CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

Preview:

This chapter provides a prelude to the interestingly growing phenomenon of women's representation in local bodies. It also introduces the concept of women empowerment in Medak District of Andhra Pradesh State. The last part of the chapter is devoted to the significance, the need; review of related literature; the objectives, hypotheses; operational definitions; as well as the delimitations of the present investigation. The chapter ends with Chapterization and summary.

1.0 INTRODUCTION :

Recent decades have witnessed growing demands for the inclusion and *empowerment of women* and minorities in elected office. Feminist theorists suggest that the presence of women leaders facilitates the articulation of different perspectives on political issues, where elected representatives are not just 'standing as' women but also 'acting for' women as a group (Phillips, 1995, 1998; Mansbridge, 1999). An accumulating body of evidence suggests that, while not transforming parliaments, women legislators do raise distinctive concerns and issue priorities (Duerst-Lahti and Kelly, 1995; Karvonnen and Selle, 1995; Dolan, 1997; Swers, 1998, 2001; Tremblay, 1998; Reingold, 2000; Tremblay and Pelletier, 2000; Carroll, 2001). The inclusive democracy proposes that all citizens should have the same opportunity to *participate in political affairs* regardless of gender, race and other identities. Therefore the entry of women into political institutions is an issue of equality. According to Karen Ross (2002) the demand for greater rights for women including political rights has been at the forefront of many women's agenda for at

least three hundred years with campaigning treatises by women such as Mary Wollstonecraft (1792) and Abigail Adams (L. H. Butterfield, ed. 1778) throwing down an early gauntlet for equality (Rai, 2005).[1]

Gandhiji believed that women have to play a much meaningful role in politics, making it more accountable, transparent and corruption free. Writing in Harijan on 21 April 1946, he emphasized the need to ''enroll women as voters, impart or have imparted to them practical education, teach them to think independently, release them from the chains of caste that bind them so as to bring about a change in them...If they will do this, they will purify the present unclean atmosphere." He prophetically said, "as long as the women of India do not take part in public life, there can be no salvation for the country (Gandhi, 1946).[2]

Suheela Kaushik (1993) lamented that even after the right to vote became a reality for all women, their representation parliament, political parties and decision making bodies remained low even after independence and after the Indian Constitution came into force in 1950 .[3]

The UNDP Human Development Report identifies four basic forms of participation for empowerment of women.

1) Household Participation: Women's involvement in decision-making at home is the first step towards empowerment.

2) Economic Participation: Women's economic empowerment act as a base for political empowerment.

3) Social and Cultural Participation: Women preserve the culture of land and their presence can lead to effective solution of social problems.

4) Political Participation: Democracy becomes meaningful with effective participation of women in decision-making (Nair, 2012) [4]

The term '*political participation*' refers 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. These activities include casting votes, seeking information, holding discussions, attending meetings, staging strikes and demonstrations, communicating with the legislators and the like. According to Herbert Mc. Closky, "Participation is the principal means by which consent is granted or withdrawn in a democracy and the rulers are made accountable to the ruled." Political philosophers like J.S.Mill, Rousseau and Bentham have strongly advocated the need for participation of people in different spheres of political life. (Gochhayat, 2013).[5]

The classic study of political participation by Nie and Verba (1972) defines it as those legal activities by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and/or the actions they take.. A broader definition is provided by Parry, Mosley and Day (1992: 16) who define it as .taking part in the process of formulation passage and implementation of public policies.. The main concern is in action by citizens aimed at influencing decisions taken mainly by public representatives and officials. Political participation is more associated with representative democracy and indirect participation (Richardson, 1983; Cunill, 1991). It expresses itself in individual and collective actions that include mainly voting, campaigning, contacting, group action and protest. All oriented towards influencing the representatives in government, rather than active and direct participation in the process of governance itself (Gaventa, 1999) [6]

The roots of women's participation in contemporary politics can be traced back to the nineteenth century with the beginning of the reform movement and even beyond it. The mythical history of India as handed down by the major epics the Ramayana and the Mahabharata and Indian history at large has given women a prominent role in public life. The nineteenth movement emerged as a result of conflict between the Indian bourgeoisies trying to wrest control from the British.

In the early 1850s a campaign on widow remarriage was launched resulting in the passage of a bill in 1856 which allowed widow remarriage but denied them the right to their husbands or his family's property. Several eminent women reformers were a part of this movement including Pandita Ramabai, women preachers such as Manorama Majumdar and Mai Bhagwati. Recognizing the need for more than just a widow remarriage bill, Swarna Kumari Debi started a women's organization, Sakhi Samiti in 1886 for widows to become self-reliant while also spreading women's education. She was also one of the two delegates elected from Bengal to represent the state at the 1890 Congress session. Sarala Debi Goshal another social reformer started Bharat Stree Mahamandal for the education of women.

The Swadeshi movement in Bengal (1905-8) marked the beginning of women's participation in nationalist activities on a larger scale. Many women were from families involved in nationalist politics. Middle class women contributed jewelry, money and even grain to the movement. They took active part in non-cooperative activities against the British such as the boycott of foreign goods. Thousands of women joined in the salt Satyagraha, which is "generally remembered as the first time 'masses of Indian women' got involved in the struggle for Independence" (Kumar 1995, p. 78). Several women's

organizations were formed to mobilize women to participate in nationalist activities including processions, pickets, charka spinning and so on such as the Ladies Picketing Board, Desh Sevika Sangh, Nari Satyagraha Samiti and Mahila Rashtriya Sangh. Sister Nivedita is reported to have become a member of the National Revolutionary Council and in that capacity, organized women for nationalist activities. Like her, there were several others seen as a threat by the British including Agyavati in Delhi, Madame Cama who was described by them as the recognized leader of the revolutionary movement and Kumudini Mitra who started a journal called Suprabath which linked nationalist politics to women's traditional power. Madame Cama, a Parsi woman nationalist, persuaded the International Socialist Congress to support the Indian independence movement and also began a monthly journal called Bande Mataram towards this end.

Women who were strong leaders in the Independence movement were Sarojini Naidu, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, Aruna Asaf Ali, and Basanti Devi. A strong supporter of women's rights, Sarojini Naidu worked with the Congress and the Muslim League. She was instrumental in the passage of a resolution to support women's franchise and became the first Indian woman to become the elected President of the Indian national Congress.

Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay participated in the Satyagraha movement of the 1930s.Aruna Asaf Ali's first major political involvement was in the Salt March at which she was arrested and prosecuted. She was active in the quit India movement, edited Inquilab magazine of the Congress and established the National Federation of Indian Women. She came to be known as the Grand Old Lady of the Independence Movement and heroine of the1942 movement. Basanti Devi took active part in anti-British activities

and was arrested for picketing foreign goods shops, and in 1922 presided over the Bengal Provincial Congress committee. Several women were active in this period on causes other than the Independence movement including Prabhavati Mirza (a powerful trade unionist), Kamini Roy (a social reformist), and Aghorekamini Roy (stared a social welfare women's organization).

The 1920s also witnessed a second generation of feminists advocating for women's rights including Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Lady Piroj Bai Mehta, Mrs. N.Sengupta. A number of these reformist and revolutionaries women were also writers including Nagendrakala Mustafi, Mankumari Basu, Kamini Roy, Kasibhai Kanitkar, Mary Bhore, Godavaribai Samaskar, Kamala Sathianandan, Rameshwari Nehru, Roopkumari Nehru, Parvatibai and Rukmanibai. During 1910-20, several all-India women's organizations came into being. In 1917 the Women's Indian Association was founded by Malathi Patvardhan, Ammu Swaminathan, Annie Besant, Dorothy Jinarajadasa, Mrs. Dadabhoy and Mrs. Ambujamal. Described asthe first truly feminist organization in India, it strongly supported the Home Rule Movement. In 1926, the All India Women's Conference was formed and became extremely active on the question of women's suffrage, labour issues, relief work and nationalist work.

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Women's participation was noteworthy in the 1948-50 Telangana movement (a militant sharecropper's movement). Thousands of women were active in strikes and rallies. The movement itself paid unusual attention to women's issues such as wife beating. However, women leaders who did take the lead in the guerilla movement that followed felt isolated and had to fight to get in. In the second wave of this movement, however, women were far more active. (Sangeetha,2000) 7

WOMEN- POLITICS-OBSTACLES

Historically many women have been active in the informal political sphere in terms of political mobilization and they have participated in large numbers in political demonstrations and agitations as well as in the activities of nationalist and political bodies and organizations. The political mobilization and participation has been impressive in the Indian National Movement particularly under Gandhiji's leadership when they participated actively in the cause against colonization for e.g. Civil Disobedience Movements and Salt Satyagraha. Political participation in India can be traced to the freedom struggle when women raised the issues of representation in politics. Sarojini Naidu and Margaret Cousins raised the question of right to vote for women as early as in 1917. At that time it was basically a demand for universal adult franchise and political participation. BY 1930 women had gained the Right to Vote, which initially benefited women from elite families.

The impediments faced by women entering politics can be classified as follows:

a) **Familial Factors**:

The primary area of subordination is the family where the patriarchal values are enforced and where the control over women's person-hood is really questioned. Women in the family are viewed as liabilities because of which gender based discrimination in all dimensions of their lives prevails. This is reflected in alarming proportion of violence against women within the family in the form of female feticide, infanticide, malnourshishment, dropouts, neglects and deprivation through limited access to resources. Milbrath and Goel (1977) observed that is a tradition in almost all societies that politics is mainly as affair of men and that women should fall in line with them politically. Support from other family members to play a dominant role in the public domain is not forthcoming and the only time they do so is when they have complete control over the women. This control takes the form of families only supporting women to get elected in order to keep the position in the family but they refuse to help her participate in the daily task of political processes. Women having young children in the family do not get the support that can free them to participate in activities outside the home. Young and unmarried women have more restrictions placed on their participation because of the control exercise on their sexuality. At the personal level, due to the socialization process, reinforcing her subordinate position, private and public dichotomy results is lack of self-esteem and confidence in women and the internalization of these value systems. This is one of the biggest hurdles to their development and participation in public life and activities.

b) **Literacy**:

Literacy on the one hand is linked to women's socio-economic status and on the other hand, her status as a woman has an independent and equally strong implication for her access to this realm. Illiteracy can also act as a barrier towards getting elected. Very often literate women are typically from the more privileged backgrounds. These results in the poor women not being able to represent their communities and not even being able to relate easily to the more privileged women who are in power. Illiteracy therefore is one of the key elements, which impedes women's empowerment and more especially her political empowerment. Unless importance is given to the education of the girl child and adult literacy, women will not to be able to access the opportunities created for them. Lack of literacy skills affects herself confidence and impedes her effective participation in politics. Such women would not be able to enjoy their right as elected representatives and demands for resources and participation in decision making.

c) **Character Assassination**:

Patriarchal values relegate women to the home. By the very nature of this value system, any woman bold enough to come out in the open and into politics is viewed with suspicion. It is natural that she is particularly targeted for slander and character assassination. It is always her sexuality that is first questioned. Furthermore, when a woman in power becomes a political threat her being a woman is used against her in the entering politics or being visible in politics.

d) **Lack of Interaction**:

Women have entered the political arena in large numbers at the level of local self-governance through the enactment of the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments.

Sharing of experience and struggles of elected women is lacking between themselves and among those at the different tiers. This is due to division on party lines and on caste/ class identities. The bonding and solidarity building is almost non-existent. There is lack of interaction between women at the State and National level politics and those holding positions at the lower levels of governance. The absence of elected women's interaction both horizontally and vertically reduces their unity in representing the women's agendas.

e) **Reservations**:

33% reservation has been provided to women in local self government. However, this reservation quota is misinterpreted to imply that women can contest only 33% seats and not against the general seats. This interpretation by the vested interest groups has limited women from exercising their right to contest beyond the reserved quota. The policy of rotation reservation of the constituencies for women and other reserved categories in local self-governance has proved to be detrimental to the enjoyment of their right to political participation.

f) **Multiple Roles**:

Women typically are forced to play a multiple role when they enter politics, namely they to work at home, in their jobs and in the political institutions. Since, it is hard for a woman to sustain this multiple burden, it can pose as a barrier to her political work or her political work can interfere with her work at home or in her vocation. There are no mechanisms to reduce the burden of women in fulfilling their domestic responsibilities. It has been observed that powerful men in the community field candidates who are inarticulate and inexperienced thereby defeating the very purpose of the reservation policy for women.

g) **Threats**:

Women who have entered the political process are faced with a lot of resistance. There are many instances where they have been subjected to physical violence, threats and intimidation. This has especially occurred when elected women representatives aspired to be articulate, assertive and effective in discharging their responsibilities (Nair,2012) [8]

1.1 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

Empowerment has become a fashionable and buzz word. It essentially means decentralization of authority and power. It aims at getting participation of deprived sections of people in decision-making process. In other words, *giving voice to voiceless*. Activists want government to empower poor people including women by legislative measures and welfare programmes. Empowerment is the process by which the disempowered or powerless people can change their circumstances and begin to have control over their lives. It results in a change in the balance of power, in the living conditions and in the relationships. Unless capacity is built in these sections in reality the power is used by others rather than the section for which they are meant.

Women empowerment may mean equal status to women, opportunity and freedom to develop herself. The focus of empowerment is equipping women to be economically independent, self-reliant, have a positive self-esteem to enable them to face any difficult situation and they should be able to participate in the process of decision-making. is 'power': it is power to 'access', 'control' and make 'informed choices'. To use an Indian expression, it is *shakti*, which is manifested through the use of a mix of power, effectiveness, capability, force and influence to challenge and transform the structures and institutions of patriarchal ideology and existing power relations. According to the

Jakarta Declaration, "Empowerment of women is not only an equity consideration; it is also a necessary precondition for sustainable economic and social development. Involvement of women in the political arena and in decision-making roles is an important tool for empowerment as well as monitoring standards of political performance." (Kuldeep,2012).[9]

During the past two decades, concepts like 'participation', 'community-based action', 'empowerment' and their varied interpretations have also been transforming the discourses, frameworks and practices of development (Chambers, 1997; Gujit and Shah, 1998; Cornwall, 2000; Parpart et al, 2000). In the context of globalization and resurgence of grassroots movements, conventional development strategies are giving way to more participatory approaches that are recognizing the involvement of those who have suffered systematic and systemic inequalities and deprivations as 'partners' in development. The processes of genuine participation with their goals of social inclusion and societal transformation essentially aim at handing over the control of natural and shared resources to the marginalized people and empowering them with skills and confidence to have a say in decision-making over their circumstances (Chambers, 1997; Gujit and Shah, 1998). This paradigmatic shift towards participatory development appears to offer prospects of giving everyone who has a stake a voice and a choice. In reality, the legacy of a highly unequal and hierarchical society, the embedded notions of gender and power and the ideology of male superiority affects women's options to intervene in discussions or participate in any decision making process (Cornwall, 2000) (Vinod,2005) [10]

As put forth by Wieringa (1994), empowerment-speak refers to a broad range of conceptualizations. It is dispersed and applied through numerous ideologies, movements

and technologies across the globe, responding to continually evolving meanings, interpretations, strategies and stakeholders. The fact that a centralized definition is absent from the discourse is partially a reflection of these diversities; it also speaks to the salient nature of empowerment to a wide variety of issues. Approaches to women's empowerment alternately posit powerlessness as an issue of economic disadvantage (Elson, 1999), of material impoverishment (Moser, 1993), as an issue of access to education (Gleason, 2001) or health care (Wallerstein, 1994), etc. The conditions apparent in disempowering situations may be framed within a human rights discourse (Sen et al., 1994), as an outcome of structural violences (Farmer, 2003) or as a question of human security deficits (Hampson, 2004) (Bilkis Vissandjee et al,2005).[11]

Empowerment is often conceptualized as a process (Cueva Beteta 2006; Kabeer 2001; Malhotra and Schuler 2005) which not only visualize but helps to have control over their resources and ideology, greater self-confidence and an inner transformation of one's consciousness to overcome external affairs. Thus an active and multidimensional process to recognize the full potential of the women which would increase the women's ability to shape her and her community is women empowerment (Rai, 2012)[12]

Most of the works on women's empowerment start with it is important to clarify what is implied by empowerment'in this article', clearly reflecting the deferring views on empowerment (Kabeer, 2005). Different scholars hold different definition of empowerment according to the need of their work. In fact many of them value it because of its fuzziness, which gives them breathing space to work it out in action (Alkire, 2007). The literature contains a whole range of vantage points for investigating women's empowerment, like, autonomy (Dyson & Moore 1983; Basu & Basu 1991; Jeejebhoy &

Sathar 2001), agency and status (Gage 1995; Tzannatos, 1999), women's land rights (Quisumbing *et al*., 1999), domestic economic power (Mason, 1998), bargaining power (Beegle *et al*., 1998; Hoddinott & Haddad 1995; Quisumbing & de la Briere 2000), power (Agarwal, 1997; Beegle *et al*., 1998; Pulerwitz *et al*. 2000), patriarchy (Malhotra *et al*., 1995), gender equality (World Bank, 2001a & 2000b). Often there is no clear demarcation between operational meanings of these terms in terms of women's empowerment. Mason (1998) and Mason and Smith (2000) treat empowerment, autonomy, and gender stratification interchangeably (Tripati, 2002)

Women Empowerment- Global Perspective

Women's Empowerment as a phenomenon is not something absolutely new. It has been there throughout history in almost all societies for a variety of reasons. (Fadia, 2014).French revolution of 1789 inspired the women of the world. Clara Zetkin was the first woman to fight for the equal rights of women. Since the historic Paris Commune of 1871, Women started fighting for their respectable places in the society. The three slogans of French revolution (Liberty, Equality and Fraternity) became a mantra (slogan) for women.

The first ever world conference on women was held in Mexico in 1975 to address the issue of gender inequality. It was followed by a second world conference on women at Copenhagen in 1980 and a third in Nairobi in 1985. At the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janiero (1992), world leaders accepted women's vital role in achieving sustainable development. At the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna (1993), governments acknowledged that women's rights are human and headed the evidence of widespread violence against women. At the

International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo (1994), women's empowerment was recognised as a cornerstone for effective population policies. At the World Conference for Social Development in Copenhagen (1995), gender equality was recognised as a prerequisite for the achievement of productive employment, social integration and poverty eradication. The fourth world conference on women took place in Beijing in September 1995 followed by Beijing + 5 held in Geneva in 2000 and Beijing + 10: 49th Session of the Commission on the status of women was held 28 February to 11 March, 2005.

Constitutional Provisions

Adoption of Indian Constitution heralded a new era of equality for women of India. It guarantees equal political rights including the right to vote to women. Also, almost all the provisions contained in the UN Convention on the 'Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women' are enshrined in the Indian Constitution. Not only does the Constitution guarantee equal political status to women, there is even a scope for 'positive discrimination' in their favour as is evident in Article 15(3) of the Constitution. There are many other provisions in the Constitution which lay stress on equality between men and women. Article 14 provides for equality before law. Article 39(a), states that the State shall direct its policy towards securing equally to men and women the right to an adequate means of livelihood, and 39(d) enjoins the State to direct its policy towards securing equal pay for equal work for both men and women. Article 42 provides for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief and Article 51(A) (e) refers to the fundamental duty of citizens to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women (Rajya Sabha, 2008).[13]

Participation of Women in Politics

Historically many women have been active in the informal political sphere in terms of political mobilization and they have participated in large numbers in political demonstrations and agitations as well as in the activities of nationalist and political bodies and organizations. The political mobilization and participation has been impressive in the Indian National Movement particularly under Gandhiji's leadership when they participated actively in the cause against colonization for e.g. Civil Disobedience Movements and Salt Satyagraha.

Political participation in India can be traced to the freedom struggle when women raised the issues of representation in politics. Sarojini Naidu and Margaret Cousins raised the question of right to vote for women as early as in 1917. At that time it was basically a demand for universal adult franchise and political participation. BY 1930 women had gained the Right to Vote, which initially benefited women from elite families (Nair, 2012) [14]

Reservation for Women in Local Bodies - Encouraging trends

In India numerous steps have been undertaken to provide constitutional safeguards and institutional framework for activities for women welfare. The development of women has been the central focus in development planning since Independence. There have been various shifts in policy approaches during the last 40 years from the concept of 'welfare' in the 70s to 'development' in the '80s, and now to 'empowerment' in the '90s and afterwards. Now the emphasis is on the inclusion of women in decision making and their participation at the policy formulation levels. The

Government of India has declared the year 2001 as year for the Empowerment of Women.

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 (73rd Amendment 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 (Nanditha,2014). [15]

The Constitution's 110th Amendment Bill 2009 provides reservation for women from 33 per cent to 50 per cent in PRIs. The Bill seeks to amend the Article 243D to enhance the quantum of reservation for women from one-third to one-half of the total seats in the panchayats. This, indeed, makes a historic beginning for the effective participation of women in the decision-making process at the grassroots level. In the elections to these local bodies, more than one million women were have been elected every five years. In 2006, 9,75,116 women were elected to Gram Panchayats; 58,094 women to Panchayats at Intermediate level; and 5779 women to Panchayats at the District level.7 It is but natural that a larger number of women have participated in these elections and this signifies a very encouraging trend for women's empowerment. Though

it has taken time for women to translate their numerical strength into active participation in the rural and semi-urban areas, the results have been truly astounding.

Before reservation, the percentage of women in this area was merely 4.5 per cent, which after reservation has gone upto 40 per cent. As per the *Fifteenth Anniversary Charter on Panchayati Raj*, "Today more than 26 lakh representatives stand elected to the three levels of Panchayats. Of these, over 10 lakh are women. The last fifteen years of Panchayati Raj, have thus succeeded in empowering marginalized groups who have gained political representation and valuable experience. Many of them have successfully taken on the challenge of governance and brought about enduring social change through their close links with the community.'' Women have prioritized issues of health; education and access to basic services and in some cases have been able to ensure a significant change in living conditions for the entire community. The efforts and work of several women representatives in Panchayats in Maharashtra, Gujarat and West Bengal have been widely acclaimed (Rajya Sabha,2008).[16]

1.2 NEED FOR THE STUDY :

Many scholars have justified the increased role of women in politics. Phillips (1993) suggests four fundamental justifications for expanding the role of women in the democratic process: democratic justice, maximization of resources, to represent the special interests of women and as role models. Including all these, Ross (2002) adds two more justifications or arguments: utility and symbolic arguments. Hence it can be argued that representation in decision making bodies is believed to be essential for women to protect the expansion of their rights and opportunities by enshrining them in laws and

constitutions. So women are demanding special provisions to enable women to be elected or appointed to high level decision making positions, and promoting the idea that 30% of membership is necessary to provide a critical mass that would allow significant changes in policies and procedures. In such special provisions much attention has been given to one particular step the introduction of quotas for women in political bodies (Rai,2012)[17]

According to Dahlerup (2002) there are eight major arguments for supporting the system of quotas.

• Quotas for women do not discriminate, but compensate for actual barriers that prevent women from their fair share of political seats.

• Quotas imply that there are several women together in a committee or assembly, thus minimizing the stress often experienced by the token women.

• Women have the right as citizens to equal representation.

• Women's experiences are needed in political life.

• Election is about representation, not qualifications.

• Women are just as qualified as men, but women's qualifications are downgraded and minimized in a male dominated system.

• It is in fact the political parties that control the nominations, not primarily the voters who decide who gets elected.

• Introducing quotas may cause conflicts, but only temporarily.

Phillips (1995) was of the view that the basis of representation should be shifted from ―politics of ideas to ―politics of presence. She offers four key arguments for politics of presence which are: the significance of symbolic recognition, the requirement

to tackle those exclusions inherent in the party-packaging of political ideas, the need for a more strong support for disadvantaged groups and the importance of a politics of transformation in opening up a full range of policy options. This concept holds that political representative should display the characteristics such as gender, race etc., of members of underrepresented groups in order to counter the partiality against them. In this way electoral gender quotas are aligned with a politics of presence. But several other studies reveal that reservation itself cannot bring empowerment of women unless there is a positive change in the social structure and mind-set of the people (Anne, 1995) [18]

Myths about Women in Panchayats.

i. Women's passivity and disinterest in political institutions - where are so many women to contest elections, etc.;

ii. Only the well to do, upper strata women will come through reservations;

iii. Their political connectivity - only privileged kins-women of powerful politicians will enter these institutions to keep the seats for them;

iv. Women who have entered the panchayats are only proxy and namesake members. They do not participate in the panchayats (Buch, 2000) .[19]

1.3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE :

The study of related literature is of prime importance in any type of scientific research. This helps the researcher to know how much work has already been done, if the specific field related to the problem, under investigation. This also provides necessary knowledge and insight into the methods having been employed for collection, analysis and interpretation of the data.

The researcher has made an attempt to review the research work coming under the purview of this research problem. However, to cut short and put the survey precisely, the salient features of outstanding research works conducted are illustrated chronologically as follows:

Pai (1998) [20] *'Pradhanis in New Panchayats'* revealed that many of the Pradhanis were illiterates and only able to put their signatures on official papers. Regarding their roles, the study revealed that they were almost insignificant in the functioning of Gram and Block Panchayat bodies. As they belonged to better off families in the villages, they do not work outside their homes. They agreed to stand for elections due to family pressure and also the decision of their community and not because they were keen to do so. The reservations provided by the Government had forced them to contest elections; provision of reservation has not led them to participate in decision-making in local bodies.

Nirmala Buch (2000) [21]*Women's Experience in New Panchayats: The Emerging Leadership of Rural Women.* This paper presents some of the findings of our recent study on women's representation and participation in panchayats and is in three parts. In the first part we briefly recapture the steps taken in India from time to time for revitalisation of panchayats. In the second part we see the evolution of representation of women in these institutions in colonial and postcolonial India. We then discuss some of the findings of our study (Buch; 1999) of women in panchayats after the amendment in 1992 mandating a minimum one-third representation to women in all panchayats in the country. The study captures their experience and impact in three northern states of MP, Rajasthan and UP. The study explores various aspects, including the newly elected

women's socio- economic profile, motivation to enter these institutions, awareness and knowledge, participation, performance, constraints, aspirations, supports of various social institutions and the community members' perception about their impact and performance.

Stephen F.Rajeshekeran N(2001) [22] *Sheep and lambs: an empirical study of women in local self governance in Karnataka*. This book provides an in-depth and comprehensive analysis of the impact of the reservation of seats for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions in Karnataka, India. It seeks to analyse the constraints that prevent women from effectively participating in the process of local governance and the achievements of women gram panchayat (GP) members in Belgaum, Raichur, Dharwad, Shimoga, Chitradurga, Tumkur and Hassan districts of Karnataka state. The total sample size consisted of 680 trained and 124 untrained members. The research was conducted between June 1998 and December 1998. The study reveals that even though there existed reservation for women, only half of them contested elections at the GP level against their will. They were dependent on men-presidents, spouses or sons due to their illiteracy, and very few female members could identify the problems/needs of the people. The findings of the study indicate that reservation coupled with participation training could equip the women to assert their civic and political rights. Most of the constraints and blocks are different facets of the politics of recognition, i.e., cultural dominance of the elites and distributive injustice in the institutional set-up. It throws light on how the women members combine survival politics with identity politics in the context of the reservation of seats for women in the local self governance structures.

Nambiar (2001) [23]in her study of '*Making the Gram Sabha Work'* noted the difference utilities in organizing the Gram Sabha. Majority of women reported that they were not informed or invited to the meetings, while other were hesitant in participating in meetings in the presence of a large number of elder members. However, they have to forego their day's wages or household duties just to identify beneficiaries as to convey what the gram Panchayat would do in future.

E. Bryld (2001) [24] *Increasing Participation in Democratic Institutions Through Decentralization: Empowering Women and Scheduled Castes and Tribes Through Panchayat Raj in Rural India*. This article discloses the potential and the pitfalls of increasing participation through decentralization by analyzing the Indian Panchayat Raj system. It is shown how technocratic regulations are not sufficient to ensure genuine empowerment for all in democratic decision-making. The question whether decentralization can be justified as one of the main means to development remains to be resolved.

Vijayalakshmi,V and Chandrashekar B.K (2002). [25] *Authority, powerlessness and dependence.* Affirmative action has enabled the representation of women in panchayats and enhanced their political status in local government. While they now possess authority through being incumbents of elective positions, this has not been translated into power. Gender and other social differences hinder the exercise of power by women representatives, and have reduced their effectiveness as political representatives. Thus, what is required is an alternative conception of power which is centered not on the position but on the individual.

Vasanthi Raman (2002) [26] *The Implementation of Quotas for Women:The Indian Experience.* The paper attempts to situate the discussion of reservation (quotas) for women both in the wider historical and contemporary context of reservation for the historically disadvantaged groups in India. The paper also examines the contemporary experience of one-third reservation for women in the local self-governing bodies (panchayats and municipalities) which has been constitutionally mandated by the 73rd and 74th Amendment of the Indian Constitution, which came into effect in 1994. And finally we attempt to examine and analyse the different positions on the current demand for onethird reservation for women in the assemblies at the state level and in the Union Parliament, through the Eighty-Fourth Amendment Bill, which is due for discussion in the parliament. The paper focuses on political reservations, since it is this that has been at the forefront of policy and debates both among policy-makers and the women's movement.

Neema Kudva (2003) [27] *Engineering Elections: The Experiences of Women in* Panchayati Raj *in Karnataka.* Engineering elections through gender quotas is a crucial component of strategies that seek to empower women through increased participation in the political system. In the south Indian state of Karnataka, this experiment has seen mixed results: it has made women more visible, decreased levels of corruption in *Panchayati Raj* institutions, and increased self-efficiency of women representatives. It is more difficult, however, to claim a substantive change in institutional priorities and state accountability. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) often provide significant training and support in successful cases. Engineering elections thus highlights possibilities for change through increased participation by women.

Nahar, U.R. et al. (2003). [28]*Women and panchayati Raj Jodhpur*. The present study investigated the social background of women in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), awareness about the structure and functions of PRIs and the socio-cultural constraints faced by women, while no gender discrimination in panchayats was mentioned by 60% of the elected women representatives, acceptability in panchayat meetings and enabling them to raise issues freely was mentioned by 94% women members. The performance of women representatives who belonged to the younger age category (21-35 years) was better than those who were above 35 years. Educated women representatives showed a significant positive correlation with better performance than those who were illiterate. It was suggested that younger and educated women should be encouraged to join politics. 43% of the women elected did not receive any training. Hence training should not only be made mandatory for all elected representatives, but it should also be organized regularly. Women can become better performers by virtue of being politically more aware and experienced, thus effort should be made not only to maintain the representation of women in politics in terms of their percentage, but also their ability in politics.

Singh, Surat. (2004) [29]*Empowerment of women representatives in Panchayati Raj : a profile from Haryana.* This study conducted in 2003 in Haryana, investigated the socio-economic and political background of elected women representatives in Panchayati Raj Institutions, the extent of knowledge and awareness about Panchayati Raj System; and their role in the decision making process. More than 80% womenwere not aware of the clause for 33% reservation for women in Panchayat, but all of them were aware of their 5 year term. 61% respondents were not aware of the quorum required for meetings. 80% women members were not aware of the taxes imposed by Panchayats, and 86% was

unaware of the schemes implemented by Panchayat s. About 80% participants were not aware of rural development schemes like SGRY and the funds received under this scheme. The reasons for their low level of awareness were dependence on their husbands, lack of interest, illiteracy and lack of training, etc.

Pragya Rai (2005) [30]*Political Representation and Empowerment: Women in Local Government Institutions in Bihar, India*. This is a study of women representatives in local government institutions in Bihar through qualitative methods, with the purpose to understand the link between women empowerment and gender quotas. The result of the present study shows that the reservation for women can be an important impetus to women's empowerment in India on village level but it is not a guarantee for participation of the elected women.

Vinod P ; Kanchan Kumar and J.R.ceeli (2005) [31] *Community Media and Women: Forging Subaltern Counter Publics*. The paper begins by examining the intersections of development frameworks and feminist theorizing, and how they have been influenced by debates and critiques of globalization. The two main feminist development frameworks -Women in Development (WID) and Gender and Development (GAD) - are analyzed to highlight the gender mainstreaming practices stirred by them, especially those that address issues of regional and cultural differences. The second part of the paper discusses how the recent approaches to development have moved away from their preoccupation with top-down economic growth and towards social and participatory development practices that are more inclusive. The aim of these approaches seems to be enlargement of people's choices and human capabilities.

Irma Clots-Figueras (2005)[32]*Did Women Politicians Reduce the Educational Gender Gap? Evidence from the Indian Districts.* This paper examines this issue for the case of India, where literacy rates are still low and gender differentials in education are very high. In particular, it studies whether the gender and caste of politicians had an impact on the educational gender gap in the district they were elected. The fact that different cohorts living in different districts were exposed to different politicians when young allows me to combine NSS survey data with political data at the district level from 1967-2001. It was found that women politicians target people from their own gender and caste in policymaking, by reducing the educational gender gap only for those who are like themselves.

Vissandjee, Bilkis; Apale, Alisha; Wieringa, Saskia; Abdool, Shelly; and Dupéré, Sophie (2005) [33] *Empowerment Beyond Numbers:Substantiating Women's Political Participation*. This research engages female and male panchayat members in rural Gujarat, India. The aim was to understand how being a woman affects access to political office, experiences therein, negotiation procedures and decisions taken. It was theorized that facilitating female representation in local governmental structures (a panchayat) through a quota represents one of many routes toward empowerment and one potential means of improving health and household welfare. When empowerment is analyzed within India's panchayat quota, dimensions such as gender and corresponding perceptions, norms and conditions evidence the centrality of gender as a persistent fault-line in number-based initiatives. The panchayat thus mirrors gendered social realities, demonstrating how complex the processes of substantial democratic political participation and women's empowerment are, in India and elsewhere.

Md. Mostafizur Rahma (2006)[34]*Women, Participation and Empowerment in Local Government: Bangladesh Union Parishad Perspective.* Mainstreaming women through gender specific policies is an acknowledged precondition for achieving meaningful development in any developing country like Bangladesh. Yet it is only recently that this issue has been recognized as such in the context of policy reforms in both administrative and local government arenas. Recent local government reform in Bangladesh has led to creation of quota for women in grassroots democratic institutions. In the context of local government, women's concerns had surfaced intermittently and were highlighted in the government reform agenda as evident in the last Local Government Reform of 1997. As a consequential effect Local Government (Union Parishad) Amendment Act 1997 was promulgated. It provides 3 directly elected women members in the Union Parishad from 3 reserved seats. However, there are serious lacunas in gender balancing both in terms of governance policy and reform agenda. Union Parishad is the most popular democratic institution at the grassroots level. Therefore, the state of women's participation at this level is crucial and deserves special attention to empower them as participation and empowerment are closely related.

Pippa Norris (2006)[35]*The Impact of Electoral Reforms on women Representation.* This study considers these issues, with the first section summarizing the normative arguments why socially inclusive legislatures are thought to be desirable. The representation of women in the Netherlands parliament is compared against the record in other countries worldwide. The second section analyzes the impact of electoral systems on gender representation, confirming that substantially more women are usually elected

in systems using party list proportional representation, especially those such as the Netherlands which have a large district magnitude, compared with majoritarian electoral systems using single member districts. Any reform that moves away from nationwide PR in the Netherlands will therefore probably reduce the proportion of women in parliament unless other compensatory actions are taken. Subsequent sections examine alternative strategies that could be adopted, including statutory quotas regulating the candidate selection process for all parties (for example, as used in Belgium), the role of reserved seats in legislatures, and the use of voluntary quotas in candidate selection rules implemented by particular parties.

Joti Sekhon (2006) [36] *Engendering Grassroots Democracy: Research, Training, and Networking for Women in Local Self-Governance in India.* The author discusses efforts to promote women's effective participation in electoral politics in rural India as an illustration of feminist politics and participatory democracy. It was argued that feminist rethinking of politics and democracy can catalyze women's effective participation and challenge the structures of patriarchy that limit political action and social mobility. The opportunity for women's widespread participation in local elections came as a result of the 73rd Amendment to the Indian Constitution in 1993, reserving 33 percent of elected seats in village councils for female candidates. That alone, however, is not enough, as women are limited by a variety of social, cultural, economic, and political factors, such as traditional gendered expectations of the role and position of women in the family and community, caste and class inequalities, lack of education, and lack of knowledge of the laws. In this article, the author analyzes the role of social movement organizations engaged in participatory action research, training, advocacy, and

networking with and for women at the grassroots level. Detailed exposition of the work of Aalochana, a feminist organization in the western Indian state of Maharashtra, provides insight into the possibilities and challenges of feminist politics to engender grassroots democracy.

Niraja Gopal Jayal (2006) [37] *Engendering local democracy: The impact of quotas for women in India's panchayats.* This article asks whether participation in these institutions has enabled women to articulate and advance their interests. To evaluate this, the article deploys the distinction in feminist literature between strategic and practical gender interests. Through a survey of a wide range of studies conducted in different parts of India it points to the constraints, both of institutional design as well as of social inequalities of gender and caste, that inhibit a fuller and more effective participation by women. There is nevertheless evidence to suggest that the quotas have enabled women to address their practical gender needs and interests, even if the articulation and realization of strategic interests is moving at a somewhat slower pace.

Carole Spary (2007) [38] *Female Political Leadership in India.* This paper is a recognition and exploration of alternative accounts of female political leadership in India, other than dynastic succession. It explores the varied paths to power which female political leaders in India have followed in the past two decades within the changing institutional environment of electoral politics. The paper argues that gender is an important factor of the path to power as well as the exercise of leadership and the sources of legitimacy that leaders draw upon. The paper critiques essentialised accounts of behavioural styles of gendered leadership, focusing on the moral capital argument.

Structural gender bias and gender-biased perceptions and expectations are understood to have a significant impact on assessments of behavioural style and performance. Yet these sources of gender power can be utilized by leaders, reinforcing and legitimizing stereotypes in exchange for political power. These insights are applied to the cases of three prominent female political leaders in India.

Diana Santillán, Sidney Ruth Schuler, Hoang Tu Anh, Tran Hung Minh, Quach Thu Trang & Nguyen Minh Duc (2007)[39] *Developing Indicators to assess women's empowerment in Vietnam.* This paper describes the process of developing, testing, and refining the empowerment indicators, presents some of the findings, and discusses the methodological challenges that need to be addressed. The paper concludes by recommending a set of Vietnam specific domains for assessing women's empowerment in the socio-economic sphere as well as in reproductive health.

India, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, New Delhi. (2008). [40] *Study on elected women representatives in panchayat i raj institutions*. This study analyzed issues related to elected women representatives visà-vis their male counterparts. It investigated their socio-economic characteristics, tracked their political careers over the past three rounds of election, and examined the quality of their post-election participation in terms of performance of their roles. A total of 23 states, 114 districts, 228 blocks and 1368 gram panchayats were selected for the study. It was found that overall elected women representatives were functioning within an enabling environment at the level of the village, community and the household. The positive impact of working as a panchayati raj functionary is evident from the fact that a sizeable proportion of women

representatives perceive enhancement in their self-esteem (79%), confidence (81%) and decision making ability (74%). While no gender discrimination in panchayats was mentioned by 60% of the elected women representatives, acceptability in panchayat meeting s and enabling them to raise issues freely was mentioned by 94% women members. The performance of women representatives who belonged to the younger age category (21-35 years) was better than those who were above 35 years. Educated women representatives showed a significant positive correlation with better performance than those who were illiterate. It was suggested that younger and educated women should be encouraged to join politics. 43% of the women elected did not receive any training. Hence training should not only be made mandatory for all elected representatives, but it should also be organized regularly. Women can become better performers by virtue of being politically more aware and experienced, thus effort should be made not only to maintain the representation of women in politicsin terms of their percentage, but also their ability in politics.

Shashi Kaul and Shradha Sahni (2009) [41]*Study on the Participation of Women in Panchayati Raj Institution*. The present study was an effort to know the extent of participation of women elected representative in Panchayat and the problems faced by them. Sample consisted of 33 women elected representatives from two Districts of Jammu and Kathua. Purposive sampling technique was adopted for selecting the sample from different blocks. The tool used for obtaining information was an Interview Schedule. The findings of the study revealed that neither the reservation for women or their actual presence in the Panchyat have become any more sensitive to the problems related to the village women. The women who are elected are not always treated with due

respect. Many elected women complained that their suggestions were not considered seriously nor were they consulted while decisions were being made. Some felt that their views were ignored only because they are women. At times they were pressurized by their husbands to approve their decisions made by the male dominated Panchayats.

Irma Clots-Figueras (2011)[42]*Women in Politics: Evidence from the Indian states*. This paper uses panel data from the 16 larger states in India during the period 1967–2000 to study the effects of female political representation in the State Legislatures on public goods, policy and expenditure. It finds that politicians' gender affects policy, but that their social position, i.e., their caste, should be taken into account as well. Female legislators in seats reserved for lower castes and disadvantaged tribes invest more in health and early education and favor "women-friendly" laws, such as amendments to the Hindu Succession Act, which was designed to give women the same inheritance rights as men. They also favor redistributive policies, such as land reforms. In contrast, female legislators from higher castes do not have any impact on "women-friendly" laws, oppose land reforms, invest in higher tiers of education and reduce social expenditure. The causal effect of female legislators is estimated using close elections between women and men.

Iyer, Lakshmi; Mani, Anandi; Mishra, Prachi; Topalova, Petia (2012) [43] *The Power of Political Voice: Women's Political Representation and Crime in India.* Using state-level variation in the timing of political reforms, it was found that an increase in female representation in local government induces a large and significant rise in documented crimes against women in India. The evidence suggests that this increase is good news, driven primarily by greater reporting rather than greater incidence of such

crimes. In contrast, it was found that no increase in crimes against men or in gender-neutral crimes. It also examined the effectiveness of alternative forms of political representation. Large scale membership of women in local councils affects crime against them more than their presence in higher-level leadership positions.

Indira Nair (2012) [44] *Need for Political Empowerment of Women in India.* The paper tries to highlight the impediments faced by the women in entering politics like personal and familial factors, triple role women are forced to play, illiteracy, character assassination, reservation etc. It also tries to draw attention to the position of women in Indian politics and the adverse effects of low participation of women in political process. It also tries to suggest some strategies for political empowerment of women in India.

Shirin M. Rai (2012) [45] *The Politics of Access: Narratives of Women MPs in the Indian Parliament.* Based on extensive interviews with Indian women Members of Parliament, this article suggests that analyzing subject narratives is an important method to understand the various routes taken by these women into parliamentary politics. This article presents life stories of Indian women MPs to reveal the complex layers of negotiations that women make to be successful. In making such an analysis, the article focuses on four avenues of access – family networks, social and political movements, the party system and the struggle over quotas for women. The article concludes that through narrative analysis we can understand better the importance of different strategies of political access in *specific* and embedded political, social and economic contexts and develop methodological insights into the broader issues of gendered access to politics.

Li-Ju Chen(2013) [46] *Impact of female legislators on support for honest government*. This study investigates whether more seats taken by female parliamentarians results in a less corrupt government. While a large and growing body of research on this issue claims that there is a link between a higher level of female representation in government and lower levels of corruption, it is uncertain if a causal relationship can be established. This study attempts to provide evidence by building a channel from electoral rules and gender quotas to the fraction of female legislators, while consequently investigating the impact of female legislators on corruption. Based on the countries contained in this study, the results suggest that the presence of female parliamentarians apparently has a significantly negative effect on the level of corruption, which is very likely to be causally evident.

Artatrana Gochhayat (2013) [47] *Political Participation of Women in Gram Panchayat Elections in Odisha: A Case Study of Hindol Block in Dhenkanal District*. The present study was an effort to know the extent of political participation of women in functioning as well as in the electoral process of the panchayats and the problems faced by them.In this regard, sample consisted of 125 women respondents from 5 gram panchayats of Hindol Block in Dhenkanal District of Odisha. The study was conducted in March -April immediately after the general panchayat elections in February, 2012. The findings of the study revealed that political participation of women in the functioning as well as in the electoral process of the panchayats is not satisfactory.Some of the respondents even do not know the names of political parties and they casted their votes identifying the symbols of political parties. Most of the women have great apathy towards

politics. The parochial culture, patriarchal society and low level of education are greatly responsible for their backwardness

Ejaz Ghani ,William R. Kerr and Stephen D. O'Connell (2014) [48] *Political Reservations and Women's entrepreneurship in India*. In this article the link between the timing of state-level implementations of political reservations for women in India with the role of women in India's manufacturing sector was quantified. While overall employment of women in manufacturing does not increase after the reforms, it was found significant evidence that more women-owned establishments were created in the unorganized/informal sector. These new establishments were concentrated in industries where women entrepreneurs have been traditionally active and the entry was mainly found among household-based establishments. Discussed the extent to which this heightened entrepreneurship is due to channels like greater finance access or heightened inspiration for women entrepreneurs.

Kuldeep Fadia (2014) [49]*Women's Empowerment through Political Participation in India*. The ethics and trend of participatory aspect has been advocated in this article for vibration of universal trend of understanding in realism. The data and indicators in this article symbolize the phenomenon of growth and attributes in the sphere of political participation of women for holistic mindset and political stratification on the highest cohesive sense of the term and conditionalities.

Babu Dhan Tripura (2014)[50]*Indigenous Women's Participation in Politics: A Case Study of Gandacharre Sub Zonal of Tripura, North-East India*. This paper makes an attempt to analyze women's participation in TTAADC village committee. It will further delve into women's empowerment through political participation and their active

engagement in local governance. This paper is a case study on Gandacharre Sub-Zonal, Dhalai Zonal, Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTADC), North-East India.

Myriad research has already been done in this field. *Desai and Thakkar (2001*) tried to explain the history of women's major issues and actions since the 19th century. They tried to focus on the complex nature of work contributed by women, their educational status, their contribution in the organized and unorganized sectors, their political participation, and legal status, their position in the family and outside world. While *R. Mishra* (1998)6 argues that husbands and family members influence the women representatives in taking decisions in Orissa, *R.Arun(1997)* in a case study of Madhya Pradesh found that in most cases women representatives are housewives, first time entrants into politics and most of them are illiterate or educated up to primary level. *G.Palanithuri(1997)* in his case study of Tamil Nadu reported that women were not reported or invited to the meetings in male headed Gram Panchayat. Husbands of the members used to accompany them (women) when they come to attend the meetings. *S.Pai (2001)* in her field notes in Meerut District found that Pradhanis in Panchayats were illiterate and only able to put their signatures on officials papers. The women representatives contest for election due to family pressure and also the decision of their community and not because of their own interest. *S.Panda (1996)* in her study of Village Panchayats in Orissa found that women entered into politics due to mandatory provision of reservation or pressure from their family members or pressure from their village community. *Manikyamba (1990)* in her study of Andhra Pradesh found that socio-economic background in general and political background in particular are important

determinants of shaping the nature and level of participation of women members in political institutions and her study concludes that the participation of poor women members is mostly found insignificant. *Dr.Singh (2004)* presents the findings of an empirical study of the elected women representatives of the PRIs of Haryana for exploring the extent of their empowerment as a result of the implementation of 73rd Amendment Act. *Dr.Bharti(2011)* explains that before 73rd Amendment came into force, Government of Orissa had adopted some of the important provisions such as reservation of seats for women, SCs, STs in its existing Panchayati Raj Acts. *Kaul and Sahni(2009)* tries to explore the extent of political participation of women elected representatives in Panchayats and the problems faced by them in two districts of Jammu and Kathua. *Patnaik (2005)* finds out the participation of elected representatives belonging to weaker sections in the functioning of four gram panchayats in Orissa's Dhenkanal district, in order to observe the extent to which numerical representation has been successful in the actual exercise of power by these sections.

Squarely a little research has been done in India on women empowerment in India with special reference to their representation in local bodies. Moreover, it seems to be in an embryonic stage in the State of Andhra Pradesh. Since there has been no systematic study made in this area, this study was designed to evaluate the empowerment of women with special emphasis on their presence in local bodies in Medak District of Andhra Pradesh. With this objective in view, the researcher has taken up the problem on hand with the following title:

EMPOWERMENT OF   WOMEN IN MEDAK DISTRICT: A CASE STUDY ON LOCAL BODIES

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF STUDY :

The present study has been taken up as a humble beginning of the tremendous task ahead with the following objectives:

1.   To investigate into the empowerment of women in local bodies in Medak District of Andhra Pradesh.

2.   To explore political participation of women for empowerment in local bodies in Medak District of Andhra Pradesh.

3.   To study engendering power of women in their empowerment in local bodies in Medak District of Andhra Pradesh.

4.   To appraise the perceptions of Women on their participation in political empowerment in local bodies in Medak district of Andhra Pradesh.

1.5. HYPOTHESES :

After setting out the main objectives of the study, the   following hypothesis has been formulated:

1. There is no significant difference in the opinion of women with regard to their participation in local politics.

2. There is no significant difference in the perceptions of women with reference to factors that motivate them to participate in local bodies.

3. There is no significant difference in the perceptions of women with regard to problems faced by elected representatives.

4. There is no significant difference in the perceptions of women representative with reference to the change in their attitudes and practices.

5. There is no significant difference in the perceptions of women elected representative with regard to their performance.

1.6 Operational Definitions :

Operational definition is description of term as applied to a specific situation to facilitate the collection of meaningful data. When collecting data it is important to define terms very clearly in order to assure all those collecting and analyzing the data have the same understanding. Therefore, operational definitions should be very precise and be written to avoid possible variation in interpretations.

In the words of W. Edwards Deming, "An operational definition is a procedure agreed upon for translation of concept into measurement of some kind." According to Brice (1978) "An operational definition is a definition based on the observable characteristics of that which is being defined" Thus, for the present study operational definitions of the terms/ concepts used in the title of the study have been furnished below:

A) EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN :

Empowerment" has been used to represent a wide range of concepts and to describe a proliferation of outcomes. The term has been used more often to advocate for certain types of policies and intervention strategies than to analyze them, as demonstrated by a number of documents from the United Nations (UNDAW2001; UNICEF 1999), the Association for Women in Development (Everett 1991), the Declaration made at the

Micro-credit Summit (RESULTS 1997), DFID (2000), and other organizations. Feminist activist writings often promote empowerment of individuals and organizations of women (Sen and Grown 1987; Jahan 1995; Kumar 1993) but vary in the extent to which they conceptualize or discuss how to identify it.

Bennett (2002) has developed a framework in which "empowerment" and "social inclusion" are closely related but separate concepts. Drawing on Narayan (2002), Bennett describes empowerment as "the enhancement of assets and capabilities of diverse individuals and groups to engage, influence and hold accountable the institutions which affect them." Social inclusion is defined as "the removal of institutional barriers and the enhancement of incentives to increase the access of diverse individuals and groups to assets and development opportunities." Bennett notes that both of these definitions are intended to be operational, and describe processes rather than end points (Malhotra, 2002) .[51]

Empowerment is a widely debated term and is ascribed a wide variety of definitions in different socio-cultural and political contexts. The discussion on empowerment of women revolves around freedom of choice, control over their own lives, access to, ownership over and control of assets, the right to opportunities and services, the ability to understand, challenge and transom realities of power relations and finally, the ability to influence events and outcomes of their lives. Empowerment as a concept evolved when conventional development approaches sought to include women as targets to increase the effectiveness of outcomes but failed to question the underlying causes of women's disempowerment. Thus, the approach to empowerment has made a deliberate

and fundamental shift away from the notion of economic empowerment to holistic development. It clearly demands that political, administrative and social structures guarantee these rights. Thus, women's empowerment extended it scope beyond the individual, to questioning and challenging power relations and inequalities (Narayana,2002) [52]

The absence of women from structures of governance inevitably means that national, regional, and local priorities are typically defined without meaningful input from women, whose life experience gives them a different awareness of the community's needs, concerns, and interests from that of men (Zahidi,2005). Women's political participation is a fundamental prerequisite for gender equality and genuine democracy. In 2004 women represented 16% of parliamentarians worldwide, compared with 9% in 1987. Without representation at this level, it is difficult for women to influence policy (The World Bank, 2005) [53]

In the present investigation, the term 'Women Empowerment' exclusively refers to the women representatives in local bodies in Medak District of Andhra Pradesh (Telangana) and their empowerment attitudes.

A) MEDAK DISTRICT

Medak District is located in the State of Telangana, India. Sangareddi is the district headquarters of Medak and Siddipet is the most populous city. The district had a population of 26, 70,097, of which 14.36% were urban as of 2001.

Medak district is located towards the north of the Hyderabad city some 60 km away. Medak is a small district with the boundaries shared by the adjacent places of

Warangal, Nalgonda, Hyderabad and Nizamabad. There is a national high way and a railway lane that connects the place with that of the Hyderabad city.

Medak was formerly a popularized place called Saidapur Medak. The prefix however lost its importance in the popular usage. The region was ruled by Kakatiyas. The District profile is adorned by the heritage left behind by these great rulers and the rich resources it possesses.
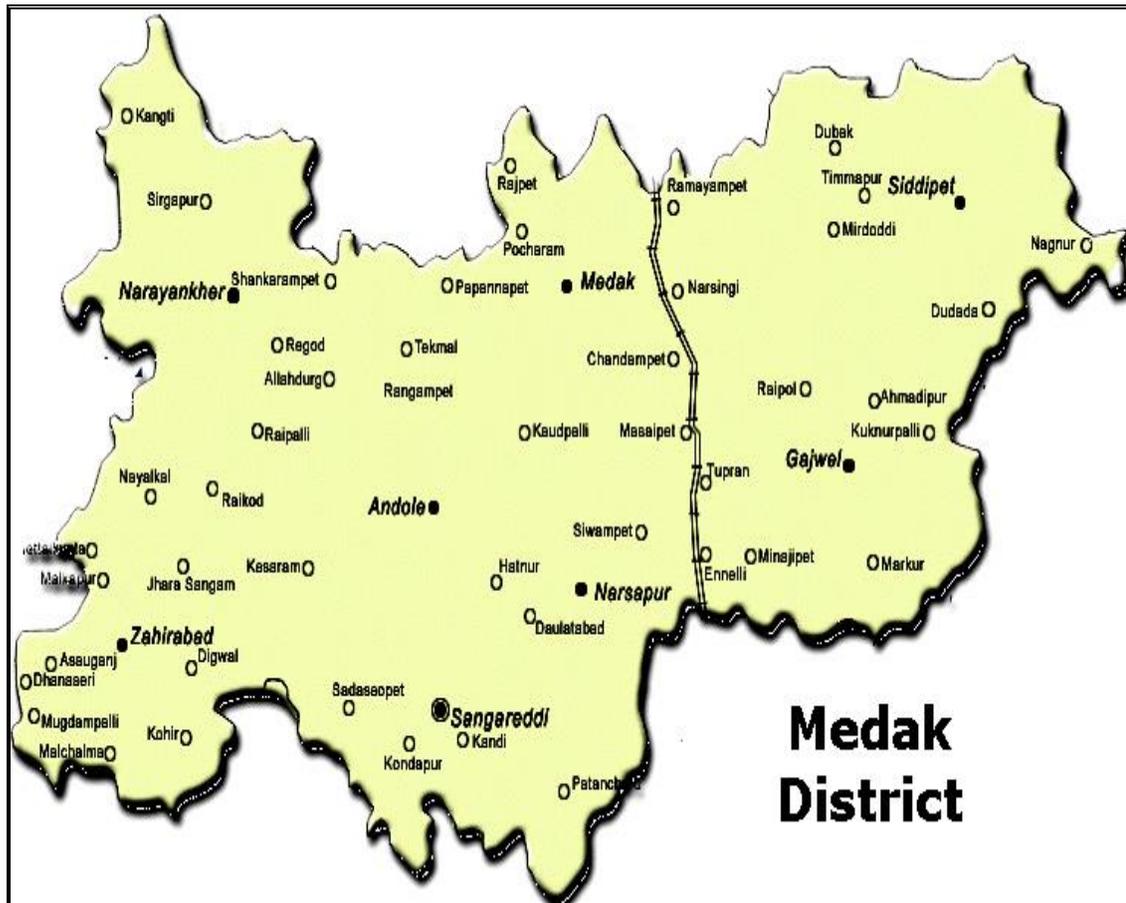
The present study takes into its ambit the sample selected for investigation at local bodies.

C) LOCAL BODIES :

Local bodies are institutions of the local self governance, which look after the administration of an area or small community such as villages, towns, or cities. The Local bodies in India are broadly classified into two categories. The local bodies constituted for local planning, development and administration in the rural areas are referred as Rural Local Bodies (Panchayats) and the local bodies, which are constituted for local planning, development and administration in the urban areas, are referred as Urban Local Bodies (Municipalities).

Local Government is a State subject figuring as item 5 in List II of the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution of India. Article 243 G of the Indian Constitution enshrines the basic principle for devolution of power to the Local Bodies. In the nation's journey towards becoming an economic power, local bodies playan important part in enabling infrastructure availability to the citizens.

The many roles that the local government is expected to play are:

1) A Regulator, namely the administration of various acts and regulations

2) A Provider, that involves providing urban services efficiently and equitably by managing its accounts effectively and efficiently.

3) An Agent that takes the schemes of higher levels government to the people. This includes promotion of popular participation

4) A Welfare Agency, which provides active assistance to higher level governments in the equitable distribution and delivery

5) An Agent of Development, who strives for improvement in the quality of life through the augmentation of infrastructure

Some of the discretionary functions, which are performed by the local governments of India, are:

➢ Planting and maintenance of trees

➢ Housing for low income groups

➢ Construction and maintenance of public parks, gardens, libraries, museums, rest houses and other public buildings

➢ Securing or removal of dangerous buildings or place

Andhra Pradesh was one of the first States to constitute local Governments through a legislative Act in 1959.the late 1950s and early 1960s saw the rise of local Governments in Andhra Pradesh with all the three tiers functioning vibrantly. However, towards the late 60s various measures taken by the Government contributed to the weakening of local governments. In spite of District Development Boards(DDBs) abolition in 1970, the supremacy of bureaucracy over local governments continued an attempt at rejuvenating local governments was made though Andhra Pradesh Panchayat Raj Act,1986 with thee objective to bring administration closer to people. The same was enacted in 1994.It satisfied the requirements of 73rd amendments by incorporating various provisions such as five-year term for local governments and one-third reservation seats for women.(Lok Satta,2004) [54]

According to this Judgment, local body elections will be conducted in six stages. They are:

1. Ward Member

2. Sarpanch

3. Mandal Parishad Territorial Constituency Member (MPTC)

4. Mandal Praja Parishad (MPP)

5. Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency Member (ZPTC)

6. Zilla Parishad (ZP)

In the present context, the term 'local bodies' refer to the six areas mentioned and how women politically empowered themselves in occupying various positions in these areas.

1.7 *Delimitations of the Study :*

As stated earlier, this piece of research was to investigate women empowerment in local bodies, especially women representation in Medak District of Andhra Pradesh. Hence, this study too had space, time and resource constraints as in any other study.

1. The area of investigation was restricted to study women representation in local bodies in Medak District of Andhra Pradesh.

2. The study was confined to **political empowerment of women** through their representation in local bodies in Medak District of Andhra Pradesh.

3. The investigation was limited to the perceptions of women representatives at all levels of local bodies.

4. The study was carried to investigate the women who represented local bodies during 2006-2007.

1.8 Research Methodology and Selection of Respondents :

The data for study is collected from primary and secondary sources. The primary data is collected through structured questionnaire and secondary data is collected from published books and research articles. It is decided to collect primary data from the total Respondents (universe). That is 664 as they are available for

administering questionnaire in quarterly half yearly and annual meetings of G.Ps, MPPs, and the ZP.But, the data is collected from 652 Respondents which is 98.19 % of total respondents. in this study the word sample and Respondents are used as synonyms while interpreting and analyzing data. For analyzing the data percentile analysis was used as the statistical techniques in the SPSS package.

1.9. CHAPTERIZATION :

The present thesis is divided into six chapters as detailed below:

Chapter I - **Introduction**

Made an introduction to a growing phenomenon of women's representation in local bodies to make them more empowered. It also explored the significance, the need; review of related literature; operational definitions; the objectives, hypotheses; the delimitations along with the research methodology and Chapterization of the present investigation.

Chapter II deals with *Empowerment Through Participation* especially political empowerment with regard to local bodies.

Chapter III deals extensively with the importance of *Engendering Power,* concept of power, advocacy initiatives, and women's movement for representation and important indicators of political participation. Further, it also studies the Indian women's movement and political representations.

Chapter IV focuses on the *Women Representation in Local bodies* and their empowerment with special reference to local bodies in Medak District of Andhra Pradesh.

Chapter V was earmarked for *analysis and interpretation of data* gathered through the tools developed for investigation.

Chapter VI illustrates *summary; conclusion* and recommendations discussion of results with major findings. Implications and suggestions for further research are also included.

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