CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There have been many studies on rural life, leadership, power structure, status and role of women and so on. The present study is related to the women leadership and empowerment- its social and economic analysis in connection with the political participation and more so with the rise of women power and the consequential empowerment through the Self Help Groups. As such various referred studies have been reviewed. They are important, relevant and concerned with the intention of the study and chronologically presented.

Rajani Kothari (1954)\(^1\) exhibited the role of caste in Indian politics. The author emphasized that political mobilization of various sections of Indian society had given salience to caste in Indian politics. He also pointed out that mobilization of different caste groups had been a major technique with various political parties for expanding their support base.

A study by Saberwal (1972)\(^2\) of three reserved assembly constituencies in Punjab shows that Scheduled Caste leaders had relatively limited political resources and political socialization. Therefore, the net result of this adverse condition was that the leaders refrain from adopting a stable political stance and depend on the patronage given by upper castes and the constitution. Saberwal concluded that without political reservation, the access of the SCs to various elite settings in the political arena would decline, leading to greater inequalities in society. Thus, it was clear from the study that due to political reservation, Scheduled Caste leaders were not inspired to group the larger institutional mechanisms which underlie inequalities, at the same time, the provision for reserved constituencies was indispensable for better political participation of the Scheduled Castes.

Shah (1975)\textsuperscript{3} found that in the last two decades the political participation of SC's and STs were increased considerably. But the political parties had failed in lessening the gap between the deprived communities and the upper castes at political participation.

Kiran Shukla (1987)\textsuperscript{4} tried to illustrate the impact of caste on state politics. The author attempted to find the actual influence of caste on the state politics. According to her, the impact of caste on politics has progressively been increasing and if the present situation is any indicator of the future, it is very unlikely that the impact will be reduced in future.

Benjamin (1989)\textsuperscript{5} observed that the Scheduled Castes of rural Bihar have not reached the level of power sharing despite state help. The author felt that there was some association at lower levels between social mobility and political participation. Social mobility was not taking place among the Scheduled Castes primarily because of the obstructive role of neo-rich middle castes or classes operating through musclemen and senas.

Manikyamba (1989)\textsuperscript{6} examined the role of women as beneficiaries in the political processes of development, assessing the role of women presiding officers. The author revealed that caste plays a vital role in selecting women members. Education and participation are interrelated. Economic status gives a sense of confidence and encouragement.

Michelle (1989)\textsuperscript{7} said that, in Arizona state legislature, more proposals to enact laws on women's areas of interest and feminist issues came from female legislators than from male legislators. Their legislative activity increased by getting enactment to their non-women related areas' proposals too. Compared to men, they were successful in getting approval to their proposals. In their study they also attempted to give longitudinal analysis (1969-86) on Arizona state legislature.

\textsuperscript{5}Joseph Benjamin (1989): Scheduled Castes in Indian Politics and Society, ESS Publication, Delhi.
to investigate qualitative and quantitative changes in the effects of gender on public policy. Differences in the number, subject matter and enactment rate of women's bills were found as the proportion of women in the state legislature increased by 10 per cent. Proportionally more legislation in traditional women's interest areas and in support of feminist interests than do male legislators, without ending their contribution to public policy in other areas.

Bessie House-Midamba (1990) provided an analysis of the United Nations Decade on the political empowerment of women in Kenya by focusing on the first goal of the decade, legal equality. The authors indicated that of all women in Kenya, elite women have been empowered to the largest degree as a result of the UN Decade for Women. The vast majority of women in Kenya continue to experience increased marginalization in their economic, political, social, and cultural roles. The overall change in the status of women has largely been incremental in nature.

Further, the authors said that women's political participation has been structured by their socioeconomic roots. There was a positive relationship between women's political participation and their economic background. When women have been able to participate in key political institutions in Kenya, they have proven to be relatively ineffective in promoting positive legislative remedies in order to enhance their overall status. Women's participation in the political realm has been minor and largely unfocused as they have not always spoken with one voice. The authors concluded that elite women do not truly represent the true cause of female liberation and change which would incorporate the basic human needs of lower class women.

Bobo and Gilliam (1990) reexamined black-white differences in socio-political participation using 1987 national sample survey data that included a large black oversample. The authors hypothesized that increases in black empowerment

would affect the level of black socio-political participation and change the nature of black-white differences in political behavior. Their results show that blacks in high-black-empowerment areas - as indicated by control of the mayor's office - are more active than either blacks living in low-empowerment areas or their white counterparts of comparable socio-economic status. Furthermore, their results show that empowerment influenced black participation by contributing to a more trusting and efficacious orientation to politics and by greatly increasing black attentiveness to political affairs. Belén and Bose (1990)\textsuperscript{10} argued that the condition of women in Third World societies cannot be separated from the colonial experience since the power relationships that were established during the colonial era between Europe and its territories, and between women and men, have not varied significantly and are still recreated through contemporary mechanisms. The authors also show that during the current international economic crisis, women's unpaid or underpaid labor has become the basis of new development programs and policies and is crucial to the recent phase of capitalist development. The authors discussed how the structural position and status of women and colonies closely resemble each other and have served as the foundations of the capital accumulation process and the development of industrial nations. The concept of women as a last colony thus becomes a compelling metaphor of liberation and leads us to stress the need for a worldwide process of gender decolonization, entailing the reformulation of power relations between women and men.

Chandrashekar and Anand (1991)\textsuperscript{11} found that women in zilla panchayats were different in their performance in these institutions and women had less knowledge than males regarding panchayats in Karnataka state. The authors stated that motivation, education and political experience factors were responsible for the active participation of women.


Reingold (1992)\textsuperscript{12} said that the general assumption among public is that, female legislators give importance to women's issues and are more likely to represent them. The women legislators of Arizona and California were found to be more likely to accept the link between descriptive and substantive representation that is, being a woman, actively representing women's issues. But the male colleagues rejected to agree such a link. The male and female legislators reacted contradictorily to represent groups. Women expressed a kind of commitment to represent women's concern which was rejected by men by saying that representing group is against their duty, their job is working for the entire constituency. More than men, women legislators perceived strong support from female constituents as an essential need for reelection.

LaVeist (1992)\textsuperscript{13} examined the impact of black political gains on black and white post-neonatal mortality. The author examined two dimensions of black political empowerment - absolute political power and relative political power. The author examined all U.S. central cities with a population of at least 50,000 residents, 10 per cent of whom were black. Absolute black political power did not influence post-neonatal mortality for blacks or whites. However, there was a negative association between relative black political power and the black post-neonatal mortality rate. Black political power had no significant effect on white post-neonatal mortality.

Kahn (1993)\textsuperscript{14} examined the political advertisement of contestants and observed that, male and female candidates in U.S. Senate Elections held during 1984-86 focussed on policy matters with similar campaign strategies in their appeal to voters through T.V. But men have tended to concentrate on economic issues, while women have been found much more likely to discuss social issues,


education and health policy. These differences were evident in campaign but not presented in media coverage.

Tremblay (1993)\textsuperscript{15} observed the influence of gender, political party, political philosophy and feminism among candidates of 1989 Quebec General Election. The author examined the reactions of male, female candidates to the demands formulated by feminist movement. These demands are related to family and reproduction, employment, politics and culture. Though candidates belong to three different political parties (New Democratic Party of Quebec, the Liberal Party of Quebec and the Party of Quebecois), in all the three parties, a majority of women than men expressed favourable opinions towards the demands of feminist movement. The differences among them were high specifically on family and reproduction, employment and culture.

According to One Country (1993)\textsuperscript{16} Report, while women are poorly represented in the lower levels of government, they are rarer still in the upper echelons of decision-making. The absence of women from structures of governance inevitably means that national, regional and local priorities i.e. how resources are allocated 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. Further, the report showed that, a study in three widely differing countries - Bolivia, Cameroon and Malaysia - were women to have a greater say in spending priorities, they would be far more likely to spend family and community resources for improving health, education, community infrastructure and the eradication of poverty, as opposed to the military, alcohol or gambling.

Vidya’s (1994)\textsuperscript{17} study revealed that majority of the elected women members belong to the age group between 25- 45 years and this goes against the


\textsuperscript{17}Vidya K.C (1994): Women and Panchayati Raj Institutions: Case Study of a District in Karnataka, Ph. D Thesis submitted to the University of Mysore.
traditional attitude that it is only aged people who become members of panchayats. The author also observed that though the numerical strength of the women members has increased they have not been able to effect decision making substantially.

Lehman et. al. (1994)\textsuperscript{18} examined that women are far more disadvantaged when it comes to the resources that facilitate active political activity. Some of the agencies that facilitate pathways to political activities are non-political organisations like charity houses and churches. For example, women of America are equally affiliated with them on par with men, but significant differences are there between the sexes in contributing to campaigns, contacting officials and belonging to political organisations. Further, the role of money has to be given weightage in understanding these differences. Voluntary organisations play a significant role in promoting political participation and especially in bringing women into political life. But financial contributions to these organisations have a bearing on women's involvement in politics. Another point is, women are at a disadvantageous position in making frequent contributions due to traditional division of labour in the house which disables them to claim equal economic status along with men and prevents them from catching political power through such organisations which play instrumental role in enhancing political participation.

Cole and Stewart (1996)\textsuperscript{19} examined the correlates of midlife political participation among 64 Black and 107 White women of the college classes of 1967–1973. Compared with White women, Black women scored higher on political participation, generativity, power discontent, and politicization. Factor analysis of personality and political attitude variables yielded three factors labeled Political Identity, Power Discontent, and Social Responsibility. Adult political participation was regressed on level of student activism and index scores of political identity, power discontent, and social responsibility. For both racial


groups, social responsibility was associated with midlife political participation. For White women, political identity was also related; for Black women, student activism bore a significant relationship. The authors suggested that Black and White women's historical and political contexts imbued their political activities with different meanings.

Govinda Gowda and et. al. (1996)\textsuperscript{20} found that the women members of developed taluks were found to play a better developmental role than their counterparts in the backward taluks. The authors revealed that among the socio-economic attributes such as age, education, caste, annual household income and land holding of women leaders, only education and annual household income had a highly significant and positive relationship with their developmental role performance. The authors stated that women members of the panchayat raj institutions could play an effective developmental role if they are given adequate recognition and encouragement.

Jayaweera (1997)\textsuperscript{21} opined that education is widely perceived as an indicator of the status of women and even more importantly, as an agent for the empowerment of women. The author examined the relationship between education and several facets of empowerment, using the macro statistics on countries in Asia presented in the United Nations Human Development Report, 1995, which attempts to compute country specific 'Gender Empowerment Measures', as well as data from qualitative studies in selected representative countries. The author concluded that there is no positive linear relationship between education and the economic, social and political empowerment of women, as a consequence of the interface of gender ideologies and social and economic structural constraints.


Pippert and Comer (1998)\textsuperscript{22} emphasised the concept of political empowerment which has been applied to ethnic and racial minorities, where it has been shown to positively influence political attitudes and participation. The authors examined whether women who are represented by women in Congress are more likely to be interested in and participate in politics using data from the 1992 National Election Study and *Almanac for American Politics* 1990, 1992, and 1994, have a greater sense of political efficacy, competence, and trust, and evaluate Congress as an institution more favorably than women represented by men.

Matland (1998)\textsuperscript{23} argued that one of the most important features of the society, connected with women’s representation levels, is a country’s state of development. Hence development leads to a weakening of traditional values, decreased fertility rates, increased urbanization, greater education and labor force participation for women, and attitudinal changes. According to Matland’s assumption when women are different from men in levels of literacy, workforce participation, and university education - and thus not equal to men in the social spheres - they are less likely to be seen as men’s equals in the political sphere.

Cole, Zucker and Ostrove (1998)\textsuperscript{24} examined the hypothesis that women who took part in student movements of the 1960s would be distinguishable from their contemporaries in terms of political ideology, political behavior, and feminism in middle age. Women who had been identified as student activists in public records during the late 1960s and early 1970s were compared to a sample of non-activist peers. Although the two groups scored similarly on variables related to work and family arrangements, former activists scored higher on measures of leftist political orientation and political efficacy, reported greater political salience and collectivism, and reported greater current political participation. Although

both groups reported high levels of feminist consciousness and identity, activists scored significantly higher.

Singh (1999) examined the nature of deprivation of the Scheduled Castes and also discussed its implications for effective political participation. He observed that the phenomenon of deprivation arises out of inequitable distribution of and access to both material and non-material resources in a society.

Sara Hlupekile Longwe (2000) observed that at the national level, women’s empowerment means women controlling resources through their presence in government, and having the opportunities to allocate those resources so that women and men benefit equally. It means their participation in parliaments to vote for discriminatory laws to be removed from statute books, government regulations, administrative practice, and from all custom and tradition. Reliance on promoting women’s political advancement by a strategy of increasing women’s education, or by ‘leadership training’, is a mistake. For example, an NGO that is supposed to be enabling more women to gain entry into parliament can adopt an approach of providing leadership training for potential women candidates. This strategy implicitly blames women for their lack of access to the resources of education, and their lack of participation in government, because of their alleged lack of confidence and leadership skills. In fact, the key problem should be identified as the covert and discriminatory systems of male resistance to women who dare to challenge male domination of the present political system. It is in the nature of empowerment that it cannot be given. It has to be taken. If we wait for male patriarchal government to give power to women, we shall wait forever. We would do better to ignore patriarchal claims that we lack the prerequisites of education, confidence, or leadership qualities. On the contrary, it is the patriarchal state which has already given us the only necessary prerequisite that we need - moral outrage against the injustice of our present mistreatment and subordination.

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Subha and Bargava (2000)\textsuperscript{27} noticed that Karnataka has the distinction of having the highest number of women elected at all levels of panchayats, 46.7 per cent for gram panchayat, 40.2 per cent for taluk panchayat and 36.45 per cent for zilla panchayat whereas at the national level 40 per cent women got elected to gram panchayat, 40 per cent to taluk panchayat and 39 per cent to zilla panchayat. The members of all-women panchayat at Mydolalu village of Shimoga district in Karnataka, have been elected for the first time and work of the village was better than that of the mixed panchayats.

Panda (2000)\textsuperscript{28} attempted to arrive at an operational definition of empowerment based on a literature review. The definition encompasses a few key elements such as power, autonomy and self-reliance, entitlement, participation, awareness development and capacity building. For a proper understanding of the process of empowerment, a systems view is presented in which all the relevant inter-linked elements have been analysed, such as the external agency (NGO), target group, development project/programme, immediate environments of the target group and external agency, and the macro-environment in which the target group and the NGO exist. Such a systems view would throw light on the differential impact of similar NGO initiated projects and processes on different target groups/communities. Further a seven-step process of assessment of women's empowerment is discussed within the systems framework. The steps are-assessments of the macro-environment, the external agency environment, the external agency, the target group environment, the target group, the development programme/project and lastly integration of the assessment process. Such a framework will help the organisations involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of development projects from the point of view of understanding, incorporating and assessing empowerment related issues at the grass root level.


According to Vijayanti (2000)\textsuperscript{29} empowerment is a process whereby women become able to organize themselves to increase their own self-reliance, to assert their independent right to make their choices and control their resources, which will assist in challenging and eliminating their own subordination. Empowerment is also a process of awareness and capacity building leading to greater participation, a greater decision making power and control.

Stephen and Raj Sekaran (2001)\textsuperscript{30} identified achievements and constraints of the women gram panchayat members in Karnataka state. It was observed that there were more stumbling blocks than building blocks for the first generation. Still some of the women could emerge victorious due to the determination and perseverance got through training. According to the authors, four basic factors - mobility, personal strength, educational status and training were responsible for better performance by women as gram panchayat members.

Satapathy (2002)\textsuperscript{31} observed that many women were elected due to pressure from husbands or influential politicians. The author expressed that 42 per cent of them took part in decision making and 58 per cent of them were unable to strike entry into actual panchayat decision making. The handicaps noticed are lack of education, articulation and self-confidence.

Vijayalakshmi (2002)\textsuperscript{32} examined complexities of political representation of women’s interest in the panchayats in Karnataka. The author argued that women’s interests are not an issue in the panchayats due to factors like lack of effective participation, absence of consolidation of gender specific concerns.

Subha and Bargava (2002)\textsuperscript{33} defining feminism considered reservation as one of the instruments of political empowerment as it guarantees representation. While analyzing elections for panchayats in Karnataka after the 1993 Act, the authors revealed that mostly illiterate women with no political background have become members. They observed that reservation policy can be used to advance women’s agenda.

Chhibber (2002)\textsuperscript{34} attributed the limited presence of women in legislative bodies to the fact that many women are still confined to the household. To support this the author conducted a survey in a state of Northern India to assess which women have been able to take the opportunity to join local bodies where, one-third of all seats, are now reserved for women. The author suggested that even after controlling for demographic factors, only those women who have an identity that is independent of the household are likely to avail the opportunity to contest elections for local bodies. The author then extended the findings from the Indian case to other nations by analyzing the World Values Survey and found that similar patterns exist globally. It is women who have an identity outside the household who are more likely to be politically active.

Mandal (2003)\textsuperscript{35} indicated that the participation of women in panchayat process has allowed them to emerge as effective leaders and to act as catalytic agents by infusing confidence, assertiveness and providing stimulus for social change among other women. At the grass root level only beginning has been made and wholesome acceptance of women in every facet of life is still to come.

Kudva (2003)\textsuperscript{36} observed that 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. As important is the fact that nongovernmental organizations often provide significant training and support in successful cases. Engineering elections thus highlight possibilities for change through increased participation by women.

According to Inter-Parliamentary Union (2004)\(^\text{37}\) political empowerment refers to the equitable representation of women in decision-making structures, both formal and informal, and their voice in the formulation of policies affecting their societies. The Inter-Parliamentary Union reports a world average of only 15.6 per cent in combined houses of parliament. The statistics by region offered few surprises, ranging from 6.8 per cent in the Arab States to 18.6 per cent in the Americas, and while women are poorly 39.7 per cent in the Nordic States.

Pai (2004)\(^\text{38}\) examined the politics of identity, the role of social capital in resolving conflicts among social groups competing for the benefits of development within the new panchayats established under the 73\textsuperscript{rd} Amendment Act in Uttar Pradesh. The author shows that the new panchayats are an arena of conflicts and contestation over scarce resources, social status and political power. Conflicts have increased not only between the dominant castes and Dalits, but the increasing differentiation of identities and awareness has sharpened competition and conflicts between sections of the rural poor. The author argued that social capital in the form of communal solidarity has united the Dalits for joint social and political action against the upper and middle castes. But in negative terms, increased social awareness, politicization and the improvement in their economic position, has divided the group of their own community with whom they have common

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economic interests. This means that group identities have the potential to create strong reservoirs of social capital within segments.

Chattopadhayay and Duflo (2004)\(^{39}\) studied the impact of women's leadership on policy decisions. Since the mid-1990's, one third of Village Council head positions in India have been randomly reserved for a woman. In these councils only women could be elected to the position of head. Village Councils are responsible for the provision of many local public goods in rural areas. The authors compared the type of public goods provided in reserved and unreserved Village Councils in West Bengal and Rajasthan. The authors showed that the reservation of a council seat affected the types of public goods provided. Specifically, leaders invest more in infrastructure that is directly relevant to the needs of their own genders.

Htun Mala (2004)\(^{40}\) focussed on the varying ways that gender and ethnic identities intersect with partisan cleavages and on the distinct “work” performed by the different remedies for underrepresentation. Quotas, which make space within existing parties, are appropriate for groups whose boundaries crosscut partisan divisions. Reservations, which create incentives for the formation of group-specific parties and permit them direct representation, suit groups whose boundaries coincide with political cleavages. Since gender is crosscutting while ethnicity tends to be coinciding, women receive candidate quotas while ethnic groups get legislative reservations. Claims for inclusion via quotas pose less of a challenge to liberal institutions than claims to difference through legislative reservations.

Kabeer (2005)\(^{41}\) examined the empirical evidence on the impact of microfinance with respect to poverty reduction and empowerment of poor women. It becomes apparent that while access to financial services can and does make vital

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contributions to the economic productivity and social well-being of poor women and their households, it does not "automatically" empower women, just as with other interventions, such as education, political quotas, etc, that seek to bring about a radical structural transformation that true empowerment entails.

Cornwall and Goetz (2005) scrutinized the factors that constrain and enable women’s political effectiveness in these democratic arenas. The authors suggested that engendering democracy by adding women or multiplying democratic spaces is essential but not enough to address historically and culturally embedded forms of disadvantages. The authors also suggested that an important determinant of political effectiveness which has been neglected is women’s political apprenticeship, their experiences in political parties, civil society associations and the informal arenas in which political skills are learned and constituencies built. They argued that there is a need to build new pathways into politics and to foster political learning and to create new forms of articulation across and beyond existing democratic spaces to enhance the potential of women’s political participation.

Dahlerup and Freidenvall (2005) identified two discourses: the incremental track versus the fast track to women's parliamentary representation, and argued that the Scandinavian countries – which represent the incremental track – may no longer be a valid model for ways to improve women's representation. The authors also analysed the implementation process, and concluded that, without specifications of quota provisions that match the electoral system in question, and rules about the rank order of candidates as well as sanctions for non-compliance, quota provisions may be merely symbolic.

Omvedt (2005) examined various women empowerment initiatives like community management, local governance and reservations. The author also

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analysed the representation of women in parliaments of these countries and suggested that what is needed is not a retreat from demanding quotas, but a consideration of the most useful forms of such reservations. Along with this, women’s representation in the bureaucracy and in the structures of political parties also has to be increased.

Jayal (2006) examined that whether participation in the institutions has enabled women to articulate and advance their interests. To evaluate this, the author deployed 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 the author pointed out 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. The author suggested 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.

Beteta (2006) argued that the Gender Empowerment Measure is an incomplete and biased index on women’s empowerment, which measures inequality among the most educated and economically advantaged and fails to include important non-economic dimensions of decision-making power both at the household level and over women’s own bodies and sexuality. The author identified and assessed potential indicators in those spheres currently absent in the Gender Empowerment Measure (household and individual dimensions) after addressing in more depth the relevance and limitations of existent and potential indicators on women’s empowerment in the political and economic spheres. Finally, the author stressed that empowerment is not primarily an outcome, but a process; as such, there are elements enabling or limiting it, such as — but not limited to — the legal and regulatory framework. The author suggested the construction of a new

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aggregated measure on the Gender Empowerment Enabling Environment of countries.

Joti Sekhon (2006)\(^4\) discussed efforts to promote women's effective participation in electoral politics in rural India as an illustration of feminist politics and participatory democracy. The author 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 73\(^{rd}\) Amendment to the Indian Constitution in 1993, reserving 33 per cent 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. The author analyzed 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.

Hazarika (2006)\(^5\) conducted a survey from in three Districts of Assam, namely Sonitpur, Cachar and Nalbari, covering 16 villages, and 12 panchayats (coming under some of the worst flood affected blocks of Assam) to find out about the participation of women in local self-governance in Assam. Samples cut across three categories of Women, viz., elected women, General women and Women Panchayat Leaders. The author highlighted gross unawareness and misconceptions regarding the panchayati raj institution and 73\(^{rd}\) amendment, and strongly recommended sensitization, training and capacity building of both men and


women alike as the primary step in any endeavor to implement these democratic measures, through an empirical study of rural Assam.

Misra (2006)\textsuperscript{49} attempted to (re)define empowerment of women in India as an open-ended process aiming at the felicitating (i) abolition of gender-based discrimination in all institutions and structures of the India society and (ii) participation of women in policy and decision making processes at private and public levels of assorted activities, qualified by all dyadic relations among mind, matter, politics of knowledge, gender politics, and poetics of lack and desire.

Dahlerup (2007)\textsuperscript{50} discussed the basic principles of gender quotas in politics. It is shown that many different types of gender quotas are in use and that various types are preferred in different regions in the world. Variations are also found according to level of democracy and electoral system. The implication of different quota regimes, defined as the combination of the electoral system and the quota type applied, is scrutinised in relation to two different concepts of equality: equality of opportunity and equality of result. The author concluded that – contrary to what is commonly believed – electoral gender quotas come closer to providing real equality of opportunity than equality of result. Quota regimes may even increase competition over elected positions, since gender quotas change the most common de facto situation, where men only compete with men.

Kumar and Rai (2007)\textsuperscript{51} attempted to ascertain the underlying patterns and themes of women's political participation and their levels of inclusion or exclusion from the political process. A balance sheet of gender participation in formal politics reveals that there has been marked increase in voting turnout and election campaigning among women although they still continue to be excluded from legislative bodies at national and state level and deprived from key decision making positions in government and political parties. The authors shows that

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‘interest in polities’ as the key determinant and one of the best predictors of women's levels of political participation. Among other factors that seem to determine the intensity of women's formal participation in politics, ‘media exposure’ - proxy for awareness - emerges as important variable. The authors mentioned that key areas that need to be addressed for improving political participation of women and inclusion in the political process are - affirmative action, better representation in legislative bodies and political parties, particularly in the decision making bodies as well as cabinet berths in government at center and state level in partnership with civil society.

Burnet (2008)\textsuperscript{52} explored the dramatic increase in women's participation in public life and representation in governance and the increasing authoritarianism of the Rwandan state under the guise of ‘democratization’. The increased political participation of women in Rwanda represents a paradox in the short term: as their participation has increased, women's ability to influence policy making has decreased. In the long term, however, increased female representation in government could prepare the path for their meaningful participation in a genuine democracy because of a transformation in political subjectivity.

Bhavani (2009)\textsuperscript{53} examined an unusual natural experiment in India in which randomly chosen seats in local legislatures are set aside for women for one election at a time. The author found using data from Mumbai that the probability of a woman winning office conditional on the constituency being reserved for women in the previous election is approximately five times the probability of a woman winning office if the constituency had not been reserved for women. The author also explored tentative evidence on the mechanisms by which reservations affect women's ability to win elections. The author suggested that reservations work in part by introducing into politics women who are able to win elections after


reservations are withdrawn and by allowing parties to learn that women can win elections.

Geetha and Indira (2011)\textsuperscript{54} observed that silkworm rearing is an important source of livelihood for rural women in Karnataka, South India. It means financial security, increased socio-economic status, increased control over decision-making and the opportunity to save and spend. The women are self-employed, carry out silkworm rearing in the vicinity of or in their own homesteads with a known peer group, which helps them to balance both household and economic activity.

Nair (2012)\textsuperscript{55} observed that women’s participation in the political process is critical both to the strengthening of democratic traditions and to their struggle against oppression. Political activism of women as for other underprivileged groups is integral to social transformation. Unless women are brought to the decision making levels directly important women issues will never be tackled with the seriousness they require. The momentum therefore requires considerable strengthening and acceleration. Countries that promote women’s rights and increase their access to resources and schooling have lower poverty rates, faster economic growth and less corruption than countries that do not.

Hossain (2012)\textsuperscript{56} attempted to analyse the participation of women members of the Union Parishad (UP), the lowest tier of the three-tier rural local government system of Bangladesh, and the influence of prevalent social norms and values in rural Bangladesh on their participation in decision-making and policy implementation. More specifically, the author highlighted how such norms, the practice of purdah and the organisational culture of the UP impinge on women’s participation in UP meetings, rural Salish, and implementation of development activities at the community level. The author show that although some women members do participate in decision-making, policy formulation and policy


implementation, patriarchal norms and values still extensively constrained them. The UP is mostly male dominated and non-cooperation of men persists as one of the barriers to enhancing women’s participation in the UP.

Sengupta (2013)\textsuperscript{57} argued that microfinance can at best become a coping strategy for poor people, with the onus of survival falling disproportionately on women without necessarily benefiting them in terms of rights and entitlements. However, the author shows that it is possible for organisations to use microfinance as a tool to connect women to larger collectives and processes that are empowering. Such organisational initiatives require the right perspectives rather than huge funds. Thus, subversion of the neoliberal agenda can happen when microfinance is shorn of its larger than life image and used as a strategy in specific contexts.

Jafar, K (2013)\textsuperscript{58} tried to see the implications of reservation policy on the political freedom of women in Kerala based on the capability approach. Using a primary survey of candidates in a recent panchayat election in Malappuram district of Kerala the author established the role of reservation in bringing many educated young women into local politics and decision-making bodies. The author also reflected on the role of party and non-party forces such as family and religion in local politics and political freedom of women. The author concluded that the new reservation has resulted in improving the constitutive political freedom of educated-young women in Kerala, but the instrumental political freedom resulted from reservation has not been as evident.

Kumar (2013)\textsuperscript{59} attempted to understand the impact of microfinance on women empowerment through a case study in Tamil Nadu. The author found that even though women have experienced an increase in income and consumption, they have very little control over resources, assets and do not participate equally in


major household decisions. However, they have significant influence on the choices that their children make. The author found that the real bottlenecks are the hierarchical nature of society, the lack of entrepreneurial talent and risk-taking ability in these women.

Patnaik (2014) examined whether women’s representation through quotas and subsequent participation in the local governance makes a difference in politics. Based on an empirical study of eight Gram Panchayats in the state of Odisha, the author explored whether the women elected members in decentralised government institutions considerably pronounce and document women’s issues and interests. Contrary to the commonly held belief that seat reservation would bring elitists women to politics, the author observed that three-fourth of the women representatives coming through quotas belong to middle and lower castes of society. Further, the author highlighted that association with political families is a trend as common among women as men, and therefore, it would be wrong to have a simplistic understanding that quotas would result in politically influential families putting their women members of the family as proxies in politics.

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