CHAPTER - II
EMPOWERMENT THROUGH PARTICIPATION

Preview:

This chapter explores participation of women in attaining empowerment. Various types of empowerment are also discussed at a length. Women's participation and leadership in the political arena and specifically within local governance structures is focused.

2.0 INTRODUCTION:

There is much talk these days about *involving* ordinary citizens more definitively and directly in the policy process. Dialogue, deliberation and citizen engagement are increasingly familiar landmarks on the current ***participation*** landscape as efforts to design more collegial and collaborative public involvement processes compete with more traditional top-down approaches. Public deliberation, a defining concept of deliberative democracy theory, is experiencing a renaissance among both scholars and policymakers (Ableson, 2006)[1]

Further, participation is a rich concept that varies with its application and definition. The way participation is defined also depends on the context in which it occurs. For some, it is a matter of principle; for others, practice; for still others, an end in itself (World Bank, 1995). Indeed, there is merit in all these interpretations as Rahnema (1992) notes:

Participation is a stereotype word like children use Lego pieces. Like Lego pieces the words fit arbitrarily together and support the most fanciful constructions. They have no content, but do serve a function. As these words are separate from any context,

they are ideal for manipulative purposes. 'Participation' belongs to this category of word.(p.116)

Often the term participation is modified with adjectives, resulting in terms such as community participation, citizen participation, people's participation, public participation, and popular participation. The Oxford English Dictionary defines participation as "to have a share in" or "to take part in," thereby emphasizing the rights of individuals and the choices that they make in order to participate.

Arnstein (1969) states that the idea of citizen participation is a little like eating spinach: no one is against it in principle because it is good for you. But there has been little analysis of the content of citizen participation, its definition, and its relationship to social imperatives such as social structure, social interaction, and the social context where it takes place. Brager, Specht, and Torczyner (1987) defined participation as a means to educate citizens and to increase their competence. It is a vehicle for influencing decisions that affect the lives of citizens and an avenue for transferring political power. However, it can also be a method to co- opt dissent, a mechanism for ensuring the receptivity, sensitivity, and even accountability of social services to the consumers. Armitage (1988) defined citizen participation as a process by which citizens act in response to public concerns, voice their opinions about decisions that affect them, and take responsibility for changes to their community. Pran Manga and Wendy Muckle (Chappel, 1997) suggest that citizen participation may also be a response to the traditional sense of powerlessness felt by the general public when it comes to influencing government decisions: "people often feel that health and social services are beyond their control because the decisions are made outside their community by unknown bureaucrats and technocrats" (p. 99).Westergaard (1986) defined participation as "collective efforts to increase and exercise control over

resources and institutions on the part of groups and movements of those hitherto excluded from control" (p.14). This definition points toward a mechanism for ensuring community participation. The World Bank's Learning Group on Participatory Development (1995) defines participation as "a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives, and the decisions and resources which affect them" (Mathobor, 2008)[2]

Traditionally, participation has been assessed in quantitative, numeric forms for example, by asking how many people have come to a meeting or how many people have joined in a community activity. The dilemma however, is that presence does not indicate participation. People can come, but not have any commitment or understanding of what is going on.

Sherry Arnstien offered an analytical visualization called, 'ladder of participation'. The bottom step is that of informing people, while the top step is citizen control. Mid-way, where partnership begins to develop, the degree of participation moves from mere tokenism to degrees of citizen power (Susan, 2002) [3]

Thus, the concept of "participation" relates to who takes part in a set of society's activities and how they do it. The list of activities considered could be formal sector employment, general and local elections, legislative work, household work, etc. As a consequence, participation can be seen as a measure of equality – both in opportunities (e.g. by looking at participation in paid work) and outcomes (e.g. participation in the use of public services). It is important to notice, however, that women's participation does not imply equality between men and women. For example, the fact that women participate in paid work does not imply that women receive or control the income which they generate. Hence, it is possible to have

situations where women participate but do not achieve equality. On the other hand, it is hard to imagine that equality can exist without a minimum of participation in, for example legislative processes (Duflo (2005), Narayan (2002) and Akerkar (2001) (Business Research, 2008).[4]

There is growing momentum among governments and civil society to foster and ensure women's participation and leadership in the political arena, and specifically within local governance structures. Establishing quotas for women's representation at different levels of government has been a strategic tactic in achieving this goal in many countries. In India, the Constitution (73rdAmendment Act), enacted in 1992,mandated the reservation of a minimum of one-third of seats for women (both as members and as chairpersons) within all of India's locally elected governance bodies commonly referred to as *Panchayati Raj* Institutions (PRIs). The amendment also entrusted panchayats with the responsibility of furthering the agenda of economic development and social justice (ICRW, 2012)[5]

Women's participation in public life and decision-making depends on several factors, including:

- an awareness of their rights and how to claim them
- access to information about laws, policies and the institutions and structures which govern their lives
- confidence, self-esteem and the skills to challenge and confront existing power structures
- support networks and positive role models

- an enabling environment, meaning a political, legal, economic and cultural climate that allows women to engage in decision-making processes in an effective way.

Empowerment and participation are deeply complementary and can be considered means and ends, processes and outcomes. The history of empowerment in development thinking and practice is similar to that of participation: both originated with social movements and liberation struggles, and were advanced by civic and political actors seeking collective responses to deeply entrenched structures, including for example the feminist movement. Yet since the 1990s empowerment has become more mainstreamed within the discourse of development agencies and governments, losing its emancipatory roots and taking on a more individualist and neo populist meanings. Thus, empowerment implies the creation of an enabling environment for individuals to fully use their capabilities to take charge of their lives. Empowerment also implies the building or acquiring of capacity to accomplish certain tasks and attain specific goals (UNECA, 2001) [6]

2.1 EMPOWERMENT –CONCEPT-DEFINITIONS

The concept of women's empowerment (by some authors referred to as "gender empowerment") has also been described differently by different authors. A key factor in all definitions, however, is that gender empowerment relates to the ability of women to manage their lives.

While empowerment has been described as both a state and a process in the literature, see, e.g., World Bank Institute (2007), we shall follow Duflo (2005) and Kabeer (2005) in stressing that empowerment is a process, which leads towards a state in which women are empowered. That is, empowerment involves an *improvement* in

women's ability to manage their own lives. This is obtained through increased access to key re-sources and activities, as stressed by Duflo (2005): *"…gender empowerment* is *defined as improving the ability of women to access the constituents of development – in particular health, education, earnings opportunities, rights, and political participation."* This understanding of women's empowerment gives a direct link between empowerment and equality of opportunities. The process of empowering women will improve their ability to manage their lives, i.e. it improves their access to education, access to formal sector employment, access to entrepreneurship, access to finance, control over fertility etc. This improved ability to manage their own lives entails an expansion of women's opportunities in the direction of equal opportunities in comparison with men (Business Research, 2008).[7]

Empowerment happens when individuals and organised groups are able to imagine their world differently and to realize that vision by changing the relations of power that have been keeping them in poverty (Eyben, Cornwall and Kabeer 2008)[8]

Empowerment is the process of increasing women's ability to manage their own lives through increased access to key resources and activities. As discussed, the process of empowerment is about improving women's ability to manage their own live through increased access to key resources and activities. A general feature of the empowerment aspects discussed in the literature is that they involve: a) Access to and control of various material and non-material resources and b) Participation in and power over various market and non-market processes and activities at different levels in society. Women's empowerment is "a process whereby women become able to organize themselves to increase their own self-reliance, to assert their independent right to make choices and to control resources which will assist in challenging and eliminating their own subordination" (Keller and Mbwewe, 1991).[9]

The term empowerment refers to increasing the power of the low-power group, so that it more nearly equals the power of the high power group. From the perspective of intermediaries, this is often done because negotiation tends to be more successful when the parties negotiating have relatively equal levels of power. When they do not, the lower power party tends to get co-opted, or otherwise treated unfairly in the negotiation or mediation process. To prevent this from happening, the mediator can take a number of steps to "empower" the lower power group. The mediator can provide access to outside resources, give advice, give negotiation or communication skills training, or structure the process in a way that somewhat favors the low-power group, thus in a sense balancing out the power differences.

Empowerment can also refer to a larger, group-level, or societal level process, such as that which occurs with peace building or the re-establishment of a civil society and traditional conflict management institutions. Many third party interveners have come to realize that the disputants themselves have very useful conflict-resolution skills, which have simply been discarded or forgotten in the height of the conflict. If they can be resurrected, or new approaches established, people can usually do a great deal to improve their own conflict situations.
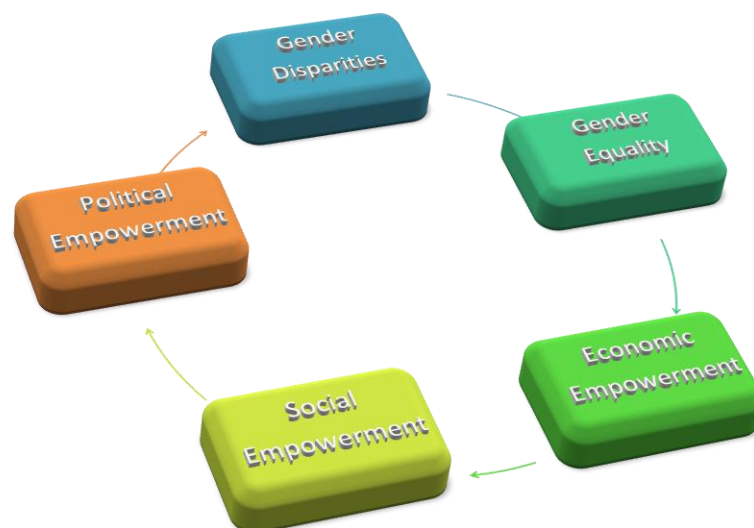
Figure-1

Thus, empowerment is multi-dimensional, social, and a process. It is multi-dimensional in that it occurs within sociological, psychological, economic, and other dimensions. Empowerment also occurs at various levels, such as individual, group, and community. Empowerment, by definition, is a social process, since it occurs in relationship to others. Empowerment is a process that is similar to a path or journey, one that develops as we work through it. Other aspects of empowerment may vary according to the specific context and people involved, but these remain constant. In addition, one important implication of this definition of empowerment is that the individual and community are fundamentally connected.

According Archana, (2009), "Empowerment means moving from a position of enforced powerlessness to one of power". Empowerment is a multi-faceted, multi-dimensional and multi-layered concept. Women's empowerment is a process in which women gain greater share of control over resources - material, human and intellectual like knowledge, information, ideas and financial resources like money - and access to money and control over decision-making in the home, community, society and nation,

and to gain `power'. [10]

Studies	Definition	Indicators used	Overlapping Areas
Oakley(2001), cited in Ibrahim & Alkire 2007.	Empowerment is an increase in power. He argues that power can be either _variable sum' or _zero sum'. The former refers to a process through which the powerless can be empowered without altering the nature and the levels of the power..while the later refers to _any gain in power by one group inevitably results in a reduction of the power exercised by others.	Work division in the household; attitude towards girls, access to household property; control over resources; participation; organization and collective action; self-confidence; social status; work pattern and productivity	Access to Resources and Wellbeing.
Parveen and Leonhauser (2004)	No comprehensive definition of empowerment.	- contribution to household income - access to resources - ownership of assets - participation in household decision-making - perception on gender awareness - coping capacity to household shocks	Access to Resources, Autonomy and Agency.
Roy and Niranjan (2004), cited in Ibrahim & Alkire 2007.	Empowerment is associated with indirect indicators like Education and work participation of women, and direct indicators of female autonomy (empowerment) such as decision-making, mobility and access to economic resources that can be viewed both as an outcome and a process.	- indirect indicators of empowerment: education, occupation, women's access to and control over resources - direct indicators of empowerment: involvement in decision-making, freedom of movement and access to money.	Access to Resources, and Autonomy.
Schuler and Hashemi (1994), cited in Ibrahim & Alkire 2007.		mobility - economic security - making small and large purchases - subjection to domination and violence - political and legal awareness - protest and campaigning.	Access to Resources, Autonomy and Agency.

Sen (1999)	Empowerment is an expansion in individual's agency i.e. expansion in one's ability to act and bring about change, whose achievement can be judged in terms of her own values and objectives.	Absence of gender inequality in: Mortality rates Natality rates Access to basic facilities such as schooling Access to professional training and higher education Property ownership Household work and decision-making.	Access to resources and Material wellbeing.
Kishor (2008)	Empowerment has come to denote women_s increased control over their own lives, bodies, and environments. In discussions of women_s empowerment, emphasis is often placed on women_s decision-making roles, their economic self-reliance, and their legal rights to equal treatment, inheritance and protection against all forms of discrimination, in addition to the elimination of barriers to access such resources as education and information	Financial autonomy, participation in the modern sector, lifetime exposure to employment, sharing of roles and decision-making, family structure amenable to empowerment, equality in marriage, (lack of) Devaluation of women, women's emancipation, marital advantage, traditional marriage	Access to Resources and Autonomy.
Ibrahim & Alkire 2007	Empowerment is an increase in certain kind of agency that are deemed particularly instrumental to the situation at hand. Thus accepting what Sen had said about empowerment	Empowerment as control i.e. control over personal decision, Empowerment as choice i.e. autonomy and personal decision making, Empowerment in community i.e. changing aspect in ones life at individual level and Empowerment as change i.e. changing aspect in ones life	Autonomy and Agency.
Kabeer (2008)	Empowerment refers to the processes by which those who has been denied the ability to make choices acquire such an ability, that means people who exercise a great deal of choice in their lives may be very powerful, but they are not empowered in the sense they have never empowered at first place. (Kabeer,2005	Empowerment refers to the processes by which those who has been denied the ability to make choices acquire such an ability, that means people who exercise a great deal of choice in their lives may be very powerful, but they are not empowered in the sense they have never	Resources, Agency and Achievements
Malhotra, Schuler & Boender 2002	Empowerment is a dynamic process. Separating the process into components (such as enabling factors, agency and outcomes)	Labor Market participation, Wage deferential, Occupational division, Female literacy and enrollment in secondary school. Marriage and Kinship system, Wives/Women's physical mobility. Sex ratios of mortality. Political participation,	Access To Resources and Agency.

		Legal rights, complains, question and request from women at village council	
Charmes & Wieringa 2003	Women's empowerment can be seen as a process in which the following elements will be considered: awareness/consciousness, choice/alternatives, resources, voice, agency and participation. This dimension of women's empowerment is linked to enhancing women's ability to make choices over the areas in their lives that matter to them, both the strategic life choices that Kabeer (1999) discusses and to choices related to daily life.	The women's Empowerment matrix sketch the contours range from personal to global level distinguishing between physical, socio-cultural, religious, political, legal and economic	Access to Resources.
Beteta 2006	Gender Empowerment measure is an incomplete and biased index on women's empowerment, which measure inequality among the most educated and economically advantaged and fails to include important non- economic dimensions of decision making power both at the household level and over women's own bodies and sexuality.	The household level and women's physical autonomy i.e. freedom to choose motherhood or not incorporating contraception methods, demand for contraception and the right to safe abortion or the difference between the wanted and actual fertility rate.	Autonomy, material and psychological well-being.

Source: Tulika Tripati

Table -1

2.2 DIMENSIONS OF EMPOWERMENT

When examining different types of empowerment, it   is important to recognize at the outset that they are not mutually exclusive and instead tend to be mutually reinforcing. For example, economic forms of empowerment where people gain jobs and economic benefit link directly to individual feelings of self-confidence and personal empowerment. The act of being involved in the job market, presumably interacting with various individuals also contributes positively to social forms of empowerment. Similarly, increased personal empowerment enhances the ability to be engaged with society and increases the chances of both social and economic empowerment. Different forms of empowerment should be identified and understood not in isolation but rather as potentially and probably inter-related dynamics.

a) Economic empowerment

Economic empowerment seeks to ensure that people have the appropriate skills, capabilities and resources and access to secure and sustainable incomes and livelihoods. Related to this, some organizations focus heavily on the importance of access to assets and resources.

Key aspects of this type of empowerment are women's access to formal sector employment, self employment, borrowing, saving and access to and control of economic resources. Examples of economic empowerment would be an increase in women's control of house-hold resources or an increase in women's access to borrowing in the financial markets.

Economic empowerment is about women's capacity to contribute to and benefit from economic activities on terms which recognize the value of their contribution, respect their dignity and make it possible for them to negotiate a fairer distribution of returns. It is also about changing institutions and norms that inhibit women's economic participation, such as attitudes about child care or the type of work that women can do.

Poverty is the biggest challenge in India's development efforts to bring about a perceptible change in the quality of life of the people. In India, a vast section of its population suffers from malnutrition, unemployment, and poor health care. This is particularly, true in the case of four main weaker sections of society namely, women, children, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. In rural India, the high rates of illiteracy and low economic status of women underlie the need for increasing their earning by providing income-generating assets. Provision of employment opportunities to rural women is one way to improve their nutrition, health, education and social status. In most of the developing countries greater emphasis is laid on the

need for development of rural women and their active involvement in the main stream of development especially economic.

b) Human and social empowerment

Empowerment is a multidimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives. This is a process that fosters power (that is, the capacity to implement) in people, for use in their own lives, their communities and their society, by being able to act on issues that they define as important (Page and Czuba, 1999).

Social empowerment is about changing society (e.g. gender norms) so that women's place within it is respected and recognized on the terms on which they want to live, not on terms dictated by others. A sense of autonomy and self-value is important for someone to preserve her bodily integrity, participate in politics, demand a fair return on her work, and take full advantage of public services, such as health and education (Pettit, 2012) [11]

c) Political empowerment

In the area of women's political empowerment, it is increasingly becoming recognized that women should empower themselves and be empowered. This relates to both individual empowerment(such as increasing individual civic competencies) and collective empowerment (such as networking). Empowerment also involves creating a conducive environment so that women can use these competencies to address the fundamental problems of society at par with their male counterparts. It follows, therefore, that building the analytical, political, advocacy, leadership, networking and other competencies of women is just as important or even more important than increasing women's numbers in higher policy and decision-making bodies and institutions. It can even be argued that these qualitative factors provide the foundation for a sustainable improvement of the position of women. Otherwise,

legislative or constitutional mandates (or any other situations in which the existing male-dominated power structures are required to 'do favours' for women - for instance by appointing them to the cabinet) may merely result in tokenism, manipulation and unsustainable representation.(UNCA,2001).[12]

Political empowerment can be referred as the capacity to analyse, organize and mobilize. This results in the collective action that is needed for collective change. It is often related to a rights-based approach to empowerment and the empowering of citizens to claim their rights and entitlements (Piron and Watkins, 2004).

Political empowerment is defined as increasing the participation of women in legislative assemblies, their decision power in these assemblies, the ability of women to publicly voice their opinions and to affect the composition of legislative assemblies. An example of political empowerment could be to ensure women's suffrage.

d) *Cultural empowerment*

The redefining of rules and norms and the recreating of cultural and symbolic practices (Stromquist, 1993). This may involve focusing on minority rights by using culture as an entry point.(Cecilia,2009) [13]

2.3 WOMEN EMPOWERMENT - INDIA:

Although women constitute half of world's population yet they are the largest group which is excluded from the benefits of social and economic development. Women constitute a strong labour force which needs to be mobilized and encouraged to make an effective contribution to the development process. In India, the work participation rate for women is less than half that of men. Despite efforts made towards economic empowerment of women, majority of the active

female population continue to be confined to micro, small scale enterprises and the informal sector.

ANCIENT PERIOD:

Gender inequality in India can be traced back to the historic days of Mahabharata when Draupadi was put on the dice by her husband and public places to please the man. Secondly, in Indian society, a female was always dependent on male members of the family even last few years ago. Thirdly, a female was not allow to speak with loud voice in the presence of elder members of her in-laws. In the family, every faults had gone to her and responsible. Forth, as a widow her dependence on a male members of the family still more increase. In many social activities she is not permitted to mix with other members of the family. Other hand, she has very little share in political, social and economic life of the society.

BEFORE INDEPENDENCE:

Raja Ram Mohan Rai, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar and various other social reformers laid stress on women's education, prevention of child marriage, withdrawals of evil practice of sati, removal of polygamy etc. The National Movement and various reform movements paved the way for their liberations from the social evils and religious taboos. In this context, we may write about the Act of Sati (abolish) 1829, Hindu Widow Remarriage Act' 1856, the Child Restriction Act, 1929, Women Property Right Act, 1937 etc.(Hazarika,2011). [14]

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, Father of the Nation, as a major social and political reformer, played an important role in attempting to eradicate the social wrongs committed against the women of the country through ages. To Gandhi, social emancipation was as critical as political emancipation. Gandhi invoked the instances of ancient role models who were epitomes of Indian women hood like „Draupadi",

„Savitri", „Sita" and „Damayanti" to show that Indian women could never be feeble. Women have equal mental abilities as that of men and an equal right to freedom. According to Gandhi, the three important factors that promote women empowerment are: education, employment and change in social structure. All the three components are equally important and mutually related. It can be said without an idea of doubt that Mahatma Gandhi experimented in all these three fields a century ago and shown the way for the empowerment of women and the improvement of the status of women in the country (Barman, 2013) [15]

The anti-liquor movement of Andhra Pradesh built up gradually in the minds of poor and illiterate women who for long years suffered the ill effects of alcohol consumption by their men folk. For families steeped in poverty, for women who were subject to domestic violence related to alcohol, for wives who had nothing material to lose by rebelling because they had nothing to loose, they fulfilled Gandhi's wish of deciding no longer to be slaves of the situation. "No one can exploit without his or her willing participation" said Gandhi. Gandhi said that women "strengthen my belief in swadeshi and satyagraha....if I could inspire in men devotion as pure as I find in the women, within a year, India would be raised to a height impossible to imagine. As for swaraj it was the easiest thing in the world." Gandhi expected them to do battle from their homes, while still fulfilling their traditional roles. "If we send them to the factories, who will look after our domestic and social affairs? If women go out to work, our social life will be ruined and moral standards will decline." The superior qualities of women and the intrinsic difference between man and woman was something Gandhi kept highlighting. Since he believed that women could bring about swaraj better: women were the very embodiment nonviolence, for him they were greater soldiers and beneficiaries of his

swaraj campaigns. The three famed spearheads of these campaigns were the manufacture of salt, boycott of foreign cloth and shunning of liquor which he said "were specially meant for the villages and the women would benefit especially." In 1930 Mithiben Petit reported to Gandhi that habitual drunkards were enthusiastically breaking earthen jars containing toddy and that thousands of persons in Surat who were given to drinking had started having resolutions passed by their castes prohibiting drinking.(Singh,2014). [16]

AFTER INDEPENDENCE:

After independence of India, the constitution makers and the national leaders recognized the equal social position of women with men. The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 has determined the age for marriage, provided for monogamy and guardianship of the mother and permitted the dissolution of marriage under specific circumstances. Under the Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act, 1956, an unmarried women, widow or divorce of sound mind can also take child in adoption. Similarly, the Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961 says that any person who gives, takes, or abets the giving or taking of dowry shall be punished with imprisonment, which may extend to six months or fine up to Rs.5000/ or with both. The Constitution of India guarantees equality of sexes and in fact grants special favors to women. These can be found in three articles (Article 14;15 and 15(A).

The government of India has ratified various international conventions and human rights instruments committing to secure equal rights to women. These are CEDAW (1993), the Mexico Plan of Action (1975), the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies (! 985), the Beijing Declaration as well as the platform for Action (1995) and other such instruments. The year of 2001 was declared as the year of Women' Empowerment. During the year, a landmark document has been adopted, 'the

National Policy for the empowerment of women.' For the beneficiaries of the women, the government has been adopted different schemes and programs i.e. the National Credit Fund for Women (1993), Food and Nutrition Board (FNB), Information and Mass Education (IMF) etc. (Hazarike, 2011). [17]

Objectives of Empowerment

Empowerment of women is aimed at striving towards acquisition of the following:

1. Higher literacy level and education

2. Better health care for her and her children

 3. Equal ownership of productive resources

4. Increased participation in economic and commercial sectors

5. Awareness of their rights

6. Improved standard of living, and

7. Achieve self-reliance, self-confidence and self-respect amongst women.

During the first 50 years of post independence, the question of bringing women in the forefront to politics, through opportunities and capabilities was being considered time and again. Therefore in depth studies by various social and economic scholars brought to the forefront that women's participation in political decision-making is important. Only towards the end of the 20th century, our planning strategies started talking about women leadership and their empowerment. Further, in terms of government policies and programmes that we have shift the focus from the concept of women development to women participation in the social and political sphere consequently towards women empowerment. Women empowerment refers to the process by which women acquire due recognition on par with men to participate in the development process of the society through the political institutions as a partner with human dignity (Palanithurai, 2001). It is a process of redistribution of resources in the

society in such a way that women get equal access and control over resources (Subha, 2000) [18]

The involvement of women in the development process and political decision making process has always been advocated by social and political thinkers. The Report of the Committee on status of women in India (CSWI: 1974), which is considered as a significant document on the socio-economic conditions of Indian women says, "though women's participation in the political process has increased, their ability to produce an impact on the political process has been negligible because of the inadequate attention paid to their political education and mobilization by both political parties and women organizations. Parties have tended to see women voters as appendages of the males. Among women, the leadership has become diffused and diverse having sharp contradictions with regard to inequalities that affect the status of women in every sphere – social, economic and political."(Sarkar,2004) [19]

2.4 CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS

Article	Description
Article 14	Men and women to have equal rights and opportunities in the political, economic and social spheres.
Article 15(1)	Prohibits discrimination against any citizen on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex etc.
Article 15(3)	Special provision enabling the State to make affirmative discriminations in favour of women.
Article 16	Equality of opportunities in matter of public appointments for all citizens.
Article 39(a)	The State shall direct its policy towards securing all citizens men and women, equally, the right to means of livelihood.
Article 39(d)	Equal pay for equal work for both men and women.
Article 42	The State to make provision for ensuring just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief.
Article 51 (A)(e)	To renounce the practices derogatory to the dignity of women.

Table -2

In fulfillment of this constitutional mandate, several steps have been taken since independence to empower women, including a series of women-specific and women related legislations; creation of national policy level commitments including the National Policy for Empowerment of Women 2001, the National Common Minimum Programme of the UPA government; international commitments such as ratification of the CEDAW convention in 1993 and India's commitments in 2000 to the Millennium Development Goals. (Planning Commission in India (2006)[20]

2.5 WOMEN EMPOWERMENT - FIVE YEAR PLANS IN INDIA:

All the five year plans had been given importance to development of women. The first-five –year plan (1951-56) was welfare oriented. The second five year plan (1956-57 to 1960-61) organised Mahila Mandals for the development of women at grass root levels. The third five year plan (1961-62 to 1965-66) and the fourth five year plan (1969-74) accorded high priority for women education. In the fifth five year plan (1974-79) there was a shift from development to welfare programmes. The sixth five year plan (1980-85) recognized development programmes for women. The seventh five year plan (1985-91) laid stress on upliftment of economic and social status of women. The eighth five year plan (1992-97) envisaged from development to empowerment. The ninth five year plan (1997-2002) included empowerment of women as one of the nine priority objectives. The tenth five year plan (2002-07) emphasized empowerment of women and development of children. The Tenth Five-year Plan (2002-2007) adopted the strategy of women's component plan under which not less than 30 per cent of funds/benefits were earmarked for all the women-related sector's and women specific programmes. The eleventh five year plan (2007-12) enough emphasis has been placed on empowerment of women. The Eleventh Five-year Plan (2007-2012) also undertook steps to further

strengthening of self-help groups and community based organizations for the empowerment of women. Special attention needs to be given to increasing employment opportunities and productive resources of women through special financial intermediaries, building women's competitiveness and increasing economic exchanges among women entrepreneurs. The twelfth five year plan (2012-17) there is a strategic shift in approach towards women's protection.(Planning commission of India,2006).[21]

The concept of empowerment flows from the power. It is vesting where it does not exist or exist inadequately. Empowerment of women would mean equipping women to be economically independent, self-reliant, have positive esteem to enable them to face any difficult situation and they should be able to participate in development activities. The empowered women should be able to participate in the process of decision making. In India, the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD-1985) and the National Commission for Women(NCW) have been worked to(1993) to the constitution of India have provided some special powers to women that for reservation of seats(33%), whereas the report HRD as March2002, shows that thelegislatures with the highest percentage of women are, Sweeden 42.7%, Denmark 38%, Findland 36% and Iceland 34.9%. In India ''The New Panchayati Raj '' is the part of the effort to empower women at least at the village level.

The government of India has ratified various international conventions and human rights instruments committing to secure equal rights to women. These are CEDAW (1993), the Mexico Plan of Action (1975), the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies (!985), the Beijing Declaration as well as the platform for Action (1995) and other such instruments. The year of 2001 was observed as the year of women's

empowerment. During the year, a landmark document has been adopted, 'the National Policy for the empowerment of women.' For the beneficiaries of the women, the government has been adopted different schemes and programs i.e. the National Credit Fund for Women (1993), Food and Nutrition Board (FNB), Information and Mass Education (IMF) etc.

The most positive development last few years has been the growing involvement of women in the Panchayati Raj institutions. There are many elected women representatives at the village council level. At present all over India, there are total 20, 56, 882 laces Gaon panchayat members, out of this women members is 8, 38, 244 (40.48%), while total Anchalik panchayat members is 1, 09, 324, out of this women members is 47, 455, (40.41%) and total Zila porisod members is 11, 708, out of this women members is 4, 923 (42.05%). At the central and state levels too women are progressively making a difference. Today we have seen women chief ministers, women president, different political parties leader, well establish businessmen etc.The most notable amongst these are Mrs.protiva Devi Singh Patil, Shila Dexit,Mayawati, Sonia Gandhi, Binda karat, Nazma Heptulla, Indira Nuye (pepsi-co), BJPleader Susma Soraj, railway minister Momta Benarji, 'Narmada Basao' leader Medhapatekar, Indiand Iron Woman, EX-prime minister Idira Gandhi etc. Women are also involving in human development issues of child rearing, education, health, and gender parity. Many of them have gone into the making and marketing of a range of cottage products-pickles, tailoring, embroidery etc. The economic empowerment of women is being regarded these days as a sine-quo-non of progress for a country; hence, the issue of economic empowerment of women is of paramount importance to political thinkers, social thinkers and reformers.(Hazarika,2012) [22]

2.6 WOMEN EMPOWERMENT - LOCAL BODIES :

The most significant and new feature has been bringing about a certain uniformity regarding representation of the weaker sections. While reservation of seats for scheduled castes and tribes has been written into the constitution from the very outset, the reservation for women is new and the most important contribution of the amendment. According to many analysts, it has brought a critical mass of women to these institutions and holds forth tremendous potential. In 1994 and 1995, the first round of elections to the panchayats was held and nearly one million women entered the threshold of political institutions of local self-government. The second round of elections to the local bodies was concluded in 2000.

What has been the experience of women's participation for the first time in these institutions, both in terms of transforming these institutions and for the women themselves? This will have to be assessed in terms of India's traditional social structure, which is characterized by a socially legitimized hierarchy, based on the caste system, an integral element of which has been gender discrimination. The caste-based social order still holds its sway in India's society and politics, in spite of the fact that the Indian constitution is a democratic constitution which upholds equality of all and forbids discrimination on the basis of caste, class, creed or gender (Raman,2002) [23]

The political empowerment of women and women leadership in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) is crucial not only for the development of women themselves, but also for the availability of their creative potential that is socially important and without which, the country cannot hope for any sustainable development. Till the early 90's India attempted to cater to the requirements of village

communities by a method that required rural folk to be passive recipients of development efforts planned and delivered by people who live elsewhere mostly in urban areas. This suppressed any attempts towards local initiatives while in urban areas the post independence period has witnessed the entry ofwomen in the fields of medicine, administration, science, law and arts.The constitutional amendment altered all this when it provided reservation for women in PRIs.(Smitha,2007) [24]

Politics has been the principal pillar of empowerment. The more the participation of women in politics, the more they can change the modalities and outcomes of politics. Studies on women leadership in Panchayat made by Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA, New Delhi, 1997) have revealed some important findings: (a) Majority of the women are in the age group of 34-45 years; (b) the proportion of unmarried women is negligible; (c) only 20 to 40 percent of the women are literate; (d) Incidence of joint and nuclear families is almost equal; (e) Less than 20 percent of them are heads of the domestic households (f) About 40 percent of the members work in the field; (g) The educational and economic background of the chairpersons are better than the ordinary members; (h) More than 20 percent come from the families of Panchayati Raj members; (i) About 40 percent stood for elections on the insistence of their husbands and 20 percent on that of the Community (Caste) etc. (j) 25 percent notice change in their status in the family after being elected; (k) About 60 percent would like to encourage women to contest in elections; (l) About 60 percent of these elected would contest next elections.(Sarkar,2004) [25]

According to Article 243(B) of the Constitution of India, Gram Sabha is a "body consisting of persons registered in the electoral rolls relating to a village comprised with the area of Panchayat at the village level." The Panchayati Raj (Rule

of Village Committee) system is a three-tier system in the state with elected bodies at the Village, Taluk (Block) and District levels. It ensures greater participation of people and more effective implementation of development programmes in rural areas. Key provisions of the Constitution (73rd Amendment Act)

• The establishment of a three-tier PRI structure, with elected bodies at village, block and district levels (States with populations less than 2 million are not required

to introduce block-level Panchayats);

• The recognition that the Gram Sabha constitutes a deliberative body at the village level;

• Direct elections to five year terms for all members at all levels;

• One-third of all seats are reserved for women; reservations for SCs and STs proportional to their populations;

• Reservations for chairpersons of the Panchayats – Sarpanches – following the same guidelines;

• State legislatures may provide reservations for other backward groups;

• A State Election Commission (SEC) will be created to supervise, organise and oversee Panchayat elections at all levels;

• A State Finance Commission (SFC) will be established to review and revise the financial position of the Panchayats on five-year intervals, and to make recommendations to the State government about the distribution of Panchayat funds.

• At the village level, the most important provisions relating to participation and accountability are those governing reservations and the Gram Sabha. Under the 73rd Amendment one-third of all seats must be reserved for women. Likewise, reservations for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) are made in proportion to their population.(ICRW,2012) [26]

Recent studies on women's participation in the PRIs have highlighted the following dimensions.

1. Women have responded overwhelmingly and participated with full enthusiasm in the elections and in the proceedings of the PRIs, thus exploding the myth that women were uninterested in politics and public life. There is a near-unanimous opinion amongst the women that they would have been unable to get into these bodies were it not for statutory representation.

2. While there is a great degree of variation across the different states in the country, nonetheless one generalization can be made — approximately about 40 per cent of the women who have got into these bodies come from marginalized sections and communities, though the positions of chairpersons tended to be occupied by women from the more well-to-do sections of rural society, like well-off middle peasant families.

3. The women representatives generally got the support of the families during the elections and also in the performance of their new political roles. Marginalized sections like the scheduled castes and tribes saw the women from their groups as representatives of the interests of their group in the political arena, while the better-off sections saw the women from their own groups as helping to consolidate their positions.

4. The self-esteem of the women has gone up tremendously, and that is an observation that holds true across the board. The stepping of women into the public realm has long-term implications for gender relations in society and the family. There are

77

already small but significant changes as men take over some roles within the family when women go to attend meetings.

5. While the presence of women in these institutions over the last eight to nine years has not transformed the power structure in the rural areas in any significant manner, and vested interests have tried to use the provision for women's reservation to consolidate their position, the overall experience has been positive. Thus women are engaging in power struggles that used to be dominated by men, sometimes as actors and at other times as pawns. However, participation in the public realm for women means that hitherto marginalized groups and communities are finding a legitimate space to articulate their interests and aspirations, and the women of these groups are getting politicized, although slowly. (Buch,1999) [27]

2.7 WOMEN EMPOWERMENT - ANDHRAPRADESH :

The composition of Gram Panchayats in Andhra Pradesh is governed by the Andhra Pradesh Gram Panchayats Act, 1964 as amended time to time. Andhra Pradesh Mandal Praja Parishad, Zilla Praja Parishad and Zilla Abhivrudhi Sameeksha Mandal Act, 1986 had a provision for reservation of minimum of two and a maximum of four seats for women in Gram Panchayats and some percentage in Mandal Praja Parishad and Zilla Praja Parishad. Some percentage of the posts of Chairperson of the Zilla Parishad were also reserved for women. As a result of the 73 rd Amendment a large number of women belonging to different castes and communities have been elected as members and chairpersons in the Panchayats. Although the Act has mandated one third reservation for women as members as well as chairpersons at different tiers of the Panchayats, in Andhra Pradesh, women have captured more than one third seats. The representation of women at this level has been 33.84 percent. In

Andhra Pradesh, the visibility of women in decision making positions has been ensured by the protective discrimination measures. There are about 73513 women members at G.P. level, 4776 at MP level and 361 at ZP level. The post Amendment phase in Andhra Pradesh has proved beyond doubt that women in Panchayati Raj moved from peripheral to leadership role. However, a Ford Foundation-sponsored study in the District of Kurnool in Andhra Pradesh mentions that a large number ofelected members of the local bodies especially women are not actively participating in the meetings of the Panchayats(Ddevendra,1998) [28]

Although women constitute nearly half the population, their representation in political bodies and decision-making structures is not commensurate with their numbers. The 73rd and 74th amendments of the Indian Constitution have provided for 33 per cent representation for women in local bodies which include Zilla Parishad, Mandal Parishad and village panchayat. Even when women are elected to local bodies there are instances where they are not allowed to exercise their official powers. Men exercise de facto control, in the name of the elected women, usually their wives. But political representation has certainly become a first step for women to gain political power. There are also instances in local elections of 2000-02 when 6.2 percent of women were elected for unreserved seats at the Zilla Paridhad level, 10 percent for the posts of Chairpersons and 5 percent at the ward members level (State Election Commission, 2000-02).[29]

2.8 SUMMARY

The salient feature of this chapter is that it throws much light on participation of women a process through which they influence and share control over development initiatives, and the decisions and resources which affect them. Moreover,

participation and empowerment are deeply complementary and can be considered means and ends, processes and outcomes. On the other hand, empowerment is the process of increasing women's ability to manage their own lives through increased access to key resources and activities. Various definitions were analyzed and portrayed to drive home that empowerment is the hinge on which democracy depends. Various dimensions of empowerment were also discussed at length giving more space to political empowerment. The role of women from ancient to modern times was also presented systematically, with special reference to constitutional provisions as well as five year plans. As empowerment flows from the power, the role of women representation in local bodies was explored with a cursory glance at Andhra Pradesh.

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