CHAPTER- VI

CONCLUSION AND FINDINGS
In the foregoing chapters of this thesis we have made an attempt to highlight the scope of study, its aims and objectives. We have tried to explain the concept of awareness and political participation in general as also awareness and participation in relation to each other. We have tried to put forward the interpretation of the term 'participation'. We have outlined various participatory activities and also have clearly defined the established, conventional modes of participation manifest in prevalent society. We have tried to make a study of awareness alongwith participation in the context of Orissa, in particular, the city of Cuttack, which presents a profile, of more than a thousand years. We have clearly defined the face of Cuttack City, whose social and political ethos, has provided a canvas for our design. In this chapter, we propose to present a summary of review of our efforts in the preceding chapters, and have put forth our concluding observations.

In the first chapter, which introduces our work, we have dealt with the approaches to the study of political awareness and participation. We have put forth a brief review of the literature available to us. We have indicated therein, the scope of study, aims
and objectives of study, hypotheses, methodology, sample and coverage, respondent structure, data collection and data analysis.

In the second chapter we have dealt with the conceptual analysis of awareness and participation and have discussed the nature and dimensions of political participation. We have made a study of the various facets of participation, as also the components of participation, including the psychological and the physical component. We have highlighted the contention that the acts of participation, and the attitudes in participation, are prompted by the psychology of participation, which may be the manifestation, of an amalgam of societal and familial factors, which impinge upon the psychology of the participant. An act of participation may be a voluntary act, or an act compelled by certain circumstance, which may explicitly or implicitly, propel the person towards such participation. However it is observed that in all democratic societies, like ours, participation largely remains a voluntary act. The various activities of participation, termed as Gladiatorial Activities, Transitional Activities, Spectator Activities have been classified and explained.

In this chapter we have also referred to acts of non-participation and have categorised such non participants into various categories. Under the broad spectrum of the micro level approach, Sigmund Freud’s ‘psychoanalytic theory’ as also the cognitive development theory and learning theory have been much discussed. In this chapter, we have also explained the concept of political communication, which
is associated with high political participation. Lastly we have also tried to establish a nexus between awareness and participation. In this thesis we have sought to put forth the contention that urban women, do generally participate greatly in the political process.

In the third chapter we have made a study of women, in the global, national and state area, in the light of history. The role orientations and attitudes of women in general has been studied, as also the gradual societal and political transformation of their roles. We have studied their participation in the political process in relation to their roles, within the family system. The process of gradual inclusion of women, in the political process, including the power to vote, have been studied, and the stages of such transaction carefully analysed. Ultimately the chapter also explains urgently the contemporary role of women in Indian society, as also the women in Orissa today.

In the fourth chapter, we have made an indepth study, of the area that forms the backdrop of our thesis. The profile of Orissa, its physical, demographical, socio-cultural, and religious dimension have been studied. We have then discussed at length, the historical development of the city of Cuttack as also the demographic and literacy profile. The socio political environment and the cultural ethos of this City, more than thousand years in age, has certainly to a great extent influenced the political attitudes of the ‘Women of Cuttack city’, who form the nucleus of our research. The traditions, customs of
this unique city tangible and intangible, which harmonises both urban and rural culture, affects participatory attitudes and political behaviour.

The fifth chapter deals with the analysis of political participation of the urban women of Cuttack city. This has been studied in the context of political awareness, political orientation and political involvement of the women respondents of Cuttack city. This was probed through our survey with the help of structured questionnaire and close ended questions which we circulated among 300 (three hundred respondents).

While testing their awareness we have found out that 77% and more are aware of the political process. We have discovered that television has largely contributed to their awareness. However it was felt that the awareness level varied with the level of education. Illiterate women, and those who only knew to read and write, were less aware that those who had studied upto Matric and above. Women residing in the slums, were less aware than women residing in the non slum areas.

A study of the extent of participation, in the context of educational level, revealed that education does not increase participation of urban women of Cuttack city. On making a comparative estimate between extent of awareness and extent of participation we have found out that there is greater degree of awareness among the educated, high awareness in the non slum areas,
while there is greater participation among the lesser educated and uneducated as also in the slum areas. However among the employed women it is seen that the degree of awareness is high as also the degree of participation.

While analysing the cause of non-participation data reveals that family responsibilities is the major cause of non-participation. However lack of mobility is one of the causes of non participation and deters participation to a large extent though it is not the primary cause.

We have tried to find out and pinpoint whether the influences of individuals or family has been instrumental in determining political participation, and it has been revealed that the basic act of participation, namely voting, has been exercised as per the individuals own choice. It clearly proves that while exercising their vote, women in Cuttack city act according to their own choice. Most of these women belonged to nuclear families.

It is found out the women of the age group 45-60 years are politically most active. It is evident that women from higher age groups engage in staging demonstrations or campaigning in elections as they are comparatively free from family responsibilities.

It was found that mostly, our respondents, were aware of the political process and were knowledgeable about the basic political issues and institutions. Analysis and tabulation of data in the
questionnaire, proved beyond doubt, that most of them participated in the political process. Though variation was noticed as regards the nexus of awareness and participation, between slum and non slum residents, yet on over all view established the fact that the women of Cuttack city participated to a great extent.

As such our hypothesis that “Urban women are fully aware of the polity and mostly participate in the political system” was found to be mostly valid.

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After examining the extent to which over hypothesis have been proved to be valid we feel it necessary to put forth the various suggestions, which were advanced by the respondents, to increase awareness and their participation.

Our findings have revealed that lack of awareness is basically due to lack of education, and political orientation. Lack of participation has been as per our analysis, due to family responsibility lack of mobility, family opposition to young women moving unescorted in public. However, the major constraint behind these physical impediments, is the factor of lack of psychological involvement in politics. The act of voting being optional, it does not necessarily persuade the voter to exercise his vote compulsorily. Certain respondents suggested certain remedies which would ensure greater
awareness and heightened participation. The researcher has tried to make a study of such suggestions, and has tried to put them in a systematic manner.

Due to social restrictions, very low literacy rate, and economic dependency, women are yet to fully participate in political activities. Women as members of political parties or political activists are not many. As a result women are yet to be brought into the main stream of politics. To integrate women into the mainstream of politics, their voting behaviour must be improved and made effective. It is true that women are not yet fully independent in exercising their rights because of their limited movement, economic dependency and social restrictions.

In this context a number of recommendations have been suggested.

(1) In order to create awareness among women voters, about their rights and obligations, a comprehensive educational programme should be undertaken by the government. Both formal and non formal education programmes should include political rights and women’s rights. It is recommended that voter education programmes (with manual) should be undertaken by the government and NGO’s throught the year. To create awareness among different sections of the women, efforts should be made to organise seminars, workshops, discussion, meetings. Training should be given to inculcate the duties of a good
citizen, as also to encourage them, to take up political and leadership positions. Supportive services, should be provided, to allow women to participate in these training courses.

(2) Curricula used at the primary and secondary levels should be reviewed and modernized and information about womens' fundamental rights including voting rights, legal rights etc. is to be included in the curricula. In schools and colleges both males and females should be taught political and other rights so that from the very beginning of their life they are politically oriented, and can become responsible citizens.

(3) A nation wide attitudinal change programme or movement is needed to create a general awareness in the society, and particularly among women, to increase their self perception.

(4) To make women voters conscious about there primary political right, they should be given the opportunity to be involved in economic activities. If they are not economically solvent, they would be reluctant to exercise their rights. They need to be organised and assisted economically by political parties, womens' organizations, and individuals in political parties, and trade unions.

(5) Political awareness, consciousness and motivation should be raised among women at all levels-national and local. Mass Media should be used to motivate women and publicise government policies.
Programme for women should be highlighted through media. To disseminate election news and the voting procedure, the mass media should play a major role. Effective television programmes should be so designed as to create awareness among voters. More radio programmes and other inputs as drama, posters, leaflets and videos should be provided to increase women's perception about political rights.

(6) Political parties should have specific agenda for encouraging women voters to exercise their votes without any undesirable constraints. This should be incorporated in their political manifestos.

(7) Finally, it is to be emphasized that there is urgent need for research studies on participation of women in politics, their voting behaviour, consciousness, their access to public offices and political parties. Such studies should also identify the obstacles and limitations that deter full fledged women's participation in politics.