CONCLUSIONS & SUGGESTIONS

The general conclusions of the dissertation work of this thesis are categorised as the under:

10.1 The Social & Economic Profile Of The Elite Women:

'Behind every successful man there is a woman', is the famous world wide sanctioned statement. At the same time it would not be an exaggeration to supplement that, 'behind every successful woman there is a family.' The family has played an important role in making these women 'successful political elites'. The word family refers to the nearest relatives of these elite women, before & after marriage.

One of the reasons for the entry of these women into politics was the family background. All the respondents have opined that it is because of the family background & family support that they could emerge as the political elites. Their development as the political careerists was also due to the constant support & encouragement by their family members. The family support thus becomes a foundation of their political career on which they have built their images as 'elites'. Though the general participation of women remains poor in India because of the family, the family became the main criteria for the uplift of these elite women.
However one has to accept the personal desire, ambition & skill of these women. The family & environmental factors help to some extent. An elite is that 'chosen element of society,' which gets rewards for personal skills & capacities. All these women possess in them integrated leadership qualities & the best capacity of organising the people.

These women have emerged as 'a sacrificing symbol of womanhood.' They have successfully maintained the ideal image of womanhood. At the same time they have dedicated their lives to a definite political thought. Thus they became a healthy balancers between Indian traditionalism & modern ideology. The simplicity of life & the consciousness of their womanhood are the prominent factors which have largely influenced & shaped the personality of these elite women.

These elite women, who have emerged as the elected representatives in independent India, are quite aware of the social, cultural & economic factors dominating Indian political situation. Most of these women, who became top elites, had participated in independence struggle. After independence they diverted their attention to bring social reforms, to change the status & economic uplift of Indian women. Thus there is a shift in the roles of these women. After independence they become social reformists, resisting the evil traditions & evil practices. These women have to fight against the British before independence & after independence against
their 'own people.' In this long process of social change, these women have thrown themselves & acted as pressure groups to bring revolutionary change in the social set up. Thus one finds politics & society intermixed. These women elites have become links, bridging society & politics together in Independent India. Social & political mainstreams are merged together. The new generation of elites readily accepted this dual role of political elites as well as social elites. In fact the roles of these elite women cannot be separated in watertight compartments. These roles are identified as if they are one.

That is why these elites were able to establish their mass-based movements. The social work done by these women brought them nearer to the masses, especially to the women of India.

These women have become sensitive towards women's issues & this gave rise to bring a dynamic change in viewing women. The decade has helped these women, directly & indirectly, in bringing this new outlook & exposing it in the society. The decade has brought an international awakening towards the issues of women & supplemented positively to the realisation that, 'women are to be treated as human beings'.

The tools & techniques used by them to bring social reforms are not aggressive & revolutionary. They do not want a destructive means to change the social set up. They have accepted an evolutionary method to bring a change. Their approach is
constructive & not destructive. They patiently involve themselves in social movement, keeping in view the idea that the seeds are sown by them for the next generation to get fruits of it.

For the economic uplift of common women, these elite women, especially the communist party elite women, have devoted their lives. The idea of making women economically self-sufficient caught momentum after independence & the decade had further contributed a lot in realising it in actual practice. These elite women have made efforts by voicing the problems of working women in trade unions & in women's labour organisations.

These women elites, project themselves as the elites of modern India. They are the initiators & pioneers of converting Indian society into modern democratic liberal society in which men & women enjoy equal status in social, economic & political fields. Most of these women elite belong to the higher castes & middle class.

Elite group of women seems to be a monopoly of middle class in case of India. These elite women being economically sound, socially visionary and politically aware have provided women leadership in independent India. They have been accepted by the society because of their image which is clean, uncorrupt, morally sound & ethically ideal. Political ups & downs are common in the life of politicians. The defeat & victory in the elections of these elite women have not changed their social image & status. They
have been constantly in the public eye because of their multifarious roles they have played all these years.

10.2 The Political Profile Of The Elite Women:

The political profile of these women needs a Kaleidoscopic analysis. These elite women have put a number of years in the political field. The political image of these women is definitely high. They are good orators, good organisers & possess in them all the qualities which a political elite needs. They present their views on the floors of the Parliament, participate in the proceedings of the House, ask questions, raise issues, demand certain facilities & undertake walkouts whenever necessary. All these women are active, are ready to solve different types of problems which people have to face. They play a parental role in their constituencies.

These women elites prefer to accept their political position without any complaint. This is due to their loyalty towards their party. These women are emotionally attached, ideologically committed to their party. Their political career flourishes within the party structure. They have been accepted by their party members as leaders and office bearers. They have gained this position by struggling hard, facing imprisonment & all types of political hardships.

The participation of women in India in the elective bodies
has not increased in all these years. The elite women have made a number of efforts for social & economic uplift of women. However such efforts or such organisational efforts are not made by the elite women. One does not find concrete measures to train leadership qualities and mobilise women to join political mainstream. That might be one of the reasons for the limited participation of women in the politics of India. If the women's participation has to be increased it can be possible if these women make organised efforts & collective bargaining, become the political leaders & call the women to follow them in the political processes of India.

10.3 The Women's Participation In Politics In General, As Representatives As Ministers & The Contribution Of The Decade:

The women's participation in Politics in general is limited. The number of women elected to the Parliament, to the Maharashtra State Legislature & to the Bombay Municipal Corporation has not increased significantly during the decade.

The total elected women in Parliament in 1977, were nineteen [3.5 %], in 1980 were twenty eight [5.44 %] & in 1985, were forty two [7.95 %]. The same kind of the picture is seen at the state level also. In Maharashtra, in 1972 the total elected women were twenty seven [10.33 %], in 1978, were only eight [2.76 %], in 1980 were twenty [6.92 %] & in 1985, were sixteen [5.19 %]. This indicates that the decade has been only successful in maintaining
the status quo & in avoiding a further decline in it.

The picture is slightly different in the Bombay Municipal Corporation. The elected women in 1973, were eleven [7.58 %], in 1978, were fourteen [10 %] & in 1985, were five [2.94 %]. This indicates that there is a miserable decline of the women's representation in the Bombay Municipal Corporation during the decade. The decade has not contributed anything in increasing the political representation of women in the legislative bodies.

The political upheaval was not as strong as the social & economic one during the decade. Consistent efforts were not made for political mobilisation of women in general.

The main reasons for the limited representation of women in politics are as follows:

i) Political parties do not make sustained efforts to mobilise & educate women to participate in the political processes.

ii) Political parties do not make deliberate efforts to arrange study camps, training courses for women by which political awareness can be increased in them.

iii) Political parties keep women away from the party organisation. At the highest level of party organisation, women are found only in single digit numerical figures.
iv) Political parties do not take risk of nominating women candidates at the time of election. Neither parties are ready to make them ministers. The percentage of women ministers is extremely low. Even portfolios allotted to women ministers are generally of less important.

All these reasons are due to the political party's biased outlook towards women & an attempt on their part to male supremacy within the party. In fact, the decade, has brought an overall awakening over the women's issues but it failed to bring any awakening among the political parties to increase the political participation of women at all the levels. The only effect of the decade is that political parties have incorporated women's issues as a passing reference in their election manifestos. The women's issues became the factors for their political speeches to appeal & impress women at large. The general attitudes of women are also responsible for this. Women are still tied by their traditional roles & are not readily willing to participate in the political processes. A proper approach is not yet developed. Participation in the political processes is regarded as an additional burden.

10.4 The Contribution Of The Decade In The Social & Economic Field To Uplift Women :

The awakening regarding the necessity to change the status of women in India is the main contribution of the decade. The need to
bring reforms towards women's present position was felt & people began to realise that women should also be treated as equals. The decade has brought new values in the social & economic spheres.

The women's subordinate social status, the voice against women's exploitation & oppression, the gender biases & sex discrimination, the cry against women's immoral traffic, rape cases & dowry deaths were a few social factors which caught the minds of the masses during the decade. This social upheaval was revolutionary in nature. These stormy thoughts attacked the very social set up of India. Thus one could notice a change & shift over dealings with the women's issues. The revolutionary thoughts however brought an evolutionary application in reality. However one has to accept this evolutionary application also in the beginning.

Bombay & women elites from Bombay were initiators of these social reforms. In fact most of these movements of social reform breed in Bombay & then spread elsewhere. The Bombay environment has provided an opportunity to resist social evils & evil practices.

The women respondents have also expressed their contentment towards the social upheaval caused by the decade. Most of them have also admitted that their efforts got a moral & rational ground because of the declaration of the decade. They have agreed that women's issues got recognition during the decade. They have welcomed such an attempt made by UNO. However their reaction was that it will be a long process to realise the aims & objectives laid
down by the UNO. A few of them have also opined that the decade had given them an additional push up, a psychological comfort that their problems have been realised, public sympathy & an assurance that their efforts would definitely bring some change.

The struggle to fight for economic justice was another contribution of the decade in women's life. A sympathetic approach was developed towards working women during the decade. The women who were total dependents were given job opportunities for supplementary income. Many women organisations began to provide such opportunities to the needy women. The women who were already working were also relieved by providing facilities like creches, Anganwadis, Child care centres etc. The idea of equal sharing of the household duties by men & women is now in some cases accepted. The discoveries of new domestic appliances relieved her from tiresome & lengthy household duties as far as middle & rich classes are concerned. The necessary food material like ata, papad, achar were began to be readily available in the market.

The women respondents have opined that the decade has brought some change in the economic status of women, especially from the educated & urban areas. In Bombay the idea of female identity is already accepted in the educated families & it was further got reaffirmed & practiced during the decade.
10.5 The Role Of The Women's Organisations And Trade Unions During The Decade:

One of the unique contributions of the decade was the emergence of women organisations not affiliated to political parties to fight against oppression, exploitation, injustice and subjugation of women. These organisations exhibit militancy and readiness to come out into the streets to press for their demands. Initially they attracted educated urban women, but slowly and gradually women in small towns, villages, tribal areas are also being influenced by them.

One of the unique features is that as these organisations grew more in number, the women from all the sections of the community came forward and began to provide membership and leadership to these organisations. The women organisations no more remained a monopoly of a particular group or area or caste or class or religion.

This women's movement which was just a beginning by 1975, became a mass based movement during the decade and saw the end of the decade with the ripe fruits. The uplift of women thus became a revolutionary process during the decade.

One of the reasons for the growth of women's organisations during the decade is that the women have found that political means would no longer help them in solving their specific issues because of male dominance in political parties & power seeking aims.
of the parties. They found an alternative in organising themselves in voluntary organisations. In this regard the role of these elite women is again two fold (i) all the political parties have women's wings & these women elites are related to these in an official capacity as office bearers. (ii) most of these elites are associated with the autonomous women's organisations not affiliated to any political party.

The leadership to the women's movement is provided by these women elites. The women wings of the political parties were active but they had limitations within the party organisations. Still these women wings, became more active during the decade. The political party leaders also began to support & rendered help when any activity of the women's wing on a large scale was organised by these women.

The emergence of autonomous women's organisations gave a golden opportunity to these women elites to exercise their ability in solving women's problems on a large scale. Through these organisations these women elites organised morchas, demonstrations, gheerous, agitations & pressurised the persons in power. Thus these women elites became not only political & social elites but became 'women's elites.'

The influence of these women political elites on the autonomous organisations have brought an indirect impact in making ordinary women aware about political activities. They also inspired
many women from these organisations & the outcome of it was the emergence of a new class of elite women socially active & politically aware.

These activities were focussed & published by the mass media. The activities of organisations got a wide response from the masses because of the fact that all felt the necessity of it. The decade thus became a broker to relieve the Indian masses from the restraints of traditionalism.

The issue that women should be economically self sufficient & the increased cost of living compelled women to go out of their houses to work. The industrialisation has brought trade unionism as an integrated activity in modern management. The role of women elites during the decade in the trade unions & women labour organisations is also noteworthy.

The women leaders from the trade unions have played a major role in bringing about changes in the labour laws to provide protection for working women. The limitations to work within the sphere of trade union to solve working women's problems gave rise to a number of women's labour organisations. Again the women political elites were at the top of these organisations. Hence even these organisations have also an impact of the ideologies of the different political parties. Still these organisations were aware of women's issues & in spite of the impact of the political ideology they worked manytimes together to solve the working women's
problems.

Trade unionists also felt it necessary to have separate units or cells within the sphere of trade union activities. The growing women employment compelled trade unions to establish women units or cells. Many women office bearers played a unique role to solve women's issues. Their activities spread widely during the decade. Special training courses, camps etc. were organised for the women workers to make them aware of their interests.

The women's labour movement also got the momentum during the decade. Thousands of women joined there organisations & strengthened the voice of working women.

Though the participation of women in the trade unions & in the women's labour organisations is limited, still the credit goes to the ten years of the decade which brought a new perspective to view working women's problems & created awareness about the importance of the trade unions & women's labour organisations amongst the women employers.

The elite women from Bombay have provided an integrated leadership to uplift women's issues in general & in social & economic fields. The credit of making women's issues sensitive to the public sympathy should be given to these elite women from Bombay. The political issues are not indirectly undertaken during the decade as 'political issues.' It seems that economic change is
'essential', social change is 'desirable' & political change is 'optional.' The decade has thus contributed women's role in economic field as 'essential', in social field as 'desirable' and in political field as 'optional'.

A large section of women who were socially backward, politically unaware & economically dependent are brought on the mainstream of this new 'Renaissance' which has no barriers of caste, language, region, religion or class. It has transcended all the realisation & self identity of women.

The overall impact of these activities during the decade is ultimately political. The Government is an agent to bring solutions to women's problems. Hence, in a wider perspective, the decade has brought a long reaching impact on the political processes & political system. The women elites from Bombay are the carriers of these ever reaching political impacts of the decade on the political processes.

The conclusions so far discussed from 10.1 to 10.5 lead to a few suggestions.

**10.6 Suggestions:**

1. The decade is only a beginning to expose to women's problems & issues. In order to develop & utilise the full potentials of women & thereby achieve national progress, concerted efforts
are necessary from all the family, the society & the political system. There should be an attitudal change in viewing women. Women should be accepted as human beings & as independent persons. This change should begin from the family & by changing the traditional value pattern.

2. To bring this attitudal & behavioural change, conscious & consistent efforts are necessary by individuals, voluntary organisations, Government agencies & non-government agencies. This revolutionary process through organised efforts should continue to work with wider struggles & wider participation.

3. The participation of women in the political processes should increase. Encouragement to women to participate in the political processes should be given by the women political elites & by the women organisations. Massive campaigns to create awareness should be arranged to mobilise women in the political fields, as per the time convenient to women, to housewives as well as to the working women.

4. Women should take lead to increase their participation in Politics. The women should organise themselves & should establish their vote banks & should act as pressure groups. Through these efforts participation of women should be increased.

5. The political parties should include more & more women. It
should be morally compulsory on the part of the political parties to nominate more & more women at the time of election. Even the women should boycott the elections if sufficient number of women candidates are not nominated by the political parties. The inclusion of more women in the elective bodies would, to certain extent, eliminate the violence & criminal elements in the politics of today in India.

6. 30% of reservation of seats to women in the legislative bodies is the only solution to change this situation. The parties & the Government had announced such a policy, but its implementation is not done so far. The women should compel the government to nominate women by way of the reservation in the coming elections.

7. In fact to bring women on the equal level to men, one decade is not sufficient. The implied expectation is that the efforts made specifically during the decade should continue even in the future with the same intensity.

8. To realise women's self identity stages of progress are needed. She has to overcome all the factors, like her health, her education, her family & social status, economic dependency & political apathy, by making continuous efforts at all the levels one by one & simultaneously. Women have begun to labour a lot to achieve these stages with a firm conviction & confidence. The decade is just a beginning. In
the years to come there should be an overall revolution in her identity to be recognised as an enlightened human being in every sense of the term.