CONCLUSION

Political participation is influenced by several factors like socio-economic background, opportunities for participation and representation, recruitment process, the nature of the political system, political culture and behaviour. Active and potential political participation enables participants to climb up the ladder of political hierarchy and to acquire representational roles. Representational roles are acquired and performed effectively not by many but only by a few. Gender, which is recognised as one of the important indicators for studying political phenomena has specific influence on the assumption and exercise of political power. The field of politics is often considered as a male domain. Women's active involvement in political process especially, in leadership roles, has not received adequate social acceptance yet. The two words, politics and women have harmonised neither on paper nor in minds for most people at most times. A century after, Virginia Sapiro said this, these two words have harmonised on paper, on public platform, academic discussions and also in some minds. The field of politics, which was considered unwomanly, is now not an untouchable one to women. The 73rd and 74th amendments to the Indian Constitution have facilitated the entry of nearly ten lakhs women in the local bodies both as members and as chair persons. This is a far reaching development in respect of women's entry into representational roles.

Being a leader depends on the possessing the qualities required and acting as a leader. In the case of women, recognition as a leader is also necessary. The present study on legislators in Andhra Pradesh has revealed marked gender differences in the background, recruitment, perceptions and performance of the
representatives. The difference, apart from others is **also** due to discriminatory policy of the parties **against** women.

All the male legislators in the sample have been contributors in the political process before they entered the Assembly. A majority of the male legislators have been substantial contributors in the capacity of party workers, members of local bodies and members of party executives. A good number of them have had political involvement right from their student career. A good proportion of the female legislators have been freshers to politics and have taken up legislative roles without any prior involvement in the field. They have neither been participants nor active participants before they contested for membership in the Assembly. They have started political participation and contest simultaneously.

**Marked gender difference** is noted as regards the age of entry into political roles by the respondents. The length of the political career of any individual would have decisive impact on assuming leadership roles. A very high percentage of women legislators in the sample have been late comers to politics. The age of first entry has been higher in the case of women compared to that of men. However, a few women legislators like M.Swarajyam, Sarojini Pulla Reddy, P.Bharati, Nannapaneni Rajakumari and Mary Ravindranath have had political involvement in their teen **age**. Especially women who have entered politics in post-independence period have been late comers. The women who entered politics at an early age have been those who took active **part** in the national movement. Women legislators in the **sample** have been beginners **in the** political roles either in their late twenties or in early thirties. The **number** of male
respondents who have had long political careers is far higher than that of the female respondents.

The extent of participation would be influenced by the motivating factors to a considerable extent. The study made clear that in the case of most of the (38%) male legislators, self-motivation has contributed to enter politics. Most of the female legislators (44%) stepped into politics after being encouraged by their kith and kin and these kith and kin are males. It is not self-initiative but others' initiative that has let to a large number of women in the sample deciding to contest for membership in the legislature. Most often, it is the blood relations that have been responsible for women's entry into representative roles.

In the selection of candidates for elections, political parties, especially the leadership, is playing a very important role. While choosing candidates, parties are expected to give preference to seniority, service to party loyalty and public spirit. But the reality is that ‘winning chance’ dominates all other factors. It is seen that neither specific criteria nor uniform methods are applied by political parties in the choice of candidates. The respondents irrespective of gender (males 83% and females 72%) expressed that the role of party leadership is very important in selection process. Service to party and candidates’ popularity in the constituency are the factors next in importance to winning chances. It should be noted that winning chance is associated with several aspects like money, power following, ability and caste. The role of money in candidates’ selection and election is kept very confidential by the respondents.

One important feet which the study revealed is that in the game of power politics, the political parties have often neglected the importance of fair deal with
fair sex. This has led to distribution of party tickets mostly to men and very rarely to women. This discriminating policy in the recruitment of contestants has brought very limited number of women into the legislative bodies. The selection criteria adopted for women candidates has been different in that parties have given utmost priority to wifehood qualification and widowhood qualification. This trend is seen in the developed systems also. In the context of contesting, women aspirants have to face ‘rejection trend’ and not ‘supporting trend’ from the political parties. This has, some times, led to unwilling females being persuaded to contest leaving willing women out of picture. In other words women with real interest in politics are discouraged and women with no interest or near nil interest are fielded as candidates. This trend is found more in TDP than in other parties. The kinship connection is also found to be having very strong influence in the selection of female candidates and in shaping their career. The nature of the recruited is bound to have effect on their perceptions and performance.

It is found that there are significant differences between the male and female legislators in respect of politically potential background, that helps to establish long political careers. As regards age, a large number of women (66%) are found in the age group of 36-45. In other age groups the presence of women is either nil or poor. The largest number of the male legislators (39%) in the sample are seen in the age group of 36-45 but a good number of them are seen in other age groups also. The male legislators have longer careers in politics compared to the female legislators. The study confirms the findings of Wolkowitz that women are denied long careers in politics.
The educational levels of the male legislators are higher than those of female legislators. It is only one woman in the sample has qualification beyond the post graduation level. None of the women respondents have received professional education. The position with regard to the male legislators is that a majority of them (31%) are either under graduates or those with professional qualification (29%). A few of them have been post graduates. The percentage of male legislators (6%) with pre-metric educational qualification is very limited. The women legislators with pre-metric educational qualification is 22%.

A study of the occupational background of the representatives shows that for most of them (38%) agriculture is the primary occupation. Contractors (3.65%), business person (11%), medical (1.21%) and legal practitioners (12.19%) are seen among the male legislators. Women of these professions are not present in the House. A high proportion (39%) of the women in the sample have been house-wives or house-managers’ And these women did not have any paid work experience. Women in the sample have not held any high income earning jobs. Political and social work, teaching and agriculture are the fields to which a few women legislators belonged. Women legislators, compared with male legislators are having less para-political and local government experience. 24% men and 22% women gained para-political experience and 49% men and 17% women earned experience in local government.

In general, legislators having two or three children are more among the respondents. But a large proportion of women (39%) are having two children and a large proportion of men (29%) are having three children. A majority of the legislators (60%) irrespective of their gender are having membership in one or
other social organisations. However, it is 6% more women (67%) than men (61%) who are associated with various social organisations.

Land, which is the chief asset is possessed by a large proportion of male and female (75%) legislators. But more men (78%) than women (61%) are having it. Though there is very less gender gap among the legislators who are not having property, it is more women (22%) than men (13%) who are not owning any kind of property.

In terms of experience, occupations, educational levels and ownership of property women legislators are found to be holding secondary status, the primary status being that of male legislators. The near nil presence of women in higher age groups is a very clear indicator of absence of opportunities for long political careers to women.

The male and female legislators have shown marked difference in identifying the priority issues during electioneering. Amongst those who focused on social issues the number of women (56%) is two times more than that of men (24%). As regards giving equal preference to social and economic issues the number of men (44%) is two times more than that of women (22%). None of the female legislators gave importance to identify only economic issues during campaigning. But 7% of the male legislators preferred to focus on economic issues. The social status and constituency needs have had their influence on the preferences given by the respondents. More than these, gender seemed to be having specific influence on the preferences of the legislators.
Electoral success, as is well known will be preceded by contributing factors. A high majority (64%) of the respondents identified their parties as the most important structures that have contributed to their success. The party-wise breakup of the respondents’ views regarding success factors shows that members of TDP and Left parties attached more importance to party than to personality factors. The legislators from Congress party have identified personality factors and party machinery in the order of importance. These statements should be understood in the background of TDP and Left parties’ alliance and the declining strength of the Congress party in the electoral success. The respondents of the Left parties made it very clear the negative vote to the Congress and the absence of opposition from TDP contributed to their electoral success. The success of a reasonably good proportion (28%) of women legislators have been due to the role of their families, according to them. In this connection, it should be mentioned that the women who identified their families having influential role in their success are mostly those who have entered the legislative bodies through wifehood qualification. While the importance of wifehood qualification should be recognised, the influence of the party cannot be set aside.

The proceedings in the legislature give opportunities for members to express their stand on different issues. But the legislators’ choice of subjects would be influenced by their role perceptions. It is found that both male and female legislators are interested in Question Hour which is the most lively pan of discussions in the legislatures. The percentage of male legislators (52%) showing interest in Question Hour is more than that of female legislators (39%). Experience, knowledge and service have enabled the legislators to be more active and freshers are often observers. More women (50%) than men (17%) have
shown interest in Zero Hour. It is difficult to say that gender's impact is visible in respect of raising questions, participating in Zero Hour.

The influence of party is seen more on the respondents' perceptions regarding House proceedings than on other matters. Participation in the proceedings is limited by time. This has led to several ruling party members, both men and women, complaining that they do not get adequate opportunity to take part in the House proceedings. They said that they have to compromise and confine themselves to ‘viewer’ role relegating participant role to the background. Thus, the desire to participate which is a consequence of perceptions need not be followed by performance which is ‘perception in practice’. The gap between the perceptions and performance, to a considerable extent is due to party control and non-availability of time. The study has revealed noticeable gender-based variations in identifying the subjects of interest and priorities. Most of the women respondents (66%) have given preference to women related subjects and are found to be interested in discussing these subjects. A large majority of male legislators (39%) have given preference to agriculture as the subject of their interest. One important point to be noted is that percentage of women giving preference to women issues is far higher than that of men giving first preference to agriculture. Both male and female legislators gave second importance to social welfare. But when the preference is related to background, it is noted that caste background is linked up with preference more in the case of men than that of women. An encouraging trend is that womanhood has contributed to women members cutting across party lines to work for women welfare. The ‘days of eves’ in the legislative sessions are good evidences to substantiate this argument.
The impact of gender on voting patterns is almost nil. Legislators are expected to vote according to the directions of party leadership. The whips issued by the party leaders in systems with strict party discipline, do not give scope for floor crossing. Hence, individual opinions are over powered by party decisions. Aspirations of male and female legislators are slightly varied. However, public service through their office is seen more in men (84%) than in women (61%). Name and fame is aspired by 22% women and 5% men. This is due to the women's desire for identity in politics.

Gender differences in constituency service are noted. The majority of the male legislators (49%) said that they receive requests from constituents in hundreds per week whereas, a large number of women (66%) said that it is difficult to give the exact number of requests they receive. More women members (72%) receive individual requests than male members (33%). More women (94%) than men (70%) have justified the legislators role in resolving individual problems of the constituents.

Among those legislators spending cent percent of the time other than House performance, the percentage of the male legislators (42%) is more than that of the female legislators (11%). A majority of the legislators (70%), irrespective of their gender, rely on contacting concerned bureaucrats in person. The gender difference in resolving constituency problems by contacting bureaucrats personally is 16%. More women (83%) than men (67%) rely on it. Apart from quantitative difference, qualitative difference based on gender is also noted. Women tend to avoid unconventional methods for problem solution. A small percentage (8%) of the male legislators depend on unconventional methods.
As regards the qualities required for an ideal representative, differences in opinions are noted between female and male legislators. Women in larger proportion than men stressed on accessibility to common people, honesty and service **mindedness** as the importance qualities of ideal representatives. Five percent more men than women stressed on **efficiency**, a quality that should be possessed by representatives.

Politics which is considered for a long time as a field of males has set new challenges to women seeking political roles. Women have been deprived of power possessions in politics though there is no law preventing them to hold such positions. Legally they are entitled, but functionally they are not. Hence, the struggles for women's identity and empowerment are very visible in the contemporary political systems. The just demand for women for equal political status has brought some but not adequate improvement. The need for equal representation of women both in numbers and in quality is now realised. The demand for **political** empowerment is emerging mostly from women. As noted earlier, adequate efforts have not been made to elicit the opinions of the male members on the need for women's active involvement in the political **process**. Both qualitative and quantitative gender differences regarding the need for women's active roles in politics are noted in the study. Equal proportion (94%) of male and female legislators admitted that politics is a field that can be handled **efficiently** by men as well as by women. A majority of the respondents (men 71%, women 83%) accepted that political parties are not coming forward to field women candidates. As to the reasons mentioned by the respondents for not fielding enough number of **women candidates**, gender difference is clearly noted. A high percentage of the female respondents (80%) identify male domination and gender discrimination as the chief reasons for the non-fielding of women.
candidates. A very few male legislators expressed similar views. A majority of male legislators offered absence of winning chances, women's disinterest are the chief causes preventing fielding of more women as candidates.

It is generally said that women are uncomfortable with situations of confrontations. This opinion is supported by 56% of males and only 39% of females in the sample. A significant proportion of the female (50%) and male (39%) legislators denied the statement by saying that it is only a myth. As regards women related issues being given priority there is a significant difference between the two genders. A very high percentage of women (89%) said that women's interest can be best represented by women legislators. Only 37% of the male legislators have held the same view. The gender difference in this regard is very high (53%). The demand for reservation of seats in Parliament and state legislatures have received very high (above 90%) support from both the male and female legislators. However, the support given by male legislators needs to be rechecked. Women and men have differed in identifying me primary pathway of women's development. A large proportion of men (45%) mentioned social equality whereas, a large proportion of women (39%) felt that economic power is essential for women's development in general.

The practice of giving opportunity to senior members, party and group and also to senior members of the House to express views is present in the Indian legislatures. In the distribution of time to parties and senior members, several aspiring members do not get chance to speak on the floor of the House. The possibilities of participation for the opposition parties' members is more because of the existing practice. Most of the women members of the House have short experience and are not leaders of political parties. Thus, neither do they have
seniority nor leadership positions in the party. These work as obstacles for active involvement of women in the House proceedings. From the quantitative point of view, women are at a disadvantaged position. But participation of women members in the House proceedings has never been less than their proportion in the House. The ‘sacred cow’ of seniority and low-level position in the party reduce the importance of the area of interest in respect of institutional participation. This is not to deny that those interested in speaking on specific issues are totally denied the opportunity to participate in the House proceedings. That the House is functionally weak and also unsatisfactory is the feeling present in the majority of the legislators in both men and women.

The study made clear that marked gender difference is present in the age of entry, educational levels, occupations and experience. Marked gender difference is noted in the responses to the statement, “women are uncomfortable with confrontations”. In the context of interesting subjects, receiving requests from individuals and allotment of time for constituency service also significant gender gap is found. Notable gender difference in perceptions regarding the need for women members representing women's interests is evident. In respect of caste of the legislators, property ownership, aspirations and voting patterns, variations between male and female members is marginal. On points like reservation for women in legislatures, discrimination for women in legislatures, discrimination of political parties against fielding of women candidates, electoral success factors and measures for women's development the gender difference is marginal.