CHAPTER VI

Political Empowerment of Women

This chapter is devoted to the analysis of political empowerment of women which is focusing at the beginning, development of Panchayati Raj Institution in Assam and participation of women in panchayats at block level followed by participation of women in gaon panchayats with respect to their socio-economic status.

Political power is based on the fact that there is a scarcity in society of social equality in terms of financial security, nutritious diet, good health, meaningful and useful work opportunities for self-development, and self-esteem (Parenti, 1978). Another way to define political power is who determines who gets what influences whom. Understood this way, power then belongs only to those who make policy and set standards. Through collusive consensus, the politically powerful are able to maintain and perpetuate the status quo, which they then hold up as the only acceptable system and one which the powerless have no choice but to accept. (Sahay, 1998).

Once economic empowerment is achieved it would have major implications on the overall empowerment of women. Intra-family relationships and domestic work culture would change resulting in social empowerment and a more equitable participation on women in decisions concerning the family. Leadership and active participation in group culture would improve political acumen and eventually help successful political empowerment. Political empowerment in turn would result in more representative planning for women and strengthening and sustaining of the process of overall empowerment of women (Sujatha, 1997).
The process of political empowerment is possible if proper socio-economic environment is created for holistic development of each and every individual and thereby the entire society. This requires not only liberty and deliverance of the oppressed, depressed and suppressed, but also establishment of such institutions which are not only democratic but also close to the masses. Panchayats are such organizations which are not only close to masses but also have adequate representation of women and marginalized sections at village, block and district levels. For example, there are more than 30 lakh elected representatives of panchayats in the form of presidents and members at three levels across the country. This is perhaps the broadest representative base which exists in any country of the world. (Kurukshetra, 2007)

6.1 Panchayati Raj Institutions in Assam

Assam has a very strong historical background of local self government since long past. This is perhaps why Assam played a pioneering role in introducing Panchayati Raj system of administration since 1948 to aim at achieving an all round development of the village governments. With a view to incorporate the provision of the 73rd Amendment of the Constitution, the Assam panchayat Act, 1994 was introduced to provides 3 tire panchayati Raj system i.e. Zila parish ad at the District level, Anchalik panchayat at the intermediate level and the Gaon panchayat at the grass root level. Effective and meaningful functioning of these bodies would depend on active involvement, contribution and participation of its citizens both male and female. (SIRD, 2005)

Article 243-G of the Constitution which is the head and heart of the entire scheme of decentralization through panchayati Raj System says that the
Legislatures of a state may, by law, endow the panchayats with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as institution of self-government and such law may contain provisions for the devolution of powers and responsibilities upon panchayats at appropriate levels including preparation and implementation of plans for economic development and social justice including the matters listed in the 11th Schedule which contains a list of 23 subjects like agriculture including agriculture extension, land improvement, land reforms and soil conservation, minor irrigation and watershed development, animal husbandry and dairy and poultry, fishery, social forestry and farm forestry, small scale industries including food processing industries, khadi village and cottage industries, drinking water, fuel and fodder, rural electrification including distribution of electricity, poverty alleviation programmes, education including primary and secondary education, adult and non-formal education, family welfare, women and child development, social welfare including welfare of physical and mentally handicapped, public distribution system, cultural activities and maintenance of community assets. (SIRD, 2005).

6.1.1 Assam panchayat Act, 1994

The Assam panchayat Act, 1994 Act extends over the rural areas of Assam, except the autonomous district under 6th schedule of the constitution of India under municipality or town committee and cantonment both under Assam Municipal Act, 1956 and the cantonment Act, 1924. Gaon panchayat is a unit of a revenue villages or villages of tea garden area or hamlets forming part or forest village. ( SIRD, Nov, 2004).

Gaon panchayat consists of ten members directly elected by the voters from each territory of panchayat for a period of five years. The state government divides
the area of the gaon panchayat into ten territorial constituencies with allotment of one seat for each constituency. The president of the gaon panchayat shall be elected directly by the voters of all territorial constituencies of the gaon panchayat. There shall be reservation of seats for schedule caste, schedule tribe and women. (SIRD, 2005).

There are provisions of three standing committees having three/four members in each committee elected from among the elected members of the panchayat namely a) Development committee to function agriculture, animal husbandry, rural industries etc. b) Social justice committee related to welfare of schedule caste, tribes and backwards classes, welfare of women and children etc. c) Social welfare committee for maintenance of proper function of education, public health, public works and other functions of gaon panchayat. Local gaon panchayat shall impose yearly tax within the jurisdiction of the panchayat. Anchalik panchayat constituted with one member from each gaon panchayat to be elected from the territorial constituencies of the gaon panchayat. President of the gaon panchayat is a part and parcel of the Anchalik panchayat. (SIRD, 2004).

Member of parliament and the MLAs, representing the constituencies under the Anchalik panchayat area wholly or partly are the members of the Anchalik panchayat having right of voting in the meeting of Anchalik panchayat. Above all, at the top is the Zila Parishad. Zila Parishad represented by the elected members from the territorial constituencies of the district on the guidelines of one member for not less than thirty thousand rural people including the Member of Parliament or MLAs representing the districts. As per amended Panchayat Act, 1997 every legislative Assembly shall take four territorial constituencies with thirty thousand rural populations and any constituency having less than 30,000 rural population
falling under any Zila parishad will be treated as territorial constituency of that Zila parished. The president or vice president are elected from the directly elected members in the first meeting presided over by the DC of the district. The Zila parished is the coordinating supervisory body for implementation of plan and programmes as manifested by each Gaon Panchayat of the district for the rural population. (SIRD, 2005).

6.1.2 Reservation for Women

Women’s participation in politics goes far beyond their numbers in elected bodies. In all the major political movements of this century, in all movements for social change, women have played an extremely important role. But in spite of the wider participation and mobilization of women in politics, this period has not seen a commensurate increase in the number of women in different levels of decision making. The constitution of independent India recognized women’s right to vote. Despite thousands of women participating and playing a leading role in the freedom movement this was not reflected in the parliament or assembly. Since the first Lok Sabha election till the present women MPs have always been less than 10 percent. A look at the list in the State Assemblies shows an even worst situation. This reflects the patriarchal, social and political attitudes of our society. (Kurukshetra, 2007).

Women’s wider participation in politics is essential for the strengthening of democratic processes and the polities, political movements of different sections of the people have an important responsibility to ensure that women are able to participate in the arena of active politics. Reservation can only link women to the politics process but effectiveness can only be realised when women are incorporated
into the mainstream of democratic politics in an organized manner. (Kurukshetra, 2007).

Amendment of the constitution in the year 1992 reserved 33% seats for women in panchayats. Accordingly, the provision has been incorporated under Assam panchayati Raj Act. This provision is a major move towards strengthening the position of rural women. The introduction of women in sizable numbers into the new panchayat could bring significant change in the functioning of these grass-root level institutions. Involvement of women in the panchayati raj Institutions is expected to bring qualitative change in the matters relating to health, nutrition, children welfare, family care, drinking water etc. (SIRD, 2004).

6.2.0 Participation of women in panchayats

In Assam, the Panchayats with its three-tier structure came into existence after the completion of the Panchayat Election in 2001-2002. Accordingly, 20 numbers of Zila Parishads at the district level, 219 numbers of Anchalik Panchayats at the Block level and 2487 numbers of Gaon Panchayats were formed. Election was held in all the Zila Parisheds. However, election was held in 187 number Anchalik panchayats and 2053 Gaon Panchayats consisting 85.38% and 82.54% of the total units respectively. (Table: 6.1).

As many as 8720 women were elected out of which 117 belong to Zila parishad 746 belong to Anchalik panchayats and 7857 belongs to gaon panchayats which comprises of 30%, 34.72% and 33.47% of the total elected members of Zila parishad, Anchalik panchayats and Gaon Panchayats respectively. Fortunately the Participation of women in the panchayats seems to maintain the required percentage share of 33%. While looking into participation of Schedule Caste and
Schedule Tribe community it seem that they occupy a nominal share in panchayats which in no case exceed 4.87% of the total member. In Kamrup district same picture is also revealed. Participation of women at the block level shows a wide variation with 75% in Kamalpur block followed by 45% in Chandrapur block, 37.5% in Hajo block and 13.33% in Boko block representing general, Schedule caste, Char community and Schedule Tribe community respectively. In Anchalik panchayat female participation is found to be highest in Hajo (50%) followed by Chandrapur, Boko and Kamalpur C.D. block with 30%, 26.66%, and 25% respectively. It gives us a clear understanding that the women membership strength is highest among Char communities, followed by Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribe and General. But the leadership in terms of presidential seat is highest among general caste in Kamalpur block among general caste. (Table: 6.2).

6.2.1 Participation of women in Goan Panchayat level

At this backdrop of Panchayati Raj Institutions of Assam and participation of women there in, the present study attempts to analyze involvement of women in the gaon panchayats with respect to their religion and caste, age and marital status, education and occupation. Moreover, level of awareness in various dimensions leading to political empowerment has also been discussed.

6.2.2 Participation with respect to Religion and Caste

In the gaon panchyats of the identified C.D. blocks, 90% women are Hindu and only 10% women are Muslim. Participation of Hindu women is found to be as high as 100% in the gaon panchayats Boko and Chandrapur C. D. block followed by the gaon panchayats of Kamalpur, Sonapur and Hajo C.D. block, the percentage share rest at 83%. Participation of Muslim women in Gaon panchayats of Hajo, Kamalpur and Sonapur C.D. block is found at 17% (Fig: 6.1).
Fig 6.1: Women participation in the Gaon Panchayats with respect to Religion

![Bar chart showing women participation in Gaon Panchayats with respect to Religion]

Source: Field survey

The reservation of seats for schedule tribe and schedule caste in Panchaati Raj Institutions is a significant aspect for development of disadvantaged groups in the rural areas. (SIRD, 2007). Participation of schedule tribe women are seems to be as high as 67% in the gaon panchayats of Boko C.D. block followed by the gaon panchayats of Sonapur C.D. block with 50% women participant. In the gaon panchayats of Chandrapur C.D. block not a single women participate from the schedule tribe community. Participation of schedule caste women are seen to be as high as 83% in the gaon panchayats of Chandrapur C.D. block followed by the gaon panchayats of Hajo C.D. block with 45% women participant. In the gaon panchayats of Hajo and Sonapur C.D. block 17% women of char and tea garden communities are represented in the Gaon panchayats election. As high as 67% general caste women are participating in the gaon panchayats of Kamalpur C.D. block followed by the gaon panchayats of Hajo and Sonapur C.D. block with equal share of women representative i.e. 17%. (Fig: 6.2)
6.2.3 Participation with respect to Age and Marital status

Participation of the women members in the Gaon panchayats are grouped into some age groups like 25 years to 35, 36 to 45, 46 to 55 and above 55 years. As seen in table 6.5 majority of women members i.e. 40% across the gaon panchayats belong to the age group of 36 to 45 years. The next active age group is 25 to 35 years to which an average of 33% women belongs. This age group is followed by 45 to 55 years. 20% of total women members are found in this age group. The age group of above 55 years is a passive age group. Women in this age group almost absent excluding 7% in the gaon panchayats of Boko and Sonapur area. It gives us a clear indication that participation of women decreases after the age grouped of 45 years. This situation arises may be due to the fact that the Panchayati Raj Institutions of Assam are actively operated only for two sessions i.e. since 2001 and 2006.
Fig 6.3: Women participants with respect to Age and Marital status in Gaon Panchayats

As gaon panchayats have not yet attained maturity in terms of span of time, women members have not got opportunity for accruing experience in gaon panchayats. It is very unlikely that women at the higher age group without any experience will enter into the Panchayati Raj Institutions. In the age groups of 45
to 55 years, participation of women does not exceed more than 20% across the sample Gaon Panchayats at the study area. (Fig: 6.3)

With regard to the marital status of women members of gaon panchayats, it is seen that women get involved in the political arena mostly after they get married only. The percentage share of married women is found at 83% for the gaon panchayats of Chandrapur C.D. block, followed by the gaon panchayats of Hajo and Boko C.D. blocks with 67% and the gaon panchayats of Kamalpur and Sonapur C.D. block with 50% women participant. Table 6.4 gives us a clear understanding that women who have never married seem to be more active in the political field as compared to the women who are either separated or widow. On an average 17% of total women members are never married in the study area as a whole.

6.2.4 Participation with respect to Education and Leadership

Empowerment of women through education will lead to their greater participation in government and community institutions and better entrepreneurial opportunities. More women in parliament and cabinets, chief executive officers in major corporations, top administrators, managers and civil servants will quicken the pace of progress towards equality and empowerment. Having women in top decision making positions will also lead to a better integration of women’s concerns into the formulation of national policies and development plans which in turn would result in developing the full potential of women.

At the backdrop of dismal educational status of women in the sample villages, it is natural that educational level of women members in the gaon panchayats also remains at a similar state. As such a major share of women (i.e 83%) members in the gaon panchayats of Hajo C.D. block have education at below
matriculation. 33% of women members are merely literate only. Similar situation is also observed in the gaon panchayats of Sonapur C.D. block. A picture is almost clear that women with a very poor educational background will not be able to contribute to the gaon panchayats at a desired level. (Fig: 6.4)

**Fig 6.4: Women participants with respect to Education in the Gaon Panchayats**

![Bar chart showing women participants with respect to education across different CD blocks](chart1.png)

Source: Field survey

**Fig 6.5: Women participants with respect to Leadership in the Gaon Panchayats**

![Bar chart showing women participants with respect to leadership across different CD blocks](chart2.png)

Source: Field survey
It is already revealed in the present study that educational level determines the decision making capacity of a women. Again decision making capacity is the prerequisite for developing leadership. As shown in table 2.3 (chapter II) women are contributing in the gaon panchayats as simple members only. They constitute 87% of total gaon panchayats women members. Women members are not being able to achieve the status of president as 1 of 10 gaon panchayats is having women president. However, 3 women members hold the post of vice president. In percentage terms leadership at vice president level constitute 10% of the total gaon panchayats members (Fig: 6.5)

6.3.0 Awareness level of Gaon Panchayats women

The overall success of the novel mission of gaon panchayats depends on the awareness level of the participants. An attempt has been made in the present study to understand the level of awareness of the women members with regard to different developmental programmes, basic knowledge in the political field and social challenges.

6.3.1 Awareness in developmental programmes: Some of the developmental programmes, implemented in the study areas are chosen for the purpose of understanding of awareness level of women.

6.3.1.1 Swarnjayanti Gram Swrojgar Yojana (SGSY) programmes: The objectives of the Swarnjayanti Gram Swrojgar Yojana (SGSY) are to provide sustainable income to the rural poor. The programme aims at establishing a large number of micro-enterprises in the rural areas, based upon the potential of the rural poor. Four / five activities will be identified for each block with the approval of Panchayat Samities. About 83% of the gaon panchayats women members of
general community are found to be aware of the programme which is followed by the schedule tribe community with 76%. The schedule caste, tea garden labour and the char community are found to be less aware percentages rest at around 33% (Table: 6.3).

6.3.1.2 Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY) programmes: Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY) schemes are designed to improve the quality of life of the poor. The primary objective of the JGSY is to promote village infrastructure including durable assets at the village level and assets to enable the rural poor to increase the opportunities for sustained employment through panchayat. Village panchayat is the sole authority for preparation of the annual plan and its implementation. (SIRD, 2007). A majority of gaon panchayats women are found to be not aware of these programmes where only 33% women members irrespective of all social groups are aware of the programmes (Table: 6.3).

6.3.1.3 Indira Aawas Yajana (IAY) programmes: Under the scheme the central and state government allotted dwelling units to the rural poor living below the poverty line. According to the instruction issued by the department, the beneficiary for IAY house has to be identified by the Gram Sabha from the list of eligible households, according to the IAY guidelines and as per the priority fixed. (SIRD, 1998). For the allocation of free housing to the poor the awareness level of the women in the gaon panchayats of Kamalpur C.D. block is relatively higher with 83% followed by the gaon panchayats of Boko C.D. block with 67% (Table: 6.3).

6.3.1.4 Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) programmes: The Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) aims at providing wage employment in unskilled manual works to the rural poor who are in need of employment and
seeking it. The secondary objective is to create economic infrastructure and community assets for sustained employment and development (SIRD, 2000). Involvement level of the women members under the scheme is very poor where highest percentage is found at 33% only for the gaon panchayats of Kamalpur C.D. block representing general caste population. Rests of the social groups are almost not at all aware of the programmes (Table: 6.3).

6.3.1.5 Watershed Management (WM) programmes: Watershed Management programme is aimed at formulating action plan for minor irrigation, rejuvenation of drinking water sources, augmentation of ground water, traditional water harvesting structures and such other schemes of individual nature (SIRD, 2000). About this programmes the women are totally not aware of. It. (Table: 6.3).

6.3.2 Awareness of basic knowledge in political field

The very first step towards empowering oneself in the political arena is to be aware of the basic knowledge related to political field aspects. In this context awareness levels is assessed on the following aspects.

6.3.2.1 Voting rights: The very success of the democratic system in India depends on healthy implementation of voting rights of the citizen. Around 67% gaon panchayats women members across the social groups are aware of the voting rights. In the gaon panchayats of Hajo C.D. block the awareness level is relatively better may be due to the fact that the communities being the immigrants from the neighboring countries are struggling for permanent citizenship (Table: 6.3).

6.3.2.2 Reservation of women: Panchayati Raj Institutes should ensure that all the sections of the society particularly weaker section including women and girl child get adequate opportunity for developing human resource potential. As
revealed in the table 67%, 50% to 83% women members across the gaon panchayats are not aware about the reservation of 33% seats for women in the Panchayats as per 73\textsuperscript{rd} amendment of the constitution in the year 1992 (Table: 6.3).

6.3.3 Awareness on social weaknesses

Those women come forward to join politics, they should be aware of certain social weaknesses or taboos that may be harmful for women and children in particular and the community in general. Some of the social taboos are child marriage, child labour and dowry.

6.3.3.1 Child marriage: The women who are actively involved in the gaon panchayats are expected to shoulder the responsibility of fighting against the weakness of the society namely the early marriage of child, to bring about its overall social welfare. In the present study 33% to 83% gaon panchayats women are not aware of the legal age of marriage for boys and girls and the consequences of early marriage are hardly felt (Table: 6.3).

6.3.3.2 Child labour: The central and state government launched free education for boys and girls up to the age of 14. So child labour is not allowed and everybody should be aware of it. 50% of the gaon panchayats women of the Kamalpur C.D. block is found to be aware of the Child Labour Act. Again in the gaon panchayats of Chandrapur, Sonapur and Hajo C.D. block a nominal share of women are aware of this fact (Table: 6.3).

6.3.3.3 Dowry: Dowry is a social evil leading in India, leading to deadly consequences in many cases. To eradicate this social evil, the Dowry Act has been implemented. The gaon panchayats women are not aware of the Dowry Act. About 17% to 33% women members are found to be aware of the Dowry Act (Table: 6.3)
6.4 Participation in Panchayat related issues

Goan panchayats are the part of the decentralized form of administration at the grassroots level. Therefore, members of gaon panchayats are supposed to take part in different developmental programmes of the government. Here, an attempt has been made to examine the level of participation of women members in some of the developmental programmes.

6.4.1 Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA): The workers of Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) play a crucial role in maintaining and developing health of women and children in rural areas which is discussed in chapter 7. This section of the study is made to understand the level of participation of gaon panchayats women in the selection process of the aforesaid ASHA, so that quality and justice can be ensured. As seen in table 6.3 gaon panchayats women of general caste are relatively more active with 67% women participants as compared to rest of the communities where only 33% women seem to participate in the selection of ASHA.

6.4.2 Rogi Kalyan Samiti: The decentralization of powers can be well understood when the responsibility of gaon panchayats members in supervising the activities of Rogi Kalian Samiti is taken into account. The focus of capacity building programme for Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI) in this sector should be on ways in which horizontal linkages with public health institutions can be promoted so that the beneficiaries can easily access treatment facilities. Quite unfortunately the participatory level of women members in the study area shows a dismal picture as shown in table 6.6 which implies the fact that the women members are not exercising their minimum responsibility in this section (Table: 6.3).
6.4.3 Training programmes: The implementation of the various poverty alleviation and rural development programmes which calls for an efficient and motivated stream of government as well as non-government functionaries is a very challenging task. Further to strengthen Panchayati Raj Institution, it is pertinent to empower the elected representatives at all levels with the necessary knowledge and skills, so that they could discharge their Constitutional obligations. To fulfill the objective of training, there is the National Institutes of Rural Development (NIRD) at the national level, State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD) at the state level and Extension Training Centres (ETCs) at the sub-regional level. (SIRD, 2005). As revealed in table 6.6 women members from schedule tribe community are performing at the best as compared to the other communities. The work participation levels of schedule tribe women are relatively better which is discussed in chapter 5. Again these groups of women are more active in taking up economic activities and exercising financial transaction as well. It is evident that this activeness helps the women in participating various others training programmes. 67% of the gaon panchayats of schedule tribe women seems to participate in the training programmes whereas this percentages has gone down to 17 % in case of the gaon panchayats of Hajo C.D. block dominated by char community (Table: 6.3).

6.4.4 Gram Sabha: The 73rd Amendment Act gives Constitutional status to the Gram Sabha to the general assembly of villagers. In the Gram Sabha the rural poor, the women and the marginalized get an opportunity to participate in decision making on matters affecting their lives. Actively functioning Gram Sabha ensure a vibrant grassroots democracy with transparency, accountability and achievement. This includes taking up of ‘Rajor Padolit Rajor Sarkar (RPRS) initiatives as a part
of government effort to bring administration closer to the people. (SIRD, 2005). It is observed in the study that participation of women in Gram Sabha is almost negligible as participation level rest at 17% only in all the gaon panchayats of C.D. blocks excluding the Kamalpur C.D. block where participation level is found at marginally better with 33% (Table: 6.6). Unless women members donot take part in the gram sabhas, they can not improve their participation level in different fields of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI).

6.4.5 Self decision in applying voting rights: At the time of field survey it is found that though the women stand in G.P. election yet sometimes they have to cast votes according to the husband or family members’ decision. The highest rate of casting vote by self decision is only 33% in the gaon panchayats of Kamalpur C.D. block and it is as low as 13% in the gaon panchayats of Hajo C.D. block. Women seem to lag far behind in the march of political empowerment as only 17% women respondents among the schedule tribe, char and tea garden communities are exercising their self decision in applying voting rights (Table: 6.3). In a situation where women after being the member of gaon panchayats fail to decide on their own, the situation of women who are not members of the gaon panchayats may defiantly be the worst.

6.4.6 Participation in political campaigning: Participation in political campaigning virtually means their activeness in the political field. As revealed in table 6.6 a major share of members of gaon panchayats that varies from 67% to 83% across the gaon panchayats do not take part in the political campaigning (Table: 6.6). There may be a number of factors acting behind these phenomena which is not covered in the study.
6.5 Difficulties faced by women

The foregoing analysis makes it clear that major share of Gaon Panchayats women lag behind with respect to the awareness level and level of participation in the political arena as well. An attempt has been made in this part of the study to assess perception of women regarding difficulties faced by them as to why the undesirable situation took place.

6.5.1 Support from family members: At the time of investigation it is felt that sometimes women are not happy or sometimes they do happily accept the fact that they are not supported by the family members to develop their activeness in the political field. However, picture of the schedule tribe community is found to be the best where 83% Gaon Panchayats women are enjoying full support from their family (Table: 6.3).

6.5.2 Time for Gaon Panchayats work: In order to perform the duties of Panchayati Raj Institutions, a woman has to have provision in the daily time schedule. As revealed in table 6.6, relatively better share of women members of schedule tribe (67%) and general community (67%) are availing required time to carry out the responsibilities of Panchayati Raj Institutions. The rest of the women members are facing the shortage of spare time where only 17% women of the char community are found to manage time for taking up Gaon Panchayats activities (Table: 6.3). As discussed in chapter 7 the daily time schedule of rural women seem to be govern by households chores like cooking, washing utensil & cloth, tending children, fetching fuel & water and animal rearing etc. Priority for attending activities outside the home is not seen in the daily time schedule.
6.6 Women empowerment through involvement in gaon panchayats

Political empowerment of women can be gauged by observing their level of involvement in the Gaon Panchayats. In this context three parameters namely whether a women member gain political focusing, self confidence and social respect through their involvement in the Gaon Panchayats have been studied.

Table 6.4: Women empowerment through involvement in gaon panchayats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the C.D. blocks</th>
<th>Gain political focusing</th>
<th>Gain self confidence</th>
<th>Gain social respect</th>
<th>Total score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Actual</td>
<td>Expected</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boko C.D. block</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chandrapur C.D. block</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hajo C.D. block</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamalpur C.D. block</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonapur C.D. block</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field survey,

The self assessments of women with regard to the aforesaid parameters have been considered here. These perception studies in terms of qualitative response are quantified following a weighted score method, where positive response is scored with 2. These scores are multiplied by number of women respondent and thereby the total score for a block is found out which is termed as actual score for the block. In an ideal situation every gaon panchayts women is supposed to be gained through the aforesaid variables. The actual score is therefore multiplied by the total number of women which is termed as expected score. A sample of 6 women members three from each sample gaon panchayats has been chosen for the analysis.
which is discussed in this chapter under the head 6.2.1. As such the expected score for each C.D. block should be 12. The actual scores are found to be much below the expected score in all the C.D. blocks along all the components. In no situation, the actual score exceeds 10 against the expected score of 12. It gives us a clear understanding that women welfare index for political empowerment is far below than that of an ideal situation. (Table: 6.4).
Table 6.1: Participation of women members in panchayats election of Assam; 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name Of the Panchayati Raj Institution</th>
<th>No of Panchayat where election was Held</th>
<th>Total of elected members</th>
<th>General Member Of men</th>
<th>SC member</th>
<th>ST member</th>
<th>Women Member</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zila parishad</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>236 (60.51%)</td>
<td>19 (4.87%)</td>
<td>18 (4.61%)</td>
<td>117 (30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anchalik panchayat</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>2148</td>
<td>1236 (57.54%)</td>
<td>80 (3.72%)</td>
<td>86 (4.00%)</td>
<td>746 (34.72%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaon panchayat</td>
<td>2053</td>
<td>23471</td>
<td>14060 (59.90%)</td>
<td>783 (3.33)</td>
<td>783 (3.31)</td>
<td>7857 (33.47%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Director of Panchayat and Rural Development Guwahati.2001, Figure in parenthesis means percentages.

Table 6.2: Participation of Women member in panchayats of the identified C D blocks, 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the C.D. blocks</th>
<th>Number of Gaon Panchayat</th>
<th>No of President</th>
<th>Number of President</th>
<th>Gaon Panchyat</th>
<th>Anchalik Member</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>No Of Member seat</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boko</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13 (86.7%)</td>
<td>2 (13.33%)</td>
<td>15 (73.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chandrapur</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2 (50%)</td>
<td>2 (50%)</td>
<td>4 (75%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hajo</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10 (55%)</td>
<td>9 (45%)</td>
<td>20 (70%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamalpur</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5 (62.5%)</td>
<td>3 (37.5%)</td>
<td>8 (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonapur</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8 (66.7%)</td>
<td>4 (33.33%)</td>
<td>12 (58.4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Respected Block Offices Kamrup District, 2008. Figure in parenthesis means percentages.