CHAPTER- I

INTRODUCTION

In a country where democracy prevails, both men and women can participate in governance and development process. Though women have a large stake in politics, as large as that of men, they donot have equal share in political power. Women constitute almost 50 percent of the population in India. In fact 80 percent of the women reside in rural areas. Most of the rural women folk are engaged in domestic and other household activities rather than participating in political activities. Many of them are engaged in economic activities to earn their livelihood. The development is not possible if women comprising half of the human resources, as labour force and citizen, stay away from the development process. Patriarchy with the advent of civilization left no room for women to live a life of their own. The women all over the world, have not only been marginalized, but had suffered from cruel and torturous behavior. Women form an integral part of the society, but they occupy a subservient position. Women in India have always been a topic of concern since ancient times. They are considered as second class citizens by their family as well as the society at large. Though in one hand the society talks about the respect of women and preach them in the name of Goddess Saraswati,
Parvati and Goddess Kali, on the other hand, the society also abused women in the form of several evils like child-marriage, female infanticide, Sati, sexual harassment and many more. From an unknown period in mediaeval India, the condition of women is still the same with hardly any change. Women were never given any rights, liberty and equality and were always treated in an inferior way. Gender inequality in different spheres of life has been identified as a very important obstacle to the development of a nation. To overcome such obstacles women’s empowerment is indispensable. Women empowerment refers to educational, economic, social as well as political empowerment. Women’s participation in the grassroots politics is very important, as this will pose the way for further development. Empowerment of women through Panchayat can become successful if Panchayats are delegated with powers to function with responsibilities. For the proper development of the society, the progress of women is necessary. A society cannot develop if women remain unrecognized. The quality and capability of women must be incorporated in the process of development of the society. Women’s participation in the decision making process bears ample significance both in and outside the household.

Women participation in political decision making is their active engagement with public institutions including campaigning for election and pursuing such activities either individually or in groups. Women are seen participating in the decision making process but in reality their participation is less than of men. The New Delhi Document on Women Development (1985) recognized that despite
the rapid growth of informal political activity by women, their role in the formal political structure has remained unchanged since independence. Broad based political Participation of women has been limited due to various traditional factors like religion, feudal attitude and family status. Women’s participation in the political decision making process plays a crucial role in guiding the ordinary individuals.

The decision makers determine the group’s behavior and regulate the conduct of politics. Therefore without active participation of women in political decision making process, the development of the society as a whole cannot be achieved.

CONCEPT OF DECISION MAKING

The literature of Decision Making includes a number of models that attempts to describe the making of decisions from many different disciplines including economics, business policy, organizations behavior political science and psychology.

According to rational analytic comprehensive model it is a purposeful, consistent, sequential and deliberate process. Janis and Mana consider rationality as the ideal to be achieved during decision making. They take the view that in rational decision making(a) the goal and objectives of decision makers are clear and known in advance (b) the decision maker choose the best alternatives among all possible courses of action (c) full information about the consequences
of possible courses of action are available and (d) there is no certainty involved.¹

Alison is one of proponent of political model of decision making. According to him, Decision Making is the outcome of political bargaining process. In any decision making process, power is shared among different personal goals and interpreting organizational goals in various ways. In many instances the outcome of decision making process is a mixture of various competing preferences, and involves bargaining and compromise between coalitions. In several instances of interests are formulated with the aim of supporting certain views of the world. Especially, in cases where adoption of certain course of action implies to reshuffling of future allocation of resources and power, if political activity is more visible.²

Decision Making is first of all attendance of the elected representatives at meetings and at other political forums.

It is when members feel that they have adequate and equal opportunities to form their preferences by arguing for or against a problem/issue, that ‘attendance‘ becomes meaningful.

It means to place questions on the public agenda and to express reasons for affirming one outcome rather than another.

² Janathan Michale (Ed.),ibid,p.352
Representatives should have voting equality at the decisive stage.

Each person must be assured that his or her judgment will be counted as having equal weight to the judgment of other representatives at the decisive stage.

Decision is the process of reducing the gap between the existing situations and the desired situation by solving problems and making use of opportunities. A decision occurs when one option is selected and the other is excluded.

Decision Making can be regarded as an outcome of mental process (cognitive process) leading to the selection of a course of action among several alternatives, every decision making produces a final choice. The output can be an action on an opinion of choice.\(^3\)

FEMINIST THEORY

Women have been marginalized in every walk of life. Feminist movement started in most of the countries in the world. Feminist struggle is not to eradicate dominance against women but the women community as a whole. It investigates and enquires the causes of women’s marginalization and the injustice done to them. Rose Mary Tong defines Feminism as struggle to end sexist operation. Various Feminist Movements emerged in different time’s viz. liberal feminist, radical feminist etc. Though the various theories differ in

\(^3\) Stucliff M. Kateen and Geray Menamana, Controlling Decision Making, p.86
their conception towards women but there is unanimity among all the Feminists that women are handicapped because they are deprived of power. In other words women should be empowered.

Gender disparities are pervasive in various social layers of social existence as its tentacles are spread across various segment/segment of the society. They are deprived of even the bare human necessities. Women should fight against all the social practices. The empowerment of women is necessary so that women can actively participate in all sphere of life including political rights. Political power plays an important role in the domination of women. Politics is the area where women entry is very poor. Women are deprived from this field due to gender discrimination. The feminist especially the Radical feminist believe that patriarchy is an autonomous historical fact more rooted in biology than in economy and they consider gender relation to be the fundamental form of oppression. Patriarchy is a male hierarchical ordering society. The feminists connotes that Patriarchal system is preserved via marriage and the family through several division of labour in the society. Patriarchy means rule of the father. It refers to a social system where men are the head of the house. The main institution of the society shows that they are patriarchal in nature. The family, religion, media, the law are the pillars of patriarchal system and structure. This well-knit and deep rooted system makes patriarchy seen invincible; it also makes it seem natural.

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5 Kamala Bhasin, What is Patriarchy, Kali for Women, New Delhi, 1994, p.9
The institutions of Patriarchy are:

(I) Family: The institution of family is the basic unit of society and is probably the most patriarchal, but not all the society. A man is considered as the head of the household; within the family he controls women’s sexuality, labour, reproduction and mobility. There is a hierarchy in which man is superior and dominant, women are inferior and subordinate. The family is also important for socializing the next generation in patriarchal values. It is within the family that are learns the first lesson of hierarchy, subordination and discrimination. Boys learn to assert and dominate, girls to submit, to expect unequal treatment. The nature and extent of male control may differ in different families, but it is never absent.

(II) Religion: Most modern religions are patriarchal, defining male authority as supreme. They present a patriarchal order as being supernaturally ordained. The feminine principle of power which existed before evolution of institutionalized religions has been gradually weakened; Goddesses have been replaced by God. All major religions have been controlled by upper class and upper caste man. They have defined morality, ethics, behavior and even law. They have laid down the duties and rights of men and women, the relationship between them. They also influenced the state policy and continued to be a major force in the society. Though India is a secular country, a person’s legal identity with regard to marriage, divorce and inheritance is determined by his or her religion.
(III) Legal System: The legal system in most of the countries is both patriarchal and bourgeois, i.e. it favors men and economically powerful classes. Laws pertaining to family, marriage and inheritance are linked to patriarchal control over property. Women do not have decision making power within the household. In many developing countries their possession including land and other legal property belongs to her father and sons. For these reasons they have not been able to overcome the gender biases and other barriers. Even after women have inherited land, her brother, other relations and even neighbours may continue to seek ways of disposing her. Patriarchal societies have denied women's substantial right to inherit and control over property.

(IV) Economic System: Economic system is patriarchal in nature. Most of productive work done by women is neither recognized nor paid. Moreover, women's role as producers and bearers of children and of labour is not considered an economic contribution at all.

(V) Political system and Institutions: Almost all political institutions in society, at all levels are male dominated, from village councils to parliament. There are only few women in political field who decide the fate of our country. (Srimava Bandaranaike, Indira Gandhi, Khaleda Zia, Shiekh Hasina, Benazir Bhutto) assumed important political positions, but due to their association with some strong male political personalities and their functions within the structures and principles laid down by men.
Media: Media are very important tools in hands of upper class, upper caste men to propagate class and gender ideology. From films, televisions, magazines, newspaper, radio the portrayal of women is stereotypical and distorted. Message about male superiority and female inferiority are repeated constantly. Violence against women is replete, especially in films. Women are low represented in the media, professionally and besides in reporting coverage, advertizing and messaging are still very sexist.  

In many cultures women were systematically prevented from studying the scriptures and even today there are few who are allowed to interpret religious and legal texts. Women should be made aware of their dominance and they should be self reliant so that they are not dependent on men in any sense.

DECISION MAKING PRACTICE INVOLVING WOMEN

In traditional society where patriarchy system prevailed, the father enjoyed the dominant position and exercised exclusive right of decision making. Tradition and custom imposed a formalized environment in which women had to operate. The home maker is confined to the four walls of the house and so it prevented from mental growth and thus, lost ability of making decision. The rural women were always considered as inactive in decision making process. Now a day the conditions are changing due to education and employment of home maker, her role in total management of the

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6 Kamala Bhasin, ibid, Pp. 10-11
house has become very active and significant, she is participating in all sorts of affairs and outside home. Rural women even participate in farm related decision. This has resulted great satisfaction to the families and thus deceased the family tension and conflicts.\(^7\)

MEANING OF GRASSROOTS LEVEL DEMOCRACY

Grass roots democracy is essentially decentralized democracy in which the management of public affairs does not begin and end at the top but operates through wide network of people’s participating units in the local area. It is a political system in which democracy in not confined to the national and regional level, but is also extends to the local levels. It is a system in which authority is developed to local governance that is accountable to the local citizens, who enjoy full political rights. Decentralization has assumed central role in matters of governance in India. It is an effort to democratize the governing structure and to involve people in the process of governance and decision making. Democratic decentralization means people’s right to manage their own affairs in a local area without any undue interference from regional or national authorities. Democratic decentralization as a political concept, aims at widening the area of people’s participation, authority and autonomy through dispersion or devolution of power to people’s representative organization from the top levels to the lowest level in all the three dimension of political

decision making, financial control, administrative management with the least interference from the higher level. Grassroots democracy prevails where the political structure is not confined to the national and regional level but is also extended to local levels. Grassroots democracy is essentially decentralized democracy in which management of public affairs does not begin and end at the top but operates through wide network of people’s participating units the local area which form more or less a mixture of central power. Grassroots democracy is not just a window dressing but it is also an effort of sowing the democratic seed into the society of the country. The major aim of democratic decentralization is to bring popular participation accountability to local government and therefore, makes local governance more responsive to citizen’s desire and more effective in services.\textsuperscript{8}

Mahatma Gandhi also emphasized the importance of individuals in the Panchayati structure. In his concept of \textit{Gram Swaraj}, he emphasized the necessity of Local Self Government. Gandhiji’s concept on \textit{ Gram Swaraj}, which emphasis the necessity to make village self-reliant and promote the well-being of the village. The village as a social entity and unit of society has traversed several passage of human development. \textit{Swaraj} lays stress on governance through individual and community building. It means sovereignty of the people based on pure moral authority. Power resides on the people, independence begins at the bottom. A society must be built in

which every village has a self sustained and capable of managing its own affairs. This political participation is the hallmark of democracy and modernization. In the traditional society government and politics were concentrated to narrow elites. The modern society has accepted the principle of active citizenship.

Political participation denotes series of voluntary activities which have a bearing on political process. The activities are mainly

(i) Voting at the polls
(ii) Supporting possible pressure groups by being their member
(iii) Personally communicating with legislators
(iv) Engaging in habitual dissemination of political opinion, by communicating with other citizen

Political participation implies participation of both men and women at all stages viz. planning, decision making, formulation, implementation, sharing the benefits of development, monitoring and evaluation. In democracy political participation means those activities which effects in influencing governmental actions either directly by implementation of public policy or indirectly influencing the section of people who makes those policies.9

Structure is composed of innumerable village, there will even widening never ascending circles. Growth will not be a pyramid with

9 KM Joyee, Community Structure and Political Participation, paper presented at the Annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Boston. Marriot Caplecy Palace and Sheraton, Boston Hotel and Toucas, September 3-6, 1995
the apex sustained by the bottom. It will be an oceanic circle where centre will be the individual. Grass roots level democracy means participation in decision making, micro level political authority and autonomy through transfer of specific power to people's representation at the bottom. It implies a larger and close association of the people with their own government. The Panchayat agencies are units of grassroots democracy where power of decision making is transferred from the State Government to Panchayat Samities and Zilla Parishad. My study is confined only to the Panchayati Raj Institutions only.

CONCEPT OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

People's participation in public affairs has been subject of abiding interest in political science since the days of Plato. Aristotle defined citizen as one who shares in the administration of justice and in holding of office. The declaration of French Revolution in 1789 says that the citizens have the right to take part personally by their representatives in the formulation of law. The concept of participation changes with the change of time and the changing role of the state. In the days of Laissez Faire, the nature of awareness was confined only to law making function. With the emergence of socialist state the nature of awareness of participation widened.

Though participation is one form on other existed throughout the history of states, democracy provides for the maximum scope of participation by the citizens. The ancient Greek democracy operates
the principle of direct participation and modern democracies are operating on the principle of indirect participation through representative institution. Democracy in fact means those activities which effect in influencing governmental actions, either directly or indirectly by implementation of people who makes those policies. Political participation of people is the core of democracy. In democracy larger and continuous participation of people is necessary.

Participation has been acknowledged as the central theme of democratic governance, where citizens enjoy the right to participate in governance. People’s participation includes (1) the activities designed to influence the decision of Government through pressure to attain and replace the existing decision makers or changing some aspects of the political system as a whole and the rules of political game (2) electoral activities, such as voting, campaigning, lobbying (3) protests, strikes, demonstrations, resort and violence, promotion of peace.¹⁰

Political participation is a necessary pre-condition for the successful implementation of any programme. Participation in public life has many facets. It includes activities which have strong bearing on group and the community, the power to effectively influence elected representative, decision making process and also to change existing situations, wherever they are found to be clearly disadvantageous. Political participation manifests in actual participation in those voluntary activities by which members of a

society share in the selection of rulers directly or indirectly, in the formulation of public policy.\footnote{Ashatosh Pandey and Gautam Vir, Empowerment of Women in 21\textsuperscript{st} Century, Abhijeet Publications, New Delhi, P 20}

However, political participation can be considered to include an involvement in any form of organized activity that effects or seeks to affect, these power relationships means those activities which effects in influencing governmental actions, either directly by implementation of public policy or indirectly influencing the section of people who makes those policies. Political participation of people forms the core of democracy. In democracy large and continuous participation of people is necessary. Participation enables women by giving them a sense of their own dignity and value. For women participation has three roles, educative, interrogative and empowering. Women constitute half of the society. So empowering women means development of the whole society, as the human society can not move forward without stirring half of his body, thus, it is the women, the social and national interest to draw women folk into social and political process.

The political space belongs to all citizens politics is everyone's business and effects. If more women are associated in the decision making process, in parties, in elected bodies, in government and in international bodies, they can be associated with this process in protagonists and more they can change the modalities and outcome of politics. Only then the concept of democracy will find concrete and
tangible expression. Democracy and the participation of women go hand in hand and promote each other mutually. Political participation also connects activities for protecting one’s rights and duties and advancing interests through competition. The non participation describes apathetic, cynical, advanced and anomic. These terms are not synonymous, they may be related to one another and possibility in common. Apathy means lack of interest. As far as political participation is concerned the most important trait of apathetic individual is his passivity from political activity. Cynicism as against apathy involves passivity and inactivity. Attention suggests actual hostility.

Robert Dahl opines that some people are indifferent to politics, others are deeply involved. Even among those who are deeply involved, only some actually seek power and among the power seekers, some gain power than the others.

The Twentieth century has brought a great change in the life of women all over the world, influencing their values and inspirations, ways of feelings, standards of behavior and acting for effective participation in all walks of life. The search for women’s equality with men has become a global phenomenon. It is particularly relevant in the societies which have deep roots of patriarchy and subjugation of women. Gender division influences family, division of labour, class structure and nation states. At present women are involved in politics, developmental programmes, movements etc. They are coming out of the realm of patriarchy, caste, class and gender based oppression of
women is being opposed in several quarters in Indian society. Women's rights in land and property in actual life are being acknowledged as an instrument of their empowerment. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment has initiated a process of empowerment of women in India in general and the women of country side in particular.

Although women are participating in great number in politics and public life all over the world, they still remain largely outside the realms of power and decision making in government. The gap between men and women's participation in political life is narrow.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT
The term 'Empowerment' has been in use for more than decade now. There is no fixed or authoritative definition of the term, but it is frequently used to describe a process wherein power is given to certain underprivileged sections of the society. The word 'empowerment' cannot be understood without understanding the word - 'power'. Empowerment is clearly concerned with power, and particularly with changing power relationships and the redistribution of power between individuals and groups.

Power can be defined as control over material, human and intellectual resources. Such resources can be land, water, forest, people and their labour and skills, knowledge, information, ideas, money and access to money etc. Power is dynamic and relative and is unequally distributed. When power is defined as control, control often
confers decision making power. This power to decide is exercised in three basic ways; to make decisions, make others implement one’s decision, and finally, influence others’ decisions without any direct intervention.

Power is closely related to the term ‘ideology’, for power structure requires a separate power ideology to justify and perpetuate the ideology of patriarchy and the gender-based discrimination against women in all institutions and structures of society. Particularly, women’s empowerment is the transformation of the structures of subordination, including changes in the law, civil codes, property and inheritance rights, control over women’s bodies and labour, and the social and legal institutions that endorse male control.

On the other hand, for the women at the grass roots level, empowerment means a range of activities from individual self assumption to collective resistance, protest and mobilization that challenge the basic power relations. For individuals and groups where class, caste, ethnicity and gender determine their access to resources and power, their empowerment begins when they not only recognize the systematic forces that oppress them, but act to change existing power relationship as well. Empowerment, therefore, is a radical process.

The process of empowerment, therefore, is all-embracing, because it must address all structures of power. For example, there is ample evidence that economic changes have not materially reduced
the other burdens placed upon women, but have often only increased them.

The process empowerment begins in the mind, by changing their consciousness. Their very beliefs about themselves and their rights; capacities; and potentials need to change. But these changes are seen to be possibly induced or stimulated by external forces. For example, one important external change-agent is the 73rd Amendment Act that reserves 33 per cent of seats for women in the PRIs. However, it must be understood that the very rational of such reservation can have positive and desired effect only if other power structure also change. Here, the clear reference is to, for example, the caste system, patriarchy, gender discrimination and control over economic resources by a privileged few.

The term 'empowerment' has been widely used in relation to women. Terms like 'women's welfare', 'uplift', 'development', 'awareness raising', and 'reservation' are some of the terms that have proceeded to mean and referred to empowerment. The distribution of power unfavourably to women arises from two sources, viz., gender and patriarchy. Patriarchy is nothing but male dominance, where ownership, control and inheritance of all assets is in the hands of men; males exercise the rights of all major decision making whether in the family or in the political structure. Gender is socially constructive and as regards women, it is based on negative discrimination.
Empowerment, particularly Women’s empowerment, may be defined as the process and the result of the process—whereby the powerless or less powerful gain greater access and control over material and knowledge resources and challenge; the ideology of discrimination and subordination which justify this unequal distribution. In essence, it is the challenge of the very rationale of such reservation can have positive and desired effect only if other power structures also change.

For the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution of India and other government has taken initiative to have the desired effect, i.e. empowerment of women, such initiatives must address both—‘condition’ referring to the material status in which the power of women lives, viz. the low wages, poor nutrition, lack of healthcare, education and training etc.—and ‘position’ referring to the social and economic status of women compared to men. Many of these initiatives are seen to address only the former, i.e., the ‘condition’, and many have doubtful predictability over the desired results.

In other words, women’s empowerment is a much discussed subject and has generally been explained as a process of awareness and capacity building leading to better participation, more decision making power and greater control to initiate actions. For women’s empowerment, there is a need that women re-examine their lives critically, recognize the structure and sources of power and subordination. They need to discover their strengths, and alter their self–image, acquire new skills and information, challenge their existing ideology structure, and gain more control over resources.
SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Women's participation in political decision making plays a pivotal role in the general process of advancement of women. Without active participation of women at all levels of decision making, overall development cannot be achieved.

Although women constitute almost half the world's population, their role in politics has remained marginal. In India, though women managed to enter Parliament they have little impact upon the policy making process. This is evident from the fact that though various organizations, women legislature demanded 33% reserved seats for women in the legislature, both in the Center and state, but it has not been approved in the Parliament till date. However, the constitutional Amendment Act passed and ratified by the Government by April 1994. The Act gives women 33% reservation of seats in the three tiers of Panchayati Raj System. Women constitute about 50% of India's population and about 80% women population resides in rural areas. As such decision making both in and outside the house hold bears ample significance for overall well being of women on the society.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The entry of women in the struggle for independence and the effect of Mahatama Gandhi led to the emancipation of women in India
in the 20th century. After independence the constitution of India was adopted, which opened the way for the implementation of the identity. Research on women’s participation in decision making has attracted the attention of political theorist but also other social scientists. V.V. Rao (1963) in his book “A Hundred years of Local Self Government in Assam” dealt with both the rural and urban local self governments. The book has VII parts and each part is subdivided into several chapters. Contains the historical background, constitutional structure, functions, local finance, municipal civil services, inter-governmental relatives and conclusion. This was the first work to deal with this book in Assam.

The study conducted by Hazel D’ Lima (1983) on ‘Women in Local Self Government’- A study of Maharastra (Concept Publication, New Delhi, 1983) observed that 50% of 144 members of Zila Parishad and the Panchayat Samities belonged to the dominant caste with a lower perchantage from the intermediate caste. Nearly half of the respondents belonged to the families, who acquired about 20 acres of land or more. The brothers and husbands of the respondents were educated. 76 percent of the respondents claimed that one or more members of their husband’s family were engaged in social and political activities and 20 per cent members claimed that the members of their parental families were involved in the freedom struggle. The average age of the respondents was 45 years. They generally entered the membership of Panchayati Institutions when they become relatively free of family responsibilities regarding children. The
members were not aware of the problems and issues concerned with Panchayati Raj Institutions.


P. Manikyamba in her book ‘Women in Panchayat Raj Structures’ (Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi, 1989) conducted her study in Andhra Pradesh. She observed that the nature of political participation of the members in political institutions depends upon the political backgrounds. The participation of women members is found to be low. The participation of young members is more than that of aged members. As such age also has an impact on participation. Woman members having experience in politics played active role in Panchayats.

Neera Desai and Maitrayee Krishnaraj in the book ‘Society in India’ (Ajanta Publications, 1990) made a comprehensive study of women and society in India with feminist perspective. The study seeks to define subjection of women in Indian Societies. The author stressed the need to take women’s issue seriously by the policy makers as well as the women themselves. Consciousness of the women’s movement in the country makes a change.

Bina Agarwal in her book 'A Field of One's Own' (Kali for Women, New Delhi, 1994) deals with the problem of gender inequality in economic and social context. She focused on the crucial role of inequality in property rights, particularly in land ownership. The book explains gender equalities of women in South East Asia.

Sweta Misra in her book entitled 'Democratic Decentralization in India' (Mittal Publication, New Delhi, 1994) discussed the concept of decentralization and evolution of Panchayati Raj in India. She critically compared the 64th, 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts and the future of democratic decentralization in India.

Joya Kothari Pillai in her work 'Women Empowerment' (Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi, 1995) revealed that women have to empower themselves. They have to understand the causes of the existing inequality of women in all sectors i.e. social, political, legal and educational and take initiative to change their status. In the first section of the book the author analysed the existing status of females in terms of their rights and their socio-economic and educational development.
In the second section the author examines to what extent the highly educated career women are successful. She also examines the cause of women lagging behind that of men. The problem faced by the women at home and work place and the cause of barriers to women’s participation in the profession. The author collected information on women professionals of the world over and made a comparison with the Indian Women.

Susheela Kaushik’s study of “Panchayati Raj in Action Challenges to Women Role” (Fredrich Ebert Stiftung Foundation, New Delhi, 1995) discussed the Panchayati Raj System after 73rd Amendment Act. She has analysed the participation of women in Panchayat Raj System. She observed that the 73rd Amendment Act had guaranteed Women in the election at all the three tiers Panchayati Raj Institution through the provision of one-third reservation. It also found that the election in some of the states like Karnataka, Orissa and West Bengal had witnessed appreciable number of women turn as voters as well as candidates not merely for reserved constituencies but even from general constituencies. The women had stood with great confidence. However, the Panchayat have not become sensitive to the problems of related to village women.

Niroj Sinha (Ed.) in the book ‘Women in Indian Politics, Empowerment of Women through Political Participation’ (Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi, 2000), analysed women empowerment, political participation, grassroot democracy etc. The book contains all
together 14 articles highlighting different aspects of women participation from different standpoints.

Kalpana Roy (1999) in her book ‘Women in Indian politics’ (Rajat Publication, 1999) has given a detailed picture about the political participation of women in Indian politics.

G. Planithurai in his book entitled, ‘Empowering People – Issues and Solutions’ (Kanishka Publishers, New Delhi, 1996) realized the long left need to established self government institution at the grassroot level in order to empower rural people.

Neera Desai and Usha Thakkar in the book ‘Women in Indian Society’ (National Book Trust, New Delhi, 2001) discussed about women related issues. The book gives a vivid picture of the present status of Indian women against the ever-changing social, economic, political and academic backgrounds. Tracing the history of women’s major issues and actions there on since 19th century the book provides on insight into the complex nature of the work contributed by women, their education, status, their contributions to organized and unorganized sectors their political participation, legal status, their position in the family and outside world and some of the emergent issues.

eight chapters’ councils the organizational framework of Panchayat Raj System; Socio-economic and political background of the representatives, women empowerment and weaken section in Panchayat Raj bureaucracy and Panchayat, rural development. He also suggested some measures for proper and efficient functioning of Panchayat.

Kamala Bhasin in the books ‘What is Patriarchy’ (Kali for Women, New Delhi, 2001) depicts the various strengths of patriarchy. Patriarchy is an analytical category by feminist in theorizing women’s subordination and how it constituted at its origin and how it has evolved historically in different parts of the world. It attempts to locate women’s struggle for social changes in a context where the patriarchal control of major social, political institution makes for special forms of discrimination against women.

The book edited by A. Kumar (Initiative for sustainable Development, Lucknow, (Anmol Publications Pvt. Limited, New Delhi, 2006) discussed pertinent issues which includes women in politics what makes a differences, women’s involvement in politics of India, political participation of women, women participation in Local Bodies, women decision making process etc.

S.N. Ambedkar and Shilaya Nagendra ‘Women in Panchayat Raj’ (ABD Publishers, Jaipur, 2005) tries to analyzed the perception and orientation of the women leaders in the decentralized democracies
and various issues pertaining to the Panchayati Raj System after the 73rd Amendment Act.

S.R. Maheswari in his book ‘Local Self Government in India’ (Laxmi Narain Agarwal, Agra, 2005) discussed both under and local self government. He analysed in detail various i.e. historical evolution, administrative frame work, persona, finance etc.

Bhupen Sharma (2006) in his study ‘Rejuvenating Panchayati Raj, Ideology, Indian States and Lessons from Periphery’ (Akansha Publishing House, New Delhi, 2006) attempts to understand how and why Gandhiji constructed the nation of ‘Self sufficient village Republic’. It is an analytical study on Gandhiji’s nationalist movement made by different scholar. It gives brief analysis on the historical perspective of decentralization in Assam. It also revealed the change of Panchayat from colonial regime to till 1990 in Assam. The study was based on the functions of Panchayat of three districts namely Kamrup, Golaghat and Goalpara.

Pamela Singh (2006) in her book ‘Women’s Participation in Panchayati Raj, Nature and Effectiveness; A Northern India Perspective’ (Rural Publication, New Delhi, 2001) made a comprehensive study on the issue of Women’s participation in Panchayati Raj Institution of Haryana. The study focused that the 73rd Amendment Act of the Constitution of India has for the first time brought 33-40% rural women into the sphere of decision making. However only the increase is not enough, due to various factors as
male domination, cultural belief and values do not encourage women’s assertion. These factors have forced women play their traditional roles of dependent spouse, housewives and mother. Despite these restraints woman members are able to participate in the Panchayati Raj Institutions and address the women issues in the local level.

Niroj Sinha (Ed.) in the book ‘Women in Empowerment of Women through Political Participation, Indian Politics, depicted the role of women in Indian politics.

Sushila Kaushik(1992) in her book ‘Women in Politics Forms and Process’ discussed about the women politician in the national, regional and local levels, which covered the ministers, MPs, Legislative members occupying important position, member of district boards, Local Village bodies and common women. She found that majority of the women leaders are from middle class background.

Sudhir Verma in his book entitled ‘Women Struggle for Political Space’ has highlighted the role of women values and participants in the various elections law to lack of motivation within themselves. Therefore, in order to equip the woman representatives’ proper training and required facilities are to be provided.

Besides these book several articles and Reports also been consulted for the study.

Hoshiair Singh (1994) in his article ‘Constitutional Base for Panchayati Raj in India-The 73rd Amendment Act’ (Asia Survey,
Vol.XXIV, No-9, September,1994,pp.818-2-7) discussed the evaluation of Panchayati Raj Institution after independence and its working, short coming reason for decline and the need for constitutional base for Panchayati Raj in India. He opined that despite some weakness and certain lacunae, the 73rd Amendment Act has provided decentralization of powers at the grassroots level and to strengthen the Panchayati Raj Institution in the country.

Bidyut Mahanty (1995) in his article ‘Panchayati Raj 73rd Amendment and Women’(Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.XXX, No-452) opined that it is necessary to create positive and healthy socio-economic and political condition to enable women to participate effectively in Panchayati Raj Institutions. According to him women’s reservation in Panchayati Raj Institution provided under 73rd Amendment Act is leading to other empowerment in the real sense.

Snehalata Panda in her article ‘Emerging Position of Leadership among Rural Women in Orissa’(Indian Journal of Public Administration,Vol.42, No-3-4,1996) in her study of village Panchayat in Orissa found that women entered into politics from non-political background due to persuasion by the family members or from the village community. The study revealed that women who reluctantly entered into politics showed great maturity and political consciousness in their role and responsibility. In another study in 1999, Panda in her field study stated that women from higher education do not come forward to represent the Panchayat. This gave
way to women of the lower caste to emerge as a potential force in village Panchayat.

George Mathew in his article ‘Women in Panchayati Raj – Beginning of a Silent Revaluation’ (ISS, New Delhi, 1994) studied about the Karnataka Panchayati Raj Institution between 1989 and 1990 and found that women from dominant castes formed 60 per cent of the members of the Zila Parishads. There was a predominance of younger members compared to that among men. More than three-fourth members of the Zila Parishad were below 45 years and more than half were of the age group of 25 to 35. Almost 80 per cent women were uneducated. Agriculture was the occupation of majority of women. With the entry in politics they acquired additional responsibilities. The study found that women have social constraints to participate in active politics.

Bidyut Mohanty in the article ‘Women and Political Empowerment’ (ISS, New Delhi, 2002) states that by providing reservation to women the policy makers intention is not only to improve the number of elected members but also to improve their economic independence, access to resources and education so by examining the socio-economic condition one can derive to the conclusion whether women are really empowered.

Manu Bhaskar stated in his article on ‘Women Panchayat members in Kerala’ (Economic and Political Weekly, April, 26, 1997, pp.13-20) attempts to give the socio-economic background and the
political motivation of women Panchayat members in Kerala. The study was based on interviews of 84 women panchayat members. 24 belonged to the age group of 26-35 followed by women in the age group of 48-55 years. It was found that women take political roles after completing their indicated that women take up political roles after completing their reproductive role. Majority of women were married and motherhood is a handicap for women in gaining political office, so women can take up active part in after politics after their child grow up. The article shows how certain variables like age and marital status are pivotal in making the structural analysis of political leadership in the grassroots level democracy in the context of Kerala. The political dynamism in Kerela is rooted in communal and caste politics. Majority of women members are Hindu (64%) followed by Christians (25%), Muslims represent 10.7%). Only (3%) belong to backward castes. The representation from schedule caste is very negligible.

Report of the Indicators for Women’s Participation in Panchayati Raj in Action (2006) prepared by the Centre of Action New Delhi states that women have the capacity and keenness to take their own decision and speak. The purdah system is not prevalent any more. The women take part in household decision but they are not aware of their health.

Report prepared by the Women Studies Centre, Gauhati University (2002) on women’s participation in decision making Building Capabilities, profile of the women Panchayat studies
attempts to study the functions of the women representatives in Assam. The study covers 600 women Panchayat members including 61 President from six districts viz., Barpeta, Dhubri, Dibrugarh, Goalpara, Kamrup and Nagaon. The study revealed that majority women belonged to the age group of 30 to 39 followed by the group 24 to 29 in all districts. Most of them are married. Their educational levels quite high having primary pass level, quite a few being graduate and even a post graduate. Majority of the members did not have any paid employment before joining the Panchayat. Most of them are nuclear family and agriculture is their main occupation. Hindus and general castes form major portion of members. Most of the members as well as the chairperson belong to economically weaker sections. The members did not have any connection before joining the Panchayat. Some of the members were engaged in self Help Group (SHG). The reservation for women granted by the 73rd Amendment has helped the entry of women into Panchayat.in large scale. But, the functions of the women within the family did not have any change. But their confidence level seemed to enhance. The awareness levels of the women were high but their knowledge about Panchayat was low due to lack of training and motivation within themselves. Therefore, in order to equip the women representative’s proper training and required facilities are to be provided.

Susgela Kaushik (2001) in her study in ‘Panchayati Raj in India-A Stock Taking (Local Self Government)’ examines the women functioning in the Panchayati Raj (Rural self Government). It tried to find out the problem faced by them in the course of their work in
which they cope up and seek to overcome the same. It also aims at recommending an action plan for helping them for a more effective participation.

O.P. Bhora in his article ‘Women in Decentralized Democracy’ (Journal of Rural Development, Vol.116 (4) pp.637, NIRD, Hyderabad, 1994) states that 73rd Amendment Act mainly aimed at decentralizing the power. It also tried to remove gender impatience and as in the institution of Local Self Government. He justifies that the rational to provide reservation 73rd Amendment Act actually aims for collective empowerment of women through reservation. So that they can take active part in the decision making process.

Devaki Jain in her article Women in Union Leadership a presentation of Global Forum (July, pp.9-12, 1992) analysis of the 73rd Amendment Act writes that the main intention of the policy makers behind the reservation in two-fold. One is the democratic justice and second is resource utilization (human). She further states that as half of the populations are women, the development of the country (India) cannot be achieved without proper participation.

Sudha Pai 92001) in the article ‘Social Capital and Grassroots Democracy political Association in Uttar Pradesh (Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.XXX, No8, 24 Feb- 2 March, 2001, p.649) examined the functioning of Gram and Block panchayats. The study revealed that despite changes in the social composition of the Jats and Rajputs, there has been little increase making and implementation of programmer by and large majority of villagers. While earlier Jats and
Rajputs controlled Panchayats they now share their dominance with a small but influential group of Jatavs. The study further revealed that the women Pradhans, who stood for election place of their husband due to the reservation, do not attend these meeting and merely sign on papers sent to their residence.

Sudhir Krishna in the article ‘Women and Panchayat Raj-the lawa programmers and practices’ (Journal of Rural Development, Vol.16, No-4 Act, Dec, 1997, pp.659-60) mentioned the aim behind the Constitution and states that the 73rd Amendment Act was made to provide not less than 1/3 seats including Chairpersons for women in Panchayat Raj Institutions at all levels and role of women in development programme.

Usha Naryan in the article ‘Women Panchayat- The Path Ahead’(Mainstream, Nov.16,1996) confirm that the main position of 73rd Constitution Amendment Act involves, as members of political parties, as candidates and elected members of Panchayat Raj Institution taking part in decision making, implementation and guaranteed for their empowerment.

Objectives of the study:
The study is based on the following objectives:

1. To explore the socio-economic background of the women members of the Panchayat.

2. To know the level of awareness about their duties and responsibilities.
3. To highlight the opportunity availed by them to exercise their duties as Panchayat members

HYPOTHESIS:

1. Women’s participation will improve the working of Panchayati Raj Institutions.

2. Women’s representation is necessary for proper growth of local leadership.

Methodology:
The empirical study was conducted in Assam. Two blocks of Kamrup district namely, Demoria and Rani were selected as the universe of the study.
The data for the study were collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data were collected by means of a field survey that was conducted in all the Gaon Panchayats of the community development block, viz. Demoria and Rani in Kamrup district. The study also included the Presidents and Vice Presidents of the various Gaon Panchayats and Anchalik Panchayats of the two community Development blocks.
The statistical method was applied to analyze the data.
Area of study:
The present study gives the profile of elected representative of two blocks in Kamrup district. Interview was taken 82 elected women for the study.

There are 12 Gaon Panchayat in Demoria Block and 8 Gaon Panchayat in Rani Block. In Demoria Block election was held in all the Gaon Panchayat but in Rani Block election was held only in six blocks. In two blocks election could not be conducted due to the agitation launched by the Rabha Hasang students’ Union demanding schedule tribe status of the six schedule of the constitution of India.

In Demoria Block there are altogether 58 elected women members and in the Rani Block there are 24 elected members. The study interviewed all the 82 elected women members from both the block. The study covered members of both Anchalik Panchayat and Gaon Panchayat.

Rani Block:
In Rani Block there are 8 (eight) Gaon Panchayat and election was held in 6 (six) Gaon Panchayat. They are Dharapur, Azara, Garal, Majirgaon, Kahikuchi, Uttar Bholagaon. In Rani Block there are 72 elected members out of which 48 are male members and 24 are female members. The female members include one Anchalik Panchayat President, one Anchalik Panchayat member. Two Gaon Panchayat Presidents and 20 Gaon Panchayat members. Rani Block constitutes 33.3% female members.
Demoria Block:
In Demoria Block covered twelve Gaon Panchayat viz., Kamarkhuchi, Baruabbari, Khetri, Malaibari, Hahara, Barkhat, Sonapur, Tetelia, Tapatoli, Digaru, Nartap, Dopguri. In Demoria Block there are 144 total elected members’ of which 86 are male members and 58 are female members. The female members include are one Anchalik Panchayat President, 5(five) Anchalik Panchayat members, 2(two) Gaon Panchayat President and 50(fifty) Gaon Panchayat members. Demoria Block constitutes 60% female members.
The Panchayat which were studied are:

Rani Block:
(1) 32 no Dharapur Gaon Panchayat
(2) 33 no Azara Gaon Panchayat
(3) 34 no Garal Gaon Panchayat
(4) 35 no Mazirgaon Gaon Panchayat
(5) 36 no Kahikuchi Gaon Panchayat
(6) 37 no Rani Gaon Panchayat
(7) 37 no Dhakshin Bholagaon Gaon Panchayat
(8) 38 no UttarBholagaon Gaon Panchayat

Demoria Block:
1) 55 no Kamarkhuchi Gaon Panchayat
2) 56 no Digaru Gaon Panchayat
3) 57 no Barkhat Gaon Panchayat
4) 58 no Baruabbari Gaon Panchayat
5) 59 no Hahara Gaon Panchayat
Rani Development Block:
Rani Development Block comes under Kamrup District of Assam. It is situated at a distance of about 30 Km from Guwahati and 9 km from Lokapriya Gopinath Bordoloi (LGB) International Airport. It is one of the main entry points to Assam to Meghalaya. It has abundance of natural beauty covered with beautiful tea gardens, lush green fields and water-filled area.

The geographical area of Rani is 2275 sq.km. The total population of Rani is 86539 of which 45081 are males and 41458 are females. The total Metro population is 48330 and rural 38209. Total SC population 4045 of which 2058 are male and 1985 are female. Total ST Population is 15032 of which 7746 are male and 2286 are female. Total literacy rate 57781 of which 32819 are male and 24962 are female.  

The block consists of 8 (eight) Gaon Panchayat and 96 villages of the 8 Gaon Panchayat 5 are Metro and 3 are rural. The Gaon Panchayat which falls under Kamrup (Metro) are Dharapur, Azara,
Goral, Majirgaon and Kahikuchi on the other hand Uttar Bholagaon, Dhakin Bholagaon and Rani. There are 3 Primary Healthy Centre, Government Dispensary, Sub-centres 22, 2 Ayurvedic cells and 3 Family Welfare Centre in Rani Development Block.

The Rani area is a major picnic spot with the Kapil Stream being the main source of attraction. The stream flows through rocky hills with elegance and flows down to the plains where it becomes the Kapili River. It is about 2 km away from the Block Office. The Department of electronics of India established a society named STPI (State Technology Park of India) in 1991 at Borjhar, Guwahati. The facilities provided by the STPI, Guwahati are best suited to the software Exporters of the North East STPI, Guwahati is considered widely as the gateway of North-East India to the I.T. world (Institute of Technology). The facilities of STPI, Guwahati is capable of providing internet and IPLC (International Private Leased Circuit services. The main aim STPI, Guwahati is to make India the most preferred country in the world for all type of soft-ware resources and services.

The Dipar Beel which is situated near the Guwahati city received International reorganization in the year 1982. It has been identified as one of the major lakes of the world. It occupies an area of 4000 Hectare and is geographically important. It is a place where migratory birds every winter and it makes the place beautiful and colourful with all the birds together. The main species of migratory bird that comes here are Spot-billed, Pelican, Bortukala (crane),
Pukard etc. and majority of these birds are actually rare species. Moreover, one can find more than 50 species of various fishes in the region. Even varieties of Orchid and medicinal plans are spread over the region. If the region is developed with proper planning and project-making, it has outstanding potentiality of becoming one of the major tourist attraction which in turn well help the economic development of the region and overall prosperity of the people.

There is a place named Jau Juwa in Andherijuli in Rani Development Block where wild elephants use to gather around during November-December mainly to quench their thirst. One can watch this rare phenomena form a safe distance.

An old temple established in the year 1920 is situated at 'Sajjanpara' 3 km away from the Block Office, where yearly offerings are made in the month of October at the time of Durga Puja. People from various parts come to pray at the temple and it is believed that their wishes get fulfilled here.

Demoria Development Block:

Demoria Development Block of Kamrup (metro) district, Assam comprises of several ethnic groups, namely, Karbis, Bodos, Sonowal, Nepalis and Tea-tribes. The geographical area of Demoria Development Block is 261.64 sq. of which an area of 16.58 sq.km. is under permanent. The total population of Demoria Development Block is 1,24,043 of which 63,832 are male and 60,211 are female. The number of people under scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes
17,101 and 15,775. The total number of literacy rate 69,322 of which 40,186 are male and 29,136 are female.

The Block consists of 12 Gaon Panchayats with total number of 144 villages. The block lies partly in the northern margin of the Meghalaya plateau, bordered by the river Umpri along its southern boundary, and partly on the plains created by the rivers Digaru, Kalong and their tributes. The place is also a place of tourist attraction.

Under Demoria Development Block of Kamrup (Metro_district there are some important picnic and holiday, locations. They are Nazirakhat, Ghagua, Tegheria, Kamakya Temple at Khetri Kalangaon Bakori, Bamphan’Dhopguri, Topatoli citrus project and Tapatoli Killingghat.

Nazirakhat is a place surrounded by forest and hills. It is located at a distance of 18 km from Guwahati city and just q.5 North from National Highway 37. It is a nice picnic spot. A beautiful water stream is flowing through the spot. An archeological park and a temple of Lord Ganesha are enhancing the beauty of this spot.

Ghagua- This place is situated at distance about 25 km from Guwahati. It is 7 km north of National Highway and 1.5 km from Digaru Railway Station.

Thegeria – Naturally most beautiful Tegheria is situated at a distance of about 28 km from Guwahati and just 3.5 km south of
National Highway-37 with a small but wintry waterfall and of scenic beauty. The natural beauty of this picnic spot is incredible and has tremendous future attrition to the tourist and therefore, local Gaon Panchayat with collaboration with soil conversation is executing some development works of this spot for promoting tourism.

Kamakhya Temple at Khetri temple is situated at a small spot about 30 km distance from Guwahati city along National Highway-37. It is a famous holy place and countless pilgrims throng to Kamakhya Temple and offer prayers for peace and prosperity where also sacrifice of goats, pigeons and buffalo is done during Durga Puja.

Kalamoni Bakori – Kalamoni Bakori is sports and cultural ground primarily of Khetri locality of Demoria. It is one of the very oldest open Bihu ground organized by Bohubribi Gosthi. It is also the play ground of Demoria College, Khetri.

Bamphar/Dhopguir – This area was originally the capital of Karbi King of Demoria. Now, some ruins are available. The place of Demoria King is situated at Bamphar village under Khetri Police Station where the present king of Demoria is living. It is only a few minutes walk to the place of the king from National Highway-37 at Bamphar. The king of Demoria has at present also some customary roles in maintaining cordial relationship among people. Tourists may see some great roles of the king during festive season particularly at Parhali Mela and at the time of community fishing at Parhali Beel and Jolihora Beel during Magh Bihu. The Barter system of commodity exchange is still in practice at Marhali Mela. Tourist may get existing
experience of community fishing and barter system on the day of Uruka during Magh Bihu.

Topatoli Organic Citrus Project:

Topatoli Organic Citrus Project is situated 2 km from National Highway-37 at Topatoli towards south. This is one of the largest citrus projects in India adopted by Organic Farmers’ association, Assam (OFAA) funding by District Rural Development Agencies (DRDA) and NEC (North East Council). This project is implemented by OFAA in collaboration with district administration Kamrup (Metropolitan). The total area of this project is 2200 hectare, out of which 1610 hectare covered by orange plantation and 590 with Lemon plantation. The entire hilly area from time immemorial was under orange cultivation. It is known that ‘Sonapur Orange’ is famous for sweet and sour taste. It is reported that orange of this area has got tremendous export potentiality, especially in the Middle East and Canada.

Topatoli Kallinghat – It is a forest area and is located at distance of about 45 km from Guwahati city and 3 km south National Highway. Again it is nearer from Jagiroad and Morigaon district. Killing is a beautiful river and the Killinghat is a junction point of boarder of two states viz., Assam and Meghalaya. The river killing has bifurcated Assam and Meghalaya.

Agriculture is the main occupation of the people of Demoria. The place is famous for orange cultivation. In Demoria there are 3
Primary Health Centre, 5 Dispensaries, 38 Sub Centres and 3 Family Welfare Centres.

**Table no-1 Number of Panchayats at each level in the State of Assam**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ZP</th>
<th>20</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>AP</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>GP</td>
<td>2223</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>2431</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Report of the Panchayati Raj in Assam, 2001

**Table no-2 Number of Elected Panchayat Representatives at each level**

**A) Gaon Panchayat**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General</th>
<th>SC</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20862</td>
<td>1254</td>
<td>782</td>
<td>8977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>93.28</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Source: Report of the Panchayati Raj in Assam, 2001

**B) Anchalik Panchayat:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General</th>
<th>SC</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>92.27</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Source: Report of the Panchayati Raj in Assam, 2001
B) Zila Parishad:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>General</th>
<th>SC</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>135</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>92.82</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>34.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Report of the Panchayati Raj in Assam, 2001

Table no-3 Number of Block and Panchayats in the State of Assam

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Name of the District</th>
<th>Number of Blocks</th>
<th>Number of Gram Panchayat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Bongaigaon</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Dhubri</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Goalpara</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Barpeta</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Nalbari</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Kamrup</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Morigaon</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Nagaon</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Jorhat</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Golaghat</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Sibsagar</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Dibrugarh</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Tinsukia</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2 GPs fall under town committee)
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>General Area</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Darrang</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>79</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Sonitpur</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Lakhimpur</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Dhemaji</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Cachar</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Karimganj</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Hailakandi</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total General area</strong></td>
<td><strong>188</strong></td>
<td><strong>2221</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Hills areas**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Code</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Karbi Anglong</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>N.C. Hills</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
</tr>
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**BTAD**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Cllrrang</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bagsha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Udalguri</td>
<td>26. Dev. Blocks partially (vide Notification No. PDP. 226/2004/7 Dtd. 05.04.2004)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Report of the Panchayati Raj in Assam, 2001