Chapter II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE
The studies done in India and abroad that directly or indirectly deal with women in politics, could be roughly divided into two types: (a) studies about women and (b) studies on women in particular.¹

The first type of study is concerned with social problems, i.e. social evils, injustice and negligence in relation to women in politics. Most of these have been written by eminent authors of either sex, scholars but not sociologists. The second type is concerned with the role, status and participation of women in politics, with a perspective of historical sociology. This is the most common perspective with the studies on women.

Differentiating between social and sociological problem, Jesser² has viewed that a social problem receives attention when a number of usually significant people within a particular social system becomes conscious of it as a problem that affronts them morally and demands urgent solution. Defined within the perspective of science, sociological problem is "a problem,

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worthy of investigation with a purpose of classifying, refuting, or augmenting a body of knowledge in its theoretical organization which helps in predicting and explaining regularities of behaviour.\textsuperscript{3} And because of this difference, the studies of social scientists on women's participation in politics are different from the studies about women by the social reformers. While the latter is action-oriented, the former seeks to "ask questions, the answers to which will fructify knowledge that is sought primarily for prediction and explanations."\textsuperscript{4}

But in practice, these distinctions between the social and sociological perspectives are not possible. Indeed, they are interrelated and they interact with each other. The studies of social problems and of social evils made by social reformers (not necessarily sociologists), eminent literary men and women, historians and politicians -- provide useful significant baselines. These certainly enable the sociologist gain some scientific knowledge.

But the available literature seems grossly inadequate and it is not an exaggeration to view that

\textsuperscript{3}Ibid., p.246.

\textsuperscript{4}Ibid., p.247.
the political behaviour and preoccupation of over half the population has been inadequately documented.

However, the available literature which deals directly or indirectly on the issue of women's status in politics in the international, national and local levels can be broadly divided into three categories:

1. Literature that deals with the women's status and role in general and politics in particular in different countries, sometimes including a broad historical analysis.

2. Literature that directly or indirectly refers to political women elites; representatives in the Parliament, State Legislatures and other party functionaries.

3. Literature concerned with the analysis of social-economic and political background which influences women and shapes their perception and attitude to politics.

*Studies on Women's Status and Role in Politics*

The overwhelming evidence so far goes to establish that no society in the world provides women equal status with men. Although anthropologists and sociologists have found that women are given considerable social
recognition and power in some societies, there exists no society in which their publicly recognised power exceeds men's. Elise Boulding and Jean Betke Elshtain affirm this kind of situation in their books. Beverly Lindzey in her edited work says that not only the women of the third world but the women world over are confronted with a similar situation. But the case of the third world countries is distinctive because they have been subjected to colonial exploitation. Colonialism has also hindered their progress. She examines various dynamic variables, e.g. economic, socio-political and educational, that have oppressed the third world women. The chapter on Indian women, entitled "Up from the Harem: The effects of class and sex in political life in Northern India" by Tonias Devon is an important contribution to the volume. According to the author, women's poor participation in politics is mainly due to the attitude and norms of the family and society. The lack of education and limited exposure among women, figure next in order of priority as reasons for such a low participation.


7. Beverly Lindzey (ed.), *Comparative Perspectives of Third World Women - The Impact of Race, Sex and Class*. 
On the studies of women as political elites, available literature is meagre. We can classify them as: (a) the category of women entering into politics, their role and attitude to women's general problems, and (b) differences made by the presence of women holding political power. J.J. Kirkpatrick has made a study of women who had the fortitude to come out of the grip of oppression and traditionalism and play a role in the power game. Her work entitled *Political Women* analyses the background and career of a sample of women legislators (43) in the U.S.A. Kirkpatrick maintains that like their male counterparts, women politicians vary greatly. She develops four-fold typology consisting of 'leaders', 'moralizers', 'personalizers' and 'problem-solvers'. All the four types have their own personal predispositions which can be detected in their style, role and self-esteem. The author observes that even those who assume the leader's role and have a passion for politics reveal a culturally induced orientation.

Although Kirkpatrick's legislators claim no incompatibility between the roles of family and citizenship,

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most of them followed the traditional career pattern of waiting until their children were grown up, before they sought for public office. Two-thirds of them had no more than two children. This is in contrast to Kirkpatrick's sample of male legislators, 60 percent of whom have larger families and ran for the office before they were forty. In the study, the women assumed the major responsibility for housekeeping and childcare and expected little help from their husbands. These social constraints limited their participation in politics.

Irene Diamond's study\(^9\) deals with women legislators in four New England states in the U.S.. In this study, she focuses on state legislators as the group of women who have achieved the highest proportion of elective office by resolving the conflict between political and ideal feminine role. Diamond's study relates the electoral success of women to the structure of politics. Thus, she views that the probability of women being elected to the legislature under conditions of intense political competition is low, but the probability that a woman who is elected under such conditions will

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resemble a man in her career pattern and her legislative behaviour will be of a high order. Finally, she deduces that a political strategy based principally on electoral incrementalisation, that is, electing greater numbers of women to the office, does influence the issues involved in changing women's status.

Joan Fogot Avil's study of political participation of women in Latin America\textsuperscript{10} briefly examines variables like education and economic participation as factors contributing to the nature and type of political participation of women. She maintains that women's lack of participation in politics is affected by their relative lack of socialisation and mobilisation. The author views women's role in child-rearing more important than her political role irrespective of cultural differences among various countries of the world. Women's lives centre around the family. When family issues are politicised, women tend to acquire political mobility as in the United States. So a change in the basic social system involving the family is relevant to activate women politically.

Anthony Orum, et al.\textsuperscript{11} in their study on women's political socialization arrive at three perspectives to explain differences in political beliefs and behaviour of men and women: political socialization, structural and situational factors. This paper reveals that socialization may not be the only factor in explaining differences in political beliefs on the basis of sex. But both political socialization and situational theories coalesce to cause this difference.

It is necessary to refer to the literature on the personality characteristics of women in political life. In this connection, E.R. Kruschke,\textsuperscript{12} in a comparison of female politicians and apoliticals, attempted to trace a relationship between political personality and political participation. He compared 45 women active in politics (who participated in a movement for the construction of a civil centre, a school board referendum, and the 1960 presidential election) with 58 elite women who were not active in politics. He found significant differences in


favour of political women on the following dimensions: sociability, optimism, willingness to risk, liberalism, and a sense of political characteristics that resemble our findings of greater assertiveness, adventuresomeness, imagination, and liberal attitudes among the women in the state legislatures.

Inborn and Jansen's\(^\text{13}\) study coupled with Krushke makes it clear that women in politics fit into the "high score" description. Their intelligence, assertiveness, chivalry, imagination and liberal attitudes were the major assets for their success of a powerful political role, albeit, contradictory to sex-role expectations.

The only other study on political women and their personality characteristics is made by Emmy E. Werner and Laise M. Bachtold.\(^\text{14}\) It is based on 103 women who served in the 1970-71 state legislatures. It compares the women legislators and elected male leaders with their respective reference groups, i.e. adult men and women in the general population. Sampling on a wider universe of


\[^{14}\text{Emmy E. Werner and Laise M. Bachtold, " Personality Characteristics of "women in American Politics", in Jane J. Jaquette (ed.), "Women in Politics", New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1974, pp. 75-84.}\]
legislature, 37 in number, representing all geographical regions in the country, this study is concerned with the salient personality characteristics that set women legislators into a role normally defined as masculine (apart from adult women in the general population, and elected male leaders). The study of personality pattern of the female politicians tallies with the male legislators' in "inborn and Jansen's study mentioned earlier.

Vijay Agnew's book on "Elite Women in Indian Politics" provides some relevance specifically to the Indian context. Agnew's historical perspective on the rise of elite women in Indian politics begins with a social background of the 19th century. The author perceives a continuity between the conventional and traditional role played by women in the Hindu society and the political women emerging in the 20th century. With this insight, the author looks at the enlightened women who fought for the freedom movement, and maintains that the women coming to power so far are influenced by the male political leaders with the ties of blood and marriage. Admitting

\[15\text{Vijay Agnew, Elite Women in Indian Politics, New Delhi: Vikas, 1979.}\]
the role of Gandhi for women's emancipation the author points out that the influence of Gandhi and Nehru brought about changes in the role and status of only a few women, symbolizing a free spirit and close interaction. Some other books also deal with women and politics. But they are mainly historical in context, and refer to the overall status of women in India and abroad.\(^{16}\)

In relevance to our study Gail Minault\(^ {17}\) in her study on women's political participation and the impact of the family analyses in great detail, three major points regarding women's political position in our country: (i) identification of the extent to which women occupy elite position in Indian politics, (ii) evaluation of possible explanations of women's prominence in elite position, and (iii) explanation of the impact of women's participations in politics on the social and economic position of women in the national context.

The explanation provided for political participation of a meagre number of elite women is based on two


\(^{17}\)Gail Minault, The Extended Family: Women and Political Participation in India and Pakistan, Delhi: Chanakya Publishers, 1981.
sets of factors. The first set examines socio-cultural, explaining the level of women's political involvement. The second identifies the political institutions, the process of political succession, the nature of the party structure, etc. as supporting or opposing the recruitment of women to positions of political leadership.

Studies on Socio-Political Background of "Women"

The findings of some studies on socio-political background of women are relevant to examine certain hypothesis in our study. Edmond Constantani discusses the interplay among personality, sex-role typing and political career of women vis-a-vis men. She finds that political women are often over-represented in the higher socio-economic group. The difference between female politicians and their male counterparts is found in the ascribed social attributes. According to her, for a woman to assume elite status in the party, what is required is a longer period of apprenticeship than that of the similarly motivated male.

Lynnes B. Iglitzin focused on the socialization

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The author maintains that the primary agents of socialisation are particularly family and school combined to channelise young women into lower occupational expectations and a willingness to play a marginal role in the economic and political aspects of society. This study explores some of the consequences of the traditional female values of young girls. The study demonstrated in the attitudes of a group of 11-year olds the wide extent of sex-role stereotyping and its damaging effects on girls. The study was inadequate in the sense that it failed to analyse the source of sex-role stereotyping over a period of time.

"Studying women in local politics in Norway, Ingunn Norderval Means 20 found that broadly the women councillors must be said to conform to the most general criteria associated with political position. Typically their childhood environments were politicized. Their education, though modest, was never less significant than that of the average male or female in the state. Their family status was middle class. But occupation-wise, most of them were housewives. The triple commitment to home,

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career and politics causes a great strain, and as a result women hesitate to take to politics as a career. The author argues that the responsibilities of women, unless shared by men, would not help women achieve equality in education, occupation and political power. As long as women are burdened with multiple roles, they cannot help remaining "ordinary".

Enumerating the structural barriers limiting women's institutional participation, Gail L. Zellman\(^1\) says that structural barriers are related to organizational and institutional patterns, practices, roles and norms which obstruct women in their efforts to enter and develop themselves in political institutions. Some barriers are there to keep women out of the political system. Others permit a woman's entry but hinder her advancement, thus precluding equal participation. Those factors include family roles, sex segregation, inadequate facilities for training, the female culture and different life experiences. "Women's participation can be put on an even keel if a change takes place in masculine

values and attitudes, political overview, and positive planning for women's development.

Charles S. Bullock and Heys in their research on women's recruitment to American Congress maintain that the background which prepares women to participate in politics is also the same for the recruitment of women into American Congress, but differs in that the latter requires a superior legislative career with political experience. According to them, higher education and frequent involvement in political activities prior to entering formal politics facilitate a woman's election. Identical opinion is expressed by Susan Welch who goes to highlight the rural, semi-urban and politically familial background of the female legislators.

Rita Mae Kelly, et. al. in their study on political socialization of women arrive at similar results. With biographical data on 36 elite women, the conjugal parental influence is examined against its impact upon the respondent's "political" development. Their


findings suggest that women in politics are mostly influenced by their mothers who are independent inside the family and outside. The non-political woman elites lack this influence. So a positive correlation can be traced to mother-daughter participation. Secondly, fathers of political women tend to show more respect and love for their wives, unlike non-political women. Thirdly, there is a more favourable attitude of fathers towards the mothers of political women. This finding suggests that the female involvement in politics is not necessarily derived from cross-sex-role preferences. In terms of political socialization, the father's behaviour and achievements are not as crucial for the daughter as they are for the son. More than the father's political achievement, equal sharing of the parent's familial and public role contributes to the daughter's success in politics.

In a slightly different shade, Maurice Fiedler25 examines the election studies of 1972 in America: "Men and women participate to an equal degree in all major modes of political activity, that is, as voters,

campaigners and communicators. None of the factors affecting male participation (i.e., socio-economic or socio-psychological factors) affects female participation in fundamentally different ways, although there are variations. Women's participation is facilitated somewhat more than that of men by high levels of political interest, information and efficacy and by socialization that included a member with political interest. Fiedler concludes that employment outside the home, particularly in managerial or professional capacities is most important. She suggests that women with career experience will already have shed "role constraints" in their own lives, and will have the potential to be successful in the political arena.

Paula J. Dubock's study on women's recruitment to political office is in tune with the above findings by Fiedler. Kristi Anderson in her study on profession and its impact on women's political participation also emphasizes on the white collar jobs motivating women to

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participate in politics. She relates economic independence of women to the increase in their number in political participation.

Thus, the above studies made in different countries in the west indicate that socio-political background characteristics play an important role in influencing political women. Sometimes the findings of the studies are so contextual that their generalizations may not be applicable to political women in countries such as India. Indian situation differs fundamentally from the western; it is, therefore, worthwhile to undertake the studies that are made in Indian contexts only.

Studies on Women in India: Writings and Reports

Vina Mazumdar's book on the status of women in Indian politics presents the position of women in Indian political sphere in recent years. In this book, papers have been arranged in three parts regarding women's participation in Indian politics. These are, firstly, women in national politics; second, the politicisation of women in India, three-state-study, and lastly, profile

of women in different state politics in India. The papers vary greatly in their focus and scope. The book in general shows a close link between women's participation in politics and their social status. Although it was difficult to draw generalizations on all the three surveys, adequate material was available to provide the following conclusions. That, women's politicization in India depended considerably on (1) Gandhi's emphasis on the socio-political emancipation of women, (2) the level of modernization in a particular region or state, and (3) families with political exposure. This suggests that family tradition and influence of individuals act as significant agents of political socialization.

Besides the general descriptions on women's position in politics, a report has been brought out by the All India Women's Committee on behalf of Government of India to assess the status of women. The Committee included politicians, social workers, academicians, trade union leaders and writers. Their report submitted in 1975 showed a downward trend in women's participation.

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in the country's political affairs. The investigations of the Committee have revealed that many of our assumptions about determinants of women's participation in the political process require empirical verification. The factors like education, urbanisation and family pressure which were hitherto regarded as primary determinants of political awareness and therefore of effective participation have been sharply questioned by the Committee. The report concludes that despite the political support promised to women in all the manifestos, political parties are indifferent to women. This may be the reason as to why the women membership in Parliament and State Legislatures has on the average declined. That women in rural areas are gradually showing a more independent attitude towards the electoral process in recent years is revealed in the study. Urban women do not seem to show much interest in this process.

In view of the foregoing development in the method and conceptual framework of studying socio-political background of political elites in a comparative perspective, the Indian example presents rather a dismal picture. Adequate study is made on the
behaviour and attitudes of Members of the Legislature and various aspects of their legislative behaviour. But on the social background of legislators, very limited work is done in recent times. An analysis of the studies is as follows: K.V. Viswanathaiah's work enquires into the character of the legislators who act as important policy-makers of the party in power in India. In this connection, the socio-economic and political background of the legislators is regarded as important. This study throws light on the nature of leadership, which is influenced by their age, caste, religion, occupation, income, education, party affiliation. The author views that all these characteristics not only help them in the formulation of attitudes and perceptions but also influence their behavioural pattern.

The study proves the validity of the public assumption that the bulk of the political decision-makers

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belong to the moderate income-group. By profession, they are agriculturists and lawyers; they belong to the party in power, and they possess sufficient administrative experience. The majority of the legislators belong to their own constituencies and generally to middle age-group; they have married and got on to relatively smaller families. Most of them belong to the dominant castes. Even then, they have themselves identified with and worked for the minority communities. This study shows a positive direction in favour of an ideal socio-political force. 'The ML*', views Morris-Jones, 'is one of the great' gap closers in Indian politics but we do not yet know whether he is achieving this in ways favourable to the modern or to the traditional style.32

Forestor's article33 is a valuable contribution to the understanding of state leadership in India particularly of the members of the Madras Legislative Assembly between 1962 and 1968.


Regarding the socio-economic background of the politicians, the study views that most of the MLAs had an upper class background. They were professionally lawyers, teachers, businessmen, and party functionaries. They belonged to a wide variety of associations. Interlocked caste and economic status were the most important factors determining their candidatures.

M. Kishanish’s work attempts to grasp the social, economic and educational level of Andhra legislators. Social and economic status being regarded as convincing factors for political decisions can, therefore, determine one’s political success. They also suggest the individual dimension of social tensions in a changing society while making allowances for the classification of individuals into representatives of political groups and social movements.

The general feeling that membership of upper caste with high income is associated with professional participation in state politics is empirically proved in this study. It follows that the higher strata of society

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possess skills, motivation and are close to political opportunities. Thus, there is a close correlation between their social position and political participation. Lack of political skill and resources in case of persons of lower social positions may discourage the latter's political involvement. In developing countries, females do not actively participate in politics because they carry the burden of deprivation, and there is usually a large gap in skills and opportunities between men and women. It appears that women are confined to a politically passive role and also by stringent social norms against their participation. Sons of the soil' have better chances of getting elected to the Assembly. The middle-aged and the old are preferred to the uninitiated and energetic in the Assembly elections. The well-to-do farmers stay in a predominant position since agriculture is the most familiar occupation of the state.

Similar results came forth through G. Ram Reddy and others in their study. In the same vein, another


study by Pratap Singh in a background study of Haryana ML's establishes that the success of any institution largely depends on the quality of leaders. The nature of leadership is, however, greatly influenced by age, caste, religion, occupation, income, education and party affiliation of the members. All these criteria not only help in the formulation of attitudes and perceptions but also influence the behavioural pattern of the members. As Parry says, "It is a popular assumption of political sociology that social background and upbringing of a decision-maker will influence his attitudes and politics." The study examines the general assumption that the bulk of the political decision-makers is drawn from the upper castes of society, because they possess the necessary skill, motivation and resources. The majority of the legislators in Haryana come from the upper social strata and are 'the sons of the soil'. They are middle-aged persons with tolerably good educational background. They know more than two languages and read more than two newspapers.


Most of them have agriculture as their main occupation. They have participated in state politics with prior experience at the local level.

Manindra K. Mohapatra's study on Orissa Legislators is an addition to the substantial findings already discussed. It starts with an enquiry into the kind of people who become MLAs. It seeks to answer a number of related questions regarding their socio-economic origin, childhood political socialization, political motivation and role perception. With a systematic analysis of the legislative behaviour of 85 MLAs, this study reveals certain remarkable patterns in the background and perceptual data about the Orissa Legislators. First, the legislators in Orissa tend to have elitist social origin, somewhat like their counterparts in other political systems. (This also applies to SCs and STs in the reserved constituencies.) Second, the legislative goals or purposive roles of these legislators generally tend to be constituency-oriented (similar to other political systems). This is revealed through comparable

research findings. Third, the majority lack training for the role of law-makers without appropriate legal and professional experience. This is in marked contrast to the trends in Western legislatures (specially the American) where lawyers make the majority.

The above study may be taken as a follow-up of an article written by the author previously. His findings about Orissa politics provide an opportunity to make a sub-cultural comparison of political socialization among the legislators. For instance, the conclusion emerging from this study seems to substantiate the previous findings that political socialization can occur at almost any point, even in the case of political elites. In such case, the region and not caste, plays a significant role in earlier political socialization. The intensity of environmental politicization (such beyond the family, e.g. communication media, exposure, urbanization etc.) seems to matter.

Another study substantiates the findings of the

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41 Prabak Banjan Rout, "Political Decision Makers in West Bengal: A Study of Their Socio-Political Characteristics", The Indian Political Science Review, pp.35-79.
investigations done in various states of India by exploring and examining the personal backgrounds and social characteristics of the political leaders (like in W. Bengal). These leaders, according to the author, have previous political experiences in local self-government, party organizations and trade unions.

Sukadev Nanda's study\(^{42}\) of social and occupational background of the people who joined different cabinets between 1950 and 1974 indicates that agriculturists in the first phase occupied the pride of place. For this, the best explanation available by the author points to the rural-based agricultural economy of Orissa. The trade-union background is almost scarce, may be, because of industrial backwardness of the state and the consequent absence of a militant proletariat. Next to the agriculturists, the teachers (both of schools and colleges) have occupied the maximum number of seats. The lawyers and freedom fighters however enjoy an equal representation. But later, during the coalition government of 1971-72, there was a change in the order; teachers and lawyers exchanged their positions while agriculturists

continued their predominance. The freedom-fighters declined in their number because of a diminishing national fervor and an attendant unpopularity of the Congress Party.

On the women in power politics, a study by Prakash Chander\(^4^3\) arrests our attention. The study observes that the constitutional and legal guarantees have not helped Indian women get proportionate representation in the Lok Sabha. The low representation of women in Lok Sabha has been attributed mainly to the traditionally domestic nature of Indian women, their low rate of literacy, economic dependence on menfolk, their reluctance to contest the election and the low percentage in professions like law and journalism, which are traditional channels for political careers.

Out of the women members elected to the Lok Sabha, a majority belong to the Congress Party. They are middle-aged women with small families. They come mostly from urban areas with college or university education. A majority of these women members have visited foreign

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countries. Profession-wise, the largest number of women members are social and political workers. Members belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes constitute a sizeable portion of the total members in the five Lok Sabhas. The study also establishes that the majority of women members of the Lok Sabha have had some previous legislative experience at various levels. So the implication that a candidate has to serve some sort of political apprenticeship before aspiring for the Lok Sabha membership holds good. The respondents do not have experience in village-level politics. Her study differs in the sense that her respondents did not have any obstacle by not belonging to the rural sector and also not having much of previous political experience.

In general, available literature in the state on women in politics is far from adequate, barring a few incidental books written in Oriya and English that cover the pre-independence period. H.K. Mahatab in his book touches the freedom movement in Orissa against a historical perspective. Not a proper study on any of women's issues, the book cites a few names of active

women in the freedom struggle. Similarly there are some other books\textsuperscript{45} by different authors, not very relevant to our study. A good number of journals available in Orissa are edited by women, but not useful for our purpose, in the sense that they do not publish articles on women in politics.

The three broadly divided categories of studies mentioned above on the woman's role, nature and type of participation in politics, explore various factors affecting women's participation in politics throughout the world. The theoretical and empirical studies in India and abroad give us a general impression, at best regarding the level of women's participation. But they have failed to project the reality existing in different regions. A gulf of difference exists among regions in other countries as it does in India itself. These differences are too important to be ignored, considering their role

in shaping the nature and level of women's participation in politics. Our study aims to explore the nature and level of women's participation in Orissa politics and also to identify the factors responsible for such a poor representation. The following chapter will be devoted to an examination of the demographic condition of the state along with an up to date survey of the position of women in state politics.