PREFACE

Movements for social, political and economic upliftment of women have started in India in the 19th Century under the leadership of prominent personalities like Kandukuri Veeresalingam Panthulu and Raja Ram Mohan Roy in India. Inspite of legal and constitutional provisions and guarantees, the status of women has not improved to the expected extent. This has led to continuous and concerted efforts to study the position of women in all fields of social activity. Especially since the submission of the Status Committee Report in 1974, there has been a tremendous progress in women's studies. The areas of study include social reform movements, women's movements for political and economic rights, women and health, violence against women and women's political participation.

There has been an increasing realisation that women's political participation has been marginal and that this could be attributed, amongst others, to absence of adequate institutional support. In party based democracies, the role of political parties in encouraging women's political involvement is very considerable and in the development of leadership roles, including those of women, parties have vital role to play. But precisely in the recruitment of women into leadership roles, political parties seem to be showing inadequate interest around the world. As all social problems are related in one way or the other to political decisions and because leadership plays key role in decision making, the presence of women in leadership position is the pressing need of the time. The purpose of the present study is to examine the
position of women's leadership in political parties in the state of Andhra Pradesh.

Sample:

The sample for the present study consists of women leaders of political parties, academics, leaders of organisations, male leaders of political parties and both men and women activists. The main sample consisting of these 127 women leaders, who includes, legislators, members of party executive committees, and members of party affiliates like members, including presidents, vice-presidents, secretaries of women's wings of the parties, and the trade union wings. The respondents in the sample are drawn from the state and district levels' leadership. These leaders belong to six political parties -- Congress (31), T.D.P (33), B.J.P (18), C.P.M (26), C.P.I (13) and C.P.I.M.L (5). The sample also includes a nominated member of the Congress government. Others who could be taken as forming part of the controlled sample include professors and other academics, social activists, journalists, former judges, party leaders, members of women's organisations, office bearers of civil liberties Association and party presidents. As nearly 50 respondents form part of the controlled sample.

Methodology:

The methodology adopted for the study is scientific. The tools of analysis include interviews and statistical techniques. For the purpose of interviewing the women leaders, an exhaustive schedule consisting of both closed and open ended questions has
been used. The interviews lasted for 3 to 4 hours and on many occasions more than one session has taken place. Since the study is the first of its kind in the state, the researcher noticed mostly enthusiasm and at times apprehensions amongst the women leaders in the sample. The statistical techniques include Univariate Analysis, and Linear Multiple Regression Analysis. The relevance and the manner of adopting these techniques are noted in the paragraphs relating to chapterisation. The "T" test is adopted for the examination of significance of scores of perceptions and performance of the respondents of political parties. To examine the validity or otherwise of the high scores in respect of perception and performance, the chi-square test is adopted. The data consists of 29 socio economic and political background variables which are regarded as independent factors and factors concerning the perception (17) and performance (9) are considered as dependent variables.

CHAPTERISATION:

The first chapter deals with feminism as a concept and movement with the objective of studying the emphasis that the feminists gave to the political aspect.

The second chapter is primarily concerned with women's participation in political process in the United States and in the United Kingdom.

In the third chapter, focus is laid on women's leadership roles in the political process in India.
The socio economic and political background of the political role incumbents will have considerable bearing on their perceptions as well as performance. Hence a study of the background factors of the respondents constitutes the essence of the fourth chapter. In this chapter, the Univariate Analysis is adopted graphically and linkages between different factors are also examined.

Recruitment is an important process through which leaders go up the ladder. In the political parties, different recruitment patterns are adopted. In the fifth chapter, patterns of recruiting women leaders are studied.

An examination of the perceptions of women leaders would be helpful for an understanding of their political awareness as well as their aspirations which influence their participatory potentialities. In the sixth chapter, the role perceptions of the women respondents are discussed. In this the Univariate Analysis is adopted for party wise distribution of perceptions. The T test is used for comparing the scores about the perceptions of respondents belonging to six political parties. The Chi-square (xr) test is adopted to examine the significance of high scores about perception and performance.

The seventh chapter dealing with performance of the respondents gives details of performance in the party activities, performance in the legislatures and performance in the Anti Arrack Movement. The Linear Multiple Regression Analysis, Univariate Analysis for linkages and the T test for the examination of
significance of scores of respondents of six political parties are used for analysis in this chapter.

In the eighth chapter, adopting Linear Multiple Regression Analysis, the association between the independent and the dependent variables is assessed. In addition, with the help of Correlation Matrix, the relationship within the groups of dependent and independent variables is studied.

The ninth chapter deals with the constraints for women's active political participation. An attempt is also made in this chapter to suggest measures for increasing women's role in the political process and in leadership positions.