Chapter – V

Conclusion & Recommendations
CHAPTER – V

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Women constitute 48 per cent of the total population of India according to the last census conducted in 2011 and constitute about half of the world’s population. They are the most important human resource centre for the development of any race, culture, nation or civilization (Sinha, 2007). Women all over the world have been kept out of the political realm for quite a long time. For centuries, they were not welcomed at the helm of political affairs (Faridi and Parveen, 2011). The modern age is the age of democracy and the successful functioning of a democracy presuppose the active participation of both, men and women, in the political process. In India, women entered the political process in the early decades of the twentieth century. In 1905 when the British partitioned the province of Bengal, women joined men to protest this decision by boycotting foreign goods and buying swadeshi goods. In 1919 under the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms women obtained the right to vote. Radha Bai Subharya, Renuka Roy, Annu Swaminathan were the earliest women members who were elected into the Central Legislature (Kuppuswamy, 1987).

A demand for women’s franchise was initiated by Sarojini Naidu who led a deputation of Indian women for the right of equality with men, before the British Parliament in 1917. In 1921, although the Reforms Act gave the right to vote to women also contained certain limitations like the possession of “wifehood,” property, and education. This led some women’s organizations to draft a memorandum wherein they demanded the right to vote without discrimination on the basis of sex. But this was turned down by the British government. The Karachi session of the Indian National Congress in 1931 passed a resolution in favour of the women’s franchise and representation, regardless of their status and qualification. Subsequently in 1935, the Government of India Act, deleting the condition of marriage, granted voting rights to women. And finally in 1950, the Constitution of India conferred equal political and legal rights on Indian women (Sarala, 2001). Though the Constitution of India guaranteed political and legal rights to women, the participation of women in politics was far from satisfactory. Although, women constitute about half of the total electorate, their representation in the Lok Sabha has
not been in proportion. Women contesting elections still constitute only a meagre percentage of the total number of contestants. For instance, in the first Lok Sabha (1952) there were only 22 women (constituting 4.41 per cent of the House). The percentage of women in the first Lok Sabha as against the total number of seats was very low, i.e., 4.41 per cent; it increased slightly in the second Lok Sabha (1957) to 5.40 per cent. In the third Lok Sabha (1962), the percentage improved marginally (6.7 per cent); in the fourth Lok Sabha (1967), the percentage of women’s representation once again fell to 5.93 per cent and in the fifth Lok Sabha (1971) there was a sharp decline when Indira Gandhi was at the peak of her career and only 22 (4.22 per cent) women were elected. The Janata Party came to power in 1977 and there was a further decline in the sixth Lok Sabha (3.29 per cent). There was a small increase in the seventh Lok Sabha (1980) with their figures going up to 28 (5.15 per cent). With the arrival of Rajiv Gandhi holding the position of PM in 1984, the situation improved somewhat and the figure went up to 44 (8.9 per cent). There was a decline in the ninth Lok Sabha (1989) to 27 (5.22 per cent). When the Janata Dal formed the government, there was a slight improvement in the tenth Lok Sabha (1988). In the thirteenth Lok Sabha, again the strength of women members came down to 44 (8.25 per cent). Now, in the fifteenth Lok Sabha, (2009) the percentage of women members has increased from 4.40 per cent in 1952 to 10.86 per cent in 2009 (Faridi and Parveen, 2011). However the participation of women in Rajya Sabha is still dismal. In 2005, the percentage of women in Rajya Sabha was 11.4 per cent but it declined to 8.57 per cent in 2009 in the fifteenth Rajya Sabha. The demand for greater representation of women in the political institutions of India was taken up only after the release of the report by the Committee on the Status of Women in India (CSWI) in 1976. Before this, the focus of the growing women’s movement had been on improving the women’s socio-economic position (CWDS, 1994).

The National Perspective Plan for Women (1988) emphasized the need for women participation in politics, especially at the grassroot level. It was pointed out by the core group, constituted by the Government of India, that political power and access to decision-making process are two essential pre-requisites to women’s equality. However, the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts are landmarks in the history of local self government which provide 33 per cent reservation of seats for women in politics.
Evolution of Panchayat Raj in India

Panchayats have been in existence in one form or the other from the Vedic period. In those days, disputes were settled through the Salaka system of which we get many references. The Panchayats were so powerful during the Mahabharata period that even the king could not interfere in their working. They were known as Gana or Sabha. Although the system during that period was autocratic, that even the king had to accept the decision of the members of the Sabhas or Panchayats. In the Manusmriti and Chanakya’s Arthasastra the head of the village was called Gramik. During the Mauryan period (322 to 195 B.C.), Grama Panchayats existed and were very well organized. The village life was run by the Panchayats. They also worked as administrative units. Chanakya established Panchayats in all the villages and they had powers to deal with issues relating to social and religious behaviour. They could interfere and express their opinion in the day-to-day affairs of the Sabhas and could also punish their members. They were also empowered to manage the financial system (Singh, 2010).

Kautilya, in his Arthashastra had advised the king to constitute units of villages having 100-500 families. There would be centres of 10 villages, 200 villages, 400 villages, and 800 villages. These centres would be known as Sangrahan, Karvatik, Drona Mukh, and Sthaneeya, respectively. The town was termed as Pur, its chief was the Nagarik. Local bodies were free from any interference from the king (Joshi and Narwani, 2002).

In India, after the 10th Century, when the Muslims invaded the country, the local administration suffered a lot. Though the Tughlaks did not interfere in the local administration, the Panchayats suffered a lot under Mughal administration. When the Mughals realized that they did not have a better alternative to replace the existing system of village government, they introduced a new administrative arrangement. This new administrative arrangement suffered from various malaises such as- (i) the police duties got centralized, thereby restricting the law and order functions of the Panchayats, and (ii) the emergence of a class of revenue farmers, known as zamindars, set between the tax administration and the tax payers. In this way, the ancient village self government began to decline at the end of the Mughal rule (Singla, 2007).
By the time of the British rule in India, the Panchayats had practically lost their importance and identity (Biju, 1998). In order to weaken the Panchayats, the British adopted several systems like the zamindari system, ryotwari system, mahalwari system, establishment of Civil and Criminal Courts, right of separate property in a family, urbanization and industrialization which weakened the Village Panchayats. Lord Mayo’s resolution of 1870 proposed a sharing of revenue with the provinces. Lord Rippon’s resolution of 1882 for the first time stressed the educative aspect of administration. The next important piece of legislation was the Bombay Village Panchayat Act of 1920 (Biju, 1998). But these resolutions did not in any real sense represent the will of the people. The local village administration had collapsed. After independence, a new stage began in the progression of Panchayats. Gandhiji stressed the need for giving power to the Village Panchayats to have real democracy. Nehru called the Village Panchayats as democratic decentralization. The Indian Constitution in its Directive Principles in Article 40 declares: “the state shall take necessary steps to organize village panchayats and endow with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self government.” The Community Development Programme (CDP) was launched on 2nd October, 1952. In the year 1957, a committee under the Chairmanship of Balwantrai Mehta was appointed by the government to evaluate the CDP. The Committee observed that the CDP could not yield much result. One of the main reasons for the failure of CDP was the lack of people’s participation in the different phases of the project. So the committee recommended to enhance people participation through Panchayati Raj Institutions and recommended a three tier anchayati Raj Institutions.

During the Janata Dal government, a committee was again appointed in relation to the Panchayati Raj Institutions under the Chairmanship of Ashok Mehta in 1977. The Committee recommended a two tier system of PRIs with one body at the district level and the other at the mandal level. The committee also recommended giving power to the Panchayats to collect taxes and to allow the participation of political parties in the Panchayats. But before any decision could be taken there was a change in power at the Centre in 1980. Later, various Committees and Commissions were formed at the Centre to study and suggest ways of making decentralisation more effective. Some of these Committees included the Hanumantha Rao Committee appointed by the Planning Commission in 1983; the G.V.K. Rao Committee
appointed by the Planning Commission in 1985; the Singhvi Committee in 1987 for further rethinking on PRIs; and the Sarkaria Commission on the Centre-State relations in 1988 (Singla, 2007). Though various Bills were introduced like the 64th and 74th Constitution Amendment Bill, they did not succeed in the Parliament. Finally, the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act was introduced and it was a milestone in the history of Panchayati Raj. It was this Bill which paved the way for women to contest in the election since the Bill provided reservation of seats for women, SCs, and STs.

**POLITICAL PARTICIPATION - A CONCEPT**

Different scholars have given different definitions to the term political participation. The term ‘Participation’ refers to the public to directly participate in the political, economic, management or other social decisions. Ideally, each actor would have a say in the decisions directly proportional to the degree that particular decision affects him or her. Those not affected by a decision would have full say. Likewise, those most affected would have the most say; while those least affected would have the least say. Participatory decision making infers a level of proportionate decision making power and can take place along any realm of human social activity, including economic (participatory economics), political (participatory democracy or parpolity), cultural (inter communalism) or familial (feminism) (Singh, 2010).

Participation is not a unitary concept, but it does consist of inter-related elements, which may be manifested in the decision-making process of an organization in a widely varied ways. Three elements central to the concept of participation are influence, interaction and information sharing (Chell, 1985). Participation has become a buzzword in any discourse concerning development. In the emerging development perspective with a sustainable base, ensuring people’s participation in the whole process of development has become a significant dimension of consideration as participation is widely assumed to be better than its alternatives (Gregory and Gregory, 2008).

According to Rush and Althoff (1971), political participation consists of voting, membership or activity connected with political groups such as movements, parties, pressure groups, office holding in political institutions. It also means participation in informal activities such as political discussions or attendance at political meetings, political persuasion of authorities or members of political public.
RESERVATION AND WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC LIFE

The allocation of 33 percent reservation of seats for women in Panchayats has opened up new horizons for women’s participation in the country’s politics. The entry of more and more women into the field of rural politics will provide them with an opportunity to air their grievances and enable them to take an active part in the formal political arena which deals with social and economic problems (Mishra, 1997). India has more elected women representatives than all other countries put together. According to the Ministry of Panchayati Raj’s mid-term appraisal of the ‘State of the Panchayats 2006-07,’ “No less than 10 lakh women are in our panchayati raj (local self government) institutions, comprising 37 per cent of all those elected and rising to as high as 54 per cent in Bihar, which has 50 per cent reservation for women” (Rao, 2010). Bihar’s example was followed by Sikkim, which increased their reservations for women to 40 per cent and held elections under the new arrangement in January 2008. Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Uttarkhand have also passed laws increasing the reservations for women in Panchayats to 50 per cent. These changes will apply in the next elections to the Panchayats in these States. Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarkhand have made 50 per cent seats available for women. This has given political and social exposure to backward, dalit, poor, and illiterates (Tiwari, 2010). The representation of women by way of reservation within the new grassroots political institutions (Panchayats) established by the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act is one of the most significant changes introduced in recent decades. Apart from seats for women in every Panchayat, the post of village heads have been reserved for women. These provisions have the potential of throwing up a new leadership among women who can play a seminal role in participation and decision making in the new Panchayats.

Reservation at the Panchayat level is today an important avenue of political participation and it has opened the doors of the political arena for emergent women leaders to enter democratic politics and introduce change at the local level. Women in rural societies have been portrayed as mostly inferior. Even women believe in the dogma that as women, they should lead their lives very differently and be subordinate to male wishes. Despite this hard reality, for many women to be called a village head is not only novel but also a new experience of having an independent identity as a public figure with respectable status (Sisodia, 2010).
OBSTACLES TO WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL POLITICS

In spite of the provision of reservation for women in politics especially at the grassroots level, majority of the women do not want to take part in politics due to various obstacles. The most crucial obstacle in the way of real political empowerment of women through Panchayat Raj occurs at the stage of filing of nomination for candidature itself. Most women file their candidature for elections to PRIs not independently, but due to the pressure of their husbands, sons or other male member of the family or the village or due to the pressure of some political party. This phenomenon is even more apparent in case of women belonging to SC or ST. In order to fill the reserved quota, political workers deploy various strategies to influence the women through their family members. Further, societal restrictions require that women do not venture into public spaces alone. The traditional concept of a woman’s real place being within the four walls of the house is strongly prevalent in rural India. PRIs are mainly regarded as political entities that are associated with power; and power is traditionally a masculine concept which is not associated with women (Sisodiya, 2010). The poor participation of women in political activities may be attributed to various socio-economic factors like illiteracy, economic dependence and other traditional factors like caste, religion, feudal attitudes, and family status (Saxena, 2000).

In male dominated societies, it is not easy to persuade women to step out of the house and take part in public affairs. Regular sensitization and awareness activities are crucial to break the traditional attitudes and stereotypes regarding the masculine concept of power. Training becomes an essential to promote active participation of women in politics once they are elected. An empirical evidence to establish the facts regarding the extent of quality and outcome of the participation of women in the democratic process at the grassroot level is important from the viewpoint of enhancing the level and quality of involvement of women.

Importance of the study

Women’s participation in political bodies at various levels is the need of the hour. Only when ways and means are evolved to promote women’s participation in polity, will women be able to gain equal access to control over the political process. Research studies on the subject of elected women role in political bodies must provide an insight into the nature of their participation as well as the obstacles to their effective participation.
The topic, A Study on the **Elected Women Representatives in the Grama Panchayat’s of Karnataka** is relevant today as the issue of reservation of one-third seats for women in Local Self Government is widely debated since its implementation. The Constitution (73rd Amendment) Bill passed by the Parliament in 1993 has sought to provide one-third of the seats in all Panchayati Raj bodies to women. This gave the opportunity for many women to enter into Panchayati Raj bodies, particularly in those States that had elections. The present study is carried out with the following aim and specific objectives:

**Aim of the Study**

To fulfil the research lacunae identified by a detailed review of the literature, the following aim and objectives are formulated:

The aim of the study is to explore the profile of Elected Women Representatives in the Grama Panchayats of Chamarajanagara and Udupi districts in Karnataka with particular reference to their participation, motivating factors, problems and difficulties experienced, and strategies adopted to solve the problems. To reach the aim, the following specific objectives have been formulated.

**Specific Objectives are**

1. To find out the profile of the elected women representatives in the Grama Panchayats;
2. To examine the participation of elected women representatives in social activities before becoming a member of the Panchayat;
3. To identify the factors which the motivate women to contest in the Panchayat election;
4. To analyse the problems and difficulties experienced by the elected women representatives in relation to their role; and
5. To study the strategies adopted to solve the problems by the elected women representatives in implementing developmental programmes.
Hypotheses

Reviewing the related literature in conjunction with discussion with experts and field visits have enabled the researcher to develop logical assumptions on the topic related to the objectives of the study. In order to suit the research design adopted, null hypotheses were framed in the study. The study has considered education, caste categories, marital status, employment status, and type of family of the elected women representatives of the Grama Panchayat as independent variables. The selected set of variables, viz., participation, motivating factors, strategies adopted to solve problems, and the problems faced by the elected women representatives of the Grama Panchayats were considered as dependent variables.

The following hypotheses were framed for the study:

1. The independent variable education has no association with the dependent variable participation, by the elected women representatives of the Grama Panchayats.

2. The independent variable education has no association with the dependent variables motivating factors, by the elected women representatives of the Grama Panchayats.

3. The independent variable education has no association with the dependent variable problems faced, by the elected women representatives of the Grama Panchayats.

4. The independent variable education has no association with the dependent variables of strategies adopted to solve problems, by the elected women representatives of the Grama Panchayats.

5. The independent variable caste groups/category has no association with the dependent variable participation, by the elected women representatives of the Grama Panchayats.

6. The independent variable caste groups/category has no association with the dependent variable motivating factors, by the elected women representatives of the Grama Panchayats.

7. The independent variable caste group/category has no association with the dependent variable problems faced, by the elected women representatives of the Grama Panchayats.
8. The independent variable **caste groups/category** has no association with the dependent variable **strategies adopted** to solve problems, by the elected women representatives of the Grama Panchayats.

9. The independent variable **marital status** has no association with the dependent variable **participation**, by the elected women representatives of the Grama Panchayats.

10. The independent variable **marital status** has no association with the dependent variable **motivating factors**, by the elected women representatives of the Grama Panchayats.

11. The independent variable **marital status** has no association with the dependent variable **problems faced**, by the elected women representatives of the Grama Panchayats.

12. The independent variable **marital status** has no association with the dependent variable **strategies adopted** to solve problems, by the elected women representatives of the Grama Panchayats.

13. The independent variable **employment** has no association with the dependent variable **participation**, by the elected women representatives of the Grama Panchayats.

14. The independent variable **employment** has no association with the dependent variable **motivating factors**, by the elected women representatives of the Grama Panchayats.

15. The independent variable **employment** has no association with the dependent variable **problems faced**, by the elected women representatives of the Grama Panchayats.

16. The independent variable **employment** has no association with the dependent variable **strategies adopted** to solve problems, by the elected women representatives of the Grama Panchayats.

17. The independent variable **type of family** has no association with the dependent variable **participation**, by the elected women representatives of the Grama Panchayats.
18. The independent variable type of family has no association with the dependent variable motivating factors, by the elected women representatives of the Grama Panchayats.

19. The independent variable type of family has no association with the dependent variable problems faced, by the elected women representatives of the Grama Panchayats.

20. The independent variable type of family has no association with the dependent variable strategies adopted to solve problems, by the elected women representatives of the Grama Panchayats.

Research Design

To satisfy the objectives of the study, a descriptive research design was adopted. Qualitative methodologies were employed along with quantitative techniques. The study is descriptive in nature as it is intended to understand who, what, when, where, and how of the women representatives and their participation in the democratic process at the Grama Panchayat level. The study is also intended to understand the issues in-depth and arrive at logical conclusions. From this perspective, the design is Diagnostic too.

Scope of the study

The geographic scope of the study is limited to the Chamarajanagara and Udupi districts of Karnataka. It studies the elected women representatives in the Grama Panchayats with reference to their participation, motivating factors, functioning, and difficulties experienced. This study is expected to help the policy makers and planners to develop schemes for effective implementation and to create a favourable environment for the participation of women in the Grama Panchayats.

Place of the study

For the purpose of the study, two districts had been chosen of which Udupi is a much developed district and Chamarajanagara is the least developed district, as understood on the basis of the development indicators.
Universe and Sample

The universe of the study constitutes all the elected women representatives of the Grama Panchayats which is 35,305 (43.80%) of the total 80,602 elected Grama Panchayat members. Of these, 1652 elected women representatives (Panchayat term 2005-06 to 2009-10) belong to Chamarajanagara and Udupi districts of Karnataka (HDR, 2005). Among them, 838 elected women panchayat members belong to Chamarajanagara district and 814 belong to Udupi district were selected. For a greater representation of the universe, a multi-stage stratified random sampling was adopted. The procedure was as follows

In the first stage, two districts in Karnataka, viz., Chamarajanagara (backward) and Udupi (comparatively developed) districts were selected on the basis of development indicators such as education, infrastructure, women literacy, and women participation in politics. It was further decided to study all the talukas in the above districts for a greater representation. The talukas were Udupi, Kundapura, and Karkala from Udupi district and Chamarajanagara, Yalandur, Kollegal, and Gundlupet from Chamarajanagara district. This was to facilitate comparison between the elected women representatives of the Panchayat of Chamarajanagara (backward region) and Udupi (comparatively developed region). Udupi has three revenue talukas and Chamarajanagara has four talukas, however Chamarajanagara districts has 126 Grama Panchayats spread over in 4 talukas, while Udupi district has 146 Grama Panchayats spread over in 3 talukas.

In the second stage, 96 Grama Panchayats from seven talukas were selected randomly by using the random number tables. The random selection was made based on disproportionate weightage so as to give average importance to talukas having lesser number of Panchayats.

Inclusion Criteria

- The study includes only the elected women representatives of the Grama Panchayats from Chamarajanagara and Udupi districts of Karnataka.
- Members from all caste groups, irrespective of reservation, are included.
Exclusion Criteria

- Women members of Taluk Panchayat and Zilla Panchayats were excluded from the study.
- Elected women representatives of the Grama Panchayats other than Chamarajanagara and Udupi districts of Karnataka, were excluded from the study.

In the third stage, three women representative from each Panchayat were selected. Leaving aside three Grama Panchayats, all the selected Grama Panchayats had a minimum of four and a maximum of 14 elected women representatives. Three elected women representatives were selected (multi-stage stratified random sampling) randomly from each Grama Panchayat, namely those who had put in a minimum four years of service in the Grama Panchayat. Wherever such representatives were not available, 20 members were interviewed who had less than the desired years of service. Likewise, the sample size was limited to 288 (96 Grama Panchayats X three Elected Women Members).

Source of Data

To satisfy the objectives of the study, primary as well as secondary sources of data, were collected for the study. The primary sources data were collected directly from the elected women representatives of the Grama Panchayats. The secondary data was collected from reference books, dissertation abstracts, conference proceedings, articles published in the referred journals, reports of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj and Rural Development, working papers, Gazetteers, Human Development Reports, unpublished papers and monographs of the research institutions working on democratic decentralisation. The records of the District Statistical Offices, Grama Panchayats, Taluk Panchayats, and Zilla Panchayats also served as sources of secondary data. The websites of the State and Central government departments, National and International organisations working on democratic decentralisation were reviewed periodically.

Tools and Techniques of data collection

The tools to collect the data were a semi-structured interview schedule and a checklist. The semi-structured interview schedule was canvassed with the elected women representatives of the Grama Panchayats. A checklist was used to conduct informal interviews with the family members of the elected women representatives of the Grama Panchayats, representatives of developmental organisations working on democratic decentralisation, secretaries of Panchayats, and field experts.
Development of Research Tools

A semi-structured interview schedule was prepared by the researcher, keeping in mind the objectives of the study. The semi-structured interview schedule consists of five sections covering the profile of the women Panchayat members, their participation in social activities before becoming Panchayat members, factors motivating the women to contest in the Panchayat election, problems and difficulties experienced by the women members in relation to their role as members, and the strategies adopted to solve the problems while implementing developmental programmes.

Pre-testing

After preparing the final draft of the semi-structured interview schedule, a pre-testing was done to verify the suitability and adaptability of the tool in order to satisfy the set objectives. The pre-testing was conducted in five Grama Panchayats from both the selected districts with 28 elected women representatives of the Grama Panchayats. This exercise helped the researcher to standardize the semi-structured interview schedule with necessary modifications (both additions and deletions). Ethical issues like informed consent had been followed. All subjects were informed of the nature of the study, its purpose and benefits in a language understandable to them and their permission was sought to collect the data. All the respondents were happy in conveying their consent. Further, the researcher had collected the data from the respondents in such a way that their human rights were respected and even promoted. Confidentiality of information was assured and the subjects were encouraged to freely express their opinions and concerns at every level and to participate actively without any inhibition.

Main Study

After standardizing the research tool, the main study was conducted in the selected two districts for the duration of 6 months (October 2009 to March 2010). Each Grama Panchayat was visited in the morning. The list collected from the Zilla Panchayat of the elected women representatives was verified after visiting the Grama Panchayats. The contact details of the three representatives as per the sampling
methodology were procured from the Panchayat Secretary. They contacted the
selected women representatives and briefed them about the purpose of the visit. A
cconvenient time was confirmed for the purpose of the interview. Accordingly, each
elected women representative was interviewed for an average duration of 60 minutes.
Altogether, one day was spent in each Grama Panchayat to interview the women
representatives. Other stake holders in the village were also met to conduct informal
interviews on the same day.

**Data Processing**

The qualitative data was quantified by assigning numerical values and were
subjected to coding. It was done by preparing a coding key. By referring to the
coding key, the data from the 288 semi-structured interview schedules was transferred
to the master chart. The data from the master chart was then keyed into the computer
in a Statistical Package for Social Sciences. The frequency distribution tables,
percentage, pie diagram, bar charts, and bi-variate tables, Mean, Standard Deviation
and Chi-square, and Rank-correlation tests were calculated using the same software.

**Limitations of the Study**

The study is limited to the elected women representatives of the Grama
Panchayats of Udupi and Chamarajanagara districts of Karnataka. It could not cover
other districts. Further, the study did not take into consideration the opinions of the
elected male members. The study also did not cover elected women representative
from the other tiers.

**Chapterwise Scheme**

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Major Results
Chamarajanagara District Data Analysis
Profile of the Elected Women Representatives in the Grama Panchayats

- Majority of the respondents of Chamarajanagara district belonged to a young age group, that is, 26 to 35 years. The mean age of the respondents of Chamarajanagara district is 37.2 (SD 9.865), mean age of Gundlupet is 41.2 (SD11.73), mean age of Kollegal is 38.77 (SD 9.455), and the mean age of Yalandur is 43 (SD 6.85). It is found that the participation of young married women is high compared to older women.

- It is evident that on the whole majority of the respondents are literates. Of this 4.4% in Chamarajanagara, 28.2% in Gundlupet, 20% in Kollegal, and 5.6% in Yalandur were educated up to pre-primary level. 13.3% respondents of Chamarajanagara, 12.8% respondents of Gundlupet, 11.1% respondents of Kollegal, and 22.2% respondents of Yalnadur have studied up to primary level. High school education was attained by 28.9% in Chamarajanagara, 7.7% in Gundlupet, 22.2% in Kollegal, and 22.2% in Yalandur taluk. However, educational background is not the criterion to become a Grama Panchayat member, but it is important to be literate to gain self-confidence.

- As far as the Schedule Caste representation is concerned, it is 44.4% in Chamarajanagara taluk, 20.5% in Gundlupet, 48.9% in Kollegal, and 33.3% in Yalandur taluk. The Schedule tribe representation was naturally quite lesser than the Schedule caste representation, that is, 13.3% in Chamarajanagara, 25.6% in Gundlupet, 8.9% in Kollegal, and 44.4% in Yalandur taluk. The general category representation was less, i.e., 11.1% in aa and 13.3% in Kollegal taluk. The comparatively high representation of SCs and STs was probably due to the reservation of seats.

- Majority of the respondents from all the four taluks were married and were living with their spouses. The percentage was high in Kollegal taluk, that is, 95.6% followed by 88.9% in Yalandur, 86.17% in Chamarajanagara, and 79.5% in Gundlupet taluk. The data depicts that very few unmarried women entered local politics in all the four taluks.

- It is evident from the studies that, majority of the respondents were homemakers (Chamarajanagara 77.8%, Gundlupet 69.2%, Kollegal 71.1%, and Yalandur 77.8%). A few women were self- employed, i.e., 8.9% in Chamarajanagara and 17.9% in Gundlupet. Few women were agricultural labourers, daily wagers, and anganwadi helpers.
It is evident from the data, that majority of the respondents did not have a sound annual income because they fall under the income range of less than Rs.11000 and Rs.11000 to Rs.15000.

It is found that majority of the respondents’ husbands were non-literates (46.7% in Chamarajanagara and Kollegal taluk, 23.1% in Gundlupet, and 50% in Yalandur taluk).

From the study it is very clear that majority of the respondents were from nuclear families. But it is also significant to note that the joint family system had not totally disintegrated.

The Participation of the Elected Women Representatives in Social Activities before becoming a Member of the Grama Panchayat

On the whole, majority of the respondents had membership in Self Help Groups (Yalandur 83.3%, Chamarajanagara 64.4%, and Gundlupet 64.1 %). But in Kollegal taluk no respondent had SHG membership. None of the respondents had membership in Temple/Church Committees. Some of the respondents had membership in NGOs, Mahila Mandals, School Development and Management Committee (SDMC), and Milk Dairy.

Factors Motivating Women to Contest in the Panchayat Election

There are various sources of motivation for women to contest for election like husband, children, brother/s, sister/s, relatives, villagers, political parties, Self Help Groups, and NGOs. The results indicate that the villagers’ motivation factor occupies first rank in Gundlupet, Kollegal, and Yalandur. But in Chamarajanagara, villagers’ motivation factor occupies second rank whereas husbands’ motivation factor (rank one) plays an important role. At the same time in Gundlupet, Kollegal, and Yalandur villagers occupy second rank in motivating the women members to contest in the Grama Panchayat election. The result also indicates that, relatives had taken 3rd rank in Chamarajanagara, Gundlupet, and Kollegal taluk. But in Yalandur it had been to pushed to 4th rank. At the same time self- motivation had occupied 3rd rank in Yalandur taluk but was pushed to 8th rank in Chamarajanagara, 9th rank in Gundlupet, and 7th rank in Kollegal. Children occupied 4th rank in Chamarajanagara and Gundlupet, but it had taken 8th rank in Kollegal and Yalandur. The source of motivation for the women members to contest the election varies from taluk to taluk.
A remarkable change is seen in Chamarajanagara because political party occupies 10th rank in motivation, whereas in Gundlupet, Kollegal and Yalandur it has occupied 7th, 4th, and 6th rank, respectively.

Most of the women have joined politics due to the force of others and only a few of them joined politics with self-interest. The rank obtained by self-motivation is 8th in Chamarajanagara, 9th in Gundlupet, and 7th in Kollegal. Only Yalandur has occupied 3rd rank with respect to self-motivation.

The results indicate that a large majority (Chamarajanagara- 64%, Gundlupet-92.3, Kollegal- 95.6, and 66.7- Yalandur) of elected women representatives are not familiar with the Grama Panchayat activities.

It is found that the respondents had different reasons to contest the Grama Panchayat elections but majority of them (Kollegal- 80%, Gundlupet- 43.6%, Yalandur -33.3%, and Chamarajanagara- 26.7%) expressed that they contested the election to develop their village.

The study revealed information regarding the source of information attained about the Grama Panchayat and its activities. Majority of the respondents (Chamarajanagara- 75.6%, Gundlupet- 61.5%, and Kollegal- 84.4%) mentioned that they received information about the Grama Panchayat while training.

It is evident from the study that majority of the respondent’s family members did not serve as Grama Panchayat members. The percentage of the respondent’s family members who served as Grama Panchayat members is 17.8% in Chamarajanagara taluk, 15.4% in Gundlupet taluk, 6.6% in Kollegal taluk, and 33.3% in Yalandur taluk.

The study shows that most of the women members’ opponents in the election were female (Chamarajanagara - 66.7%, Gundlupet- 82.1%, Kollegal -88.9%, and Yalandur- 94.4%). Only three (6.7%) respondents from Chamarajanagara taluk were unanimously elected.

With regard to the opinion of the respondents about the present election system, majority of the respondents (Chamarajanagara 44.4%, Gundlupet 69.2%, and Yalandur 50%) accepted the present system of election.

Regarding the respondent’s family member’s and friend’s reaction towards the respondent’s decision to become a Panchayat member is concerned, it is found that majority of the respondents received positive reaction and encouragement.
from the spouse (In Chamarajanagara taluk encouragement by spouse scored 4.26 and obtained first rank, followed by parents scoring 3.26 obtaining 2nd rank. In Gundlupet taluk, spouse motivation scored 4.10 and obtained first rank followed by neighbours motivation which scored 3.64 and obtained 2nd rank. In Kollegal taluk, spouse had scored 4.66 and obtained first rank, followed by relatives which scored 4.05 and obtained 2nd rank. At the same time, Yalandur taluk spouse had scored 4.61 and obtained first rank, followed by in-laws obtaining 2nd rank).

The Problems and Difficulties Experienced by the Elected Women Representatives in Relation to their Role

- A good majority of the respondents did not face many problems in the Grama Panchayat. The women who did face any problems mentioned only two types, i.e., not informing meeting agenda in advance (Gundlupet- 2.6% and Yalandur - 11.1%) and giving late notice for the meeting (Kollegal- 8.9%).

- The study reveals information about the problems faced by the women in relation to activities like attending Grama Panchayat meeting, election canvassing, attending training, attending programmes, and to visit their ward. It is significant to note that majority of the women members reported that they did not have any problem in implementing the above mentioned activities. Few of the women mentioned that they had problems in attending the Grama Panchayat meeting (2.2% in Chamarajanagara and 11.1% in Yalandur). Few of the respondents mentioned that they had problem in election canvassing (2.2% in Chamarajanagara, 4.4% in Kollegal, and 11.1% in Yalandur taluk). As far as attending training is concerned some of the women mentioned (Chamarajanagara - 4.4% and Yalandur- 16.7%) that they had problem attending training. Problems with regard to attend programme is concerned, few of the respondents opined that they had a problem (Chamarajanagara- 4.4% and Yalandur- 16.7%). Majority of the respondents did not have any problem visiting their ward, while the percentage of respondents having problems is also low, i.e., Chamarajanagara- 4.4%, Kollegal -4.4%, and Yalandur- 11.1%.

- The study reveals information about the problems faced by the women members in initiating programmes in their ward. Majority of them reported that they did not face any problem. Few of the respondents of Chamarajanagara (2.2%), Gundlupet (2.6%), and Yalandur (27.8%) taluks did not get co-operation from the secretary.
• With regard to the different positions held by the women members and their
tenure is concerned, it is found that majority of the women respondents were
members of the Grama Panchayat and a great majority of them were in the process
of completing five years (Chamarajanagara- 95.6%, Gundlupet -100%, and
Kollegal -100%). No woman member of Chamarajanagara had been a Standing
Committee member or Standing Committee President.

• As far as the ability to manage their positions in the Grama Panchayats is
concerned, majority of them (Chamarajanagara -66.7%, Gundlupet- 53.9%,
Kollegal- 97.8%, and Yalandur- 44.5 %) mentioned that they could manage the
responsibility as members very well.

• It is significant to note that only in two talukas of Chamarajanagara, i.e., Yalandur
(77.8%) and Gundlupet (76.9%), majority of the women members mentioned that
their social status had increased.

• It is interesting to note that majority of the respondents stated that men are co-
operative with them. The percentage is high in Yalandur (83.3%) followed by
Chamarajanagara (82.2%), Kollegal (71.1%), and Gundlupet (61.5%).

• The study reveals that, majority of the women members in Chamarajanagara taluk
(91.9%) followed by Gundlupet (76.9%), Kollegal (73.3%), and Yalandur (50%)
taluk were able to exercise their legitimate authority.

• The data presents reasons for some respondent’s inability to exercise their
legitimate authority. One of the reasons mentioned is that they were not much
aware about the Panchayat procedures and one respondent mentioned that her son
takes care of her work and she is comfortable with it.

Strategies adopted by the elected women representatives in implementing
development programmes

• All the respondents of Gundlupet and Yalandur mentioned that they were
receiving guidance from the Panchayat officials (Chamarajanagara- 95.6%
Gundlupet- 100% Kollegal -91.1%, and Yalandur- 100%).

• Majority of the women members reported that their suggestions are considered in
the Panchayat (Gundlupet- 87.2%, Chamarajanagara -80%, Kollegal -71.1%, and
Yalandur -55.6%).
Conclusion and Recommendations

- From the data it is clear that majority of the respondents regularly attend Panchayat meetings. The percentage is high in Yalandur (100%) followed by Gundlupet (94.9%), Chamarajanagara (93.3%), and Kollegal (86.7%).

- The study reveals that the women members consider their participation in the meeting in a positive manner. Majority of the respondents, that is, 86.7% in Chamarajanagara followed by 79.5% in Gundlupet, and 64.4% in Kollegal mentioned that they actively participate in the meeting.

- The study depicts the information about the programmes that are implemented such as, construction of bus stand, housing, drainage, road light, village sanitation programme, primary health center, road repair, anganwadi, water supply, electricity, literacy, small bridge, farm pond, tank de-silting, school building, and subsidy to Self Help Groups. A good number of the women members had implemented more of the water, housing, village sanitation, and road repair programmes as compared to other programmes. Though the percentage of women implementing programmes is low, for a majority of the programmes mentioned in the 11th Schedule of the Constitution some have been implemented.

- The data provides information on how often women members of the Panchayat visit their ward. As for as Chamarajanagara (53.3%) and Gundlupet taluk (76.9%) is concerned majority of the women members reported that they visit their ward every day (respondents belongs to the same ward). A good number (49.9%) of women members of Kollegal taluk visit their ward once in a month and in Yalandur taluk also a majority (72.2%) attends the ward once in a month.

- It is evident from the data, that majority of the women members conduct ward meeting regularly. The percentage is higher in Gundlupet taluk 92.3% (Chamarajanagara- 71.1%, Kollegal- 82.2%, and Yalandur-72.2%).

- Women members were asked about number of members attending the Grama Sabha meeting in order to understand their awareness level regarding people’s participation in the Grama Sabha. As far as Chamarajanagara taluk is concerned, 37.8% of the respondents mentioned that less than 100 members attend the Grama Sabha meeting and 33.3% of the respondents in Gundlupet taluk said that there will be 100 members, whereas in Kollegal 35.5% of the respondents reported that there will be less than 100 members and in Yalandur taluk 44.5% expressed that there will be around 100 members in the Grama Sabha meeting.
Conclusion and Recommendations

- As far as 33% reservation is concerned majority of them mentioned that it is not enough. It is understood from the data that majority of the respondents in all the four taluks of Chamarajanagara district reported that they need 50% reservation in Panchayats.

- The study provides information on whether the women members are interested to contest the next Panchayat election or not. It is significant to note that majority of the women members were interested to contest the next Panchayat election (Chamarajanagara- 71.1%, Gundlupet- 79.5%, Kollegal -88.9%, and Yalandur - 72.2%).

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF UDUPI DISTRICT

Profile of Elected Women Representatives in the Grama Panchayats

- As far as age distribution of the respondents is concerned, it is significant to note that majority of the respondents belonged to the middle aged group, i.e., 36 to 45 years (Karkala taluk -42.8%, Kundapura taluk- 35.3%, and Udupi taluk- 39.6%).

- With regard to the educational qualification of the respondents, in Karkala taluk 50% studied up to high school, in Kundapura taluk 43.1% studied up to high school, and in Udupi taluk 64.6% studied up to high school. A good percentage (23.8%) of the respondents in Karkala taluk studied up to PUC followed by Udupi taluk (14.6%) and Kundapura taluk (09.8%). Graduate respondents were only 5.9% in Kundapura taluk and 6.3% in Udupi taluk.

- A good number of the respondents belonged to Category-IIA (38.1% in Karkala taluk, 35.1% in Kundapura taluk, and 37.5% in Udupi taluk). It is evident from the data that the representation of general category (Karkala- 16.7%, Kundapura- 07.8%, and Udupi-04.2%) was not satisfactory.

- The data indicates that in all the three taluks of the district majority of the elected women were married. The percentage was higher in Udupi taluk (93.8%) followed by Kundapura (92.2%), and Karkala taluk (88.1%).

- The data reflects that majority of the respondents were housewives. The percentage was higher in Udupi taluk (62.5%), followed by Karkala taluk (40.5%), and Kundapura taluk (37.3%). Very few women covered under the study were self-employed; 9.8% in Kundapura taluk followed by 8.3% in Udupi taluk and 2.4% in Karkala.
Most of the respondents mentioned that they were under the poverty line (Karkala taluk- 92.8%, Kundapura- 68.6%, and Udupi- 43.8%).

The study indicates that majority of the respondent’s husbands had primary level education (Kundapura- 39.2%, Udupi -25%, and Karkala- 21.4%).

The figures indicate very clearly that majority of the respondents belonged to the nuclear family (Karkala- 85.7%, Udupi -79.2%, and in Kundapura -74.5%).

The participation of the elected women representatives in social activities before becoming a member of the Panchayat

As far as the participation of the elected women representatives in social activities before becoming a member of the Panchayat is concerned it is found that women members participated in CBOs like SHG (SHG membership: Kundapur -28.6%, Udupi -52.9%, and Karkala- 31.3%) and Mahila Mandals (Kundapur -14.3%, Udupi -11.8%, and Karkala- 22.9%).

Source of Motivation for Women to Contest in the Panchayat Election

It is found that majority of the respondents received motivation from their husbands (Udupi -1st rank, Karkala -2nd Rank, and Kundapura -2nd Rank) than self- motivation (Karkala- 4th rank, Kundapura- 5th rank, and Udupi- 5th rank).

Another observation was that villagers and political party motivated them more strongly rather than relatives and family members. The motivation provided by villagers stands first rank in Karkala and Kundapur taluks and in Udupi it has secured 3rd rank.

It is evident from the data that in Udupi (58.4%) and Kundapura (62.7%) majority of the respondents contested the Grama Panchayat election for the purpose of village development. But in Karkala taluk a good percentage (35.7%) of the respondents’ said that they contested the Grama Panchayat election because of the reservation.

The data indicates that majority of the women members from Karkala (78.6%), Kundapur (64.7%), and Udupi (58.3%) were not aware of any activity of the Grama Panchayat before becoming a member. A good number of the members reported (Kundapura-39.2%, Karkala-26.2%, and Udupi -16.7%) that they were not interested in knowing about the Grama Panchayat before becoming a member.
Conclusion and Recommendations

- The data explores the source of information for the women members about the Grama Panchayat and its activities. Majority (Udupi - 95.2%, Kundapura -37.3%, and Karkala -68.8%) of the elected women members got their information while training.
- Most of the women representatives clearly stated that they were the first one who had entered the Grama Panchayat as an elected representative. In all the three taluks, majority (Karkala- 97.6%, Kundapura- 82.4%, and Udupi -81.3%) of them entered the Grama Panchayat without any political background.
- It is found that majority of the women contested against women. The percentage is 92.9% in Karkala taluk, 76.5% in Kundapura, and 79.2% in Udupi taluk.
- Majority (66.7%) of the respondents in Karkala taluk opined that the present system of election of the Grama Panchayat is good, followed by Kundapura (84.3%) and Udupi (47.9%).
- In all three taluks (Karkala, Kundapura, and in Udupi) the husband’s reaction in regard to the respondent’s membership in the Panchayat was positive, which secured the 1st rank.

The problems and difficulties experienced by the elected women representatives in relation to their role

- From the data it is found that more than ninety percent of the respondents did not face any problem in the Grama Panchayat.
- More than 90% of the women members, except Udupi (68.8%) taluk, mentioned that they had no problem in initiating programmes in their ward.
- It is significant to note that majority of the women members covered under this study did not face any problems by the Grama Panchayat staff. Only one (2.4%) woman member of Karkala taluk, two (3.9%) of Kundapura taluk, and five (10.4%) of Udupi district faced the problem of non cooperation by the secretary.
- The data explores information on the different positions held by the Grama Panchayat members. It is clear from the data that majority of the members occupied the position of member in Panchayat and majority of them held the position for five years (Karkala- 95.2%, Kundapura- 98%, and Udupi -100%).
It is significant to note that a great majority of the respondents reported that their social status had increased after becoming a member of Grama Panchayat, since they represent their ward (Karkala - 97.6%, Kundapura - 98.0%, and Udupi - 97.9%).

A good number of the women members mentioned that they received very good co-operation from the male members. Only one (2%) respondent in Kundapura taluk reported that she was neglected by her male co-members.

A good percentage (Karkala - 42.9%, Kundapura- 54.9%, and Udupi- 56.3%) of the respondents said that they were able to exercise their authority.

Strategies adopted by the Elected Women Representatives in implementing Development Programmes

The data states that majority (Karkala -95.2%, Kundapura- 92.2%, and Udupi- 95.8%) of the respondents reported that they get guidance from the Grama Panchayat officials.

For considering the respondents suggestion while implementing any project is concerned, a good number of them, that is, 87.5% in Udupi taluk followed by Kundapura (64.7%) and Karkala (52.4%) mentioned that their suggestions are considered while implementing any project.

One of the major findings of this study is that inspite of their household chores women members make it a point to attend all the meetings of the Panchayat which is very appreciable. More than ninety percent of the respondents are attending all the meetings of the Panchayat (Karkala- 95.2%, Kundapura- 96.1, and Udupi -93.8%).

Majority of the respondents actively participated in the Panchayat meetings which was evident from the study (Karkala- 95.2%, Kundapura- 82.4%, and Udupi -87.5%).

It is evident from the study that majority of the elected women members of the Grama Panchayat implemented most of the programmes such as village sanitation, road repair, water and electricity programme. No woman member of Udupi taluk had implemented the housing, drainage, and road light programmes. The Grama Panchayat in Karkala taluk concentrated more on village sanitation programmes, village cleaning, primary health centers, road repair, anganawadi, drinking water, and electricity. The Grama Panchayat in Udupi taluk concentrated on some of these programmes, viz., housing, drainage facility, road lights (street lights), village sanitation programmes, village road repair, anganawadi center, drinking water, small bridge (kalu sanka), farm pond, and tank desilting.
The data presents the frequency of visits by the members to their ward. Majority (64.3%) of the respondents under Karkala taluk mentioned that they were residents of the same ward. Hence they were in frequent contact with the people of the ward. As for Kundapura (58.8%) and Udupi (43.8%) taluks, majority of them visited the ward once in a month.

- It is evident from the study that majority (Karkala- 69.0%, Kundapura -92.2% , and Udupi- 97.9%) of the women members in Udupi district get good responses for their questions. It is also one of the important changes taking place in the villages.

- It is evident from the above table that 97.9% of the respondents in Udupi taluk conduct ward meetings regularly while no respondent in Karkala taluk conducts meeting which is not a good sign.

- The study reveals that in Karkala -59.5%, Kundapura-17.8%, and Udupi- 39.6% less than 100 people attend the Grama Sabha meeting.

- When the women members of the panchayat were asked questions with regard to reservation, majority of them expressed that 33% is not enough. Only one woman said that reservation is not required.

- The study sought information on the elected women representatives’ interest in contesting the next election. A large number of women expressed that they would like to contest the next election (Karkala -73.8%, Kundapura- 60.9%, and Udupi- 56.3%). It indicated the women’s interest in public life.
COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE PARTICIPATION OF ELECTED WOMEN IN THE GRAMA PANCHAYATS OF CHAMARAJANAGARA DISTRICT AND UDUPI DISTRICT OF KARNATAKA

Comparative analysis of the Profile of elected women representatives in Grama Panchayats

- Majority of the respondents of Chamarajanagara district belonged to a young age group of 26 to 35 years, whereas in Udupi district majority of the respondents belonged to middle aged group, i.e., 36 to 45 years (Karkala taluk- 42.8%, Kundapura taluk -35.3%, and Udupi taluk- 39.6%).

- It is evident from the study that majority of the women members of Udupi district (90.8%) are literate when compared to Chamarajanagara district (70.2%). With regard to the educational qualification of the member’s spouses in Chamarajanagara district, it was found that around 59.4% of them were literate whereas in Udupi district 89.4% of the spouses were literate.

- It is clear from the study that a good number of the women members in Chamarajanagara district represented the Scheduled Caste (38.1%), Scheduled Tribe (19%), and Category-I (16.9%). In these three categories a large number of the respondents are Illiterate. The general category representation was not much when compared to the SC, ST, and Category-I. In Udupi district, the data revealed that a good number (37.5%) of the women members represented Cat.- 2A. There appears to be an equal distribution of the number of elected women members around various caste categories, except Category-2B and Category-3B. From Ca.-2A only two women members are Illiterate while the majority had primary and high school education.

- It is evident from the study that more or less an equal percentage of women members of both the districts (Chamarajanagara- 95.3 % and Udupi- 97.2%) were married.

- The percentage of daily wage earners was comparatively high (32.0%) in Udupi district than Chamarajanagara district (11.6%).

- Income was calculated on the basis of the unequal distribution of classification. Majority of the women members of both the districts, 51.7% in Chamarajanagara and 67.4% in Udupi were having very low income of less than Rs.11000.
The present study reveals that in Chamarajanagara district, 51.7% belonged to nuclear families, 44.9% belonged to joint families, and only 3.4% belonged to extended families. But there was no great difference in the percentage between joint and nuclear families. With regard to Udupi district, a majority (79.5%) belonged to nuclear families, 14.8% belonged to joint families, and 5.7% belonged to extended families.

In the present study, the field data clearly shows that more than 40% of the women members have two children, i.e., 46.8% in Udupi district and 41.5% in Chamarajanagara district.

**Participation by the respondents in social activities before becoming a Panchayat member**

- It is clear from the field data that majority (68%) of the women members of Chamarajanagara had membership in Self Help Groups than Udupi district (38.3%) before becoming a member of the Panchayat.

**Factors Motivating the Women to Contest in the Panchayat Election**

- According to the study, in both the districts, majority of the women members were motivated by the villagers to contest the election which secures 1st rank. The rank score was slightly higher in Chamarajanagara district where the rank score is 7.10 as compared to Udupi district where the rank score is 6.53. The respondent’s spouse occupy second place in the rank order and the rank score is higher (7.38) in Chamarajanagara when compared to Udupi (6.32) district. The third place was occupied by the political parties and the rank score is higher in Udupi district (5.63) than Chamarajanagara district (3.3). Self- motivation secures 4th place in the rank order and the rank score was higher in Udupi district (5.11) when compared to Chamarajanagara district (3.18).

- As to the reasons for not knowing about the Panchayat activities, it is found that a comparatively higher percentage (43.6%) of the respondents of Chamarajanagara district than Udupi district (27.7%) mentioned that they were not interested enough to know about the Panchayat and its activities. A comparatively higher percentage of respondents of Chamarajanagara (25.2%) district than Udupi district (11.4%) have mentioned that they have not stepped out of the house, to know much about the Panchayat.
Source of information about the Grama Panchayat and its activities after being elected as a member

- It is found from the study that majority of the respondents, both in Chamarajanagara (67.3%) and Udupi (65.2%) districts got their information about the Grama Panchayat while undergoing training.
- Majority of the respondents, of both the districts (Chamarajanagara - 84.3% and Udupi - 86.7%) mentioned that none of their family members served as a Panchayat member.
- It is evident from the study that in both the districts majority of the women members had women as opponent in the election (Chamarajanagara - 81% and Udupi - 82%).
- The study reveals that in both the districts (Chamarajanagara - 51.7% and Udupi - 66.6%) women members mentioned that the present election system is very good.
- The study indicates the positive reaction of the family members and friends towards their decision to become Panchayat members.

The problems and difficulties experienced by the elected women representatives in relation to their role

- It is evident from the study that majority of the respondents of both the districts did not face any problem in the Panchayat (Chamarajnagara- 97.3 and Udupi- 98.6%).
- It is clear from the data that women have taken the initiative to settle the problems independently which is a positive sign. All initiatives (100%) were settled without any problem.
- It is evident from the data that majority of the respondents of both Chamarajanagara (97%) and Udupi district (94%) did not face any problem in the family.
- Regarding the problems in initiating the programmes in their ward is concerned, it is found that, majority of the women members from both the districts have not faced any problems and 5% of the respondents of Chamarajanagara and 5% from Udupi district mentioned that the secretary did not co-operate with them.
- A large number of the respondents reported that (Chamarajanagara and Udupi - 81%) their social status has increased after they became a member of the Panchayat.
It is evident from the study that majority of the women of both the districts served as members in the Panchayat for five years (Udupi - 97.9% and Chamarajanagara - 86%).

Regarding the position of the Grama Panchayat President, a good number (23.4%) of women members of Udupi district compared to Chamarajanagara district (14.9%) served as President for two and half years.

In both the districts, the percentage of women who served as Vice President was not satisfactory and maximum number of years served as Vice President is only two years. The percentage is 10.2% in Chamarajanagara district and 4.2% in Udupi district.

The study identifies that the majority of the women members managed very capably as members of the Grama Panchayat. The percentage is 71.8 in Udupi district and 70.2 in Chamarajanagara district.

It is evident from the study that majority (73.5%) of the respondents of Chamarajanagara district mentioned that co-members are cooperative as compared to Udupi district (57.5%).

It is significant to note from the study that majority of the women members of both Chamarajanagara and Udupi district mentioned that they were able to exercise their legitimate power but the percentage was slight higher in Chamarajanagara district, i.e., 77%

The Strategies adopted by the Elected Women Representatives in Implementing Development Programmes

- Majority of the women members of both the districts mentioned that they get guidance from the Panchayat officials. The percentage is slight higher in Chamarajanagara (96%) when compared to Udupi district (94%).
- The study reveals that a majority of the women members of both the districts felt that their suggestions were considered by their co-members. The percentage was higher in Chamarajanagara district (76%) when compared to Udupi district (69%).
- The present study discovered that majority of the women, of both the districts, (Chamarajanagara - 93% and Udupi - 95%) attend meetings regularly.
- The study revealed that majority (Chamarajanagara - 84.4% and Udupi - 87.2%) of the women members get good response for the questions raised by them.
Conclusions and Recommendations

- Majority of the respondents from the both districts take an active participation in the meeting (Udupi - 88% and Chamarajanagara - 73%).
- Majority of the women members were able to provide drinking water to their ward. The drinking water scheme for their ward was availed of by 66% women in Chamarajanagara and 55.3% in Udupi district.
- The road repair project was availed by 59.2% women members of Chamarajanagara and 57.4% of Udupi district for their ward. The housing scheme was availed by 42.8% of women members of Chamarajanagara district and 31% of women members of Udupi district.
- A majority (84.3%) of the women members of Chamarajanagara implemented the street light project but the percentage of women members of Udupi district was very low, i.e., 22.7%.
- In Chamarajanagara district a good number (51.7%) of the women members visit their ward every day while in Udupi district none of the women members visit the ward every day.
- Majority of the women members of Chamarajanagara district (70.7%) followed by Udupi district (63.8%) said that they conducted ward meetings regularly.
- In Udupi district 35.5% of the women members and in Chamarajanagara district 21.8% mentioned that usually there will be less than hundred people attending the Grama Sabha.
- Majority of the women members of Chamarajanagara district (84.4%) followed by Udupi district (65.3%) opined that 33% reservation is not enough.
- A large number of elected women members of Chamarajanagara district (78.2%) followed by Udupi district (58.8%) desired 50% reservation.
- It is evident from the study that majority of the women members of Chamarajanagara district (69.4%) followed by Udupi district (62.4%) wished to contest the next Panchayat election.

Implications of the study

Based on the major findings, analysis of the empirical data, and insights gained by the researcher on the participation of elected women representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions in Chamarajanagara district and Udupi district the following implications are made. It is for the enhancement of women participation in Panchayat Raj Institutions, for attaining development with greater representation in electoral rolls without gender discrimination, and with inclusion of the voices of the
weaker sections, particularly of women as elected representatives and also women as a member of the community representing the resource poor, marginalized, excluded, oppressed, and downtrodden.

‘No involvement, No development’ ‘No participation, No progress’ tells the story of the developmental programmes. People’s participation is crucial in sustainable development activities. Community ownership is essential for an active participation and success of any programme. Participation depends on the consideration of priorities and felt needs of the community. Felt needs are hardly considered as we lack proper representation of the voices from all spheres of the community. Women constitute around 48% of our country’s population. Consideration of her voice, allowing her to speak on development needs, and making her to participate in development initiatives has a bearing on the inclusive development of the community.

The study has highlighted the participation of elected women in the process of democratic decentralisation. The study is more important from the point of view that it has been carried out at the grassroot level, that the status of women is not encouraging inspite of all development efforts initiated, by both the state and NGOs.

The study highlighted a close link between education and women participation, family support and involvement of women in PRIs. By and large, and in terms of numerical representation the participation is encouraging, but, participation 100% is desirable and expected. Certain family issues and socio-economic status influence the interest and participation by women.

The study makes sure that certain unresolved issues are brought to light. In addition to family support and encouragement, women need to be well informed about their legitimate functions and rights as well as the process of decision making which affect the lives of many people.

**Suggestion**

It is evident that men’s attitude towards women’s entry into politics has begun to change from that of total rejection to limited encouragement, and in some cases even to active encouragement. Women are given 33% of reservation in PRI
institutions. Because of this reservation a large number of women got the chance to get involved in local politics. But the question is, are they really interested in public life or did someone force them? A woman’s initiative should answer this question. At the same time it is observed in this study that women have taken the chance to get involved in local politics and they used this opportunity for the purpose of community development. A large number of programmes were implemented in their wards. They concentrated more on sanitation and drinking water activities as basic needs or needs of which they were aware of. This trend needs to be strengthened through orientation courses and training programmes for officials and elected representatives, both men and women.

In most of the cases, community based organisation members are interested in the local self government. A large number of rural women are involved in the activities of CBOs because of Non-governmental organisations’ initiatives. These NGOs influenced women to take part in the activities of the CBOs as part of their development programmes. Their influence motivated the women to participate in the local self government. Hence, the voluntary sector can play a vital role in enhancing the scope of women participation in Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Some of the women still accept men domination in the family and probably outside also. It probably reflects on their upbringing. But there is a ray of hope that things would improve and the real objective of women participation can be achieved. There is a need to change in the attitude of the both men and women about gender equality. But this is a slow process but the results are long lasting. In this context social work approach would be more appropriate with not only the women, but also the family and the wider system so as to bring about positive changes.

Social Work knowledge base can be practiced at micro to macro levels for the enhancement of active participation by the elected women representative in Panchayati Raj Institutions. Social case work services would be more effective at three levels, viz., developmental, preventive, and therapeutic levels. Social workers can work with women at personal levels to motivate and encourage them to actively participate in the democratic process. At the preventive level a social worker can
identify those women who exhibit severe difficulties but not full blown warranting solutions. These women can be understood and suitable preventative measures can be offered. There are women who have either personal or familial or societal problems and may require active personal help by working with the families and other significant individuals. Early identification of the problems and timely help would enable the women to participate effectively and meaningfully for the cause of the community.

Group work can be made use of by social workers by organizing women in the communities over Self Help Groups and Mahila Mandals through which their social empowerment can be done and over a period of time they can start taking an active part in the local issues particularly in the decision making and implementing of development initiatives in the Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Community organisation method would help social workers to work with women in different localities, by motivating and organizing them at the community level. The collectives of women in the Self Help Groups and Mahila Mandals can form as pressure groups to address the development issues of the community in general and issues of women in particular. In the process of community organization practice, it can be prioritized for women initiatives and leadership in the community driven initiatives. This will definitely benefit women participation in the Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Social Action being the auxiliary method of social work can be used by social workers to mobilize the community in general and women in particular to address the issues that remained unsolved at the community level. The policy level issues can be addressed by adopting social action techniques to resolve community issues and attain development.

Training is the most important tool in the process of effective women participation in politics. The Government has spent a lot of money and time to train the newly elected Panchayat members and special training was arranged for women members. This is not sufficient. The spouse or one family member should also get the
training whereby the other gender will also realize their role in the family as well as the role of the elected representative.

This study has showed that a large number of women representatives are encouraged by their spouses. But what type of encouragement? Only for the election process or to further deliver their duties and responsibilities. It is most important to explore this possibility. Education about the Panchayati Raj system and encouragement from the spouses or family members will enable women to participate more effectively.

There is a need to train women leaders at regular intervals to enable them to manage the responsibilities assigned to them in the Panchayats at all levels. These must be organized at their doorstep and active Panchayat leaders can be involved as trainers.

There is a need to bring an attitudinal change in both men and women. To inculcate this they should be imparted education to bring about social and political awareness in both.

Contact with the outside world makes women more alert and also active in the political process. There needs to be an interaction between enlightened rural women and illiterate elected ones. They need to be encouraged for their initiatives.

Incentives play a vital role in ensuring the participation of elected representatives in decision-making. It has been noticed that there are certain very active and enlightened women leaders in the Grama Panchayats who have been successfully implementing the developmental programmes and have ensured the development of their constituencies. Such leaders need to be encouraged by publicizing their leadership qualities and honouring them in public meetings. It will certainly encourage other women representatives so that their success stories and good practices will get replicated.
The media both print as well as electronic can play an important role in creating awareness in the rural society. It can act as an agent of political socialization for inculcating the values of gender equality and gender justice.

**Conclusions:**

This study is an empirical attempt to explore the participation of elected Women representatives in the Grama Panchayat’s of a couple of districts, viz., Chamarajanagara and Udupi of Karnataka. It has addressed the issues of women participation, motivating factors, problems and difficulties experienced, and strategies adopted to solve the problems. It has adopted quantitative as well as qualitative techniques to evolve comprehensive understanding on the issues of elected women participation in Local Self Government in order to evolve holistic interventions.

Rural Development, Good Governance, and Gender Justice are the three vital areas of development in a country like India, an India made up of the rural areas. About three-fourth of the nation constitutes rural communities. Hence, an approach of inclusive development must consider the developmental needs of rural areas. Good Governance is another area of development in general and rural development in particular. Panchayati Raj Institutions play a vital role in the attaining rural development. Good governance of rural India depends on the effective functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions. Grama Panchayats are the lower level local institutions governing villages. The optimum use of available resources, a viable development planning, and appropriate programme implementation in the villages have a bearing on attaining desirable changes in the rural life.

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act an important milestone in the history of local self government in India. Delegation of power to the people was constitutionally recognized. It gave 33 per cent reservation of seats for women in politics perhaps at all the levels of governance. A space was made available for the women after the 73rd Amendment. The very purpose of this was to have a representation of the weaker sections, more particularly of women in politics.
Rural Development has a bearing on the nation’s development. Development is always integral and inclusive. A true state of development is attaining ‘least of the last’ according to Gandhiji. Women constitute about half the total population. Indian politics is not spared from male dominance. Women discrimination, exploitation, and underestimation and underutilization are states of underdevelopment. Women can play a vital role in the development process particularly in Good Governance. If she is treated on par with men, it will give her a chance to prove her abilities. Today women are making a significant contribution to politics from Central to local government. She has a major role in the Local Self Government particularly in the Grama Panchayats.

Involvement of women in politics has something to do with considerations of priorities and felt needs of the community. Listening to the voice of the voiceless, the downtrodden and weaker sections are very important in inclusive development. The Ward Sabha and the Grama Sabha are the platforms where the maximum representation of the weaker sections can be sought and their active participation in decision making be prioritized. Successful implementation of the rural development programmes and ownership of such programmes by the community also depends on the active participation of women in the Grama Panchayats.

Gender development is the need of the hour by ensuring the values of gender justice, equality, and equity. Grama Panchayats are the larger platform of development planning, development dialogue, and development agency of rural development. Active participation of women on this platform can bring about desirable change, progress and development. By providing gender friendly environment, optimum use of women resource can be made for the proper functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions for delivery of timely and quality of services. This has a bearing on ensuring quality of life to the rural masses. What is needed is to look at woman not as a woman but as a human being.
References


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