CHAPTER 4

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT PROCESS IN INDEPENDANT INDIA
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Women empowerment process in Independent India

4.1 Introduction:

The topic of the present research is ‘Women’s political participation in Municipalities and Municipal Corporations field in Dhule district.’ In this research the political participation of women is to be studied therefore it becomes necessary to know their present status, in association to this the process of women empowerment will be studied in this chapter. Different laws are made time to time by the central as well as State Government for the comprehensive development of women and to increase their contribution in national and social development. Besides it, different movements had also been run for the upliftment of status of a woman in society. So it becomes necessary to review all these movements with association to this present research.

Therefore, the social, economical and political status of women, different feminine movements, different laws and its stages about women empowerment and women leadership will be discussed in this chapter.

4.2 The Social, Economical and Political Status of women in India:

In Indian culture not a single task in our life will be completed without the participation of woman, so she is called as ‘Ardhangini’. It seems so much importance of the woman in human life. But it is observed that; the religious system, - which is the origin of the caste system; had given the worst position to woman in India. But as the time passed, there was also thorough change in the status of woman. This change was Judgmental as well as non-Judgmental type. During these entire changes one positive thing happened that, the process of women empowerment gets developed. It is also seen that the position of ‘man’ in a ‘male dominated family system’ in India became stronger and stronger and the position of women downed to the worst position.

The index of a social development of any society cannot decided unless the study of the social status, prestige, the economic and political condition of women in that
society. For that purpose it becomes necessary to know about the social, political and economic status of women in India.

4.2.1 Ancient Vedic Period to Medieval Period:

Before studying the present status of women in India, it is necessary to study the condition of women from Vedic period. It is observed that, in ancient period no any unreasonable restrictions were applied on women. “In ancient time the marriage of woman was conducted when the girl becomes completely mature physically and she had been given a complete freedom to choose her life partner.”

It is seen that, in the contemporary period of Panini the women had political power. “It is observed that, Gargi and Maitreyee had participated in the formal debate in the court of the Sages and Wise King Janak.” During ancient period the unjust tradition of ‘Sati’ was not observed. On contrary, the society was permitting the remarriage of widow. But it is also observed in the same period that, there was an incident in which of Droupadi was desecrated in the whole royal court. It is also seen that, the blessing like ‘Ashtaputra Saubhagywati Bhav’ (May you have 8 sons), which was the indication of the thought that the social status of a son is greater than the status of girl, also nourished in the same period.

It is seen that, in Manu’s period “The efforts were done to make a worst image of woman in the society and those attempts were succeeded.” Amrita Pritam has explained emphatically that “The condition of woman in this period was like dough of flour. The rats would nibble it; if it remains inside and the crows would prick it if goes outside.”

It is observed that, in the medieval period, the outsider’s invaders like Mughal, Turk, and Arab had treated women as only a thing to be used and throw and so to protect them from these outsiders invader. Indian women imprisoned themselves in houses and thus their social activities got deemed and many restrictions were forced upon them. It is seen that in medieval period many women like Jijabai, Ahilyabai Holkar, Chandbibi, Rani Laxmibai, and Razia Sultan had left their impressions in politic, social affairs as well as in economic affairs. “Gond Queen Durgawati had reigned for 15 years successfully before her heroic death in battle with Mughal.”

“In southern India many women conducted administration in different villages and cities as well as they
worked as heralds in religious and social institutions.”  

But in spite of all these, Medieval period is recognized as a period making the woman confined. In the same period the ‘Pardah Method’ (veil-custom) was established and become prevalent. So that the women were restricted to outcome from their houses in the same period. Such a decline of women is seen that, they started considering themselves as helpless, powerless; dependent on husband and the husband’s word was the ultimate order for them. They had prepared their mentality such that, birth of woman is only for the tolerance to suffer and to go through the pains and distress.

Today also the same mentality is observed to some extent.

4.2.2 British Period:

In the British period, it is seen that the Mahatma Jyotirao Phule and his wife, Savitribai (Phule Couple) had recognized the importance of education and they had done the efforts to raise the status of women. It is also seen that, the wives of many Christian missionaries had also take some efforts for women education in India. So it can be said that the upliftment process of woman was started in the real sense in this British period. In the British period it is described that, “Indian Hindu women were naturally blameless, non-adulterous and virtuous.”

Indian women are described as having such great qualities, but in spite of that they had to remain veiled. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Pandit Ishwarchandra Vidysagar and Justice Govind Ranade etc. these social reformers had done tremendous efforts to eradicate these bad customs and traditions from the Indian society. So a political and educational awareness was emerging in Indian women due to the reformatory works of all these social reformers. So many efforts were done to the great extent for the education of women. As per the report of Imperial Census Commissioner in 1881, “Only five lakh fifty thousand (5, 50,000) women were educated at that time.”

It is seen that in the British period, in more or less amount women became conscious in some extent due to education.

“In 1917 the delegation of Indian Women had a meeting with the Secretary of Foreign Affairs demanding the political rights for women. Besides its all India Women education conference was held in 1927.” It is seen that due to all such activities as well as the efforts of social reformers women were developed self respect to some extents
successfully. It is seen that, the social reformers had succeeded to develop the feeling in women that they can also do great things for rising up themselves. Mahatma Gandhi said, “a mother nurtures the bodies of her children by the same way she must nurture their mind to develop the qualities like freedom, fearlessness and determination.” Thus it is observed that, in this period due to the continuous efforts of social reformers they could develop self confidence and self respect in the women.

4.2.3 The Period after Independence:

The movement of the reformation about women started in British period is seen to be continued after independence also. After independence the Indian constitution has tried to empower the women by giving them many constitutional rights, the Indian constitution gave them the right to vote without any struggle. “Only in India 16.36% women are lives out of whole world.” The India in which such a more women population is there, has bestowed equal rights, equal opportunity and the guarantee of equal pay and wages for the equal work, by constitution. It is seen that, through all these equality the efforts are done to develop the social and economic status of women.

4.2.3.1 Social & Educational Status:

Many provisions are made in Indian constitution to empower the women. But then again the real condition of women in society is pitiable. Many rights are bestowed to the women by making laws, but the implementation of these laws are not done properly. Consequently, it is seen that there is an increase in the outraised on women. In an Indian male dominated culture the addiction habits of men directly affects on slaying on women.

The former Chief Justice of the court of Domestic Affairs, Meera Khadakkar Says, “The rapes or other violent incidents on women occur due to alcoholic drinks.”

Not only in the field of the education, but almost in all fields of life, women are not seen to lag behind than men. Many attempts are done on time to time by Government also to help the women to lead a safe and self esteemed life. But the attitude of society, to look at the women is not seen to be changed in consequent manner. It is seen that, she has to suffer the injustice by society. The crime clock maintained by National Crime
Records Bureau reveals shocking figures that “One crime committed against women in every three minutes, one molestation case in every 15 minutes, one rape case in every 29 minutes, one sexual harassment case in every 53 minutes, and one dowry death case in every 77 minutes.”

According to Indian customs and traditions, in India women are classified into two groups like a well borne upper class women and other is Bahujan, Dalit, Adivasi (lower) women. If any woman is born in higher class, she was to suffer from a subordinate position, because in our so call society a woman is always given a subordinate position. In the ladder of the caste system Bahujan Samaj is at the lowest position. So the women born in Bahujan society have to suffer the double subordinate position. It’s seemed that, the Indian women have to struggle caste discrimination as well as the sex discrimination. But it is observed that the government had done many efforts for the upliftment and development of the downward women by giving them various facilities in education and by implementing many policies for their economic development to empower them.

To provide a prestigious and self respect like to the women different types of remedies are done by Indian government in Hindu Code Bill, such as to give her a share in hereditary property, an equal share in inheritance etc. As a result of all these efforts it is seen that Indian Women have got a social prestige, self respect and they are now participating and impressing their own imprint in almost every field of life.

As like whole India, Maharashtra has also got the inheritance of many great women deeds, Maharashtra led on path of such modern thoughts, so the condition of women in Maharashtra is seen better.

“According to the census of 2001, there are 2,46,78,031 women population in Maharashtra and the number of women in the urban part of Dhule District are 2,13,877.” It is observed that, in Maharashtra women has created their own position by their capability in the fields of agriculture, science and technology as well as in administrative field. In spite of this as per the latest report of NCRB, “In Maharashtra, 15728 crimes charges are there, out of which the most are of Rape. In the smuggling Maharashtra is at on third rank.” From all these information it can be said that the
view to see towards women is only a thing of sexual enjoyment. But Maharsashtra Government has taken an important step ahead. Maharsashtra Govt. has declared a woman policy for the empowerment of women to improve the status of a woman in the society. In this women policy the discussion is done on the provisions like Gender Audit, a charter for women etc. In Maharsashtra women are working recently on the post of Secretary in Ministry, As a Chief Commissioner of State Election Commission and it is seen that women are getting the equal treatment and equal opportunity in many social and political fields.

It is observed that, in India the talks on the subject sex discrimination, women literacy were started in the real sense after 1970. The factor education was getting more and more importance to make a woman powerful. In this period, the only obstacle in the education of girls was the custom and traditions bounded Indian Society!! But it is observed that in the same period there was an increase in the ratio of women literacy due to different opportunities of education. This is shown by the following Table No.4.1

Table No.4.1: The Rate of Women Literacy in India.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Rate of Woman Literacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>8.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>15.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>21.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>29.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>39.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>54.16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>64.84%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source:  
i) Census of India Report 1951 to 2011  
i-www.censusindia.gov.in/2011census/censusinfo/dashboard/index.html

Rate of woman literacy is comparatively less during the period of 1951 to 1971, but there is a remarkable increase after 1971. Before 1970 more than 50% of women were illiterate and so their illiteracy was the factor which was the obstacle in their development. After 2001, it is seen that there was an increase in the literacy of women up to more than 50%, so there is an increase in process of women empowerment.
Maharashtra Government has done many strenuous exertions for the education of women. “Maharashtra Govt. Has taken the decision on 7th June, 1996 to give imarts free education to the girls.”(16) There was a positive effect of it. “According to the census of 2001, 67.51% women in Maharashtra were literate. This ratio is 13.23% more than the proportion of the nation.”(17) In 2011 there was a remarkable increase in this proportion. “The ratio of women literacy in Maharashtra is 75.48% and the proportion of women illiteracy in Dhule district is 66.21%.”(18)

Maharashtra Govt. has provided many facilities for women to develop awareness in them about education and to make them well and highly educated. “The percentages of girl pupils in polytechnic in Maharashtra is only 6 to 17.7 %.”(19). So it is seen that to increase this percentage in Maharashtra the facilities like separate vocational training institutes, polytechnics and reservation in engineering for girls are provided by Govt. of Maharashtra. To make the women capable and strong, they should be educated as well as became economically independent. For this, it is necessary to give them higher vocational education. If women would take such types of training then they would earn and become economically independent. Therefore it is observed that Govt. of Maharashtra has provided different facilities for women in vocational education. So the number of women taking higher vocational education is seen to be increasing presently.

4.2.3.2. Economical Status:

Many efforts are seen to be done from the period before independence to fill gap of equality between a man and a women. After independence many laws were made in India to finish this inequality and to make women economically empower. In 1956 the Act of Hindu hereditary right was implemented and Hindu Women got a right of share in inherited property. After the availability of the opportunity of education, the women become independent and came out of the houses the restrictions for earning. But it is observed that, though they were earning the money but they had no freedom or right to spend that money. According to one National Family Survey done in India, “Only 20.25% salaried women are having freedom to spend their salary as they wish.”(20) It seems that, though the women get earnings; society has not accepted their position as
equal to men. Many attempts are seen to be done in India since independence to change this mentality of society and to create self confidence in women by making them economically empower. It is seen that, in the 3rd five year planning India tried to make women as self independent. The effort were done to make women economically self independent like reservation in service and jobs, scheme of self employment for women. It is seen that, many efforts are being done to make a women economically empower by implementing different schemes like saving groups (Bachat Gat), self help women group, vocational training of women etc.; and by encouraging them for this schemes. But in spite of all these effort, “The contribution of women in National income is only 27%.”

The Bush and Company had a done a survey in 2012 about the availability of employment. According to them, “Survey was done in 128 countries and India ranks 115th in them.” It is observed that, the process of women economical empowerment was accelerated in the real sense from 6th five year planning. Special efforts are seen to be done in India to create skilled, unskilled women workers, technicians etc. On one side it is seen that different opportunities of jobs are made available to women in different industries, foreign companies, by giving them vocational training and education. Many Indian women earning more than males by their intellect; Purhaps, it is also seen that,”the women in the society is faced the maximum suffarage of economical disparity.” Many Indian women are seen to be working in many reputed institutes. They have got an honorable position in those institutes. Many women are sent to be working as upper class officers in many financial and administrative organizations. In the world the upper class women are about 20% and in that Indian women are only 5%.”

In India where the almost half of the total population are women, “the proportion of works participation of women in 1991 was only 22.73%. In 2005 it increased up to 25.68%. In this proportion in 1991 the proportion of urban women was 9.74% and it get increased in 2001 up to 11.55 %.”

In Maharashtra it is seen that women became educated and are taking now equal or somewhat more salary than men. It is also observed that, women are working almost in all fields of life equally to men by breaking the concept of ‘Chul Ani Mul’ (cooking and care taker of baby). It is seen that, “40 women are selected and offering their services in I.A.S., 8 women in I.P.S. and 7 in Indian Foreign Services (IFS)”.

The work
participation rate of women in Maharashtra, in 2001 was 30.81% and in that proportion of urban women is 12.57% and proportion of rural women is 41.61%.” (27) In urban area women are working in vast range of fields. They are seen to be working as teacher as well as in the researcher carried in laboratory and are trying to earn money. In rural area the efforts are done to a large extent to make rural women economically independent and empower through women self help groups. In Maharashtra a long chain of these saving groups has established to make the women economically empower. The Govt. of Maharashtra “taking a decision on 15th Sept., 1992 that, the name of wife must be registered on the revenue papers (Revenue Form No.7/12) as co-partner” (28) for becoming a women empower and economically independent.

It is seen that, if women are educated then only, they will become economically independent and they can develop their confidence. If they got economic independence and get settled in life then they start participating in social and political works.

4.2.3.3. Political Status:

Indian constitution has bestowed the political rights to Indian women without anymore struggle. It is observed that, in political field also by participating in different movements after independence. After independence women were participated in different movement in a great manner and prove that they can participate in political field enthusiastically. After independence “in the 1st general parliament elections held in 1951 women members were elected 4.4% of the total members of house. After 45 year of independence there was only increase of 3.5% and this proportion became 7.9%. But it is seen that, in 15th general parliament election held in 2009 elected women members were increased up to 59% and this proportion was the 10.8% of the total members.

The Rajya Sabha the proportion of women member was 7.3% in 1951. It is observed that, the ratio of women members was increasing continuously. In 1984, it was 11.4% and again there was an increase and in 1991 it become 15.5%. But in 2009 it was only 8.57%.” (29) In short, it is seen that, we can say that the number of women representatives in Indian Parliament increasing continuously.
It is seen that after independence, when the Indian public is enjoying the freedom, Indian women are also enjoying it in slight extent of the higher position of the power. In 1997 not a single lady cabinet minister was seen there in the Cabinet Ministry; but five lady state ministers were working in the cabinet. This number is seen to be increasing and in 2009 there were three Lady Cabinet Ministers and five ladies are state ministers. The Table No.4.2 to shows the year wise comparison of lady ministers involving in the cabinet of India.

**Table No. 4.2: Number of Ladies in Cabinet Minister at Central Council Ministry.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minister Rank</th>
<th>Central Council of Minister</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet Minister</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet Minister</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet Minister</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet Minister</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source : (I) www.parliamentofindia.nic.in  
(II) Govt. of India Ministry of Statistical and Programme Implementation, Central Statistical Organisation (2007),  
Women & Men in India 2006, New Delhi pp104  
(III) www.cabsec.nic.in / women.htm

Indian constitution has given the right of voting to all without any sexual discrimination. But it is seen that, in the beginning of independent period women were not actually participated in the process of voting. “It is observed that only 37.10% women had casted their votes in the general elections held in 1952. This proportion is seen to be increasing continuously and in 1991 the rate of voting of women is 47.42%” (30)
It is observed that the mentality of women about the political participation was negative because of the presumption that the politics is the field of male domination, hectic and hooliganism. The women were participating in local government bodies but the proportion is seen to be very less. Maharashtra Government proposed to give reservations to women with the feeble factors, in local government bodies and paved the way of the woman participation in politics. “On 22\textsuperscript{nd} December, 1992, the 73\textsuperscript{rd} and on the next day 74\textsuperscript{th} amendment in constitution is done”\textsuperscript{(31)} to increase the participation in local politics and to utilize the power actively in the process of the development of the women which are near about of the 50\% of the total population and consequently to empower them by increasing their confidence. Due to these 73\textsuperscript{rd} and 74\textsuperscript{th} amendments women got 33\% reservation in local government institutes and then in the real sense they got the opportunity to enjoy the political power. “In the local government bodies existing in 2003 out of near about 34 Lacs representatives, 10 Lacs women representatives were elected”\textsuperscript{(32)}

As a result we can say that women are now transcending out from their traditional image that they are born only work in kitchen to give birth to children. They are now making changes into the established political culture of India. But it is seen that they always lag behind in expressing their opinions, their views prominently & effectively and unable to collect the unanimous backing to their opinion.

In Maharashtra it is seen that the doors were already opened to the women by giving them reservation in the local government institutes before the 73\textsuperscript{rd} and 74\textsuperscript{th} amendment into constitution. The actual beginning of the women representation in the state was seen through the election of state assembly. After the new formation of Maharashtra, “17 Lady M.L.A.’s were elected in the election of 1962.” The number of lady M.L.A.’s was increased up to 28 in the election of 1972. But in the later, it is seen to be decreasing. In 1980 there were 20 lady M.L.A.’s in the legislative assembly but in 1995 only 13 lady M.L.A.’s were there. In 2009 the number of lady M.L.A. in Legislative Assembly was 11.”\textsuperscript{(33)} After bestowing the reserved seats to women in Local Government institutes the possibility was predicted that, they may become only the rubber stamps or may be considered as the ‘proxy’ of the hands of either her husband or a
political leader. Because due to reservation and political participation of women was compulsory, it is seen that the political participation of women was either unwillingly or due to the political needs of her husband’s. Many serious problems are seen to be created due to such ‘proxy’ women representatives. It is observed that a new custom is established that the husband do all the work on behalf of the women representative. As per the survey done by ‘Team Sakal’ in Maharashtra “The picture is seen that, the rein of power in the village is hold by either the husband of a women ‘Sarpanch’ or by the political male leader in that village.” (34) On the other hand the picture is found during the election of local government institutes like “Woman’s contest but the prestige of husbands.” (35) In Urban area there is no exception. It is also seen that, a lady incumbent women do not even sign on any papers without the permission of her husband. If the chronicles of various local government institutes are observed, “in every exceptional case a lady incumbents had spoken something on some issues, they had given any suggestions, or they had taken part in any discussions but these kinds of incidents happened very few times.” (36) with this reference if the example of Nandurbar District is taken, then “In Nandurbar District, women are designated on the posts of President of Zilla Parishad, all four President in the district, one Dy. President, four chairperson of Panchayat Samiti, the District President of both congress and National Congress Party, and 58 councilors of municipality. But except a few women, most of them have nominally designated because it is found that, their husbands are enjoying the powers of all these posts. Some husbands are seen to be even ascending on the chairs of these incumbents in their offices also.” (37)

To increase the political participation to develop the impact on the decision making process; and developed the quantitative participation will increase automatically by reservation but their qualitative participation should also increase for this above said improvements it is necessary to create an atmosphere which will nourish.

For the upliftment of women, in Maharashtra “Govt. of Maharashtra had given a concrete foundation for the upliftment of women by declaring a separate women policy in 1995” (38); besides its, “the year 2001 was declared as a ‘women competence and women empowerment years’” (39) “The legislative assembly of Maharashtra had taken a decision on 9th March, 2011, to give 50% reservation to women in local government institutes” (40)
to increase the political participation of women. Thus, the journey of women empowerment reached to the destination to the half partnership in the political system. In Maharashtra since many years women are enjoying the opportunities of participating in political process to the great extent, and therefore a Maharashtrian woman could become the President of India.

Recently, India is on the way to become a super power in the world, but it is too much behind with in women empowerment and this is a bitter truth. India runs ahead towards the comprehensive development of progress by riding on the waves of man – woman equality. The efforts of women empowerment are seen by appointing a woman, Pratibhatai Patil, at the highest position of the nation. But this process of woman empowerment is not possible without the change in the attitude of women and society. Various women movements and organizations had also played an important role in the process of women empowerment in India, since the period before independence.

In present chapter it becomes necessary to study the works of all such movements and organizations, while studying the process of women empowerment.

4.3 Feminine Movements in India:

The origin of the feminine movements is found in social reformatory movements in 19th century. A feeling of sympathy was developed in the minds of men that the society would not improve without the improvement in the status of women and from this sympathy the movement ‘Stri Dasya Vimochan’ (A freedom of women from slavery) is seen to be originated.

According Prof. Chhaya Datar movement means “if any factor in the society recognizes the injustice on them and to prevent it by trying fundamental structural changes, when those factors become, active, then those activities, streams is called as a movement.”

Many social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Mahadeo Govind Ranade, Beharamji Malbari etc. had spoken out against the tyrannical religious and social traditions, and after words the process of making some new laws was
started. In the first half of 19th century there started a brain storming due to the awareness about some women problems. In the later half, different movements which are trying to solve these problems were started and other side these movements were faced opposition this kind of situation is to be seen. In the same period it is seen that Jyotiba Phule, Vitthal Ramji Shinde, Aagarkar, Dhondo Keshav Karve and other such social reformers had done the efforts for women upliftment even after facing the opposition of society. In 1904 all Indian women organizations were gathered in the one roof and organized the ‘Bhartiya Mahila Parishad’ at Mumbai. This attempt is nothing but the efforts taken for raising the women movement for solving their problems.

It is observed that in the period before independence the women were not get for women problems but they were organizing to take part in national freedom movements. In the same period different organizations were formed to work for the women rights. But very less incidents could break the traditional frame work of society. “In 1937 the organization based on Hinduism named Rashtra Sevika Samiti was established.”(42) In Bengal there was ‘Nari Bahini’, which helps, guards villages at night, studies had recorded many stories of women’s courage, militant, spirit and innovation of these struggles.

After independence in 1967 feminine movements raised in more manner. Women also started by going beyond their ‘woman ship’ and started to think that they are ‘Human’ first and then a woman’. So they started to find the ways to come out of this subordinate position. During 1970 to 1979, the problems like the role of women in the field of production, their wages, duration of working period, factory laws, etc. means the problem related to life were discussed in the movements. After that the new problem like Rape, Dowry Victims, and Sexual Harassment were get included. The year of 1975 was celebrated as International Women’s year. After it, the feminine movements are seen to be flourished in all aspects.

“In 1979, the all India women awareness council was held at Delhi.”(43) After 1980 India politics became centerised around Hinduism, Dalit and Minorities. Due to this from the few years, caste, religion, culture all these issues are get included in
feminine movements. These women organizations had risen up many issues in the social, political & economic fields for women empowerment.

### 4.3.1 Feminine Movement for social reformation

After independence of India Woman had raised up many social reformatory movements touching to various aspects of life. Middle class urban women had raised a movement to a great extent to oppose the Mathura Rape case in 1978. Many women organizations have seen to be given their contribution in favor of prohibition of alcohol, and overcome against addiction, because many women have to suffer molestation due to the addiction and alcoholic addiction of men. After the freedom the first movement against the cruel tradition of ‘Sati’ was risen up in 1983 and got motivation to a great extent in 1987. After the case of ‘Shahabano’, “on 6th May, 1986, Muslim Woman Act (the protection of rights of woman after divorce) was sanctioned.”(44) But women organizations had shown oppose tremendously to this law. It is seen that women organizations had taken tremendous efforts to sanction the act of equal civil rights, to abolish the ‘Pardah’ tradition. It is seen that women had taken militant and active participation in many important movements like peasants movement, Bodhygaya Movement, Chipko Movement etc. Women organizations has performed their important role in many movements like, the movement of middle class women against the dearness, rapes & sexual harassment at working places, violence etc.

Before independence, women had not only participated in the Satyagraha, but also fought by taking up the arms, against British on the response with Gandhiji’s appeal. After independence these women had not only fought themselves but also taught other women’s to fight.

### 4.3.2 Feminine Movement Political Reformation:

Indian women had not to do much struggle because Indian constitution has bestowed women the political rights. But it is seen that many women organizations are active to get the political reservation. In 1992, the amendment in constitution was done by giving 33% reservation to the women in local government institutes on the demand of various woman organizations for the purpose of women empowerment. But women
organization is now in seeking form to get same type of reservation in parliament and in legislation also. But still they are not seen to be succeeded. “Once again the parliamentary bill which gives the 33% reservation to the women in parliament and in legislative assembly (legislature) was postponed on 16th May, 1997.” This bill was presented in the parliament again & again, but it is not passed still today. It can be guessed that the country in which to change the Anti Dowry Act and to reform the act against rape had taken many years. So how this important reservation bill will pass in short time? It can also be guessed that for passing this bill, the struggle is unavoidable, but it is also seen that more pressure is put on by different women movements for passing this bill.

It is observe that, women organization were resist hooliganism and delinquency in politics in to a great extent. It seen that all political parties are giving support to feminine’s movements by opening a separate women cell in their parties.

4.3.3 Feminine Movements Related to Economic Reformation:

A great contribution of women organizations is seen in the demand for equal right as like men in the property to the women; and a wife should be nominated as a co-partner on the revenue paper (Form No.7/12). Woman organizations had done admirable efforts to give women an equal right in the property by legally, to get inheritance right in husband’s property, a daughter’s right to get the share in father’s property etc.

Now a day’s admirable efforts are done by woman organizations to make women economically empower through saving groups. It is seen that, women organization have given justice by putting the struggle for the women for equal wages for equal work; and to get daily wages to the ‘Adivasi Women’ by applying pressure on government.

In rural area, the efforts are seen to be done by these women organizations to make the woman economically independent and to develop her confidence by opening women credit societies.

Now a day’s these women organizations are trying to work for giving the rights to a woman in all fields of life to lead a fear free and endurable life. It is seen that in
Maharashtra also these types of efforts are done by different political women cells and women organizations handle various problems of women.

4.4 Feminine Movements in Maharashtra:

In the movement of joint Maharashtra (Sanyukt Maharashtra), the feminine movements had played an important role. But after it the women movements are seen to be slowed down. After 1975, in Maharashtra a new tradition of group leadership came into existence by removing the single powerful leadership and this type of feminine movement is originated. Before it in 1972, the feminine movements have shown its glimpse during the agitation against dearness. In the same period, “Ila Bhatt has tried to form a first trade union of women and established the organizations named as, ‘Service Employment of Women’s Association’ (SEWA)” (46). In 1976, various problems of women were discussed in the ‘woman’ liberation struggle council’ held at Pune. Afterwards taking motivation from this council many other woman liberation organizations and modern women organizations are seen to be originated. But after this period the insistence of social reformations was decreased and the efforts are seen for to develop a self dignity about the various rights of women. After 1975, different family counseling centers were conducted by women organizations to make the counseling of women about the molestations, dowry victims, rape etc. ‘Nari Samta Manch’ from Pune had done the work of developing self dignity in women by the magazine ‘Milun Saryajani’. ‘Swadhar’ organizations from Mumbai had worked to give the domestic justice and the organizations ‘Majlis’ has worked to deal with the problems of Muslim women. In 1978-79 the women organization works admirably for solving the problems of ‘Devdasi’.

It seen that the woman liberation organization had done the efforts to give justice by playing an important role in Mathura Rape Case, the movement against dowry and in the movement against domestic violence. This organization had accelerated the feminine movements by establishing & running women trouble prevention centers, to give shelter to victim women, rehabilitation of women, women literacy and rationing etc.
It is observed that the organization ‘Nari Samata Manch’, established in 1982, had trying to developing awareness among women by discussing & approaching the subjects like sex, women health, environment, the management of water etc.

It is seen that, the important works like to cultivate the concept of sisterhood and to gain a right to a woman as human being are done by a ‘Mahila Dakshata Samiti’ of Mumbai in a great manner.

In Maharashtra, an important contribution is given by the feminist publications like ‘Bayaja’, ‘Stri Uwach’, Milun Saryajani’ etc for enlightenment of the women and to strengthen the feminine movements. The attempt was done to take the famine movement and the problems of women beyond the politics through the ‘Stri – Mukti – Yatra’ in Januaryry, 1985. On the other hand in 1986, in the two-day camp conducted for women former by ‘Shetakari Sanghtana’ at Chandwad, (Dist. Nashik). In that camp the issues of women security are given in the form of a political background. Mehrunnisa Dalwai and Razia Patel had tackled the problems of Muslim women through ‘Muslim Satyashodhak Movement’ and the organization like ‘E Nisbaw.’ It is seen that, Supriya Sule (Member of Parliament) had taken efforts to make women economically competent through the movement of small saving groups (Bachat Gati). Govt. of Maharashtra had given the political reservation to the women in Local Govt. Institutes before the 73rd & 74th amendment in constitutions. Now Govt. of Maharashtra had taken a revolutionary step by increasing that reservation up to 50% from year 2011.

In Maharashtra, women organization is seen to be done great efforts to solve the problem of women. But their work is seen very much less with related to the women’s political participation, impression on election agenda etc. It is also observed that the impression of women leaders is more than the impression of feminine movement in developing the awareness among women and to activate them in politics. These women leaders have given important contribution in women empowerment.

4.5 Woman Leadership:

From ancient period it is seen that women are active in almost all fields of life. The scholar women like Gargi, Mailtrayji etc had proved it by leaving their impression.
In the medieval period Shivmata Jija Bai, Sant Mirabai etc. women had changed the attitude of the society to see towards women by their work capability.

In present research while studying the political participation of women it becomes appropriate to get acquainted with the achievements of women leaders since the period before independence.

4.5.1. Women Leadership in the period before Independence:

Before independence, the women like Savitribai Phule, Queen of Zanshi Laxmibai, Sarojini Naidu, and Dr. Annie Besant had tried to motivate the women by their works.

The name of Ahilyabai Holkar comes first in the list of modern ruler who had done the politics for society. She was the first Indian woman who runs the feminine movement for women liberation. She had tried to abolish the traditions of ‘Sati’.

The name Sarojini Naidu becomes as the first woman president of Indian National Congress who was of Indian origin. It is seen that she had done a great job in Indian freedom struggle during 1911 to 1942 as well as for the development of women. She was the first woman governor of independent India.

Pandita Ramabai – who opposed the child marriage, who was the defender of remarriage, she was born in Brahman Society who was married to person of lower caste. She had done tremendous efforts to make women competent she was inherited of a modern thought by her father that education should be given and she was became ‘Pandita’. In Maharashtra “it was due to her efforts that Maharashtrian women started to wear a five (Var) meter saree instead of nine meter (Var) Saree.” *(47)*

The name of Ramabai Mahadev Ranade must be referred as the strong supporter of woman rights and equality of rights. She established a ‘Hindu Ladies Club’ in Mumbai to give a voice to the problems of women. She started school for girls in Pune; she had spread awareness among women by offering free medical service to ‘women varkaries’ (pilgrims) she was honored a president ship of first ‘All Indian Women Council’ she had risen up a great movement to make compulsory primary education to
girls. In 1921-22 she had established an organization of distressed woman in Mumbai province.

4.5.2.1. Woman Leadership in period after Independence:

After independence women had also performed important roles in various fields. Women had proved themselves in political, educational, social & research fields. It seen that some women leaders had created their own identity in Indian politics and social work by their ability.

*Vijaya Laxmi Pandit* was the first Indian Woman to honor the President ship of the General Assembly of United Nations Organizations (UNO) she had left her impression on international politics. *Sucheta Kripalani* was the chief Minister of the Uttar Pradesh which is the largest state in India; she was recognized as the first woman Chief Minister in India, she had shown glimpse of leadership by her deed. The first lady Prime Minister of India *Indira Gandhi* with her strong, stout and sturdy leadership – has given a new identity to the India as a country with atomic power. She has taken the important decisions very firmly and stoutly like the separation of Bangla Desh, the nationalization of Banks, elimination of poverty etc.

*Laxmi Sahgal* was the first Indian women contestant for the post of president of India. Also *Meira Kumar* is the first lady speaker of the Loksabha of India.

The contribution of *Anutai Wagh* is recognizable in bringing Adivasi women in the main stream of education. *Anita Anand* had contributed very much effort to motivating women for education and introduce them the vast world outside the home.

Some foreign women had also participated in Indian politics. Some ladies like *Annie Besant, Alen Roy, and Margarathe Cousins* are the women who have participated in Indian politics. The same tradition is to be continued in the form of *Sonia Gandhi*. “In 1983 she has accepted Indian citizenship,” (48) she has rejected the Prime Minister ship and has taken tremendous efforts to stop the regression of congress party and to bring the congress party again in the power. As per the declaration of Forbes in 2004, “Sonia Gandhi has got the third position among the most powerful personalities in the world.”(49)
It is also seen that, Uma Bharti, Vijaya Raje Sidhia, Vasundharajare Shinde, Mamata Banerji, Jai Lalita, Mehbooba Mufti, Sheela Dixit, Sushma Swaraj, Mayawati etc. all these women has shown a special impression in politics and in political decision making process by their own accomplishment. Sushama Swaraj is nominated as the youngest Chief Minister of Harayana. In her career she achieved the Chief Ministership of Delhi and now her career is seen to be glorified as the General Secretary of Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP).

4.5.2.2. Women Leadership in Maharashtra:

When in all over India, Women leaders are proving their accomplishment on the political horizon from the modern Maharashtra the women leadership also get honored as the highest constitutional post in India. Smt.Pratibhatai Patil had given a justice to the all designations like M.L.A., Speaker of State Assembly (Council), leader of opposition, by her competency. She has shown a special glimpse of her work while working as a governor of Rajasthan. The ‘comprehensive development of women’ became the integral part of her life after holding becoming a president. It is seen that, by establishing Women Financial Development Corporation & Mahila Banks etc., she had done the efforts for making the women economically empower.

“Sarojini Babar – who is referred as the ideal ruler had cherished the dream of new India, was the member of Rajyasabha during the years 1968 to 1974.”

‘Medha Patkar’ – the largest mask agitation raised by Medha Patkar named as ‘Narmada Bachao’. By this agitation she was struggling prominently to solve the problems of rehabilitation of the project affected, insistence of Panchayat Raj, and developing awareness in Adivasi people also.

‘Sindhutai Sapkal’ – who became the mother of many orphan children, has tried developed confidnence among the common women.

Jyoti Naik from Mumbai has tried to make women economically independent by establishing ‘Shree Mahila Gruh Udyog’ – Lijjat Papad; she has established this unit by keeping the purpose of mind gave a opportunity to the hidden qualities of women and to avail them the opportunities of earning and to develop confidence in them.
Prabha Rao is included in a few women who had shown their remarkable long lasting in politics in Maharashtra. She held the responsibility of ministership of various departments successfully and impressively. She works a successfully as the governor of Himachal Pradesh. “She held responsibility of the President Ship of State Women Commission successfully during the years 1993 to 1995.”

4.5.2.3. Women Leadership in Dhule District:

It is observed that, in Dhule district of Maharashtra some women have shows a great impact in political and social field. In these women, Shalini Borse – who was elected twice as a M.L.A. and tried to develop the awareness about the health of women is more prominent. She held the position of Dy.Minister of Higher & Technical Educational Department.

Kamalabai Ajmera was also a dominant & influential leader who had done an influential work as an M.L.A. of Dhule. She had done the efforts for women empowerment through establishing working women hostels, women’s college, girl’s hostels etc.

Vijayatai Chawk had done great efforts to make a feminist movement more and more powerful. She had agitated the whole district by her movements; rally against the dowry system & to give justice to dowry victims and a common woman. We can say that in the real since she had made the feminine movement fluent in the district.

It is seen that Nirmala Sawant – Prabhawalkar – the President of State Women Commission and Rajani Sawant had averted a pressure on government to sanction many decisions about women.

It is observe that, Kesharbai Kshirsagar, Chandrika Kenia, Suryakanta Patil, Vimal Mundada, Kalpana Navhire, Bhavna Gawali all these women are doing leadership in their respective political parties effectively.

Because of these woman leaders the Indian women has got opportunities in every field of life. These women leaders have encouraged the government to make various laws time to time in favor of women. In these modern period new many laws and acts
were passed for the protection & security of women are working almost in all fields of life and creating their own image & position.

4.6 Stages in the development of women empowerment and Laws:

4.6.1 Stages in the development of women empowerment and Laws:

Since before independence the attempts are done for the all round development of women from social as well as governmental levels. Due to these attempts, women became organized, united and they had developed their political and social feelings of awareness. After independence India constitution has accepted the principle of ‘equality’, and then efforts were started to give the equal treatment to her. The attempts were done for the economic development of women and to raise her social status. These types of efforts are also considered as a part of the process of woman empowerment.

“To participate the women in all the fields of life like social, economic, political, educational etc. and to make them independent is called as the ‘women empowerment’. For this “since 1946 the human rights commission has bestowed social, financial political & cultural rights to women.”

Though Indian constitution has tried to empower women by giving them all rights; till up to 1980 there was no actual women empowerment is seen in extensive view. While explaining the status of women, Indira Gandhi has said in Loksabha in 1976 that, “here I am not talking as a Prime Minister, but I am talking as a representative of the biggest minority. Women are the most exploited in any class. Many obstacles occur in the process of the comprehensive development of women. The main cause of it is mental barriers. The mentality of male which the society has fixed in their mind, is the big obstructive.”

To improve the status of women and solve their problems “On 31 January, 1992 women commission was established.” The efforts for women empowerment are done through this commission. It is seen that many policies are implemented by government by Central Social Welfare Board, Women & Child Welfare Departments, Health & Family Ministry, Labor Ministry, and Rural Development Ministry etc. for to empower the women economically independent.
4.6.2 Efforts taken in India for Women Empowerment:

Conscious efforts are seen to be done for the health, education and employment of women in independent India. So in each development plan, each scheme are tried to design for women empowerment.

In 1st five year plan (1951-56) some remedies were suggested to provide better health facilities to women. In the chapter of social welfare it was explained that “the social welfare of any community, depends upon the status of women in that community, their works and their responsibilities. In a social environment, women must be given opportunity for creative self manifestation, due to which they can contribute the economic & social progress of their community.”

In 2nd five year plan, it was mentioned that an educational curriculum should be framed with taking into consideration as per needs of girls and their physical and biological inabilities.

In 3rd five year plan it is mentioned that a need of special scholarships to be given to the girls at university level. Recommendation was done to give grants to woman colleges. For financial independence to the women, the ‘Amber Charkha’ was brought in the market and women are availed the opportunities for employment.

In 6th five year planning (1980-85) a separate chapter was included on women development and review was taken in that chapter about the status and circumstances of women. It was concluded in that chapter that there was a regression of women in all fields. For the financial independency of women, the focus was given on self employment and various remedies are seen to be suggested. It is also seen that the suggestion was given to the government about taking review of all the policies are implemented effectively or not. To check the level of participation of women science & technology, research & survey are focused in the planning.

In 7th Five year plan (1985-90), it is mentioned that, give the good education and vocational training to women and to create skilled and unskilled employment to women is required. For this purpose a ‘women corporation’ for every state is suggested. In such
a way awareness were developed in the women about their rights. In this plan education, nutritious diet, opportunities of employment, necessity of a woman integrated development project is mentioned.

In 8th five year plan focused on, making women able as the equal partner in the development process. It is also mentioned in this plan that the view of looking towards women is not only as like ‘beneficiary’ but it is necessary that attitude of the society towards a woman must be changed.

In 9th five year plan (1992-97) it is seen that the object is decided to rise up the women completely by achieving their comprehensive development. It is suggested in this plan, that a national policy on women empowerment should be framed. In this policy frame the plan to give the rights of trading to the women as she is also an important factor of our society. Necessity of the reservation for women in parliament & state council was first time mentioned in this plan. It is seen that, 30% representation to women in public sector, free education to girls up to college level, the establishment of ‘Development Banks’ for women industrialist etc. are suggested in this 9th five year plan.

In the decade of 19th a 73rd & 74th amendment was done for the political empowerment of women and get opportunity to take them with the way of development. After 7th five year plan the process of women empowerment began in the real manners. It is seen to be continued today also. It is also seen that Maharashtra Govt. is implementing all these central government policies in our state completely.

4.6.3 The Efforts of Maharashtra Govt. for Women Empowerment:

It is seen that Maharashtra Govt. has implemented various policies in our state by keeping a positive view in women empowerment. These different policies are as follows:

- The rehabilitation centre for girls – Swadhar Rehabilitation Centre, Devnar – The first project in India;
- ‘Swayamsiddha’ project giving the training to women for self protection; Indira Gandhi Women Protection scheme giving protection and financial help to helpless widows, devdasis, deserted women up to their rehabilitation;
• Chartered policy of action plan for women empowerment which is compulsory for government, semi-govt. and co-operative organizations and institutions.

• The establishment of state women treasury and by this treasury the special policy for women had provided short term loan;

• Village Mahila Sabha Policy – A amendment was done in Grampanchayat Act to call the separate meeting of women in the village or in grampanchayat.

• It is seen that such types of different policies are implemented by Govt. of Maharashtra for women empowerment. It is seen that Maharashtra has tried to bring the status of women equal to men in all social, economic, development by implementing a separate policy for women through establishing the state women commission. Govt. of Maharashtra has provided its progressiveness by giving reservations to women in Local Self Govt Institutions, even before the 73rd & 74th amendments in Indian Constitution. At present it is observed that Govt. of Maharashtra put up the one step ahead by increasing this reservation up to 50%.

The Justice Chandrashekher Dharmadhikari Committee has suggested some recommendations and punishment for the provoking male to lead secure life to the women. Home Minister of Maharashtra Mr.R.R.Patil had give clear indications of implementation of these recommendations by saying that, “25 rapid action courts will undertake the cases against women molestations.”(56) By declaring this, it can be said that Govt. of Maharashtra is trying to offer security to women.

In Maharashtra it is seen that to empower the women by taking education and training of self employment, a separate Industrial Training Institutes, Polytechnics are started. To increase the ratio of women literacy, the attendance allowance is given to backward class girls of Istd to IVth Std., uniforms and midday nutritious meals are given to girls. While implementing the educational policy various types of schemes such as to provide a bicycles to the girls whose are coming to school from more than 2 kms, to give grant to women for self employment. These schemes implemented by department of Women and Child Welfare Committee.

Today number of women is in neck and neck with men in social, political and educational fields. But day by day her sacrilege, molestations on her and injustice with
her is increasing. The government had done some harsh rigorous laws to protect from the barriers created by society in her development and to carry women empowerment process in right and proper direction. The implementation of the laws becomes necessary because without women empowerment, their participation in politics cannot be increased.

4.6.4  The Laws and Provisions for Women Empowerment in India:

Indian Constitution has given justice to the women by accepting the principle of ‘Equality’. But it is seen that there are some barriers by mentality of male dominating culture in those efforts. Therefore to give the right of equality to women and to enable her to seek the justice against any injustice Indian Govt. had done many efforts.

It is seen that India has done 2 types of legal endeavors for women. first is empowerment by making provisions in Indian Constitutions and the other is, by making laws time to time as per the situation to remove the injustice & molestations a woman.

The following provisions are made in Indian Constitutions about women empowerment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>For women -Equality before law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15(i)</td>
<td>The State can not discriminate against any citizen on the grounds of only of religion, race, caste, sex, and place of birth or any of them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15(3)</td>
<td>The State can make any special provision in favour of children and women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Equal opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the state.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39(a)</td>
<td>The State can direct its policy about security for men &amp; women in equality at night to an adequate means of livelihood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39(d)</td>
<td>Equal pay for equal work-Follows this principle for both men &amp; women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>The State can make provision for securing just and human conditions of work and for maternity relief.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51(A)(e)</td>
<td>To promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India and to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>243D(3)</td>
<td>Not less than one-third (including the number of seats reserved for women belonging to the S.C. and the S.T.) of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Panchayat to be reserved for women and such seats to be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a Panchayat.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Article-243 D(4) Not less than one-third of the total number of offices of chairpersons in the Panchayat at each level to be reserved for women.

- Article-243 T(3) Not less than one-third (including the number of seats reserved for women belonging to the S.C. and S.T. of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Municipality to be reserved for women and such seats to be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in Municipality.

- Article-243 T(4) Reservation of offices of chairpersons in Municipalities for the S.C., the S.T. and women in such a manner as the legislature of the state may by law provide.

- Article-39 (c) The equal right to both men and women to get the means of livehood.

- Article-51 (e) To discard the customs against self esteem of woman.

- Article-32,132,134, 136, 226 The right to make an appeal in court in equal manner to a man and woman.

### Legal Provisions

The state had made various legislative provisions to ensure equal right, to counter social discrimination and various forms of violence and provide support for women. The crimes which are directed specifically to women are mainly classified in two categories.

- **Indian Penal Code 1860**
  - Article / Clause 302, 304 b - - Homicide for Dowry, Dowry death etc.
  - Article 375, 376A, 376B, 376C, 377D - - These article are related with sexual harassmentespacially for women. In this article 375 the rape is defined. (The term Rape is defined) Punishment are made for such crimes and in article 376 is provided for such punishment. As per this article, punishment is life imprisonment up to 7 to 10 years and a fine in a form of money is mention.
  - Article 354 – molestation - - This article states that if anyone assaulted on woman or criminally forced on her and if, behind it the molestation is the main purpose, then the criminal will be given imprisonment up to two years or fine in the form of money or both.
  - Article 509 – Sexual Harassment- - Any words, expression or action done with the purpose of the molestation of a woman has causes one year imprisonment.
As per the article 354 and 509 both of these crimes are bailable, thus no more dread persons tampering with women, criminals do not any dread about it to the criminal who was the molester.

- Article 363, 373 …. Kidnapping etc.
  The crime of kidnapping of a woman is liable to punishment as per this article.
- 498 A . . . . . Torture (mental or physical or both)
- Article 312, 313 …. The crime of abortion.
- Article 355A….The act of abduction and to seduce the girls for the purpose of sexual intercourse.
- Article 366…. The crime of exporting girls in foreign countries.
- Articles….372, 373 – purchasing & selling (purchase & sale) of girls or women for prostitution.
- Article 306…. The crime of impulsion of women to make her no option without suicide by husband or the relatives of husband within 7 years of marriage.

Some important acts which have special provisions to secure the woman are as:

1) **Hindu Marriage Act 1955**: As per the article 44 of Indian Constitution; this act is included in Hindu Code Bill and it is applicable to all modern sub-religions of Hindu like Jain, Baudhh, and Sikkh. By this the age of marriage for a girl and boy for are defined and fixed. This act prevents polygamy. After passing the child marriage prevention act; the act of guardianship from the section 6 of this act was canceled in 1978.

2) **Bigamy Prevention Act**: In a case if the first wife is alive then without giving her divorce to do a second marriage is a crime as per IPC 494.

3) **Child Marriage Prevention Act**: Now adays this act is applicable for all Indian citizens. As per the modified act of 1979: The age of a girl for marriage was decided. Again there was a modification in this law in 1987 and after it, this act is now applicable to people of all religion and castes equally.

4) **Hindu Widow Marriage (Remarriage) Act 1856**: This law is the result of social reformers tussel against tradition. This law was passed in the period of Lord Dulhossi by the efforts of Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar. As per law a Hindu
religion gave approved to the remarriage of a widow and the descendants by this marriage.

5) **Special Marriage Act 1955:** As per this law any boy whose age more than 21 years and the girl more than 18 years and if they are mentally competent can do a love marriage or an inter-caste marriage willingly. It means that by this act a woman is given a full freedom to choose her life partner.

6) **Divorce Act 1869:** Intially this act was applicable to only people of Christian religion only. No such law was existed for Hindu people and as the special marriage act 1954 was became applicable to all religious and castes; the act of divorce was also modified.

   One can take a divorce, if there is an ill treatment to a women / harassment of a woman, if the husband is impotent, if anyone from both is suffering from any incurable disease, or madness (chemical, imbalance of brain), in case of adultery if any one of them changes the religion, or take the renunciation (Sanyas), if wife or husband is missing since 7 years. By this law there is a provision to keep her freedom and keep safe her self esteem.

7) **Dowry Prevention Act 1961:** In period before independence, in Sindh Province an attempt was done to remove Dowry System by establishing the Act ‘Sindh Leti Deti Kayada’ (Give P Tak Act). It is seen that firstly in India, in 1950 in Bihar and Andra Pradesh Dowry preventing acts were established in 1958. Even after this cruel custom was not completely removed. “on 14th April, 1959, the Dowry Prevention Bill was kept for resolution in Parliament due to political and social pressure; and then after the approval by President, on 20th May 1961 it was converted into a law.” Modification were done in this act time to time by constitutional body and then Dowry death improved Act 1984 & 1988 were established in which the provisions are seen to give punishment to both dowry giver and dowry taker person or persons.

8) **A Domestic Violence prevention Act 2005:** If a woman has to suffer any type of physically, mentally, economically, socially or any other type of violence by any male relatives in a family, then in such case a woman can appeal for justice as well as she can demand for protection from police.
9) **Maternity Facility Act:** A facility to get a full pay leave to working women for some particular period for the delivery and to look after the new born baby.

10) **Hindu inheritor 1956:** By this law women gets equality right in property. Women are given extensive rights by this law. Daughter is given an equal share as like as a son in the property of father, by this law. By this Law the right to consume and to utilize her own ‘Stri Dhan’ (gold ornaments etc) is strictly given to a woman only.

11) **Equal Pay Act:** Women get a right to get an equal payment to as like man for the same work. This law gives protection to women, to live with security and self esteem. To prevent the obstacles occurs in the process of woman empowerment several laws are made as per demand in all religions. e.g. law of prevention of vulgar exhibition of women - 1986, domestic court Act - 1984. Act for Muslim Women 1986, Human Rights Protection Act 1993, the act of married women share in property 1959, National Women Commission Act 1990, Property and inheritance right Act for Parsi Women, Muslim Marriage Act, the property and inheritance right act for Christian women, Hindu, adaptation and subsistence act 1956. Indian Govt. and State Govt. have tried some efforts to make women competent and powerful by passing all these laws.

4.7 **Epilogue:**

Since, from ancient period; women working with men equally in political and social fields. But it is observed that in the period of Manu, women treated as subordinate and so their social, political and education status is seen to be declined. In medieval period the development of their rights and activeness became stunned and so it is seen that their field was not limited to only kitchen. In India it is seen that the lives of women were only like the jails due to patriarchal method in male dominated society. In British period, due to the efforts of social reformers, many cruel, bad customs are seen to be banned. As well as in this period the attempts were done to give education to women.

After independence the Indian Constitution has bestowed the equal rights to women in all fields, based on the principle of ‘equality’. But even after this the mentality of Indian Society was not seen to be changed. Violence, sexual harassment, domestic
violence is seen to be increasing. But even then there was spread of education in women and its seen that they have started many movements for their rights.

For that some women leaders are seen to do many conscious efforts with different social movement. Govt. had also done any efforts for women empowerment and so it is seen that the process of women empowerment was getting a concrete form in the real sense after 1975. It is seen that Govt. is doing efforts continuously to eradicate the violence and ill – treatments to women by establishing women commission and by celebrating in Woman’s Day.

It is also observed that the Govt. has made many laws to lead a secure and safe life and avail them equal opportunities in all fields of life. Many policies are seen to be implemented by Govt. to make women if educationally and economically strong and competent. If the women are economically competent, then only she can be competent in political and social field. So Indian Govt. has taken a revolutionary step ahead for the development of women and increases their political participation through making 73rd and 74th amendment in constitution. By giving the positive response of Maharashtra Government and gives the reservation of 50% to women is Local Self Government Institutions. This will help to increase the proportion of political participation of women. It will help to the development of the major factor which is almost help in the society. By this political participation of women will increase and both national development process and women empowerment process will get accelerated.
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