted) and her ideals and ambitions are directed towards acquiring a husband and worshipping him as God.

Informal observation of media for years by the investigator indicates that many a time brilliant,

* The Working Group on Software for Doordarshan set-up in 1982 popularly known as the Joshi Committee.

successful, high achieving women are treated with ridicule or as a 'potential risk' in popular television programs and films, 'taming of the shrew' remaining a favourite theme. Alternatively, women taking up conventionally male professions like that of a police officer or a gangster are eulogised leaving an impression that only by entering the conventionally male domain women can achieve equality. In fact the effect, if any, of a whole week's public service messages on gender equality can be wiped out by the Doordarshan's weekly dose of commercial Hindi films which unquestionably attract bigger audiences and more attention.

This is not to say that men's portrayal on media is without bias. But the influence of the women's movement and emergence of Women's Studies as a serious academic discipline have had major contribution in acceleration of research and documentation of women and media. Consequently, little attention has been paid to the stereotype portrayal of masculinity in media.

Lack of gender sensitivity and proper understanding of the subtle nuances of gender bias on part of the people handling the mass media is a major problem.

The recent (March 1996) campaign of the Government of Gujarat for their '*Kunvarbai-nu-Mameru*'* scheme is a

* A popular classic in Gujarati literature in which the poet Premanand portrays a father's agony on not being in a position to fulfil the monetary demands of the in-laws of his daughter.

perfect example of how a communication message intended to benefit women can have a totally opposite effect due to deep-rooted gender bias in the communicator's frame of mind.

The television message on Doordarshan begins with an old Gujarati song '*Dikri to Paarki Thaapan Kahevaay*' - a daughter is somebody else's property entrusted to you temporarily. Her proper place is at her in-law's. The scheme promises Rs.5000/- to parents belonging to economically-backward families at the time of daughter's marriage so that she can go to her in-laws with a respectable sum of money.

Joshi (1986), who studied the participation of women at the higher decision-making levels of Doordarshan, reported that of his respondents, a large number of women felt that increasing the proportion of women employees in the structure would improve program quality and bring about a more balanced (gender) perspective. But Zoonen (1986) found that the conventional notion, that news content would change if the number of women journalists/producers increased, was not supported by empirical evidence. What Zoonen found could very well apply to Indian situation also because it is illogical to assume that just because a person is a woman she would have more gender sensitivity and would value gender equality more than a man. In fact, the long-term subtle socio-cultural influences by the family, schooling, and community often make women victims of

cultural conditioning. It is not uncommon to find women at all levels who are steeped in gender bias.

Considering the fact that the official mass media in India, the All India Radio (AIR) and the Doordarshan reach over 800 million people and adding to that the numerous (33,612 in 1993 out of which 5,316 were in English) newspapers and periodicals published (GOI, 1995), the mainstream media could have significant influence in giving direction to social change. Their contribution in encouraging gender equality, however, seems to have remained negligible.

1.2.2 Educational Approaches and Alternative Communication Media for Gender Equality

Throughout history the socially and politically powerful groups have been effectively using media as well as religious preachings, texts and discourse; social and educational institutions including the family, school and politics; and literature for shaping and reinforcing gender bias and gender stereotypes. It is certainly possible to use all these channels of communication for a reverse goal - that of gender equality and gender role-sharing. In fact, communication and education will have to play a key role in this area because social change in an ancient social fabric can not happen overnight, nor is it achievable through mere legal measures.

This realisation is clearly reflected in India's National Policy on Education (NPE) and also in the modifications undertaken in 1992 (GOI, 1992a). The policy does not talk about merely equal educational opportunities for women. It views education (formal, nonformal and informal) as an agent of basic change, as an instrument of social engineering which will be used to neutralise the accumulated distortions of the past. Program of action (GOI, 1992b) under NPE (GOI, 1986), also declares that the electronic, print and traditional media will be used to create a climate for equal opportunities for women and girls. They will play a complementary and supportive role in awareness-generation, dissemination of information and communication.

The NCERT handbook on Training Program on Methodology of Women's Education (NCERT, 1989) considers the following factors very important for bringing social change in gender roles : Government's priority to women's issues and policy changes; willingness of people and institutions to put them in practice; change in attitudes and prejudices concerning women's role in development; change in reproductive, child-care and auxiliary home responsibilities; and redefining of social roles of men and women to encompass both the public roles and the private sphere of the family.

All these factors have to be reflected in the mass media and other communication channels.

The country paper presented by India at the 4th World Conference on Women at Beijing in 1995 (GOI, 1994) in an exclusive section on 'Societal Reorientation, Gender Sensitization and Advocacy' gives an overview of efforts made for communication for gender-just society. Alternative forms which can be ideologically and politically more significant are limited in their reach and find it difficult to compete with the mainstream media. Several initiatives, however, do attempt to intervene directly in the process of social and attitudinal change. They work to correct distortions of existing messages and represent women more authentically and positively. This has been an arduous task given the fact that it is seen as marginal with constraints of limited outreach and finances. Yet for many years now a large number of women's organisations, NGOs and Government departments, not to mention individuals, have consistently attempted to : i) analyse the sexist content of the various media, ii) to protest and challenge sexism in the media, and iii) to create alternatives to sensitise society on women's issues" (GOI, 1994). These efforts include : Analysis of textbooks, self-learning modules (for example, NCERT modules), literacy primers and materials, publication of literature by feminist publishers (Kali for Women, for example). Women's Journals (for example, Manushi), establishing media advocacy groups working towards constructive intervention and development of interactive media like songs, posters and street plays by NGOs and women's groups. A few individuals and groups have also

attempted communication for gender equality through subtle invasion of the mainstream print and electronic media.

1.2.3 Gender Training and Gender Sensitisation

The National Perspective Plan for Women (GOI, 1988b) identifies training as a key strategy in changing social attitudes and biases that seep into policy and program implementation. Training programs in the area of gender and development cover a wide range of groups : teachers, government officers, police officers, policy makers, and NGO volunteers. Some programs aim at introducing gender components in the existing training programs (e.g. Programs of the Indian Institute of Management in Government, Trivandrum and the Water Resource Engineering and Management Institute, Vadodara) while some focus exclusively on gender and development (e.g. DANIDA supported 'Training Packages for Women's Development, gender sensitization programs of the National Institute of Rural Development and Gender Awareness and Development Workshops by the Women's Studies Research Centre, and Baroda Citizens Council, both of Vadodara).

Many international bodies like UNIFEM, DANIDA, CIDA, SIDA, NORAD, and Royal Netherlands Agency also provide gender training to their planners and staff and some non-government donor agencies like Oxfam, Action for World Solidarity and Friedrich Neumann Foundation arrange workshops and seminars for their project partners.

1.2.4 The New Communication Paradigm : Participation, Sharing and Analysis

The perspectives concerning the role of communication in development have changed greatly in the 1980s and 1990s.

Describing the paradigm shift in 'Communication for Development' Melkote (1991) emphasises greater participation of the beneficiaries in the development process in general and in message development in particular. "There is a shift from the concept of Development Communication (DC) with its emphasis on top-down, big-media centered, government-to-people communication to Development Support Communication (DSC) focussed on co-equal, little-media-centered, government - with-people communication' (Ascroft and Masilela, 1989). 'A concomitant development is the emergence of a new development professional : the development support communicator who mediates between the technical experts and their beneficiaries" (Melkote, 1991).

The new paradigm of the 1990s, envisages new functions for communication in development. According to Diaz-Bordenave (1989), some of the new functions for communication media that may contribute significantly to a participative society are :

- i) to help in the development of a community's cultural identity,
- ii) to act as a vehicle for citizen's self-expression,
- iii) to facilitate problem articulation, and
- iv) to serve as tools for diagnosis of community's problems.

Discussing the gender training strategies, the Country Paper (a draft) by India for the 4th World Conference on Women at Beijing in 1995 also warns against communication modules brought from outside and for a short duration. "Gender training itself is not merely a skill, but the result of conceptual clarity. It is also critical for the success of the effort that it is participatory and that the conclusions are reached through reflection and analysis so that they are internalised" (GOI, 1994).

1.2.5 Communication for Gender Equality at School Level

The formative school years in an individual's life are very important if gender equality as a value is to be imbibed in the society.

Socialization has far-reaching significance at school level also. Every student brings with him or her a set of gender related attitudes and expectation. Socialisation of teachers and its consequences also have significant influence on the gender related attitudes and practices of students. Added to these are attitudes and values of administrators, policy makers and curriculum planners.

To make the matter more complex, children and adolescents form a large portion of consumers of the mainstream media.

With respect to the socialisation of the young, Krishnakumar (1986) comments with insight on the role of formal education, more specifically of school in sex-role learning. He challenges the view that the school and community should be complementary to each other in socialising the young : "If one accepts this principle of complementarity, then there is no hope for changing the prevailing code of sex-typing through education, which means that there is no hope that education can intervene in the cultural reproduction of entrenched sex-roles". Reflecting on the ways and means by which the school can act as a counter-socialiser in sex-role learning, Krishnakumar emphasises that when cinema and television cast in conservative images of women and men, the school's media - that is, textbooks and other materials - should offer images and symbols that motivate the reader to look at human beings in terms of their own struggle for an identity rather than as reciting prefabricated conversations. "... If acceptance of the prevailing order and its norms is what society demands, then the school should demand the spirit of inquiry and should offer opportunity to practice it".

Ramamurti Committee also supports this view : "Outmoded traditions and myths that hinder positive development of women and their role in national life should be objectively discussed in the classroom in a gender perspective". (GOI, 1990)

The communication approach selected for the present study attempts to give students these opportunities as it focuses on participation, sharing, inquiry and analysis.

1.3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

1.3.1 Gender Equality

To understand the problems of gender bias and to appreciate the philosophy of gender equality it is essential to first understand the words 'Gender' and 'Gender Roles'.

The word 'Gender' is used in grammar to classify words roughly answering to sex (Chamber's, 1972). The terms 'Gender' and 'Sex' are often used interchangeably but the distinction is that 'Sex' is purely biological whereas 'Gender' is constituted biologically, socially, economically, culturally, and above all, politically (McLaren, 1988).

Role is defined as a set of rights, duties and expectations associated with a particular position in the society (Baker et al., 1980). Gender role concerns rights, duties and expectations associated with being a man or a woman. Some writers use the term sex roles when they speak of purely biological functions (such as having babies) or characteristics (such as breast development), and the term 'gender roles' when they mean behaviour that is learned and can be acted out by persons of either biological sex (such as being emotional or cooking).

Gender Equality is a complex concept that does not stay fixed. Though being a constituent of the set of basic democratic values, its definition varies over time, situations, cultures and social groups. If one uses the notion of 'difference' as an organizing principle, one can periodize the entire history of feminism in terms of the domination, in alteration, of an androgynous and a female - uniqueness view of women's subordination and liberation. The eighteenth and early nineteenth century Enlightenment feminists, religious and secular, tended towards an androgynous vision of the fundamental humanity of men and women; that is, they emphasised the artificial imposition of femininity upon women as part of a system subordinating, constricting and controlling them with the result that 'women' as an historically created category, had had their capacities as well as their aspirations reduced. By contrast, the later nineteenth century feminists tended towards a female moral superiority view. They applauded what was different in women, and while they were not always biologicistic in their assumptions about how men and women became different, the process of differentiation was less interesting to them than the result : a world divided between a male principle of aggression and a female one of nurturance. Motherhood was the fundamental defining experience of womanhood (Gordon, 1991).

In the second wave of feminism, a similar movement from androgyny to female uniqueness occurred. The early women's liberation movement, both radical and liberal, emphasized equal rights and equal access for women to previously male privilege. In the past decade, we have seen again a celebration of women's unique and superior qualities with, again, an emphasis on mothering as both source and ultimate expression of these qualities. But it is not as if an accute shift occurred from one perspective to another; rather this duality persists continuously within feminism e.g. on one side, there is a demand for equality in the spheres of career, achievement and wages, which is hardly possible without higher male participation in child rearing, while at the same time 'female superiority' view glorifies the mystical and special bond between mother and child which no other relationship could replicate.

Gender Equality has also become a controvercial term over the years. Radical egalitarians claim that man and woman are exactly equal in all respects. This narrow view, apart from being scientifically unsound, has serious consequences. It does not respect the special biological necessities of women for which they need special protection and privileges (e.g. during periods of maternity, lactation etc.). As Hirst (1976) points out "Egalitarianism can never lead to equality. It can only apply an equal standard to qualitatively unequal class".

Before exploring any intervention approach it is important to examine several perspectives and arrive at the perspective for the present study.

1.3.2 Gender Equality : Different Perspectives

Both feminist scholarship and women's studies came, of course, directly out of the women's movement. Feminist scholarship has taken up not simply the task of developing an understanding of the world that takes women into account, it also has as its explicit goal the search for the origins of women's oppression and formulation of effective strategies for change. The subject of Women's Studies was developed primarily as one of the strategies for change. It was seen as a way of disseminating feminist scholarship and of 'educating for change'. The basis of feminist scholarship and of Women's Studies is thus a commitment to social change, specifically addressed to ending the oppression of women (Lowe and Lowe Benston, 1991).

Different groups of women including scholars and activists, however, have different perspectives on 'social change', the concept and nature of equality between men and women and also on strategies and approaches for social change. Thus, there is no universal model to which everyone has to subscribe.

Discussing the perspective taken by different branches of feminism, Lowe and Lowe Benston (1991) emphasise

"... it should be recognised not only that labels are imprecise and represent abstractions of real positions but also that most feminists share all of these views to some extent and differ primarily in emphasis."

Liberal Perspective

Liberal feminists ask for equal opportunity to women to compete within the existing system. This branch of feminism is much less committed to egalitarian aims and collective work styles than the others and makes the general assumption that women will act like men given equal opportunity. Attempts at institutional change are directed towards those ideas and institutions that seem to keep women in disadvantaged positions, such as sex-role socialisation, inequality of opportunity, unequal access to education, and (female) responsibility for child rearing and housework. The assumption is that women's oppression serves no real social function, so that the institutions seen as specifically oppressive to women can be changed without any fundamental change in other social institutions.

The liberal feminist idea that changes in individual consciousness are the critical factors in eliminating women's oppression has been a strong element in planning educational approaches and in focusing on real legal and social barriers faced by women in our society.

Radical Perspective

Radical feminists argue that the oppression of women is built into the very structure of our society. The division between the sexes based on the patriarchal family is seen as fundamental to social organisation. Other hierarchical oppressive social structures are developments that come out of patriarchy. Thus, all such structures must be rejected if women are to be liberated. This branch of feminism sees equality for women within the present system as impossible and calls for a radical restructuring of society, involving the elimination of patriarchy and along with it all other hierarchical structures.

Marxist-Socialist Perspective

The Marxist-Socialist feminists also believe that women's oppression is so deeply rooted that only a basic restructuring of society can change it. This branch of feminism emphasizes the way in which the specific form of women's oppression changes from one society to another and links the position of women to economic and social institutions characteristic of a particular society.

Socialist-feminist theory, relying on both Marxism and structuralism, emphasises the importance of equity between genders in all spheres of activities, traditional and non-traditional, private and public. Liberal perspective on the other hand, emphasises the increasing

movement of women into non-traditional role. Socialist-feminists assume that media and popular culture perpetuate and develop cultural ideology, and if women's status is to improve, these structures must change. They further argue that transforming mass media and popular culture can make a difference even in absence of a socialist revolution. In this they differ from Marxist perspective which emphasises that change in women's status is predicated on changes in the economic structure of the state (Steeves, 1986).

Gender Bias : The Male Viewpoint

Most people tend to associate gender oppression with oppression of women. Besides, men often fail to see their problems as related to gender bias because they have been taught that they are the powerful sex. Violating gender roles has often more severe consequences for a male than for a female because when a woman tries to adopt the 'male' ways of behaviour, develop the 'male' qualities or choose a conventionally male domain of work she is viewed as progressing from the 'inferior' to the 'superior' and if she is successful, she gains certain rewards like money, power and independence. But in case of a man who has qualities perceived as feminine or who chooses a conventionally female domain of work, the society views him as regressing to something inferior and the degree of social disapproval and ridicule is greater. Besides, he risks losses in terms of power, prestige, and money.

Brannon and David (1976) interpret the male role in terms of four factors -

- (1) No Sissy Stuff : The stigma of anything even vaguely feminine.
- (2) The Big Wheel : Success, status, and the need to be looked up to.
- (3) The Sturdy Oak : A manly air of toughness, confidence, and self-reliance.
- (4) Give 'Em Hell' : The aura of aggression, violence and daring.

In fact some argue that this century's social developments have reduced women's burdens far more than men's burdens and since the advent of feminism women have gained much greater role flexibility and much greater choice between traditional and non-traditional life styles.

Some of the areas where men become victims of gender bias are :

- * Overemphasis on achievement
- * Pro-maternal bias in divorce and custody cases
- * Stiffer punishment compared to girls in schools and at home for the same behaviour
- * Overemphasis on women's reproductive rights and men's responsibility for child support
- * Fabricated charges of spouse abuse, sexual abuse and family violence.

As Young (1994) puts it, "The interest in men's issues is a much-needed corrective to the increasingly obsessive tendency to focus on real or fictitious

disadvantages affecting females and ignore those affecting males. Moreover, by encouraging more role-flexibility for men as well as women, and in particular greater male involvement in home life, the men's movement may be an essential step in achieving the work/family balance often described as the key issue on the women's agenda. perhaps the ultimate lesson we have still to learn is that most gender issues are women's and men's issues."

The Concept of Equity

Distributive justice is an important concept for many of the contemporary social issues involving value conflict. In his analysis of justice, Piaget distinguishes two types of distributive justice : equality and equity (Wrightsmann, 1977). As explained by Wrightsmann, Equality has the same meaning in Piaget's system that it does for most of us: everyone should be treated the same. Equity allows for consideration of individual circumstances; here equality is never defined without taking into account the way that each individual is situated.

The Concept of Androgyny

Treating masculinity and femininity as psychological concepts, Sandra Bem offered the concept of androgyny to label the possession of approximately equal portions of masculine and feminine characteristics (Bem, 1975). Androgynous individuals would be those persons who considered themselves to have an equal number of masculine

characteristics and feminine characteristics. Bem argues that the most well-developed individual is the one who combines the best of both worlds and who can therefore respond to a greater variety of situations with appropriate behaviour. Androgynous people are basically more adaptive to their environment. The concept of 'Ardhanaranarishvara' in Indian mythology corresponds to androgyny.

Using a similar concept of androgyny, Spence, Helmreich and Stapp (1975) have found that those individuals who possess high degrees of both masculine and feminine characteristics possess more self-esteem than do more traditionally sex-typed individuals.

1.3.3 Gender Equality : Perspective of the Present Study

On exploring the various perspectives on gender equality one realises the enormous complexity of the concept. For a balanced, holistic concept of gender equality one has to consider biological factors as well as the constantly changing dynamic nature of society. One has to consciously stay away from the tendency to confuse the 'cultural' with 'natural' and learn to critically examine the roles of biological differences and socio-cultural factors, especially social learning/social education and social structure.

Again, the different perspectives offer a wide range of choices in pursuing the goal of equality and social

change, one can take the female superiority view, and strive to transform the entire social system - the values, institutions and the relationships - according to the women's vision of the world. Or one can ignore the inherent biases in the social system and strive to get better deal and more power for women without transforming the society. One can take the male superiority view and try to improve women's situation so that it resembles men's situation; or one can hold on to the 'biology is destiny' theory and shun all attempts at social change. Alternatively, one can recognise the biological differences in men and women and yet believe that it is possible to work towards a more equitable relationship.

For the present study the perspective vis-a-vis Gender Equality will have to sharply focus on what exactly is 'essential' for an adolescent boy or girl of Standard 11 to understand about gender and equality. One has also to work within the socio-cultural milieu of the adolescents and the structural boundaries of the school system which makes it imperative that the researcher's approach be more pragmatic than utopian.

Considering all these factors, an effort has been made in the present study to redefine the equation between man and woman which would reflect the respect for democratic values like individual dignity, social justice and equity.

Following are the guidelines followed in the present study to conceptualise gender equality as a value :

- (1) Both, men and women, are critical elements in gender issues.
- (2) Men and women are different in many ways but different does not always mean superior or inferior. Men and women can be different yet equal if nothing is considered inferior or superior just because it is associated with a particular gender. It is essential to take gender into consideration where it is necessary (e.g. protection for maternity).
- (3) Role reversal or "oppressed imitating the oppressor" can not be an alternative to role stereotype. Role sharing which considers individual differences among men and among women, family needs and biological as well as socio-cultural-economic factors offers a better alternative.
- (4) Equality is possible only through mutuality between sexes when in any given sphere (e.g. economic or sexual gratification) no one sex is always a giver and no one sex always a receiver.
- (5) Considering the realities of the Indian socio-cultural situation, social change has to be gradual and should come from within over a period of time.

One can begin the process taking a pragmatic approach. To imbibe gender equality as a moral value in the society, however, is a very complex process because of the complexity of the concept of gender equality as well as the complexities in the Value Development Process. Yet, it is essential for a democratic society like India, and can be achieved only through communication and education in the right direction.

1.3.4 Values and Value Development

The basic moral value that undergirds and sustains a democracy is the principle of individual dignity. The individual deserves consideration by virtue of his or her humanness, apart from considerations of wealth, race, sex, or physical or intellectual ability (Hersh, 1980).

Gender Equality, therefore, is an important value for a country like India, which ideologically supports basic democratic values like social justice, individual dignity, freedom of speech and religion and equal protection under the law.

Democracy places heavy demands on the moral capacities of the individual. It requires the individual to make informed judgements about personal interests and the welfare of the community. Ideally, these judgements are based on our values. Values are guides to our behaviour and give focus to life.

Among the three most important categories of values that enter into the activity of teaching are aesthetic values, instrumental values, and moral values (Shaver and Strong, 1976). Aesthetic values are those standards by which we judge beauty. Instrumental values are standards set in order to achieve other standards designed to serve larger ends. Moral values are the standards, the principles by which we judge whether aims or actions are proper. Gender Equality as a value belongs to this third category.

Thus, moral values express something more than a purely individual standard though in the simplest terms value refers to objects that human beings cherish and desire and also consider as desirable. As Shaver and Strong (1976) point out, "Because moral values are used to justify and judge ethical decisions, and these have impact on other people, moral standards are not merely matters of personal taste. Unlike aesthetic or instrumental values, moral values necessarily carry a basic message of obligation". And therefore, moral values are given higher priority in value education.

But value education, certainly, is not an easy task. Value Development is a very complex process. According to Dewey (1939), children learn moral values from the quality of their total social experience. Again, morality depends on the combination of humane caring, objective thinking, and determined action. If any of the three elements is lacking

the process remains incomplete. During the process of value development, several inputs work simultaneously : experience, modelling, direct preaching and teaching, intellectualising and reasoning, understanding, appreciating and reacting emotionally.

Another factor that adds to the complexity of Value Development is the fact that our values are not isolated from one another. They are interlocking parts of total value-networks, rather than self-contained units. Hence, value conflict emerges as an essential part of Value Development process. For example, we may value liberty as well as equality but in fulfilling the claims of equality we may have to compromise on liberty and vice-versa.

In our daily life we encounter many situations which demand decision making in difficult situations. Ideally, we would make our life choices based on our values and resolve the value conflicts by rational balancing, but in reality it is not all that simple. Many a time we are not clear about our own values. Many of our values are unconscious. Many of us have hardly ever given a thought as to why we cherish a particular value, how we came to cherishing it and what effect that has on our other values and on other people.

Children, youth and adults - all face value conflicts in their life but adolescence is the stage of life when value conflicts are at their peak. We cannot leave their value conflicts unresolved because they are the future

citizens, the future policy makers, work-force and homemakers. A well-defined value system is also important for their personal well-being.

Adolescents and Value Conflict

Adolescence (the period between 12 to 19 years) involves accomplishment of a number of critically important developmental tasks. These are : adjustment to the physical changes of puberty and later of adolescent growth and to the flood of new subjective impulses brought on by genital maturity; development of independence from parents or other caretakers; establishment of effective social and working relationships with peers of the same and opposite sex, preparation for a vocation and the development of a system of values and a sense of identity . . . (Conger, 1977).

The development of independence and a philosophy of life based on a consistent value system are very crucial for adolescents but the complexity of the contemporary society has made these tasks increasingly difficult.

Compared to the previous generations today's adolescents have many more influences on their life. Yesterday's adolescents derived their values from three major sources : family, a relatively homogenous neighbourhood and a highly structured and moralistic school-program. Today, concepts of family, neighbourhood and school have undergone major transformation providing a bewildering range of alternatives. Besides, the explosion

of oral, written and electronic media has exposed today's adolescents to a variety of cultures and life-styles and to people with paradoxical values and philosophies.

Thus, the multiplicity of sources as well as channels of Value Development offers so many conflicting and confusing possibilities and choices that an adolescent gets bewildered as to how one should arrive at one's own set of values. The value-confusion and conflicts are especially acute in gender related values because gender is constituted biologically, psychologically, socially, economically, culturally and politically and influences most of the life-experiences of a person.

Some of the questions constantly being raised by young people are : Who should be their models? Who is right? How could one balance between the traditions and change, self-interest and social justice? It is difficult and yet essential for young people to find convincing answers to these questions.

1.3.5 Approaches to Value Education

Kirschenbaum et al. (1978) discuss four approaches to help young people find answers to value conflicts : moralising, modelling, laissez-fair approach and value-clarification approach.

Moralising is increasingly becoming a less preferred approach and in certain cases less effective because in

today's society there is no complete consistency about what constitutes 'desirable values'. Though Sommers (1993) criticises the sense of moral relativism pervasive among American students and argues that value educators should make clear distinction between "basic" ethics and "dilemma" ethics. She maintains that as far as universal basic ethics and private morality (virtues) are concerned school children must be taught right from wrong.

Modelling too is rapidly losing its earlier place. The problem is that young people are exposed to too many - and at times, contradictory - models to emulate. Also moralising and modelling, if used as the sole approach to value education, do not give a young person an opportunity to develop his/her own sense of identity, and learn to relate to people whose values differ from his/her own.

The rationale behind the laissez-fair attitude is that no one value system is right for everyone, so let children decide what they want without intervention in any way and eventually everything will turn out right. But as Kirschenbaum et al. (1978) point out, everything does not usually turn out all right. Most young people do not need adults running their lives for them, but they do want and need help.

Value-clarification approach has been one of the more favoured approaches to value education. Loui Rath (1966) built upon the thinking of pioneer educational philosopher

John Dewey and developed a systematic approach to help students become aware of the beliefs and behaviours they prize and would be willing to stand up for. This approach helps students answer value-related questions, make their own choices, evaluate the consequences and build their own value system. Value clarification approach maintains the principle that the teacher should never directly tell students about right and wrong.

Sommers (1993) has rightly criticised the tendency of value clarification approach to treat one's preference for basic values like honesty or respect for human dignity as one treats one's preference for vanilla over chocolate flavoured ice-cream. She questions the value clarification proponents' tendency to place the locus of moral authority in the individual's private tastes and preferences. Nevertheless, many value clarification techniques provide students with opportunities for the practice of moral reasoning in issues involving broader social perspective.

Value clarification approach uses several techniques like Value Love List, Value Action, Value Voting, Value Ranking, Value Continuum, Incomplete Value Sentences, Coat of Arms, Value Thought Sheet, Value Autobiography, Value Clarification Journal, Value Questions, Value Interview, Value Brainstorming, Value Problem Solving, Value Indicators, Life Raft, Value Role Play, Conversion of Limitations, Fantasy Exploration, Negotiation and

Expectation, and Life Process : A Structured Fantasy
(Smith, 1977).

'Dilemma' is one of the frequently used techniques in value clarification.

Dilemma as Pedagogic Tool

Use of Dilemma-based techniques in education, especially moral education, is not new. Way back in 1960s Piaget initiated the approach of confronting a child with stories that pose a moral dilemma. Later Kohlberg extended Piaget's basic theory and developed dilemmas of greater complexity to study different levels and stages in moral development. The dilemmas posed in stories used by Piaget and Kohlberg seek to measure moral judgement or the moral attitudes that determine how a person feels one should respond to a certain situation (Wrightsman, 1977). Carol Gilligan, a former student of Kohlberg, added a gender dimension to the study of moral development. Kohlberg had not included any girls in his studies spanning over 20 years. Gilligan has also used dilemmas and has found interesting differences between boys and girls in their approach to a moral problem (Gilligan, 1982).

Dilemma-based educational approach has been adopted in the school and college level ethics courses all over the United States of America.

Conscientisation

Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1972) first introduced the concept of conscientization which has had profound impact on movement for gender equality.

Freire's disappointment with educational system in Brazil and Chile coupled with his conviction, that 'every human being, no matter how important or submerged in the culture of silence' he may be, is capable of looking critically at his world in a dialogical encounter with others, led him to advocate an alternative. As Shaul (1972) explains, "provided with proper tools for such an encounter a human being can gradually perceive his personal and social reality as well as the contradictions in it, and become conscious of his own perception of that reality and deal critically with it. In this process, the old, paternalistic teacher-student relationship is overcome".

In his most acclaimed and frequently cited work 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed' Freire (1972) has laid down his vision and experiences related to this alternative which came to be known as Pedagogy of Liberation or Critical Pedagogy.

According to Freire, Education with conventional teacher-student relationship suffered from 'narration sickness'. "Narration (with the teacher as narrator) leads the students to memorize mechanically the narrated content.

Worse still, it turns them into 'containers', into receptacles to be filled by the teacher.

Freire designated this as the 'banking concept of education'. Advancing the concept of dialogics : the essence of education as the practice of freedom, Freire argued that in the pedagogical system he proposed, the receiver would be liberated from his/her mental inertia, penetrate the ideological mist imposed by the elites and perceive the realities of his/her existence. He called this process conscientization.

Feminist educators often cite Freire as the educational theorist who comes closest to the approach and goals of feminist pedagogy.

". . . . Like Freirean pedagogy, feminist pedagogy is grounded in a vision of social change. And like Freirean pedagogy, feminist pedagogy rests on truth, claims of the primacy of experience and consciousness that are grounded in historically situated social change movements. . . . Feminist theory, influenced by post-modernist and cultural identity theories, like other contemporary approaches validates difference, challenges universal claims to truth and seeks to create social transformation in a world of shifting and uncertain meanings" (Weiler, 1991).

Freire used a photograph, a picture or a drawing to represent the existing reality. A discussion was then initiated which sought to conduct an autopsy of the existing

realities and encouraged the participants to question why things were as they were, what could be done to rectify the situation, etc. In other words, communication channels were used in this approach to generate a dialogue, to help people talk together and understand each other. Communication was thus a vehicle for liberation from mental and psychological shackles that bound peasants to their existing situations. In many ways communication was performing its true function: 'communicare' or build commonness (Melkote, 1991).

Value Discussion Model

Value Discussion Model is developed in India by Sansalwal on the principles of value-clarification approach (Singh, 1991). Dilemma and Discussion are the two major components of this model which gives students opportunities to intellectually and frankly discuss among themselves their value-conflicts. It brings into focus their daily experiences and helps them examine individual experiences in wider social context.

Value Discussion model seems to be a suitable approach to discuss gender values with adolescents from two points of view : One, it does not impose any value on youngsters; it encourages thinking and analysis in the right direction and lets individuals make their own decisions, it gives students an opportunity to listen to others' reasoning and point-of-view and find out how rational and fact-based are their justifications for their

own choices. The present educational system with its emphasis on rote-learning and academic competition does not encourage this kind of independent thinking which is so crucial for adolescents. Two, Value Discussion Model is age appropriate considering the stages in cognitive development. During adolescence a shift occurs in the direction of formal operations. In Piaget's view, the most basic capabilities aimed at during this stage involve a shift of emphasis in the adolescents' thought from the 'REAL' to the 'POSSIBLE'. This is the stage when the child can perform abstract tasks. Here the mode of problem solving is hypothetico-deductive. The educational objective is to train the child in solving abstract problems (Passi et al., 1986).

As Elkind (1971) explains, it is at this point of post-conventional stages of moral development that the adolescent may no longer be able to adopt without question the social or political beliefs of his or her parents.

In Conger (1977)'s view adolescence is a period of increasing ability to consider hypothetical possibilities and reason about one's own thought objectively. The adolescent boy or girl, guided by self-awareness, is likely to become more introspective and analytical.

For believing in a value like gender equality in a predominantly patriarchal society, one needs to undertake analysis, questioning and critical thinking beyond what one has learnt from one's own family.

1.4 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The review of literature shows abundance of studies describing the present status as well as social and educational scenario vis-a-vis gender bias and low status of women. Factors affecting the status of women are also discussed by many studies adopting a survey method in most cases. These studies call for action and educational efforts to bring positive change in the existing situation. The report of the National Seminar on Education for Women's Equality (GOI, 1985b), the National Perspective Plan for Women 1988-2000 A.D. (GOI, 1988b) and the UGC Guidelines for Development of Women Studies (UGC, 1992) have all unanimously recommended that communication and education should strike at the deep-rooted attitudes and gender-bias. The present study takes off from this point and reflects the growing concern of researchers to use research for not just reporting the *status-quo* or change but also for initiating change.

If the existing patriarchal paradigm of the family and resulting patriarchal constructions of masculinity and femininity have to give way to mutuality, reciprocity, harmony and nurturance in the family, the right attitudes and values have to be nurtured from the young age. Flexible role-sharing brings forth unlimited possibilities and enhances individual and national development but unless people are prepared and trained to take up the dual role and

appreciate differences between and also within genders, gender equality would remain just another utopian dream. Today's children are tomorrow's teachers, policy planners, administrators, professionals, spouses and parents. It would be highly undesirable if our future human resources continue to grow up with gender bias, myths and stereotypes without critically thinking about them.

The Non-aligned Ministers' Conference on Role of Women in Development held in New Delhi in 1985 (GOI, 1985a) endorsed that "Structurally, pedagogically and philosophically educational institutions need to play a far more active role in the development of new cultural ethos that can contribute to the realisation of the goals of comprehensive development of human material. This also requires that they internalise the concerns for the equality of women and the enhancement of their role in their curricula, pedagogic method, organisation and research agendas".

The National Policy on Education (NPE) envisages education as a strategy for achieving a basic change in the status of women (GOI, 1992a, 1992b). NPE's vision for the national education system is to play a positive interventionist role in the empowerment of women and contribute towards development of new values through redesigned curricula and textbooks. There is a strong emphasis that education must address the structures and attitudes that have prevented women's equality till now and

have perpetuated and strengthened patriarchal values and institutions that subordinate women. Education must also play an active role in promoting the new values of equality in the division of roles, rights and responsibilities between men and women in every sphere.

If Value Discussion Model emerges as an effective approach for gender-equality communication, it can be included in gender sensitisation programs at school level. Later the model can be adapted for mass media like newspapers and television. It could be tried out with other groups like teachers, parents and policy planners combined with other approaches in action programs.

1.5 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

To study the Effectiveness of Value Discussion Model in communication for gender equality among adolescents.

1.6 OBJECTIVES OF THE PRESENT STUDY

- (1) To study the effectiveness of Value Discussion Model in terms of change in -
 - * attitude towards gender equality
 - * gender stereotyping
 - * value judgement with respect to gender equality
 - * value clarification with respect to gender equality.

- (2) To study the influence of sex of the subject, profession of mother, profession of father, education of mother, education of father, and type of family on effectiveness of Value Discussion Model in terms of change in -

- * attitude towards gender equality
- * gender stereotyping
- * value judgement with respect to gender equality.

(Only qualitative observations were made in case of Value Clarification with respect to gender equality.)

1.7 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- (1) The study was delimited to the eleventh (XI) standard students of General Stream of two selected Gujarati medium schools of the city of Vadodara under the Higher Secondary Education Board, Gujarat State.
- (2) The period of treatment was delimited to 16 dilemma sessions over a period of four months.

1.8 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Gender Equality :

Equality between males and females, allowing consideration of individual circumstances.

Values :

The standards/principles by which people judge

whether aims/actions are proper. Values also refer to objects that human-beings cherish and desire and also consider desirable.

Value Discussion Model :

It is a model developed in India by Sansanwal in 1986 on the principles of Value Clarification Approach. Dilemma and Discussion are the two major components of this model.

1.9 HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

Since the study followed experimental design in which hypotheses required statistical testing, they are presented here in the form of null hypothesis.

- (1) There will be no significant difference between adjusted mean attitude-towards-gender-equality scores of the control group and those of the experimental group.
- (2) There will be no significant difference between adjusted mean gender-stereotype scores of the control group and those of the experimental group.
- (3) There will be no significant difference between adjusted mean value-judgement scores of the control group and those of the experimental group.

- (4) There will be no significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores of attitude towards gender equality in the experimental group.
- (5) There will be no significant difference between the pretest and posttest gender-stereotype scores in the experimental group.
- (6) There will be no significant difference between the pretest and posttest value-judgement scores in the experimental group.
- (7) There will be no significant difference in the adjusted mean attitude-towards-gender-equality scores of males and females in the experimental group.
- (8) There will be no significant difference in the adjusted mean gender-stereotype scores of males and females in the experimental group.
- (9) There will be no significant difference between adjusted mean value-judgement scores of males and females in the experimental group.
- (10) There will be no significant difference between adjusted mean attitude-towards-gender-equality scores of children of housewives and those of working mothers in the experimental group.
- (11) There will be no significant difference between adjusted mean gender-stereotype scores of children of

housewives and those of working mothers in the experimental group.

- (12) There will be no significant difference between adjusted mean value-judgement scores of children of housewives and those of working mothers in the experimental group.
- (13) There will be no significant difference between the adjusted mean attitude-towards-gender-equality scores of students whose fathers belonged to different professional categories in the experimental group.
- (14) There will be no significant difference between the adjusted mean gender-stereotype scores of students whose fathers belonged to different professional categories in the experimental group.
- (15) There will be no significant difference between the adjusted mean value-judgement scores of students whose fathers belonged to different professional categories in the experimental group.
- (16) There will be no significant difference between the adjusted mean attitude-towards-gender-equality scores of students whose mothers had different levels of education in the experimental group.
- (17) There will be no significant difference between the adjusted mean gender-stereotype scores of students

whose mothers had different levels of education in the experimental group.

- (18) There will be no significant difference between the adjusted mean value-judgement scores of students whose mothers had different levels of education in the experimental group.
- (19) There will be no significant difference between the adjusted mean attitude-towards-gender-equality scores of students whose fathers had different levels of education in the experimental group.
- (20) There will be no significant difference between the adjusted mean gender-stereotype scores of students whose fathers had different levels of education in the experimental group.
- (21) There will be no significant difference between the adjusted mean value-judgement scores of students whose fathers had different levels of education in the experimental group.
- (22) There will be no significant difference between the adjusted mean attitude-towards-gender-equality scores of students from joint families and those from nuclear families in the experimental group.
- (23) There will be no significant difference between the adjusted mean gender-stereotype scores of students