CHAPTER - II

CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS
CHAPTER - II

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION: A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

Political Participation is indubitably the cornerstone of democracy. As a means to democratic system, it is basic to the rights of citizenship and democratic governance. Political participation involves an active role of the citizens to exercise their political voice by expressing the policy preferences of the state. The main objective of it is to bring about desired changes in the form of political decisions. In today's globalized world, participation is a fundamental need and a democratic right. This participation of the citizens in the affairs of the state not only provides stability and security to the ruler but also grants legitimacy to political authority and facilitates the involvement of civil society in the governance of its state. In other words, the spontaneous participation of all citizens in the political processes and institutions of a country is one of the key factors in fostering democracy.

MEANING AND ACTIVITIES:

Political participation in one form or the other has existed always in all societies. However, the study of political participation at different periods of time has given different connotations with the changing roles of the states. The study of it in 1940's and 1950's strongly focused on voting and electoral participation. Herbert McClosky in the Encyclopedia of Social Sciences referred political participation to "those voluntary activities by which members of a society share in the selection of rulers and directly or indirectly in the formation of public policy." His conception of participation has excluded involuntary activities like payment of taxes, serving in the army and like others. Nie and Verba's in their influential research in participation in U.S.A. defined political participation as "those legal activities by private citizens which are more or less aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and or the actions they take." Milbrath and Goel have defined, "Political participation as those actions of private citizens by which they seek to influence or to support of governmental policies." All of them have excluded the activities of professionals and regular public offices from the process. Actually, up to 1960's political participation was understood in terms of
traditional conceptualizations of politics or conventional modes of participation such as voting, campaigning, and the contacts between citizens and public officials in the formal political process.

The late 1960's and early 1970's discovered a remarkable extension of the concept in both conventional and unconventional directions with the growing importance of community groups and direct contact between representatives, voters and public officials. It came to cover a wide range of activities starting from 'voting to representation, and decision-making to movements, protests and support meetings or issues of vital situational and systemic import.' Myron Weiner in his essay 'Political Participation: Crisis of the Political Process' says, "Political participation refers to any voluntary action, successful or unsuccessful, organized or unorganized, episodic or continuous employing legitimate or illegitimate methods intended to influence the choice of public policies, the administration of public affairs or the choice of political leaders."5

There are some writers who believe that political participation is associated with representative democracy and indirect participation, which are expressed in individual and collective actions that include mainly voting, campaigning, contacting, group action and protest. All of them are oriented towards influencing the representatives in government, rather than active and direct participation in the process of governance itself. (Richardson1983, Cunill1991). These writers have considered participation as a central to the electoral process providing an opportunity for citizens to exercise their policy preferences. "Whatever may be the fact, it influences the selection of the elected officials through the process of Representation."6

In 1990's the most modern definition was given by Parry, Mosley and Day as "taking part in the process of formulation, passage and implementation of public policies."7 Their main concern was the action taken by the citizens in influencing decisions taken by public representatives and officials. They have declared participation as the critical link between the citizenry and the governing process.8 Kavonen and Selle have remarked Political participation "as a necessary prerequisite to influence public policy".9 Citizen's participation also can be seen as a mechanism of holding political representatives accountable to their electorates.10 While Lasswell has defined Politics as "shaping, distribution and exercise of power," participation in the political process has
been conceived as the involvement of the citizens in the decision-making process of the system in influencing the power channels and giving legitimacy to political authority and their decisions.

Conway similarly has explained "Political participation as those activities, of citizens that attempt to influence the structure of government, the selection of governmental authority, or the policies of government"\textsuperscript{11}. He says political participation can take two distinct forms: conventional or unconventional political engagement. The former refers to those activities like voting, writing a letter to elected officials, seeking office, donating money or campaigning while the latter i.e. unconventional forms are characterized by both legal and illegal protest activities. Dalton characterizes modes of participation through their type of influence, level of conflict, amount of initiative required, amount of cooperation with other and type of influence associated with each activity\textsuperscript{12}. In 1990’s political participation revealed the fading border between political and non political spheres of modern society and the revival of Communitarian approaches leading to the expansion of political participation with “Civil activities” such as volunteer work and social engagement\textsuperscript{13}.

Woshingsky says political activism takes place on three distinct levels. Less frequent conversation relating political candidates and elections characterize the 1st less complex level. Many citizens at this stage have only a modest interest in politics, which guide their degree of service. At the next higher level, participation is limited only to those activists who follow politics in the mass media, members of political groups, attend political meetings, and provide effort and money to candidates to whose issues they support. At the final most complex level participation is carried out by political leaders, who have a high level of commitment and devote their career to public service\textsuperscript{14}. Hence in its broader and complex term, participation expresses itself in various kinds of overt and manifest political activities by various individuals and groups in the political process of a political system at various levels. It may be electoral or non electoral. The electoral participation may be as a candidate, membership of any political party, campaigning during election, attending important meetings, contributing towards part fund or as a voter. The non electoral may be a participation at any level of governance, expressing satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the system, suggesting remedial measures to the
government, keeping contact with the government officials or to involve oneself in the political system in some form or the other.

Again participation can be negative in the form of strikes, demonstrations, destroying public property or any other form of violent activities. Besides these, another group of people are seen who due to some reason are either cynical or distrustful of governmental activities and they deliberately or unconsciously shun political activities. This form of non-participation is undesirable, as democracy believes in involving people in some form or the other in the political process. Actually increased participation improves the efficiency of public service, makes local governments more accountable and deepens democracy - complementing representative forms with more participatory form of democracy.

The different views of political participation can be explained in terms of models: The Civic Voluntarism Model had its origin in the writings of Sydney and Verba in 1972. This model explains how socioeconomic status, education, and occupation determine the participation of an individual. Verba, Schlozman, and Bardy (1995: 269) remarked that passivity of people in politics might be because they lack resources and psychological engagement with politics or they are outside the recruitment networks that bring people into politics. The roles of social inequalities were emphasized in resources like educational skills and socioeconomic status and motivational factors like political interest, information and confidence in explaining who participates. In other words, the resources of this model were quoted in terms of "time, money and skills, which are conducive for developing civic attitudes".

The Social Psychological Model believes in the existence of a feeling within an individual that his political action can have an impact on the political process and will make his or her contribution in civic duties effectively. In this model the expected benefits of the political participation are weighed by the individual's sense of political efficacy. Greater psychological resources (efficacy, political trust, social ties) along with socioeconomic assets (money, education and skills) facilitate an individual participation. "Because high status individuals are located in social environments which encourage and enforce positive attitudinal and participatory norms as well as civic skills, they are more likely to participate in politics than the low status individuals. Hence even though
participation brings rewards, active involvement in politics is possible only in those individuals who have high achievement motive and social approval. The Resources Model has linked mobilization to participate politically with the presence of resources and opportunities. Since the opportunities for participation differ, the nature of political participation is not uniform in behaviour.

Another model such as The Mobilization Model asserts participation by connecting individual's involvement to the political opportunities in the environment and mobilization through other people like political parties, peer groups or the community. Rosenstone and Hansen focus on the role of traditional mobilizing organizations in civic society, notably the way political parties, trade unions and religious groups recruit, organize and engage activists. This model can also be linked to the resources model.17

The Institutional Model has focused the way the structure of the state sets opportunities for participation. Powell and Jackman in 1986 point that electoral laws, party systems and constitutional frameworks help in explaining differences among nations in participation. Trends in participation can also be accounted when there is change in franchise or reforms in campaign or spending laws18.

Participation in political affairs is important because a situation, which results in high participation by members of a group normally, has higher potential for democracy. But there are lot of confusion on the questions like who and why should participate in political activity and what should be the extent of their participation. On the basis of participation, a society may be either a participant modern society with greater involvement of citizens or a non-participant traditional society with the involvement of few people. The democracy requires both a degree of voice and equality. It has been said, "The political space belongs to all citizens. Politics is everyone's business."19 Hence in a political system if participation is restricted or restrained, people lose their interest, which is harmful for the democratic functioning of the political system. Popular participation is sine qua non for democracy and is a landmark for the success of democracy. The model for participation is given below, which is best explained by Pippa Norris in his book Democratic Phoenix20.
LITERATURE REVIEW OF WOMEN AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION:

In today's changed global context, women constitute an important section of public life and gender equality has been conceded as a basic principle by many societies. The European Union Community Framework Strategy on Gender equality (2001-2005) have recognized gender equality as an integral part of economic, social, and democratic development. But there is a little agreement on a common definition of political participation by women and in the course of time it has taken different forms. A different perspective of women's participation developed in the writing of Kate Millet in her work on 'Sexuality in Politics' in 1972, where she redefined politics by removing her focus from activities taking place within established governmental structures to relationships based on power, whereby one group controls over another.

The political field in every country has its own peculiar characteristics, but one feature remains common to all, i.e. it is uneven and is not conducive to the participation of women. There is no one country which claims to be satisfied with the political representation and participation of women. In 21st century, the social and economic position of women has gradually improved in many countries with the introduction of adult literacy program and female enrolments in higher education, labour force participation, growth in per capita income; industrialization etc. Nevertheless the goal of gender equivalence throughout the world is disheartening and particularly so in the political arena. Women have always and almost everywhere been at the edging of
political and social power. Chibber remarks that the ‘norms that restrict women to the home are still powerful in defining the activities that are deemed appropriate for women, and they exclude political life, which by its nature takes place in a public forum’.

The view that a women’s place is the ‘home’ prevails very much even today. From time immemorial there is a primary segregation of duties between men and women. In the 20th century only, after a century of struggle and fight, women’s equal status and exercise of political rights has got their recognition in various national and international plan of action. The feminists comment that it was women alone who had pushed for, expressed, formulated, lobbied, and sometimes simply protested for their rights. A century after receiving their right to vote, women still find themselves struggling for a political voice.

The representation of woman has remained no more than a blip on the political landscape dominated by men. The Beijing Conference declared that the equal participation of women in decision-making is not only a demand for single justice or democracy, but is a necessary condition for the consideration of women’s interests. Even in most advanced countries, the representation of women in national assemblies have increased only marginally from 9% in 1995 to 16% in 2004 — a rate of just 0.5% per year— considerably lower than the critical mass of 30% envisaged at Beijing. Unless the women represent at various level of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved. “Even a country like Sweden with a high per capita income and standard of living, and hailed as a model for other nations of the world with its gender equality policies and it’s over 40% female representation, confirms the existence of certain entrenched and often subtle macho attitudes towards women.

IMPACT OF WOMEN’S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

The presence of women in power serves as an indicator of a society’s fairness and has the potential to trigger more fundamental changes in gender relations and beliefs about appropriate gender roles. Political participation of women in the political process has strategic importance due to number of reasons. Firstly, as the participatory democracy is the need of the hour, the increasing participation of women at various levels would give a positive twist to democratic governance. The concept of democracy would find its
concrete and tangible expression when half of the population would be given justice in their full participation with the democratic process. Secondly, evidence suggests that women’s participation in political and decision-making bodies would improve the quality of governance. It would make the local government more accountable and would expand democracy- complementing representative forms with more participatory forms of democracy. A poll conducted by Gallup and the Inter American dialogue in five Latin American countries in 2000 found that most of those surveyed believed that the presence of more women in power improves quality of governance and women alone can handle certain policy issues better than man. Thirdly, equality of opportunity in politics is a human right and the need of today is to stop mythologizing the political capacities of women. They are considered as possessing specific qualities or talents, which could be fruitfully tapped by society through their more effective political participation.25 Fourthly, an equitable presence of both men and women in political decision-making not only ensures good governance but is fundamental to restore gender power imbalance. Fifthly, from the point of view of diversity in representing policies the presence of women is necessary. For e.g. men and women live in different socioeconomic conditions, women in general perform different tasks and have particular interests in the allocation of local resources and services such as electricity, water, cleanliness, public safety etc. A survey of women’s political experience, carried out by the International Parliamentary Union (IPU) in 1999, and including 187 women from 65 countries showed that 89% of women consider that they have a special responsibility to represent the needs and interests of women. Sixthly, more women can bring change in the political system by improving governance, increasing efficiency and promoting transparency.

Similarly Karam Azza in his review of has pointed certain changes brought by women through participation in the political process. Their presence have brought changes in the perceptions of men and women, change in policies, change in legislation, change in institutions, and change in discourse which refers to the language and actions, means of reference and spheres of influence.26 In recent years, with the process of democratization gaining its importance everywhere the complex relationship between governance and women’s empowerment has received considerable attention by academicians, development practitioners and grassroots institutions.
Within the narrowly conceived range of participation, in 20th century, studies of women have concentrated only on voting patterns or increasing the “critical mass”. But now the time has come to look at political participation from a different angle. In a broader sense, participation in politics goes far beyond electoral politics, such as voting, and election to public office. “Boosting of women’s political participation need to go beyond raw numbers to encompass the complex relationship between power and participation”27 On the other hand as a vital aspect of democracy and component for development, the impact of women in the participation process along with their leadership qualities and visibility in the decision-making bodies has to be studied.

According to Milbrath, it is a tradition in almost all societies that politics is mainly an affair of men and men tend to be more psychologically involved in politics than women28. Campbell found that average American in comparison to women are less efficacious, involve less in politics and also has less political concept formation29 Niroj Sinha says, “it is an international experience that despite proclamations of constitutional equality between men and women, only few women seldom enjoy political power or are less involved in the decision-making process”30. Maximum participation of women is generally seen in case of voting. But their involvement in other active form of participation like attendance at political rallies, or membership in any political or social organizations or their representations in national or state legislatures are marginal. Cultural norms, values and customs that include patrilinear inheritance and property ownership and religious practices and teachings among other factors have created longstanding imbalances of male superiority and female inferiority which have in filtered all spheres of life including the political involvement31. It is only few women coming from affluent, urban, and having higher educational back ground showing maximum interest in politics.

Public participation has its own set of costs and constraints as it is time consuming, expensive and brings latent conflicts to the surface. Actually, political participation is a function of numerous variables. Information, knowledge, political skills, learning and communication are prerequisites of formal participation. People without political knowledge or having less of it participate in politics. Education is highly correlated with political knowledge and formal participation.
FACTORs AFFECTING WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

While explaining why few women rise into leadership roles, Vicky Randall gave examples of supply and demand factors. The supply factor is related to culture socialization which views women being socialized into feminine and nonproductive roles that do not accord with political activity and resource allocation is related to women’s education, income, health and the availability of childcare. The demand factors focus on the environment within which they operate. These are voter bias against female candidates, the reluctance of party selection committees to nominate women for winnable seats, the nature of electoral system, and competition from males in single member plurality districts\textsuperscript{32}.

Farzana Bari calls the above factors as individual and institutional factors. The barriers, while varying among countries typically, are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. The individual factors are affected by ones’ access to education, income, low resource allocation to women's human development by state, society and the family, occupation, religion, residence and various other socioeconomic and cultural factors in the society. The gender status quo is maintained through “low resource allocation to women’s human development by state, society and family\textsuperscript{33}.” This in turn is reflected in the social indicators, which show varying degrees of gender discrimination in education, health employment, ownership of productive resources, and politics in all countries.

IDEOLOGICAL FACTOR AND PATRIARCHY

Douglas Ashford discusses ideology in relation to political participation. He quotes J. Gould in saying, “Ideology is a pattern of beliefs and concepts which purport to explain complex social phenomena with a view to directing and simplifying socio-political choices facing individuals and groups.” Ideologies of certain factors may be studied in order to determine what factors may or may not spur the participation. Patriarchy is one such ideology that shapes women's relationship in politics.\textsuperscript{34} Patriarchy has been defined as ‘a familial, social ideological, political system in which men by force, direct pressure or through ritual, tradition, law and language, customs, etiquette,
education, and the division of labor determines what participation women shall or shall not play in which the female is subsumed everywhere under the male'.

Eisentein says, Patriarchy transforms male and female into men and women and constructs the hierarchy of gender relations where men are better privileged. This gender ideology becomes a mechanism of patriarchy to place women within the private arena of home as mothers and wives and men in the public sphere. It provides the sexual hierarchical ordering of society for political control and shapes the level of women's participation globally. Women have to negotiate their entry into and claim on public space according to the discursive and material opportunities available in a given culture and society. Nassali in her book remarked that men are traditionally known as decision makers in the homes and they exert power to dictate their wives actions. Those who go for politics face big challenge of maintaining the 'womanhood' behaviour and cope with political institutional norms and demands.

The Indian social system, which for centuries has been based on hierarchies of several kinds, has always kept women in a position of subordination to men. Vina Mazumdar points out "The inequalities which resulted from their position had been institutionalized through a plethora of customs, norms and practices to protect a highly resilient hierarchic social order. The order rested on three major foundations a) rank order linked to occupational status and other qualities of groups, rather than individuals; (b) careful preservation of distances and differences between diverse groups ;(c) subtle and sophisticated institutions to control and appropriate women's freedom, sexuality and labour, designed and maintained successfully by the three most significant social organizations- the community (caste, tribe, kinship, religious/ sects/ linguistic group etc). These institutionalized methods of control and subordination of women currently referred to by women's studies scholars as structures of patriarchy were and still are, essential to the maintenance and continuity of hierarchy. The forms of control/ appropriation have kept changing over generations, but the dependence of the other two systems of social organizations on this patriarchal structure has remained basic to the social system as a whole.

This general sex role socialization is thought to be advantageous to males in the world of politics and females are often discouraged to take up an active role in it.
Samarsinghe in her essay, 'Participation of women in politics in South Asia', speaks that women's expected subservience is an essential marker of patriarchal control. The historical genesis of patriarchy is well known and its socialization processes is deeply embedded in all contemporary societies and is continuing till today. A plethora of cultural norms, tradition and myths keep women out of politics. She again questions, "Molded into shape as icons of culture by the dominant males, often used as symbols of docile dependency without a voice of their own, how would women enter the political arena of the public space?" As long as the main ideological barriers are present women cannot expect full justice in politics.

**SOCIO - ECONOMIC FACTORS**

The socio-economic model considers the social and economic background as the primary factor to explain the differences in citizen's level of participation. It claims that higher income and better education create more active citizens. The education, income, class and residential location – alone or in some combination – carry most of the explanatory power to study political participation of individuals. Young and Harris suggested that the dominant mode of women's subordination might vary with the level of economic development.

Joe Sess and Suzanne Mettler (2004) gave the most prominent explanations of political participation suggesting the 'Sociological Variables', which explain how individual's influence in the political arena is determined by individual's social background and affiliation. Women's lack of access to and ownership of productive resources also restricts their involvement in politics which requires money for campaigning, funding, and like others. Huntington and Dominguez point that as economic development expands people become literate and better off functionally. Susan Mezey argues that women are often presumed to have different assets and liabilities and participation varies accordingly. It appears that universal franchise is inadequate to overcome structural constraints that obstruct female presence in political offices. Thus the socioeconomic background of women has a major role to play in either escalating or inhibiting participation.
EDUCATION

Various writers have accepted the importance of education in increasing awareness and providing political information for effective participation. If one is educated, then he is one likely to know about politics, feel prepared to participate and receives more political information. A highly educated one is more likely to get a high paying job which can be used for campaign donations, and providing opportunities to exercise high level and politically relevant skills like speech making. Political knowledge also smoothes the progress of participation. Knowing about politics generally or specifically (Hutchings 2003) increases both the reward of participation and reduces the cost associated with political action, such as information gathering. In case of women, education serves as the conduit by which women long rooted in the private sphere move into the public sphere and assert themselves equally with men. It provides critical foundation for empowerment because of which the educated classes possess the keys to political participation and involvement. Mc Glen is of the view that gender differences in participation depend on the level of education and the political differentials between the sexes are reduced, as the educational level of women is raised. It is also a spring board for employment and economic independence providing the critical foundation from which further empowerment flows. Education is thus precondition to raise women’s awareness and levels of confidence and bringing them out from the traditional control. It serves as the means by which women long rooted in the private sphere, move into the public sphere and assert themselves on an equal footing with men.

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Women’s participation is lower either because they have been socialized differently especially as far as (marriage, motherhood, employment and property ownership are concerned), or because they have fewer resources. Women find limited time to participate in politics because of their dual role in reproductive and child caring stage. Mc Glen says that the political activity of mothers is restricted during childbearing stage. This limitation results in women joining late in politics, which enables them to acquire the seniority and experience necessary to achieve influential positions in the political process. Due to the family and child upbringing responsibilities women suffer
from role conflicts and get less time and inclinations to involve themselves in politics. For this gender based division of labour, women have to bear full household responsibilities whereas men can take part freely in routine political activities as there is no restriction on his mobility and his fulltime presence to bear household work is not required. Neera Desai and Usha Thakkar comment, “Routine political campaign work, the necessity of maintaining contacts with the constituency, regular debates, discussions and meetings which are usually held at night, clash with her household and other responsibilities”. Thus, the life style factors including the family roles such as marriage, childbirth, domestic work and family needs limit women’s association in politics. In some countries of South Asia, women face cultural constraints on their mobility. Even among the Nordic countries where women’s political involvement is known to be high, until the development of Nordic welfare state, women’s confinement in the family and household duties was a big limitation to their participation.

But family does not always play a negative role in hampering women’s political participation. Some times the family provides the stimulation either directly or indirectly for developing one’s interest and gaining access to political power. Chibber argues that those women who can negotiate independent space for themselves within the household are more likely to participate in political life. In a cross cultural empirical study, Milbrath and Goel emphasized the importance of family in political participation as “the family experience has a profound impact on a person’s exposure to political stimuli. Children growing up in a home with a high incidence of political discussion and a high intake level for political stimuli are more likely to maintain high level of exposure to stimuli about politics when they grow up to adults. Marvin. E. Olsen has pointed out that children growing up in a politicized family learn political skills through frequent discussion inside the family in political affairs and parental involvement in political groups and parties. Verba also have referred to family as the most important agent of political socialization process implicitly and explicitly. A supportive and cooperative family plays a critical role in furthering career of women in politics. Their research observations reveal that the martial status of women is essential for their involvement in politics.
Another equally significant restriction is the current political culture whereby women are less attracted to the subject like politics. Vicky Randall has defined politics as "an articulation, or working out of relationship within an already given power structure." It is in contrast with the traditional view, that defines politics as an activity, a conscious, deliberate participation in the process by which resources are allotted among citizens. This concept restricts political activity only to public arena and the private sphere of family life is rendered as apolitical. The crucial problem is that women find themselves being judged and judging themselves by two standards. One standard is that of feminist in the private world whereby she is portrayed as possessing emotional, passive, caring and motherly qualities and the other standard is her modern role in the public sphere whereby she is expected to be competitive, assertive, aggressive, ambitious, and result oriented. This compartmentalization creates difficulty for women to choose appropriate course of behaviour. In order to be successful in politics and to become a real politician society expects to follow the aggressive and masculine norms of politics and not expected to be soft, emotional and personal. That is why women in politics are experiencing alienated behaviour. The stigma of politics as dirty persists again in those countries where political scandal and conspiracy dictate the headlines.

In the same way, Peterson and Runyan argued that there are vast ways of looking at power. The conceptual notions of power themselves are based on masculine qualities and ideals as it accepts andocentric notions of strength, competition, aggression, coercion and public activities dominated by men. Again women’s gender often becomes invisible because women (passive, dependent, domestic: engaged in meeting private familial needs) are by definition inappropriate political agents (active, autonomous, public oriented: engaged in making collective, not personal needs).

Majumdar in her book commented that a vibrant civic life in a robust civil society is considered as a precondition for effective participation in communal life and correspondingly for the proper functioning of public institutions. She has given social capital theory, which believes that networks within and between group of people make
for trust and cooperation, stimulating the participation of citizens, which from their participation, expand trust and cooperation though society as well as increase civic engagement and good governance. Again the understanding of political processes requires constant interaction, developing skills and gaining self-confidence which is not easily accessible to women. The reason can be given in terms of developing the theory of women’s ‘backward consciousness’ due to the lack of information, education, resources and less exposure to the political world. Routine political work, regular visit to their constituency, active participation in meetings, regular touch with the electorates are inconsistent with a woman’s life having family. Elizabeth Holtzman and Shirley Williams said that the political participation of women is affected by the stereotype belief about women’s inability to travel, take criticism or to raise campaign funds. Women face major obstacles where many dubious practices including power bargaining are essential. Because of all the above factors, the participation of women in politics becomes limited to voting, organizing processions, and doing routine work in the party offices. And this has resulted in a conceptual debate among activists regarding the concept and indicators for political participation.

The western theorists gave explanation of underlying public and private dichotomy theory, particularly the social and political forces that create the situation in which women were confined to a private, domestic care taking role while men are able to move freely between the domestic and public sphere. For some analysts, the situation is different in the third world countries. Along with that public private dichotomy other factors play their role due to cultural, religious, patriarchal, economic, caste, ethnic and like other factors. Richard. E. Matland says that the barriers are not same all over the world. In some countries Gender Quota has been created as a global fast tract strategy to restore the barring of women in politics. But the central problem is how they will act once they are elected in the midst of all these barriers. Anne Phillips commented that quota in politics is imperative due to the need of symbolic recognition of disadvantaged groups and at the same time subvert, and reform and to introduce new issues and also different ways of doing politics.

There are now 77 countries with constitutional, electoral or political party quotas for women but they face difficulty from the entry point itself and are unable to express
their rights in the political system. The political process has become so complicated that many decisions are taken behind the scene. Power games are controlled by maneuvering or through monetary deals. Threats of character assassination, criminalization of politics and political violence are “enough to throttle the political ambitions of women.”\(^{58}\)

Women are facing problems to enter institutions of governance such as political parties, and when they are successful, party is hesitant to nominate them as candidates and the electorate encourages the gender stereo types in society by choosing men. If women are successful in becoming a member in the institution, they face new obstacles that constrain their ability to act.\(^{59}\)

For most women the power hierarchy is so rigid that the natural process of democracy and constitutional provisions has not been able to crack the citadel of power. Throughout the world it is evident that absence of suitable socioeconomic and political environment, lack of political background, skill and training, and organizational framework have put women far behind men in political aspect. In general, women have often understood power in terms of who has “power over them, rather than as the power that is exercised on their behalf or for a larger common good.”\(^{60}\) It is necessary that if women want to share power, they have to make a place for themselves beyond voting.

Evelin Hust says, in industrialized countries the low participation are mainly seen due to neglect of women (who still care for the offspring) and traditional recruiting practices of political parties, whereas women in developing countries are further handicapped because of lower educational achievement, and the prevalence of social norms that severely restrict their freedom in the public sphere.\(^{61}\) On the whole, political participation should, clearly consist in taking part in some political action. Good Governance has emerged very recently to mean being participatory, accountable, predictable and transparent which reasonably calls for a gender balance in political decision-making.\(^{62}\)

**POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN INDIA**

The New Delhi Document on Women in Development (1985) had reported that though there has been a rapid growth of informal political activity by women to advance their own interests and their rights as citizens, their role in the formal political process has
remained virtually unchanged. Indian scenario still reveals a great deal of forced silence among the elected women representatives. The IPU had reported in its data on lower house / Lok Sabha that only 8.8% of women had been elected to it under Parliamentary election. Even those elected women are experiencing insurmountable limitations and obstacles for which active political participation at the most, has been made a remote idea.

Apparently, the constitutional provisions of universal franchise were found to be insufficient to attract more women into political offices. The severity of gender inequality is perhaps best represented by the notion of Missing Women, a term coined by Amartya Sen. The comparative neglect of girls in India during the formative years indicates both the imbalanced sex ratios as well as women's lower rates of literacy. Even now while sons are sent to school daughters stay at home for domestic education. They are still tied to closely to the private sphere. Their narrow identity as reproductive vessels and their relative lack of education limits their opportunities for self-empowerment and assertion of their individuality in the public sphere, as their identities have already been compromised for them.

Women entered into politics actually due to mandatory provisions of reservation under 73rd and 74th amendment Act, which was assumed to bring women to the forefront as well as to introduce social transformation in Indian politics. It was argued that the reservation policy under these two amendments would break the male bastion of power. It would broaden the base of 'critical masses' from grassroots level to participate in decision-making bodies. For the above reasons, the reservation of seats in Panchayati Raj and Municipal bodies has tremendous implications, not merely in terms of the number of women entering the public arena and holding public office, but also in terms of the social, economic and political impact that these reservations would have for the total system. For most women it is the last piece of straw and a desperate measure to ensure their entry into the political mainstream. Baring this reservation, the question of promoting women into politics and local administration would have proved to be a failure in spite any social, institutional or personal appeal.
### Socio-Economic Constraints

1. Economic Dependancy
2. Lack of Family Support
3. Unequal Gender Relations
4. Marriage
5. Lack of Education & Awareness
6. Restricted Autonomy & Mobility
7. Lack of Patronage
8. Family Burden
9. Lack of Social Capital (skills, resources, training)

### Political Constraints

1. Aggressive Nature of Electoral Politics
2. Criminalisation of Politics
3. Male Dominated Network in Party Politics
4. Lack of Political Party Support
5. Patriarchal Political Culture of Society
6. Lack of Political Information
7. Male Domination in Political Institutions
8. Lack of Institutional Support
9. Lack of Political Capacities

---

#### Theoretical Model of Constraints of Women's Political Participation

Reservation for women in local government is not just a question of increasing numbers, but to develop capacities to play their rightful roles in the developmental process. Politics and participation for women range from home through the locality to the national level. Banerjee and Oquist remark that women should participate at the micro level of home, community organization and local government and macro level of national party, parliamentary and governmental process. For gender development, political analysts insisted in 1990’s on equity and empowerment of women. Recently there has developed right-based approach to cover the concept of welfare, anti poverty, equity, empowerment including capability all fitted together.

Some writers recently have divided marginalization of women in politics both vertically and horizontally. The former is concerned with the position of both men and women in political hierarchies while the later focuses on various policy areas in which men and women work. They observe that women have been vertically marginalized and their numbers of representation have been decreasing as they move upwards in the political hierarchies. Regarding horizontal marginalization they say that women tend to dominate in the reproductive sectors like education, health and social policy whereas men take up productive sectors. The women sector is referred as ‘soft’ sectors and those for men as “hard” sectors. The whole process they have regarded as functional marginalization in politics.
Though it is not possible to make comprehensive generalizations, but one thing is clear that women are getting absorbed into formal politics at the local level and their presence can no longer be ignored. But at the same time, the political participant must be someone who should have a reasonable expectation of influencing the political decisions or at the very least of making his voice heard in the deliberations. Here comes the concept of political efficacy as a mark of effective participation. Some analysts have described it as a barometer of the democratic system. Various scholars of American politics as ‘self confidence’ and ‘subjective political competence’ have defined efficacy. Albert Bandura who first formulated and researched this construct, holds that nothing is more central and pervasive than people’s beliefs in their capabilities to produce given levels of attainment. Perceived personal efficacy influences the choices that people make, their aspirations, how much effort they mobilize on a given task, whether their thought patterns are self-aiding or hindering and the amount of stress and anxiety they experience in coping with situational constraints. Researchers first have analysed political efficacy as a disposition (Campbell et al, 1960), then as a psychological (Coppersmith 1967) and social process (Easton and Dennis 1967). It was consistently explained earlier that the differences in political socialization lead to different kinds of political attitudes in the adult citizen. Almond and Verba in Civic Culture, in 1963, wrote that belief in one’s competence is a key political attitude. Lyons in his study of Black Americans hypothesized that poverty and the resultant environment of deprivation were the driving factors on low level of political efficacy.

Thus, the early works on efficacy were most often viewed as an innately personal, individual level attribute, linked to one’s education and income. Citizens with higher degree of formal education and more access to political information are more active participants. Greater Psychological resources like efficacy, political trust, and social ties along with socioeconomic aspect like money, education and skills facilitate an individual political participation. It has been speculated that the tendency of women to rate their political efficacy, that is their ability to effect change through politics, are lower than men. Lane says women lack a stake in the subject matter of conventional politics.

The individuals having high status are more likely to participate actively than lower status individuals as the social environment in which they exist encourage and
enforce positive attitudinal norms as well as civic skills. Women in general are regarded as having low political efficacy because of lack of effective and timely planning, strong political background, organizational support, access to resources such as the time and money needed to create social and political influence and due to existence of differences in interests according to the manner of social cleavages. Political efficacy, throughout its theorization in the social sciences in early days has been thought to come from any of the following three sources: political information, belief in the trustworthiness of political institutions, and access to resources. Recently Mark Lubell has given the concept of both internal and external political efficacy. Internal efficacy refers to beliefs about one's own competence to understand and participate effectively in politics, while external political efficacy refers to beliefs about the responsiveness of government to citizen demands. The distinction between the two is important because the ability of individual citizens to influence political outcomes requires both competent citizens and a responsive government.

Prewitt's Social basis of leadership theories explains how education and income influence political recruitment as the elite and economically privileged women stand a better chance of selection as compared to the opposite. The reason is that educated and economically empowered women have self-confidence necessary for their self-selection and selection by others. In a similar way the political socialization and political mobilization and political recruitment theories will help us to understand how the political ambitions of women develop from being participants in the private spheres to active politicians or as political leaders. Actually, the socio-political relations of women and their social network in the families and schools, work places, associations, campaign, and political groups or other forms of organizations have gone a long way to shape their perspectives, desires, ambitions, motives and abilities towards acquiring political power and gaining more prestigious political positions.

It has been known that the activities of local government affect both men and women, as they are fundamental in satisfying the basic needs of human being and have a significant impact on quality of life. The International Union of Local authority (IULA) in its worldwide declaration on women in local government has stated that Municipal bodies are the best institutions to involve women in the making of decisions concerning
their living conditions and to make use of their knowledge and capabilities in the promotion of sustainable urban development. This body is often described as the level of government that is closest to people in urban areas. Participation of women in urban local body would include the role of women as voters, members of political parties, candidates and also as elected members, their participation in meetings, planning, budgeting, implementing policy decisions, associating with voluntary organizations, and role in developmental activities.

Local political institutions are considered as a ‘school of political capacity’. But there is difference between representation and participation. After 74th Amendment Act women had got mandatory representation in urban local government. So it is important to examine the institutional mechanisms by which the representation of women is enhanced or inhibited and to explore the conditions, both institutional and social under which women are able to participate effectively. The visible participation of more and more women in urban bodies and their greater representation in decision-making process are definitely important for more than one reason. In the process, not only they will contribute towards the issues of women with a degree of understanding but also they can sensitize fellow male members and officials on the perspectives of women in the society.

Therefore, unless women engage in large numbers with varied process of self-governance democracy might end up being no more than an empty shell, devoid of substance, and often providing merely a thin cover for dictators and authoritarian regimes. Women have to recognize collectively and critically their abilities and limits to change the unequal power structure. This is the process of gaining control over the self, the ideology and resources - physical, intellectual and financial that determines power. Hence the leadership of women must be fostered and valued in political and non-political offices.
REFERENCES:


16. ibid – pg- 271


21. Paper presented by Pradeep Chibber, Why Women are Politically Active: The Household, Public Space, and Political Participation in India, University of California, Berkeley, p. 1

22. Chibber, *ibid*


27. Lina Hamadeh Banerjee and Paul Oquist in *Women's Political Participation and Good Governance; 21st century challenges* UNDP-2000, Pg 1-7
30. Niroj Sinha, "*Women as Marginal in Politics*", in Pramilla Dandavate and others, Widows, Abandoned and Destitute Women in India, Radiant Publishers, New Delhi, 1989, p-68
36. Farzana Bari, *op.cit.*, p.3
41. Susan G. Merzey, "*Does Sex make a difference*", *A case study of Women in politics*, *Western Political Quarterly*, vol.31, no.4, p. 496
44. Nancy.E. Mcglen , op.cit, p-304..


58. N.Desai and U.Thakkar, op.cit, pp.113


66. Bunnerjee and Oquist., ibid p.4


72. Quoted from *Women and Politics* By Vicky Randall, op. cit., p.57


75. S. Batliwala, Empowerment of women in South Asia: Concepts and practices, sponsored by Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education and FAO's Freedom from hunger campaign, Action for development, New Delhi, 1993