CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 OVERVIEW

Gender studies in India have extensively focused on women and development with questions over inequality, empowerment/disempowerment, social exclusion (Ross & Byerly 2008). By and large, the dominating debates on women’s movements have mounted their attack on questions over media representation of women, emphasising women’s relative invisibility in media or their under-representation in decision making/policy-making and power roles. Often, they have underscored how women have been portrayed as sexual objects or mere as upholding patriarchal value systems (Kramarae & Spender 2000).

According to the feminist scholars, the dominant narratives have been historically and contemporarily are represented from ‘male gaze’ as passive objects (Ong & Peletz 1995). The dominant research model within gender and women’s studies and the larger body of works on feminist methods can be called the representational theory.

The present study attempts to offer a corrective on the dominant representative theory on women and media applied within the context of political communication. The study departs from the representational theory, to consider the continuing relevance of traditional concerns of media
influence on audience in relation to the core concerns of how media influences women’s issues in the context of conventional politics.

2.2 MEDIA REPRESENTATION

There has been a long well-established tradition of theory and research relating to gender and media. Various studies and main stream researches within communication scholarship have focused on issues such as gender roles, stereotyping, representation of women in media (images, portrayals) questions of identity, discourses in power and gender & race relations.

Ni (2002) while attempting to study media representations of women in Taiwan news press, tries to examine news coverage and criticisms on women politicians in Taiwan press during the 1900s'. Three topics were taken into account, viz., the situation of participation of women in government as well as political affairs; the writing of body image and the conflict of political arena. It mentioned several cases to show that the Taiwan press, apart from representing distorted stereotypes of women, also represents illusions and ideologies on their involvement in government and public affairs.

Sullivan (1993) has developed a political discourse that is said to reflect a gender-based approach to decision making and manifesting prototypical characteristics of women's culture. The discourse offers directions for transformations in political decision making.

Framing of the notion ‘motherhood’ by the media, seldom turned Susan Smith into a cipher for discussions on a range of social issues in America. The constructed concept of ‘motherhood’ ultimately took precedence over other interpretations of her trial case (Hasian & Flores 2000),
in an attempt to examine the mass-mediated representations of the Susan Smith trial that circulated in both legal and public spheres.

Jeffrey (1993) has discussed the contemporary relationship, which women have towards media in Canada. The study was based on three dimensions, namely, portrayal, engagement in activist lobbying and participation in employment. The situations of women in broadcasting are seen as symptomatic of lack of cultural authority. It is also a part of the ongoing and historic power struggle between media and feminists, wherein the media statted as symbolic battlegrounds and the women see up to the Canadian state for advancing their goals.

Several analyses were done viewing of minority language media by majority group, with the focus on identifying the drive behind viewing, existing relations between such viewing and the stereotypes and effects of the minority language interpersonal contact (Harwood & Vincze 2012).

There are major theories, perspectives and concepts that have been widely considered for defending arguments about the difference, which the gender creates in media professions, especially journalism. With regard to claims about sex stereotyping, there are two kinds of direct effects based on sex differences, that is women's skills and natural talents are superior to men's. Change arises only when a turning point comes. In journalism, ironically, the concept of critical mass lead to fears about Pink Ghetto, i.e., the successful incursion of women into the field of journalism would reduce men's salaries and drive them out, sees (Steiner & Linda 2012).

From the feminists' point of view, inter-sectionality represent that gender is not sexually deterministic or dichotomous but rises at the intersection of complex cultural/social and historical conditions. Several experiments in newsroom contents, structures, policy-making and decision-
making based on feminist theories and critiques are essential for journalism to serve the existing political and societal needs of people, observes (Steiner & Linda 2012).

Suggestion for a media-effects model in order to analyse the ways in which stereotypes of African Americans could vary due to media coverage of Barack Obama’s election, as the first African American President in U.S. history was developed (Zhang & Tan 2011). The authors have tested it in the panel studies of college students in the United Stated and in China. The test was done twice, before and after Mr. Obama was elected. The authors also discussed their findings with regard to theories of media effects on stereotype change.

In order to analyse the living experiences of nurses, who were bound to undergo sexual harassments by the patients, a qualitative study was attempted by scholars. They have applied an intergroup communication approach for the study. For the study, 28 interview transcripts were analysed thematically. The results showed how the mixture of stereotyping and self-categorisation worked out both positively and negatively in harassment situations (Dougherty et al 2011).

2.3 SCHOLARLY WORKS ON MEDIA AND POLITICS

Methodologically, the focus has been on qualitative research with emphasis on language discourse and rhetoric analysis. Many studies have praised gender within the context of culture, examining cultural politics.

News images of Hillary Rodham Clinton frame a sharply contested space due to feminist discourses, postmodern discourses, news expectations and advertising. It positions her feminist image within the masculine narrative of television news and also illustrates her difficult fit. It considers gender
politics and the likely meanings that audiences arrive at based on television portrayals of her public role, a study by (Brown & Ellen 1997).

Researchers have examined gender issues, as represented in television, magazines, newspapers, advertising and so on. A survey among 6,330 Belgian adolescents was done to analyse the relationship between political participation and various dimensions of television viewing. The findings, however, confirmed a negative impact of TV viewing that was to some extent counterbalanced by a positive impact of a preference for information and for public broadcasting. The impact of impact of televisions in the adolescents' political participation was analysed. Not only the time spent in watching TV was considered, also the kinds of the programmes watched were also taken into account (Quintelier & Hooghe 2011).

Looking at the age categories in communication scholarship, we find that most attention is being given to women (presumably adult women), where as girl child, girls in pre-adolescent stage have received comparatively less attention in literature.

Holt et al (2013) in a study regarding age and effects of news media attention and social media use, analyses the ways in which the usage of news media varies across age groups. It also takes into account whether this difference matters for the people’s participation in politics. Especially, the study examines the impact of social media use for political participation.

It seeks to extend traditional political communication theories to assist the factors determining women’s political involvement. The key argument of the present research is that too much of emphasis is being given to the media coverage of women at the cost of considering women as distinctive news user groups or an audience community with their distinctive pattern of media use, processes and effects.
The representational theory of gender is limited in terms of the insights it can provide on how audience understand and use these ‘gendered’ messages and with what consequences.

### 2.4 GENDER, POLITICS & MEDIA

There is a significant body of research in the communication discipline that examines relationship between gender, politics and media. Here in these literatures, ‘political’ is understood in terms of partisan politics and democratic ethos. Benoit (2004) in his study on political party affiliation and presidential campaign discourse, examines whether the presidential candidates’ party affiliation influences the nature of their discourses in the political campaigns.

There exists a strong relationship, between voter sex and voting for female candidates. In 8 states out of 13 states, in which women ran for statewide office ‘as women’ in 1992, independent of party affiliation. Stronger effects were established when the Democratic female candidates were rated as strong feminists (Plutzer & Zipp 1996), in a study on identity politics and partisanship with regard to the U.S. elections.

A closer examination of studies on gender, women and politics indicates that the predominant researches have been on election campaigns, women in public sphere, public debates and participatory democracy.

Women were less likely to feature in news stories than men. They were more likely to be mentioned in articles focusing on gender issues. This was evident from the study on sex, politics and the coverage of British general elections by the press. The authors tried to explore whether there existed any differences in the news coverage of women and men candidates, taking into account both frequency as well as content (Ross et al 2013).
Cirksena & Kathryn (1996) in a study on women’s political persuading, examined two antecedents of women’s political involvement in persuasion during political campaigns. The first one being access and the second, being competence. It argued that the findings modify previous explanations of women’s political participation and also suggested a gender-based approach for a fresh analysis.

By adapting the construct of gendered spheres to the Women in National Service (WINS) campaign, the author suggested that the effort of the WINS effort cautiously altered its prewar depictions of female submissiveness and domesticity so as to present a transformative view of the wartime home and the housewives’ role in it. However, the author arrived at a conclusion that while the transformed vision was obviously empowering, its inbuilt limitations successfully created a sense of disempowerment, Kimble (2011).

Wasburn & Wasburn (2011) in a study on media coverage of women in politics, examined the ways in which various patterns were evident in reporting on Sarah Palin, the Republican candidate for Vice-President of the United States in the 2008 election. The study suggested that the consequences of gendered reporting might not be uniform, and also the data showed a mixed patterns of differences and continuities. Several decades of research on the coverage of women campaigns by media have found out various patterns of gendered reporting, which have not encouraged citizens to vote for women candidates. Also, it has not encouraged to contribute to their campaigns and discouraged them from entering politics.

Chang & Hitchon (1997) conducted a study on the impact of the media on the response of the voters towards women candidates. The study reviews the literature on political representation by women, including mass
media effects. It argues for the relevance of gender schema theory as a corrective framework to supplement research.

More recently, more attention has been paid to the implications of new media technologies on gender roles and women issues. Very few studies have examined the relationship between news media-related activities and their political orientations. Studies on women’s representation have too narrowly focused on content framing research on explicitly normative basis rather than on empirical evidence.

Do women really read news? What is the nature and scope of their involvement in news? What extent news media-related factors influence women’s political involvement and subsequently their political empowerment? The existing studies often look at gender differences in news media use, but have failed to account for the differences in terms of empirical models.

The purpose of the present study is to address this gap. It seeks to address the relationship between women’s political involvement and other exploratory variables such as media importance, political news interest, news media use together with the general political variables such as political party affiliation, voting behaviour (voted in recent elections) and collective actions of women (politics-based actions).

An improvement in representation of women in media alone cannot address the need for changes in gender roles in society. Further, quantitatively increasing the presence of women in political sphere, though desirable, on its own is no guarantee that gender-related issues will be addressed by women decision makers any better than their male counterparts.
For gender issues to reach a critical mass of concerned voters, the specific, substantive gender concerns have to be addressed politically. For this, one would expect certain levels of gendered involvement amongst voters. This argument parallels the phenomenon of gender-affinity affect that (Dolan 2008) identified in her studies. There may be reason to expect that women would more likely support gender issues in politics - it directly relates to their interests, but empirical support is required to make claims on extent of support and determinants of gender-issue affinity.

There are many reasons for women to support or not support gender issues. Firstly, group cohesion through shared experience might make women identify with gender issues. Voters who are conscious of gender inequality in politics are likely to support gender issues. Secondly, a sense of gendered identity politics of everyday life might seep into a deeper consideration of gender-related issues. Thirdly, women might support gender issues because of accurate perception of gender under-representation in politics.

Women's reservation bill in India also had a galvanising effect on raising awareness of gender disparities in membership to parliament. Finally, greater support for gender issues might stem not so much from identity politics but rather from complex interplay between political socialisation and partisan orientation.

News media use, importance given to media and interest in political news might also be a viable explanation for differential levels of affinity towards gender issues, as implied by several studies on representation for women in media and attempts to problematise or correct misrepresentations. Thus, one could postulate that there is a clear evidence for the phenomenon of gender-issue affinity that reflects people's levels of involvement in gender-related issues.
Most gender studies and feminist literature have convincingly demonstrated these core gender issues. Yet, a few studies have looked at how news media influence these gender awareness.

2.5 POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT OF WOMEN

Media have played a major role in spreading awareness among the people about the criminalisation of politics. With the literacy rate among women going up, they have become highly consciously of the criminal nature of the political system. With women’s safety in public always at stake and with crime rates against women yet to subside, it has become unimaginable for middle-class or poor class women (of course, exceptions are there) to plumb for politics as a career.

There were reports of an actress campaigning for a political party in Uttar Pradesh, who was teased and molested by a few hooligans in a crowd. That takes the cake in public safety system for women. Also, media were flooded with reports in Tamil Nadu of a woman being molested by a local leader of a well-known political party and reports of the woman’s attempt to get a case registered against that man.

In the Indian system being what it is, when it comes to character assassination, it is women who are more affected than men. Moreover, economic freedom, though achieved to a limited extent, has entailed double responsibilities for women, at home and in public.

The fast growth in use of social networking sites seeks reconsideration of the understanding in mediated political involvement in the society. As quoted by Fenton & Barassi, Castells (2009) argued that social networking sites provide a type of mass communication of the individual wherein they can acquire a fresh creative autonomy. Fenton & Barassi (2011)
provides a serious reflection on the logic of mediated involvement promoted by social networking sites by considering the differences between the collective and individual types of mediated political involvement. Based on ethnographic research on alternative media within Britain's trade union movements and the modern studies on political culture of social media, the scholars contended that apart from empowering, the logic of self-centered involvement promoted by social networking sites could present a threat for political groups, instead of an opportunity.

The role played by internet and traditional media with regard to the involvement of young people in politics has attracted wider scholarly attention. Beginning with the concept of differences in media use and an encompassing idea of political involvement, the study analyses the relationships between various media use including TV, newspaper and Internet and also the offline/online forms of political involvement. The findings suggest that there is a positive relationship between internet uses and various forms of political involvement, but the association between traditional media and political involvement are not quite stronger, though showed positive relationship. With regard to the duration, the study rejected the association but supported the forms of media use. Positive associations between online communication and non-informational uses of the internet on political involvement were identified. A larger and contemporary thought of political involvement coupled with greater media use could help gaining good insights into the roles played by media in the involvement behaviours of young people in the internet generation (Bakker et al 2011).

Eveland et al (2009) in a study on attention, exposure, or news 'use' sees that the notion of usage of news media has always taken a centre stage in the political communication research during the past decades. Historically, scholars have applied measures of exposure, attention and reliance on news in
order to tap the notion. The scholars were interested in identifying the influence of news use several political outcomes such as knowledge, involvement and opinion. In spite of huge literature on these issues, what is not available is a consistent and validated survey measure of the usage of news (Chaffee & Steven 2001).

Lundell & Ekstrom (2008) in a study on visual gendering of political women in the press, presented an analysis of the ways of doing gendering in the press visuals of women in politics. The scholars argued that professionals (women) working in the political arena are type-cast and gendered in a much complex way than shown by earlier researches. Taking into account the qualitative analysis of visuals from Sweden's three political scandals that involved famous political women, the scholars examine the diversified forms of portrayal of women in visuals, which do not merely reproduce the notion that women-gendering uncritically correlates with issues such as objectification, sexualisation, passivity etc.,. As on-lookers of a woman in political arena caught in a demanding situation in a snap, the authors contend that, at times, people may be asked to see her as an 'other' as well as an individual with whom one can identify. The scholars see that a woman may be placed as an object, keeping 'appearance' as a focus, but not by stressing her sexuality and femininity but by doing the reverse exactly.

List (1985) while attempting to study the political coverage of women in the new republic by two party papers, explores the likelihood that the leading party newspapers in Philadelphia in the end of the nineteenth century had a say in the inclusion of women in political arena. It also seeks to analyse whether those papers varied in their portrayal of women in politics. In spite of being poles apart on each and every issues of politics, the editors of the two newspapers improved the then notion that women, in addition to remaining at home, can exercise power in politics by adjusting their
relationships based on their husbands' political profession. The editors also familiarised the concept that even women are considered political actors and have precise roles to play.

The media have been condemned for portraying thin women as ideal. Some contend that these images generate impracticable expectations for young women causing disordered eating and body dissatisfaction. The authors accumulate results of empirical studies, which analyse the media's effects on body image. Trends in research, influence of moderating variables, and estimate of overall effect size are reported and analysed. The finding shows that depictions of thin women might have no/little effect on viewers. But, the images of fat women have positive effect on the body image of women (Holmstrom 2004).

Sometimes, female candidates are discouraged from negative campaigning as they might risk backlashes of voters by challenging gender stereotypes. The author in an experiment has manipulated a negative TV-campaign advertisement in order to control for the narrated gender, traits and issue contents of the candidate. The support of the woman candidate was not reduced due to the attack on her opponent. The results reveal that in the low-information elections, women candidates are presumed to be weaker on the issues pertaining to male. But, while the women candidate used the issues pertaining to male as an attack on male opponents, she was considered quite competent. The scholars suggest that negative advertising can be an efficient tool to counterbalance the disadvantages created by gender stereotypes (Gordon et al 2003).

Dahlgren & Alvares (2013) has underscored the need for a new research agenda as the landscape and the societal significance of media as well as the democratic scenario is changing day-by-day. With regard to democracy, the stress is laid on the political participation dimension and for
the developments in the media, a term mediatisation was used. This study focuses on changing nature of democracy and the political engagement; media and mediatisation with relevance to democratic participation.

de Zuniga et al (2013) sees positive relationship between interpersonal discussion, consumption of news and political participation while attempting to study the implications for interpersonal discussion and political participation with regard to expressive and consumptive blog use. Several new insights into the framework have tested positive effect of the usage of blogs in the political domain. As per the date from the national survey, this study recommends novel ideas by differentiating between less-consumptive blog users and high-consumptive blog users. Those reading entries and comments were categorised as less-consumptive users and those post comments on others' blogs and one's own blog were categorised as high-consumptive users. The results of the study showed that high-consumptive blog users are directly connected to political participation and interpersonal discussions.

After controlling for demographics, traditional offline and online media use, size and frequency of political discussion networks and information-seeking through social networking sites are positive indicators of social capital and civic and political participation. The use of digital media for the purpose of gaining information and contributes to the creation of social capital and democratic processes (de Zuniga et al 2012) sees while studying the usage of social media for news and individuals' social capital, civic engagement and political participation. The development of technology has made mix-of-attributes of political participation and user-generated content useful for digital media (Dylko & McCluskey 2012).
The internet is a predominant change-agent for political communication and involvement. Influence of online communication on the citizens' participation habits is one of the important aspects of possible effects. The scholars used a panel survey data from Germany covering the first decade of this century to test causal hypotheses on process of transformation. New forms of political communication are only a complement to the available forms with effects of a few substitutions. The survey data also established the strong role the habitualisation plays, especially in political information-seeking and conventional forms of political involvement and discussions, when online communication is still catching up with minimum fixed-action-patterns (Emmer et al 2012).

Various research works have analysed the effects of attention of news media on behaviours of political involvement. Studies in this context have concentrated on cognitive variables as influencing the behaviours of the people. Candidates' emotional reactions could mediate the effects of attention of news media on political campaigning involvement. Both the attention on news media and the degree of emotions towards the candidates are positively associated with the involvement in political campaign. The association between TV news attention and political involvement is completely mediated towards both the candidates through emotions. On the other hand, the association between newspaper attention and political involvement is partially-mediated. That is, TV news has an indirect effect on political involvement towards candidates through emotional reactions (Namkoong et al 2012). In order to test the hypothesis, the scholars employed the method of structural equation modeling.

In modern times, mobile communication has surfaced as a medium for political discourse among network ties. Though a few appreciate novel possibilities for political life, others are quite concerned that it could lead to
political detachment and network insularity. The study analysed the ways of interactions of mobile-mediated discourse with the characteristics of political involvement. The results showed a positive association between mobile-based discourse and political involvement. Political involvement rises with the rise in use of technology in wider networks of like-minded people and decreases with the decrease in the use of technology in homogeneous (small) networks (Campbell & Kwak 2011).

2.5.1 Elections as Parameters of Women’s Power

When we compare women’s representation in electoral politics or law-making fora, a sorry state of affairs exists in India. Though the world, by and large, is yet to give a more satisfactory representation to women in law-making Houses, there are countries which have overtaken India on this count.

India is far behind when compared to other countries, including Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan with regard to involvement of women in politics. In the list of countries which provide women representation in power, India’s slot was 105 in 2012 and 111 in 2014 (as per the annual analysis of Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

After the recently held elections to Lok Sabha, the number of women who have entered Parliament has, of course, gone up. The 16th Lok Sabha now has 61 women members who have been elected out of 668 candidates. Compared to the first elections in 1952, the figure is surely higher. But out of the total MPs, 543, the women’s figure at 61 (11.3 per cent) is meagre. It is nowhere near the 33% mark, which the Women’s Reservation Bill strives to implement, says Uppuluri (2014).

Even after 67 years have passed since the country won independence, women are yet to achieve a considerable number of their
representatives in the decision-making and law-making House. Gender discrimination and the political system driven by money, muscle and might are so daunting that more women shy away from making a foray into politics.

In a democracy which has a Constitution that proclaims in its preamble equality to all irrespective of gender and all other divisions, the 67-year history of independent India’s women still struggling to get their voices fully heard and getting choked in the tough and rumble of male-dominated electoral system reads miserable and pitiable.

It is quite alarming that India lags behind her neighbours such as Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh which give women a better representation in the Parliament. The gender bias is deeply-rooted in our mentality. Indian women need to march ahead as the supremacy of males continues to supersede in all spheres of life, says Radha Kumar, quoted by Altaf (2014) for Khabar South Asia.

The Indian political world is quite rough and tumble. However, a few women feel like entering the fray. Moreover, the country remains a sexist society, which does not value women adequately in spite of paying much lip-service to that ideal, says Sumit Ganguly, professor of political science and director of the Center for American and Global Security at the Indiana University School of Global and International Studies in Bloomington, at an interview by Ghosh (2014) for International Business Times.

Joseph (2012) has expressed deep concern with regard to the poor representation of women in the Indian Parliament. The 15th Indian Lok Sabha had only 11 per cent of women members in Lok Sabha and 10.26 per cent in Rajya Sabha. When compared to the mere five women Members of Parliament in 1952, these numbers are better but it does not give a complete satisfaction. The increase is substantial, but hardly adequate. The poor
representation of women in the parliament is highly striking when contrasted with the fact that 33.3% of the total seats are reserved for the women after the 73rd and 74th amendments of the constitution. In order to achieve gender equity, the pace of grassroots governance has to be accelerated, observes Joseph.

2.5.2 Women’s Political Involvement in Indian Freedom Struggle

Tens and thousands of women took part in the heat of the Indian freedom struggle, taking greater risks and unmindful of the dire situation they were left in. Yet, history has turned a blind to their sagas of sacrifices, turmoil and turbulence. While the historical records and history textbooks are having an innumerable stories of male leaders and revolutionaries, who laid their lives for Independence, they have blissfully and ignorantly denied space to women revolutionaries, who were disowned by their own kin, clan and their dear and near ones and whose patriotic fervour was no less enormous than that of male leaders. One of the famous daily English newspapers quoted them as the 'Unsung Heroines of Independence'.

Even though India’s struggle for independence witnessed a considerable involvement of women, unfortunately quite a few of them remain invisible in the modern era, unsung and unknown. Those women freedom fighters who got a place in the history books were from elite backgrounds and often their male relatives had encouraged them. On the other hand, there were numerous ordinary women, with little schooling or less education, hailing from poor and conservative background, who were involved in the struggle with great commitment and undaunted spirit, observes Devi (2012).

The moment the concept of Indian women in freedom struggle is broached, one’s mind is struck by a list of top and prominent women leaders
such as Jhansi Rani Lakshmi Bhai, Sarojini Naidu, Vijayalakshmi Pandit, Kamala Nehru, Kasturba Gandhi and Indira Gandhi. One cannot certainly deny their role and importance. But either they belonged to the well-known families of upper class or elite class or their spirit was shored up by their male mentors. Anyway, their courage and adventurous spirit in jumping into the struggle cannot be underestimated. The renowned Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi (Maharani Ahilyabai Holkar) became the cult figures in the country's political arena, observes Agrawal (2008).

But, several lakhs of women who were left to rot at the lower rung of the society, without any social, educational, economic, cultural and communal status, took a plunge into the boiling cauldron of the Indian freedom struggle.

The history in 60s did not record the ordinary women's role in the freedom struggle. The history of that time completely brought to limelight only a select women and this contributed to a distorted vision. The portrayal of the freedom movement inclined to be male-centric, upper caste and bourgeois, with the involvement of women seen as an extension of their domestic roles, says Charu Gupta, associate professor, Department of History, Delhi University, as quoted by Devi (2012) for 'The Hindu'.

A typical example of such a horde of ordinary patriotic women is Raj Kumari Gupta of Kanpur in Uttar Pradesh. Joining hands with her husband and rallying behind Mahatma Gandhi in his crusade against the British, she used to carry arms hidden behind clothes and supply them to freedom fighters. At a time, when women’s education, employment and emancipation were taboos, ordinary women like Raj Kumari Gupta dared to come out and do the most un-thinkable in those days. But, as fate would have it, the tear and blood-smeared life of that woman was left in tatters when her
family of inlaws threw her out after her arrest by the British police, remembers Devi (2012).

### 2.5.3 Renowned Women in Post-Independent India

In post-modern India, the emergence of Dalit politics and women politicians can be considered as two major trends. While the former is out of the purview of our study, the latter can be studied in detail. Comparatively, post-Independent political horizon has seen more women leaders than the pre-Independent scenario, though women are still considered to be politically under-represented. Except the late Congress leader and Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, probably all women leaders, national and regional, belong to the post-Independent era. All women leaders, except a few, have scaled greater heights in politics, riding piggyback on the legacy left behind by their male mentors or thanks to their upper class patriarchal family background.

Kasturba Gandhi, despite having her own sterling qualities and having a record of being imprisoned during the 1942 Quit India Movement, is inseparably intertwined with or stands behind her husband and Indian icon, Mahatma Gandhi. While her husband is hailed as the Father of the Nation, nowhere is she held aloft as Mother of the Nation. Similarly, Jawaharlal Nehru is still more famous as the first Prime Minister of Indian and staunch lieutenant of Mahatma Gandhi. His daughter Indira Gandhi alone, though basking in her inherited glory, was later able to hold her own and won acclaim and adverse criticism as a great politician of international repute. From Nehru’s family, there were politically inclined women who set out in the fight against the British reign, such as his wife Kamala Nehru, his sister Vijayalakshmi Pandit, who was the first woman President of the United Nations General Assembly and who was the first Indian woman to hold a
Cabinet post. However, Nehru’s glory was blindingly bright that the women leaders in his family could not outshine it.

Indira Gandhi, his daughter, rose to the occasion and perpetuated the tradition of rule. Of all Indian woman leaders, she was unmatched and unparalleled in several ways. However, her political decisions and administrative policies provided a lot of grist to the mill of the media in her times. Following in her footsteps, the present woman leader from her family Sonia Gandhi took over the torch from her late husband, Rajiv Gandhi, and has become the most powerful woman leader in India, though not holding any office at all.

The name of Sonia Gandhi is omnipresent in India. It is a name, which inspires several crore of people and a name, which guarantees peace and progress. She is a legend in the Indian political arena with her extraordinary qualities such as sacrifice and renunciation, says Sarkar (2007).

Of course, India now has a few top women politicians such as Jayalalithaa, Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu; Mamata Banerjee, Chief Minister of West Bengal; Mayawati, leader of Bahujan Samajwadi Party; Sushma Swaraj, Minister of External Affairs; Meira Kumar, former Speaker of Lok Sabha; Sheila Disksit, former Chief Minister of New Delhi; Uma Bharathi, Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation; Vasundhara Raje, Chief Minister of Rajasthan; CPI(M) Polit Bureau member Brinda Karat….. and there are lot more to add in the list.

The list may be still larger. Only those women, who have got the chance, probably thanks to their comparatively better background, to storm into the male bastion of politics, have come up and are hogging the limelight. As the proverb goes, a single sparrow does not make a summer. A few
success stories of women politicians need not represent the overall picture of women empowerment in India.

For instance, Vasundhara Raje who has earned lot of kudos for her efforts to uplift women in her State has got a royal background. Father and husband were sources of main support that kept her going steadfast and unsagging. However, this does not detract from the fact that she has got her own qualities of leadership that played a major role in pushing her up to the top level.

In the same way, Mayawati, former Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, had a mentor in Kanshi Ram who espoused the cause of Dalits’ empowerment. After her mentor’s demise, she brought her training under his tutelage to bear on her political career and thereby make it big in politics.

2.5.4 Women Politicians in Tamil Nadu

When it comes to women politicians in Tamil Nadu, unfortunately, the situation leaves much to be desired. However, as far as Tamil Nadu is concerned, women’s political involvement and active participation in public life were, to a greater extent, influenced by social reformer and founder of the Dravidar Kazhagam, E.V. Ramasamy, who properly utilised the print media to propagate his ideas on women’s liberation. He was, through his journal, ‘Kudiarasu’, writing articles about the need to educate women and give them equal rights.

Such was his major contribution to the cause of women’s liberation that the title ‘Periyar’ was conferred on him at a women’s conference held in Madras in 1938. It is no exaggeration to say that as a fall-out of Periyar’s propaganda for women’s rights (he called upon women once to throw away the mangal sutra which he branded as a symbol of slavery), more women
joined the Tamil Nadu politics. More space and opportunities were created for women, also thanks to the enlightening media. A few women who have hogged the limelight in Tamil Nadu, coming to one’s mind are Maniammai, wife of E.V.R. Periyar, Jayalalithaa, Janaki Ramachandran and Kanimozhi.

Of all the women, the story of Jayalalithaa, Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and AIADMK Supremo, reads more like one of adventure, a never-drooping spirit, and die-hard perseverance. So powerfully gripping is her life history that she has become a metaphor for the general tendency of the Tamil Nadu politics which is inseparable from cinema. She is an inevitable part of the Dravidian movement that began exploring and exploiting the medium of Tamil cinema.

It is very evident that the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), founded by C.N. Annadurai in Chennai on September 17, 1949, after he broke up with E.V.R. Periyar, Dravidar Kazhagam leader, found cinema a most powerful and convenient tool to reach out to the masses.

The political leaders, Annadurai and Karunanidhi, scripted several propaganda-laden films, while M.G. Ramachandran and others played heroes. The image of M.G.R. as a messiah for the down-trodden, who have started feeling disillusioned with the Congress rule in the post-Independent era, helped him further his political ambitions. After the demise of their leader, C.N. Annadurai, both the friends, Karunanidhi and M.G.R., turned political foes. It was cinema that created ‘paths of glory’ for M.G.R. who led to the throne. Following the paths set by both M.G.R. and the then political developments, Jayalalithaa rose to turn the tide in her favour.

Ill-treated and scorned initially by representatives of the male-dominated society, despite creating controversies with her policy decisions, she has emerged now as the unavoidable force to reckon with in the national
politics. Just as M.G.R. demolished the myth that actors have no acumen for administration, when he captured power in 1977 State Assembly elections, so she made her detractors and critics fall silent, when she became Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu three times (1991, 2001 and 2011).

Now Jayalalithaa has become quite prominent at the national level so much so that the political leaders including Mamata Banerjee, who are hell-bent upon creating a non-Congress and a non-BJP-front, seem willing to suggest her name for the Prime Minister post. The fervor and fad that she has been evoking among party workers are scaling greater heights.

2.6 GENDER-ISSUE AFFINITY AND POLITICS

Gender-Issue Affinity is a measure of affective and behavioral commitment to gender-related issues in political sphere. Affective dimension could be emotional or symbolic. Gender-Issue Affinity differs from previous measures in that the scale does not focus on gender perceptions but instead emphasise behavioral aspects of political orientation, more closely resembling scales on political participation (Robinson, Shaver, and Wrightsman. 1998).

When it comes to analysing the relationship between media, gender and politics, people commonly have an opinion that greater involvement of women in politics would contribute to greater sensitization of gender-related issues in political sphere and consequentially bring greater gender parity. Increased involvement of women in politics is expected to bring increased equality. Based on this assumption, several studies were conducted in western countries on 'gender-affinity effect', which claims that women voters tend to vote for female candidates (Dolan 2008). Drawing insight from that, the present study seeks to analyse whether there are gender-issue affinity among women. Gender-issue affinity is nothing but a sense of concern shown by women towards a problem that affects women. The study tries to find out
whether that concern over gender-issue affinity, or that concern over a problem affecting women, would bring women to political arena? Are women voters drawn to gender-related issues in political considerations, are women voters tend to involve in politics by way of non-conventional political activity, in support of the issues affecting them. While gender studies and feminist scholarships have explored several facets of dialectical relationship between women, news media and politics, relatively less attention is paid to support for gender-related issues amongst women.

In the realistic political arena, number of women can be identified as entered into politics, though however, they had started their public life initially as fighting for their rights. Several famous politicians have showed concern over women's rights and fought for the women's cause that had ultimately brought them to the political arena. For instance, Phoolan Devi's life and death bear testimony to the abysmally brutal side of criminalization of politics and the social environment. A lot of literature, a film by Shekar Kapoor and media hype have all contributed to the building-up of an icon, from a low-caste girl to a bandit queen to a personification of a Hindu Goddess to a politician strutting about on the corridors of power.

If a low-caste woman, born in a village in Uttar Pradesh, who got married to an old man at an early age, walked out on the marriage, what would happen? An answer from the typically-conditioned Indian mindset is this obviously: she is bound to be branded as an outcast. Quite logically, that was what happened. Exposed to the seamy side of life, she bore a chain of physical and mental trauma and troubles. A gang of bandits was set upon her. She was raped as a revenge; her lover, also a dacoit, who was only her hope and silver lining in the otherwise dark horizon of her life, was murdered. Ultimately, she turned a bandit herself and murdered a group of 22 high-caste men who abused, humiliated, tortured and raped her in 1981 in the well-
known Behmai massacre. It was then that the media all over the world turned their spotlight on her. She was hailed as a female Robin Hood, a modern-day Count of Monte Cristo, a living legend, a review made ne her autobiography.

At the same place where she was gang-raped, years later, she hit back, killing the high-cast men. She looted the rich and gave it to the poor. Chambal Ravines, where she used to stay along with her gangsters, had become a metonym for Phoolan Devi, who was, by virtue of her hitting back against the high-caste people, looting the caste-conscious rich men and swooping down on sex-hungry male chauvinists, hailed by the village folks as the Durga, the Hindu Goddess, at her most ferocious, devouring and destroying the devils.

A bandit queen facing several cases of murder and violence, and becoming a Member of Parliament, seems improbable; a far-fetched idea. But, Phoolan Devi, imprisoned for her crimes, must have found politics as a safe haven for her life from her enemies who were out on the prowl, crying for her pound of flesh. She laid down her arms before the statue of Gandhi and that of Durga in 1983, signaling that she was now for a life of peace and tranquility. However, injustice that started dogging her from her childhood still continued.

While in prison, she was forced to undergo hysterectomy. She was taken to hospital suffering from bleeding due to ovarian cysts and given an unnecessary hysterectomy. The doctor who attended her case said that there is no need for Phoolan Devi breeding more Phoolan Devis, as quoted by Arundhati Roy in 1994. However, she became a Member of Parliament in 1996 and had stated her political ambition openly. Having faced child marriage, caste discrimination, criminal assaults and even rape, she must have realised she had what it took a woman to be involved in political game. So,
she took a deep plunge in politics and when she died in 2001, she was an MP, a politician.

A woman’s life that spanned 37 years (1964-2001) has spawned a lot of literature, documentaries, films, lot of media hype and support and opposition. From a bandit queen to a politician, it may be a sort of tribute to Phoolan Devi’s extraordinary macho qualities, though a woman. But it also speaks about the malaise that is hidden in the establishment; about the heavy prices that a woman has to pay for political popularity and above all, about the unfriendly and cynical nature of the Indian system as a whole towards women’s political involvement.

Yet women are not so miserable lot always throwing in the towel in their day-to-day struggle against the oppression. Grit, determination and drive are not in shortage, when it comes to a stiff fight against the establishment. When they take to streets for social causes, women become political warriors.

The current Indian woman fighter who has been hogging the limelight is Irom Chanu Sharmila, the Manipur ‘Iron Lady’, the 42-year-old activist, who has been on an indefinite fast for over 13 years, demanding the repeal of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA).

With the State viewing her record of indefinite fast as an attempt to commit suicide which it says is a cognizable offence under Section 309 of the Indian Penal Code and with honours from various groups and forums pouring in for her and with parties like Aam Aadmi Party and even the Congress, wooing her, Irom Sharmila emerges as a special study in what Indian woman could do in political activism. An extraordinary example of perseverance and dedication to goal, she has been deliberately shunning options and offers to storm into politics.
Unlike other famous woman politicians, who have somehow or other been connected with well-known men, Irom Sharmila was just an ordinary woman aged 28 when on November 2, 2000 in her town, Malom, she happened to witness a group of 10 ordinary people being killed by the Assam Rifles, part of paramilitary forces. Left confused over the reason for killing the innocents, she came to know later that the AFSPA had given the Assam Rifles the right to shoot anyone at will without assigning any reason. The alarm and outrage she felt led her to begin fast on that day and to continue it, get arrested, released and again arrested and again released; so, the activist is still not ready to give up her fight.

The State says it is an attempt to suicide, quoting the IPC section 309. But she says it is a non-violent agitation taught by her icon Mahatma Gandhi. She met the President, the Prime Minister and top officials and various activists including a Nobel Laureate, asking for their attention to the issue of AFSPA under which, she says, lot of excesses are being perpetrated in the northeastern states of the country.

Another woman leader, who has earned the nickname, 'Iron Lady', is the President of Brazil, Dilma Rousseff, one of the most celebrated powerful women in Latin America. Now, she is credited with having brought the unemployment rate down in her country.

Having a political career no less tumultuous and torturous than any male leader in the word, she has overcome a lot of adversities such as imprisonment for three years for her active participation in the armed struggle against the military dictatorship in 1960's. Before her present stint as President, she had got a thorough political and administrative training as energy minister in 2003 when Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva was the President and also worked as chief of staff.
As the woman President getting popular for her aggressive crackdown on corruption and having 10 female members in her Cabinet, she has, unsurprisingly, dedicated her landslide success 'to the Brazilian women.' Dilma Rousseff’s success story has proved that women, given right chance and environment, can succeed and clean the Augean stables of power and decision far better than men.

When debt crises are blasting Western economies, the developing markets of Brazil, Russia, India and China are expected to grow. As women in these countries continuously outperform men in education, they are prepared to deal with issues such as politics and finance and even they are not afraid of hard work. In India, over 80% of women wish for top jobs. In Brazil and China, it is over 70%, whereas in the U.S. only 36% of the highly qualified women shoot for top jobs (Hewlett & Rashid 2011).

At a time when women were branded as weaker sex and politics, which takes only the tough and rough men folk’s macho qualities, was considered as an anathema to them, women leaders rose to break the myths to the smithereens. Aung San Suu Kyi is one such woman leader whose astounding and amazing life history has been marked by ups and downs; so great and inspiring was her struggle to free Myanmar from the military junta and so undaunted she was by the house arrest for 15 years that now the number of her Facebook followers, who like her, has touched 7,37,198.

The 65-year-old Nobel peace laureate, who has put behind herself her great troubles and tragedies such her father’s assassination in 1947, sounded like an epitome of eternal optimism worth emulating for women all over the world. ‘The Nobel Peace Prize drew me again into other human beings' world, outside my isolated area to reinstate a sense of reality to me,’ she announced. Also, it was important because it drew the attention of
the world to the struggle for human rights and democracy in Burma. “We will not be forgotten,” pronounced Suu Kyi (2012) at her Nobel peace prize acceptance speech.

Aung San Suu Kyi is the modern metaphor for perseverance and perspiration that are demanded especially for women willing to take a plunge into politics. Her emergence on the political horizon should be looked at against the background of the deteriorating condition of women in Myanmar.

A study conducted by Asian Women's Resource Exchange in 2002 on the human rights situation in that country captured the miserable and pitiable condition of Burmese women, who have been forced to sacrifice themselves for the welfare and wellbeing of men-folk and thereby, lost opportunities to education, freedom of speech and health care and subjected to rape, slavery and all the atrocities that are normally associated with harassment by men.

But the traditional image of Burmese women is that they were once holding eminent positions and respected and venerated. Aung San Suu Kyi resurrected the now-defunct image of Burmese womanhood and stormed into the male bastion and came out with flying colours.

On April 2013, Time magazine has released a list of 100 most influential people in the word. In the list figures Malala Yousafzai, who is, in the words of Time, “Pakistan’s torchbearer for girls’ education.” In a country, where Talibans and other terror groups like Al Qaeda are operating and unleashing a reign of terror and in a country where women do have lesser chance to come up in life and assert themselves and in a country where its former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto was assassinated, a 17-year-old girl has emerged and asserted that education was a fundamental right for girls.
When she was shot at in a running bus by Talibans, the world media began looking at her in awe at her courage, started covering her life and crusade for women’s rights. Malala is a testament that everywhere women cannot be intimidated into silence and that our voices will be heard. No matter how hard it is, we will speak, Giffords (2014).

The global media limelight that fell on Malala is unique. So inspired by her first public speech, on the need for education of girls, that the UN observed a ‘Malala Day’ and set the target or goal of education of all girls before 2015. At a time, when the Pakistani establishment itself was quite wary of the Taliban, Malala rose and spoke against its diktats on education of girls. When the shooting took place in October, 2012, the world media branded it as a ‘watershed’.

Her blog advocating education for girls and attacking the Taliban’s act of closing girls’ schools and trying to enforce a strict Islamic code of life in the Swat valley, nearly 150 km from Islamabad, catapulted her to fame. Her blog appeared in the BBC website (Urudu) and incurred the wrath of the fundamentalists and extremist organisations.

From the moment, when she fell unconscious, to the moment when she was admitted in hospital, all the anxiety-ridden hours were recorded in a video and broadcast by all news channels across the world including Geo, a well-known channel in Pakistan. Today Malala is a symbol in Pakistan, having promises of girls and women in future having wriggled out of religious shackles and emerging democratically independent. She is now a world celebrity to the point of being hailed as an icon of girls’ education. She has set up ‘The Malala Fund’ and it is followed by tens and thousands on Twitter.

As she once said, she might float a political party and would continue her crusade. The media, old and new, will stand by her, driving home the point yet again that media always play a major role in women’s
participation in politics. Even otherwise, her words would be ringing in the women's world: “Let us pick up our books and pens, which are the most powerful weapons. One child, one teacher, one pen and one book can change the world” (from a transcription of the speech of Malala at the UN).

2.7 AN INSIGHT INTO KEY CONCEPTS

A significant number of studies have been conducted on the importance of the media with regard to media use, media satisfaction, political efficacy and individual motivations. Though regular reliance on various other media is considered a predominant factor in decision-making of journalists, little attention has been paid by scholars in the area. The author investigated the role of media importance in journalistic profession. Taking German political journalists as instance, the scholar analysed that the use of media is a predominant work in everyday-journalistic profession, as indicated by the time spent by them in using other media and by the level of importance they attach to other media for various stages in the production of news. However, the level of media importance varies among journalists in different media with different ages and political views, (Reinemann & Carsten 2004).

News Media Use measures the degree of usage of news media by women while trying to acquire information on political issues. It is considered the dynamic process of acquiring knowledge from various sources of media, i.e. from newspapers, TV, radio, internet and so on. In short, it is a simple measure of what sources women use to know what is happening in the political arena. Several scholarly works have been undertaken with regard to the usage of news media and political involvement of people.

A study by Jung et al (2011) elucidates the indirect process by which usage of news media influences political involvement. Precisely, it explores the role of political efficacy and knowledge as mediators between online/offline political involvement and communication within the scaffold of
an 'Orientation – Stimulus – Reasoning – Orientation - Response' model of communication effects. The finding based on the analysis of structural equation modeling sustains/supports the notion that political efficacy and knowledge act as significant mediators. Additionally, the findings expound the rising importance of internet in assisting political involvement.

Though sweeping statements about the TV viewing's effect on political involvement can be found in the 1990s literature, now, it is held that TV viewing's effect must be studied as a multi-dimensional concept. Apart from the time spent on TV-watching, the kinds of programmes that are watched and the preference for channels also have an effect (Quintelier & Hooghe 2011).

The findings from a registered voters' telephone survey in Washington looked at how the media exposure of the citizens, their perceptions on the importance of media, the performance satisfaction of the media, relate with political efficacy and disaffection. The study analysed two different models, one contained measures of media satisfaction to identify the levels of political efficacy and disaffection of the citizens, and the other contained the frequency of media use and the perceptions on the importance of media. Measures of satisfaction were better useful predictors of negativism and cynicism than media importance and use. The results showed that the social scientists must concentrate on the level of performance satisfaction of the media of the citizens in order to understand the role played by media in political decision-making (Pinkleton & Austin 2002).

2.8 AS A CORRECTIVE ON DOMINANT APPROACH

Studies on media effects on politics suggest that the dominant approach is to see media as a political institution. Schudson (2002) recapitulates the case for considering news media as a political institution, a trial that has a long history, expressing concern over neglect of news media as
political institutions. Schusdon (2002) point to an increasing 'mediatization' of politics emphasizing research that examines “news as a form of culture that often unconsciously incorporates general belief systems, assumptions, and values into news writing.” Gender roles and values are one set of general belief systems that media perpetuates.

(Allan et al 2002) outlines gendered realities of news but places less emphasis on how news influences gender concerns. We could expect the centrality of news media as a political influence to be reflected at individual level. Thus, we could hypothesise the following relationship:

**H:** Media Importance will be positively associated with gender-issue affinity

**H:** News Media Use will be positively associated with gender-issue affinity

**H:** Political News Interest will be positively associated with gender-issue affinity

Norris (1997) further argues for examining how news media-related activities, especially interest in political news and importance given to media, as key influence on individuals' orientation on social issues. Research on media influence suggests several candidate variables that can potentially influence women’s political involvement (Comstock & Scharrer 2005). The following hypotheses are generated from these literatures:

**H:** Media importance will be positively associated with voting behaviour

**H:** Media importance will be positively associated with political party affiliation
H: Media importance will be positively associated with non-
conventional political activity

H: News Media use will be positively associated with voting
behaviour

H: News Media use will be positively associated with political
party affiliation

H: News Media use will be positively associated with non-
conventional political activity

H: Political News Interest will be positively associated with
voting behaviour

H: Political News Interest will be positively associated with
political party affiliation

H: Political News Interest will be positively associated with non-
conventional political activity

Studies on voting behaviour and political participation have
traditionally examined politics in terms of conventional forms of political
participation such as voting and party membership (Verba et al. 1997). One
could expect that measures of conventional forms of political participation are
likely to affect individual’s concern for gender issues. Thus, the following
hypotheses would be expected:

H: Voting behaviour will be positively associated with gender-
issue affinity

H: Political party affiliation will be positively associated with
gender-issue affinity

Political scientists have considered factors that influence
individual's political participation, especially socio-economic and
demographic characteristics that are seen as an obvious candidates for segmenting citizens and voters. Further, most recent studies have emphasized non-conventional forms of political activity as a powerful factor in political change. Thus, we could complete the model by postulating the following hypothesis:

**H:** Non-conventional political activity will be positively associated with gender-issue affinity.

The usage of news media among women, the level of importance women attach to media, the degree of interest they show in political news might also be a viable explanation for having varied levels of affinity towards gender issues that are of utmost concern to women. Also, increased levels of gender-issue affinity influence the level of non-conventional political activity among women. Thus, one could postulate that there is a clear evidence for the phenomenon of gender-issue affinity that reflects people's levels of involvement in gender-related issues.