CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

The Indian political firmament witnessed the nineties, namely, the emergence of very tangible and visible presence of woman in elected bodies at various levels of local self-government or what is commonly known as the 'Panchayati Raj'. Nearly one million woman are now actively involved in the process of decision making of on a day to day basis, extending from the Village Panchayats, Panchayat Samitis, Municipal Corporations right up to the District Level Zilla Parishads.

1997 brought with it the possibility of India becoming a pioneer at yet another level of woman's participation in the governing process. The 81st Amendment bill or what is commonly referred to as the 33% women's reservation bill, seeks to reserve one third of all seats in Parliament and in legislative assemblies. The highest Political - Bodies at the national and state levels, respectively for women.

No country in the world has one-third representation guaranteed to women in apex bodies. Even in the west the average number of seats occupied by women at the highest level of Political decision making take parliament, the Senate, the Duma, etc., is logged in the proximity of 8% - 9%. The exceptions to the rule one the Scandinavian nations, which have a long tradition of social democracy. Finland and Norway these have up to 15% women in their apex Political institutions. But this is not by "Reservation". Elections are fought by women, on equal terms, with the men. The policy of reservations for women, understood as "positive discrimination ' is already part of India is accepted Political framework. The dramatic change was made possible by a piece of twin legislation, referred to as the 73rd and 74th Amendments to the constitution, which were formally passed in April 1993.
The 81st Amendment Bill represents a historic attempt to grant Political empowerment to women in India. Now here in the world has any government sought to move a bill that will reserve one-third seats for women in the highest bodies of decision making. That it has failed to pass the test, till now, does not detract from this fact. But to fully appreciate the magnitude of what was attempted, as well as understand the possible reasons for opposition, it is imperative to understand the process of urban women's empowerment in a historical perspective.

It would be useful at the outset, therefore, to broadly define what the word, "Empowerment" stands for, and later identify its implications in the context of women in India. The Webster's Dictionary designs empowerment as the process of giving official authority or legal power', Feminist authors have attempted to define the matrix a little more specially.

A process aimed at charging the nature and directions of systemic forces which marginalize women and other disadvantaged sections in a given context (Sharma.K, 1992).

Empowerment is not a change of mindset, but a visible demonstration of that change which the world around is forced to acknowledge, response to and accommodate as best it may (Nanavaty, R 1994). It would be fair to say that there are three parts of the process which makes empowerment a reality. These may be described as follows:

A change in the mindset of women followed by their active participation towards effecting a change in their situation.

A change in the social circumstances as a result of forces of processes which push society towards change.
A formalization of that altered and new status that emancipates women from the earlier constraints and brings them to a new position.

Women’s Political empowerment, whether in India or elsewhere, has not come at one go. It has been a continuous process of gaining ground through stages of Political evolution, punctuated by more visible movements of confrontation once in a while. The profiles have been different in different societies and at different junctions.

The process of women’s emancipation is closely linked to women’s empowerment in a conscious manner in the reform movements of the early 19th century. The demand for the abolition of Sati, the advocacy of widow remarriage, the struggle for women’s education, are some of the movements which come to mind. The path which the reformists traversed, the problems they encountered, the manner in which they won new ground, the profiles of the main actors have all been extensively documented.

The issues that the social reform movement concerned itself with were mainly “their” problems, not the problems faced by women of other castes and classes. The social change that was brought about was their a limited one, of transformation within the system rather than transformation of the system. [towards equality, 1974, PP 283-4] It was thus that a section of women founded women's organizations like. The women's Indian conference [1917], The All India women's conference [1927], and National council for women [1926]. It opened up a new chapter in the history of women's empowerment.

The freedom movement proved to be the key to them from the social sphere to the political. Initially there was a difference of opinion as to whether the women's organizations should participate in the freedom movement as it was a political issue.
The pressure of the historical movement, however, propelled them the British Raj. Women began to participate, some by jumping into the struggle themselves, the majority of them by providing supportive action to the men who were actively involved.

The participation of women in political action in the years after independence was distinctly lower without a doubt that was the result of the fact that now, with freedom having been achieved there seed many ,formerly active women dropped out of Political involvement of the remaining ones who were still enthusiastic, many become active in the different Political parties. The earlier women’s groups and association reorganized under different names and these organization now donned a new mantle, focusing on the rights of women as workers, on concentrating in executing social welfare programmes regarding education, family welfare etc.,

The sixties thus yielded a curious profile of women on the one hand, there was a growing minority of well educated and professionally able women in the other hand, multitudes of women were being denied the benefits of growth, the expected "trickle down" effect was not in evidence. The trend continued In to the servants, with some variations urban areas saw a conglomeration of women in the work force. Banks, railways, factories, government offices many were the outlets that saw women emerging as a sizable block. There was however no such silver lining for the rural women. The U N declaration observing 1975 as the international year of women. To that end, a high profile, committee was appointed to study the issue. The status of women report that emerged was to become a cognizance of the position and plight of the Indian women's focus too way trained on women's issues as never before studies have recorded the increase in quantity of coverage and broadening of range and the same trend continued up to nineties.
It was becoming increasingly clear that the condition of women was cause for alarm. It was evident that the representation of women in the political process and in the power structures remained significantly low. Since the first parliament when women had contested elections, the percentage of their seats had never risen above 8%. The reasons for the low representation of women were identifiable. Political parties process equality but have themselves not given women a chance to contest elections. Their representation in apex bodies was always less than 10% in the general society, money payer and control over reforms were in the hands of men. Underlying all this was, of course, the basic patriarchal attitude that saw house-keeping and bringing up children as the primary responsibility of the women. In the year 1991, in Loksabha Elections total seats were 544, women seats were 543, women seats were 718. It was these findings that propelled a women's committee to once again raise the demand for reservation of seats. Out of the 11 members of this committee, 2 wanted reservation at the local level as well as the parliamentary level as remaining 7 wanted reservations only at the local levels. On the whole therefore there was a storing degree of agreement on the need for reservation on the need for reservation on the level of local self government. However, nothing was done to implement any of these recommendation, but change was on way.

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Any study of women's empowerment programs must needs examine the extend to which women are empowered within the organizations which have adopted the goal of women's empowerment. Obviously, empowerment con not be something which happens 'outside' or for others ', just like charity, it should begins at home. And in this case, women organizations are the home within which the practice of this ideology must begin.

Most of the urban local bodies have a professed aim of trying to induct more women in to their organizations and want to be equal opportunity employers.
As far the percentage of women at higher decision making levels goes, however, the picture is quite discouraging; while there may be one or two women in senior management they are still the exception rather than the rule. And many of these women say they have faced both subtle and overt antagonism from the male colleagues.

While these organizations are contending with the problems of how to create more feminist-styles of functioning. There are also women-dominated organizations which function no differently from male-dominated ones, at lease as far as their women staff are concerned. And this forces us to confront the fact that simply because women loan and staff an organization. It does not automatically become more sensitive and empowering to the women working within it. On the contrary, it can be very apperceive if the leadership comprises people who are biological women, but whose consciousness, value system and behavior is essentially male. Such women prejudices and patriarchal capitalistic social values of the male world. In psychoanalytical terms, they subconsciously, despite women and desire themselves for being women - they want to be men, and hence set out to prove that they can be as good as men or even beat them on their own turf.

While women are increasingly mobilizing and empowering themselves in groups of organization, networks and movements worldwide, women's participation in electoral politics is significantly smaller.

According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPC) which regularly gather statistics on the number of men and women parliaments, women held more than 20% seats in only 11 of the 171 national parliaments. That existed as of June 1993.

At the ministerial level, women hold only about 4% of positions worldwide. In 1990, women held more than 20% of ministerial posts in only four countries, Bhutan, Colombia, Norway and Sweden.
Although few women reach the positions of President or Prime Minister of their country, several women have played prominent roles in world politics as heads of state or govt. one need think only of Indira Gandhi, or Margaret Thatcher an exception is grow Brundtland who as Prime Minister of Norway appointed a cabinet with 50% of women.

**OBSTACLES TO WOMEN'S POL PARTICIPATION**

Why are there so few women elected or appointed government positions? There are several major reasons for this.

1] For one thing the whole Political culture and style is male-dominated and alien to women. In most countries women have a shorter history of participation in electoral politics than men and has debate and relations with the mass media.

2] Gender discriminations at all levels, women face discriminations and exclusion from position of power. Women have been able to band together to challenge this situation and demand change in only a few places.

3] Women's weak economic position is also an obstacle. Few women have access either to substantial funds of their own or to other sources of funds, and generally lack the experience or the connection needed to raise the money for running a successful Political campaign.

4] Women also encounter many obstacles on another major pathway to Political participation that, the national and international civil service.

5] Political power today is increasingly exercised by government bureaucracies and high Political officer one often filled by appointments from top levels of the civil service, so that women's exclusion from this sphere significantly weakens their opportunities for Political participation and power.
Given the prevailing situation in electoral politics, many women have opted to work for political and social change outside the system without decision making power and control at all levels, the gains women have made are too easily ignored and eroded. Too many of the major and political decisions in the world are being made without the input of women.

Women have formed their own political parties in a number of countries, including Canada, Germany, Iceland, Nigeria, the Philippines, Russia and Spain.

In the political scene as elsewhere women never try to imitate men. They have a special role to play. As Gandhiji used to say women are a symbol of non-violence. When the world moves towards non-violence, women naturally become the leaders when there is violence women left behind.

If the Indian women want to be free, bold and develop, they must understand and participate in politics, by participating in politics. They can emerge as a pressure up and force the system to deliver the goods and services for them.

The nationalist movement has brought the women in to the stream of nation’s politics. In independent India women’s power in politics has considerably increased. Jawaharlal Nehru was proud of woman who had joined politics.

A few women have occupies seats in parliament, state legislatures and held gubernatorial and diplomatic assignments. Today women are in the forefronts of many radical organizations. Their participation in politics reached its climax with the a secondary of Mrs. Indira Gandhi to the premier ship of the country.

With the women’s participation and involvement in politics is not complete. There are millions of more women ignorant of politics though they are affected by it. Number of cobwebs inherent in the political system society, family and personal attitudes are preventing the women to participate in politics.
Some major problems confronted by women in the process of participation in politics are depressed economic status, inferior socio-religious position, poor literacy levels, organizational handicaps and male chauvinism.

One encouraging thing is, their active turn out during elections to exercise their right to franchise. "However, the fact that remains is women are in equal partners in the Indian Electoral System ".

Women is Political perception, awakening development and participation is at a low degree. Efforts must be made by the government, political parties and voluntary organizations to emancipate the women from their present high and ignorance fact modernization an industrialisation will quicken the development of women.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

Empowerment is the key factor for make of women agents as social change & development. Therefore, women cease to be instruments of development and the become its principal catalyst. The Ninth Plan focused on both women-specific and women related sectors of chalked out strategies accordingly. For instance, it laid emphasis on creating an environment for women to exercise their rights both within and outside home and providing adequate representation of women in decision making andreserving one third of seats of Parliament and State Legislatures for them. To achieve these objectives, the plan has even directed both the centre and the states to adopt a special strategy of what it calls “Women’s Component Plan” in which 30 percent of the funds are earmarked for women related sectors. The Ninth plan has also suggested that a special vigil to be kept in on the flow of earmarked funds through on effective mechanism.

Studies on women empowerment in the context of Urban Local bodies are very few and far between. These have attempted to examine mainly socio-economic background of women members of the municipality with little focus on their functional rules in development activities. Many studies have pointed out that
most of these women have hardly played an effective role in the urban local bodies because of the fact that they were insignificant in number and they served under the male dominance. However, it would be wrong to generalize on the basis of such a findings that the role of women in urban local bodies is ineffective.

The Karnataka Government has given relatively better representation to women on urban local bodies through 73\textsuperscript{rd} and 74\textsuperscript{th} amendment. Since they are elected they constitute the legal and statutory leaders with sufficient scope to play an effective role in managing the affairs of urban on the equal plan with male members. Further, the performance of women leaders in the urban local bodies is significantly influenced by their experience in other social organisations as well as by there out look and attitudes.

Planned social change has its differential impact on different regions / taluks. People from developed or progressive taluks tend to have better participation than those in backward taluks in developmental activities.

Thus elected women members of the municipalities of developed taluks are likely to have higher level of literacy awareness, modern outlook and participate more effectively in political and developmental activities. They are also more easily change prone to new value than the women members of the municipalities of backward taluk. There is a common belief that of higher socio economic and political background with modern outlook take more active part in the grass root organisation. However, such a notion has not been adequately examined empirically by the existing studies. The present study attempts to examine this hypothesis empirically besides investigation into the factors promoting effective participation of women members in urban local bodies.

To sum up, the present study attempts to overcome the gaps in the present knowledge and the inadequacy of literature on women members of urban local bodies. The findings of the study it is hoped would help the state to formulated broad-based policies to effectively involve urban women in democratic and development process of urban local bodies.
OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Feminists, Eminent Scholars, Policy makers and Research workers have recently shown an increasing interest in women empowerment in Indian context.

Increasing educational opportunities and economic opportunities, growth of awareness among urban women and specially the policy of reservation bringing extensive changes in the ways of women empowerment. The penetration of mass media of communication into every field brought about the development of new attitudes, new outlook, new values and expectations and as a consequence has to some extent undermined traditional forms of social pattern & ideology. All these made the Indian women mobile & empower. The present study attempted to answer the question of how far have women been able to play their role in Urban Local bodies in the light of the social economic cultural and political background of women members of municipalities. Keeping in view the aforesaid objective, this specific objective of the study were:

1. To examine the structural indicators of Urban Women Empowerment in Karnataka.

2. Understand & Portray the Socio-economic status of women members of urban local bodies with reference to their Age, Marital Status, Caste, Education, Size of Family, Income Levels, Occupation & Assets.

3. To examine the empowerment characteristics of the women members of urban local bodies with reference to their involvement levels of social participation, social articulation, decision making and participation in political activities;

4. To understand their access to information and their perception of role performance self-esteem and change in status;

5. Analyse the levels & social correlates of empowerment of the women members of urban local bodies.
HYPOTHESIS

Formulation & verification of hypothesis is a part & parcel of scientific inquiry. Therefore, the following hypothesis were formulated for the present study:

a. Political participation & the level of empowerment of women members vary positively with their socio-economical characteristics, such as age, education, caste, occupation, income & size of family

b. The extent of role performance of women members is related positively to their socio economic & cultural attributes as well as political participation in decision making and empowerment levels

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Methodology forms the crux of any scientific inquiry and helps to arrive at valid generalization about the problem under study. The methodology in social science research comprises selection of study area, selection of sample, collection and analysis of data.

SELECTION OF STUDY AREA

The universe of the present study is city municipality of Bellary District. The District is endowed with three major civic resources, agricultural land, a mighty river and an abundance of mineral deposits. In the spheres of agriculture and exploitation of minerals. The district has witnessed a tremendous amount of development during the past two decades what was once a district that bore the burnt of frequent draughts & famines & presented a picture of impoverishment and un-rewarding labour has now been transformed into a district, which is vibrating with a new zest for life and is set for a bright future. Thanks to the mighty Tungabhadra which flows all along the western and northern border of the district and has now, that is after the erection of a dam near Hospet, turned out to be a veritable boom to the people of not only Bellary District, but also to those of Raichur District. The network of agriculture industries communication, transport & educational institutions in and around Bellary City has a considerable bearing on the people of Bellary.
Bellary city is also the seat of the politics and also the centre of various kinds of movements including women which are believed to have been affecting the general awareness and thinking of people in the Bellary District. Various voluntary and government agencies have implemented several developments programmes in the district more intensively in view of its proximity to the seat of Political power i.e. Bellary under such circumstances the awareness, literacy and propensity to participate in different programmes or organisation tend to be more among people. In view of this women leaders of municipalities of Bellary District were assumed to be more enlightened and participated more effectively in the activities of municipalities. In order to test this empirically Bellary district was selected on the basis of sampling for the present study. Another factor which prompted the researcher to select Bellary City for the study was her familiarity with the socio-civic and cultural background of people in the district, since she hails from the very district.

To study the levels of Political participation and the level of empowerment by the women members of urban local bodies in the entire district was a different task for the researcher within the constraints of time and resources. Therefore, it was decided to study women councilors of the 1996 & 2001 who had completed one full term an 1 year.

The district has seven (7) Taluks out of which Bellary & Hospet taluks were developed taluks while Kottur taluk was a backward taluk on the basis of random sampling (Table). Sandur and Hospet Taluks represent more or less similar socio-civic conditions and have greater influence of Bellary City as compared to Kottur since the farmer are closer to Bellary than the latter.

**SELECTION OF SAMPLE**

The sample for the present study comprised the elected women members of all the municipalities of the selected taluks who have completed one full-term i.e. five years from 1996 to 2001 and newly elected members i.e who have completed 1 years from 2001-2005. To give greater credence to the findings of the study by way of increasing. The representative of the sample it was decided to cover relatively a large number of women members.
The number of women members selected for the present study was 120. The total number of women leaders selected for the study formed 65.2% of the total women members in the study taluks positional approach was adopted to locate women leaders and analyzed their role in municipality activities.

**SOURCES & METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION**

Data collection is an essential part of scientific investigation. Data form the basis for testing hypothesis and arriving at reliable results. Data for the present study were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources of data formed the data collected from women members while the secondary source involved collection of data from sources such as census reports, publications of the state. Directorate of Economics statistics and Gazetteers municipality notifications collected from Deputy Commissioner’s office, which helped significantly to prepare a profile of the district and taluks, selected for the study. Besides, the published or unpublished literature such as books, journals, reports of different commissions, committees and study teams of Government also formed secondary source and they were largely used to collect information about the development of urban local bodies. Data on different activities implemented by the Municipalities attendance of women members at municipality meetings etc, were collected from the office of municipalities.

Interview method is the most suitable for data collection when a large numbers of respondents on either illiterate or literate or have low levels of formal education. Given the low education levels particularly among women, it was decided to collect data by interviewing women members of municipalities. This comprehensive interview schedule with open-ended questions on different aspects based on the objectives of the study was prepared and pretested. The inconsistencies and difficulties in language were rectified and finally adopted for data collection. The interview of women members was conducted individually by the researchers at their residence for collecting data and thus helped the researcher to get a better understanding of their social, environment apart from collecting
data from women members, discussions were also held by the researchers with men members of municipality and husbands of elected members of course this was done without the knowledge of women members. This discussions aimed to cross verify whether the data furnished by women members on their participation in municipality activities justified the role they played in these. This method however, confirmed that the data given by almost all the women members were true to the role-played by them. This also implies that the self-assessment of women members was consistent with their overall behavior & pattern of involvement.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA**

Classification and tabulation enable organisation of the data in a systematic manner so that meaningful generalizations could be arrived at. The data collected for the present study were assigned codes I then transferred to Computer Card. The coding of data enabled the researcher to convert the qualitative information into quantitative expressions in order to computerize the same for precision and accuracy.

The responses of women members on their political awareness, political linkage, political participation in decision making process, attributes and knowledge about various things as well as their role performance in different spheres of municipalities were given appropriate scores in order to compute the composite index of Political participation role performance and decision making (mode of scoring is discussed in the respective chapter). Based on the Political (aggregate) scores the levels of Political participation and decision making of women members, were determined as very high, high medium, low and very low. The dividing points for five levels were decided upon after calculating the mean and standard deviation of the respective aggregate scores. The score value obtained after adding one standard deviation to the mean indicated very high level while the score value obtained after subtracting one standard deviation from the
mean indicated the very low level. The scores which lies between the very high and very low level represented high medium and low level.

For rigorous generalisations, the use of statistical tools has been considered essential by the social science researchers in recent times. The present study has used percentages and averages for analysis of data t-values were computed on the basis of mean and standard deviation of the aggregate scores in respect of overall political participation, self esteem and decision making of women members of the selected taluks. Further t-test has been used to find out significant difference in the mean scores of women members between the taluks under study.

Further Cross, tabulation, was used to observe possible significant relations between dependent variables such as overall political participation, role performance and decision making and independent variables such as age, education, caste, occupation, income and extent of land holdings which constitute important socio economic and demographic attributes. These attributes were assumed to have influenced the political participation, decision making and role performance was further related to the levels of political status and decision making of attained by women members. Co-efficient correlation was computed in order to assess the directions & magnitude of relationship between independent and dependent variables. Further, the co-efficient of correlation was subjected to t-test to measure the degree of statistical significance at 1% percent & 5% percent levels.

PLAN OF THE STUDY

For convenience of exposition of the various aspects of the problem under study the thesis is organised into six clearly demarcated but cohesive chapter including this introductory chapter.

First chapter deals with Statement of the Problem, Significance or Need for the Study and Method of Study.

The Second Chapter is on the Concept, Review of Literature.
The Third Chapter presents Urban Women Structural Factors of Empowerment in Karnataka, Profile of Karnataka, Urban Profile, Quantitative indicators of Empowerment and Analysis and Findings.

The Fourth Chapter presents a Brief Account of Urban Settings. A Brief account of the study area in terms of its historical, geographical demographic and socio-economic background, profile of urban local bodies in Bellary District and socio-economic status of women members of urban local bodies and summary.

The Fifth Chapter examines urban women and empowerment it examine the levels of social participation, self esteem and decision making of women members of urban local bodies. It analyse the problem of women members, discusses the levels of political participation of the women members and finally analyse the levels of empowerment by the women members of urban local bodies.

The Sixth Chapter, the last one gives a summary and conclusions. The concluding observations and policy suggestions based on the findings.
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