The Political Culture And Women In Karnataka
CHAPTER - V

THE POLITICAL CULTURE AND WOMEN IN KARNATAKA

Introduction:

Politics is one of the unavoidable facts of human existence. Everyone is involved in some way at some time or the other in some kind of political activity. The participation of women in political system is always influenced by values, beliefs, attitudes and orientations. The concept of political culture has been formulated for this purpose.

In the words of Almond and Powell "Political culture is the pattern of individual attitudes and orientation towards politics among the members of a political system "Political culture consists of these attitudes, values and skills which are current in an entire population as well as those special propensities and patterns which may be formed within separable parts of the population" 1

Definitions:

Roy Macridis observes “Political Culture means commonly shared goals and commonly accepted rules”. Pye and Sidney Verba observe “Political culture consists of the system of empirical belief, expressive symbols and values which define the situation in which political action takes place.”2
Political culture is sum total of values, beliefs, orientation and attitudes of the people which they learn and acquire from the system and which influences their behaviour as actors of the political system.

Lucian Pye has rightly observed “Political culture is the set of attitudes, beliefs and sentiments that give order and meaning to political process and that provide the underlying assumptions and rules that govern behaviour in the political system.”

To Bear and Ulam “certain aspect of the general culture of the society are, especially concerned with how government ought to be conducted and what it shall try to do. This sector of culture we call as political culture.

“Political culture represents a system of control over the system of interactions and regulates the ways in which the formal institutions operate. It includes:

a) Knowledge of political system

b) Awareness in regard to political system

c) Emotional dispositions

d) The Judgment and evaluation of political objects, the formal organ of the government, political parties, pressure groups.
So, political culture transmits it successfully from an old generation to a new one. The political culture is nothing but the internationalization of values of political system by the people of the country for which wider spread political training and education is essential. As it is a continuous process of acquiring the political system by the people, through this learning process gradually a voter becomes political being. Maturity of a citizen as a voter, depends on her participation in voting and vote participation is a source of political culture". ⁴

Political culture of women is defined by their attitudes, values and behaviour in relation to their own real interests. They have autonomy because they claim their freedom existing male hierarchies, whether they live in traditional societies or modern industrial societies. They manifest equal mindedness, rather than act of roles that merely confront and challenges male dominance. Political culture of women do not aim at being superior to men. They respond as equals and cooperate in order to work towards the common good. Furthermore, they define their values and formulate their beliefs themselves.

Political culture of women, is broader than the one covering women's participation only in the electoral and administrative processes. It involves the gamut of voluntary activities with a bearing
on the political processes, including voting, support of political groups, communication with legislators, dissemination of political views and opinions among the electorate, and other related activities.

It refers broadly also to the “activities by these not formally empowered to make decisions, these activities being mainly intended to influence the attitudes and behaviour of those who have powers for decision making.” Women’s role has covered a range of activities including movements, protests and support meetings on all issues connected with labour, rape, dowry domestic violence, price rise, food adulteration, as also movements for the promotion of peace.

I. Participation In Electoral Process

In India, the position of women has always been a rather ambivalent one in our culture. She has been raised to the status of divinity and on the other side she has been exploited as a human being who is lower in status than men in every walk of life. Fortunately, from the middle of the nineteenth century, consciousness a rose in our country to eradicate this dichotomy from her existence. Social reformers rose especially in Bengal, like Vidya sagar and Raja Ram Mohan Roy, founder of the Brahmo Samaj who advocated education for girls, marriage after adolescence and the right to widow remarriage.
India’s Independence Movement was a great boon to the cause of women in India as most leaders came from a western liberal education system. They encouraged the participation of women in the Independence struggle. We know that this struggle threw up many eminent women who fought for the Independence or our country. Participation of women in the Independence struggle, members of the newly formed women’s Indian Association in Madras, insisted on to their political demand of right to vote. When these women asked for the vote, they claimed they spoke for all women.

In August, 1918 Smt. Sarojini Naidu spoke on behalf of women’s suffrage at the special session of Congress held at Bombay. Mrs. Naidu persuaded her audience that extending the franchise to women was rational, scientifically and politically sound, compatible with tradition, and consistent with human rights.

When the Thirty Third Session of the Indian National Congress met at Delhi in December 1918, Saraladevi Chaudhurani presented the resolution supporting the vote for women. These meetings were followed by gatherings all over India of provincial and district Congress Conferences and women’s organization to express support for women’s franchise. Nationalist leaders also challenged women’s rights. This advice from nationalist leaders did not prevent pro franchise women
from continuing their fight. Bombay and Madras were the first provinces to extend the franchise to women in the year 1921; the United provinces followed in 1923; Punjab and Bengal in 1926; and finally Assam, the central provinces, and Bihar and Orissa in 1930.

Muthulakshmi Reddy the first woman legislator, was appointed to the Madras Legislative Council in 1927. The Congress election manifest of 1937 stood for removal of all sex disabilities whether legal or social in any sphere of public activity. Under the act of 1935 women got special representation in provincial legislatures and some of them became ministers too. They stood for reforms in Hindu society.

During the whole of 1940s women’s organizations in India were very active in the agitation for removal of disabilities of women. During the time of Second World War women too had to come forward to participate in the war effort in different capacities. There were about 5,00,000 British women in armed forces, another 2,00,000 in the women’s land army and well over 3,00,000 in the civil services. Almost similar was the case with Russian women. Almost all able bodies males in Russia were drafted for military service and the civil services were mostly handled by women. In America more than two million women had volunteered for Red Cross Work, during the war.
When the elections were held in 1946 for the Constituent Assembly, many prominent women of India like Smt. Sarojini Naidu, Hansa Mehta, Durga Bai, Renuka Bai and others were elected.

The Constitution of Independent India visualized that all its citizens should be assured of certain fundamental rights, freedom of speech and expression, equality before law, equality of opportunities and adult franchise. Indian women, involved in the working of Indian National Congress in the freedom struggle tirelessly as much men were equipped adequately to work towards the modern values of gender equality.

Sex-wise voters – India

Table 5.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Elections</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1952</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>61.20</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1957</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>62.20</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1962</td>
<td>63.31</td>
<td>46.63</td>
<td>55.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>66.73</td>
<td>55.46</td>
<td>61.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>60.90</td>
<td>49.11</td>
<td>55.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>65.63</td>
<td>54.91</td>
<td>60.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>62.15</td>
<td>51.22</td>
<td>56.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>68.18</td>
<td>58.60</td>
<td>63.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>66.13</td>
<td>57.32</td>
<td>61.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>61.58</td>
<td>51.35</td>
<td>56.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>62.06</td>
<td>53.41</td>
<td>57.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>65.72</td>
<td>57.88</td>
<td>61.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>63.97</td>
<td>55.64</td>
<td>59.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>61.66</td>
<td>53.30</td>
<td>57.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Election Commission of India Report 1952-2004
In the free India, Women voters represent not less than fifty percent as per the statistical report given in the table 5.1. The first and second general elections of 1952 and 1957 shows only the total percentage of voters rather than sex wise tabulation. Since 1962 third general election, the table shows the sex wise voters representation. However while analyzing the women voters, their percentage steadily increased from 46.63 percentage in 1962 to 58.30 percentage in the election of 2004. This statistics shows the steady increase of women voters at each election and also demonstrates that the response of women to the political rights conferred on them to the constitutional development in the democratic spheres.

**Women's Representation in Lok Sabha**

**Table 5.2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Women MPs</th>
<th>Percentage of Women MPs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>499</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5.40</td>
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<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>503</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>6.76</td>
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<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>5.93</td>
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<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>521</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>544</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3.49</td>
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<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>544</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>544</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>8.09</td>
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<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5.22</td>
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<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>544</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>7.17</td>
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<tr>
<td>1996</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>7.18</td>
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<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>543</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>7.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>543</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>9.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>543</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>8.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Sunday Times of India Mumbai, May 23, 2004 p.5
The above table clearly shows the sex wise representation from the first general election to the latest election. The women have not crossed more than ten percentage when compared to male. From the first general election it increases 4.40 percentage to 9.02 percentage in 1999 election shows their political awareness and political culture in the time of election.

"The political empowerment of women has made considerable strides with only 22 (4.40) women being represented in the first parliament of 1952-57 to 45 (8.28) percent in the present Lok Sabha. Women’s representation in the Rajya Sabha has however, shown greater improvement, having increased from 7.7 percent in 1952 to in 2002. It is however, felt that the Panchayat Raj Act of 1992 will empower women politically at the grass roots level in a revolutionary way. Here women will have reservation in the Gram Panchayats, Panchayat Samitis and Zilla Parishads both as Sarpanchas and Panchas. This will enable them to take interest at the local level and energise and improve the situation of women in areas like health, education and employment, which is essential to their basic existence. This will also train them for further political asserations in the form of members of State Legislatures and Parliament". 6
The participation of women in the PRIs is considered essential not only for ensuring political participation in the democratic process, but also for realizing the developmental goals for women. Participation of women in PRIs involves.

(i) Women as voters
(ii) Women as members of political parties
(iii) Women as candidates
(iv) Women as elected members of PRIs taking part in decision making, planning, implementation and evaluation
(v) Women as members of Mahila Mandals and their association with voluntary organizations.

The outcome of PRIs elections in terms of women's participation has been very encouraging. Elections in Karnataka, Orissa, and West Bengal earlier had witnessed appreciable number of women turn out as voters as well as candidates. Not merely for the reserved constituencies, but even for the general constituencies, women had contested with great confidence. In many states, the percentage of women who got elected to PRIs exceeded the reserved positions. For example, in Karnataka it was above 45 percentage. Thus, it can be said that in all these above instances, the participation of women went beyond expectations.
Several initiatives have been taken up in Karnataka for strengthening the participation of women representatives in PRIs through training and facilitation programmes, by the state government as well as by voluntary organizations.

An ambitious and well designed state wide programme to reach all the 33,305 women from 5,640 Gram Panchayats was drawn up by the state Department and SEARCH, a Bangalore based NGO support organization. One of the most active, enthusiastic and efficient programmes has been conducted in Tumkur district where the district authorities, the National Literacy mission volunteers and SEARCH conducted training programes for 1,693 women and 1,708 men.

The percentages of women at various levels of political activity has shifted dramatically as a result of this constitutional change, from 4-5 percent before PRI to 25-40 percent after PRI. At the local level, the numbers of women representatives have increased from no more than 6 in each assembly, usually less than 1 percent in these bodies and that too as nominated or co opted member to a total of 3,30,000 and a presence sometimes in excess of the mandatory one third, the highest proportion being 43 percent. In other words, in some cases women have moved out of reserved constituencies.
The History of Women's Inclusion in Political Representation in India:

In 1946, there were 16 women out of 150 members in the Constituent Assembly. When Panchayat Raj was first introduced, in 1957, the concept was to co-opt two women who were interested in working for women and children. Maharashtra Zilla Parishad and Panchayat Samiti Act of 1961 provided for the ‘nomination of one or two women’ to the Panchayat bodies in case women were not elected. West Bengal Panchayat Act 1973, also provided for co-opting 2 women. The Report of the Committee on the status of women (CSWI) of 1976, demanded representation of women in Panchayat as well as the establishment of “All women Panchayat at village level”. 25 percent of seats were reserved for women in the Karnataka Zilla Parishads, Taluk Panchayat Samitis, Mandal Panchayat and Nyaya Panchayat Act of 1983. Some 14,000 women were elected out of 30,000 candidates who contested in the election of 1987.

Women are also aware that their strength comes not only from their numbers, but also from their knowledge and skills, for example literacy. Thus, women see training as an important part of their empowerment. Many NGOs have seized on this as a fundamental issue and have begun to focus on the training of women.
PRI has given many women a greater understanding of working of politics, in particular the importance of political parties. On the other hand, some women’s involvement in PRI has helped them affirm their identity as women with particular and shared experience. A woman at Panchayat meeting in Karnataka stated that when we meet they said that we work together as women, for our lobby and we don’t notice party identities. Several women panchayat members of Dharwad district seem to be drawn to an identity above caste or party. They work together as women. They did not give importance to party politics. This self perception arises from two sources from women’s own sense of their shared experience and from attitudes and imagery imposed on them by the men. The men see these new political actors as women not as party colleagues. Party politics, a necessary condition for classical democracy, is competitive, but the women bring a non competitive or co operative ethics as they are drawn to work together across party jines and seem to have similar interests. Gender can supersede class and party lines. Women have opened up the possibility for politics to have not only new façés but a new quality.

The 73rd Amendment of 1992, which has reserved one third of seats for women in Panchayat Raj Institutions is a major land mark in the political empowerment of women. A unique experiment in the
world, the measure will go a long way in uplifting our women who constitute about half the population. Ever since Independence, a number of innovative schemes have been launched for the upliftment and empowerment of women in our country. India is the first country to give women equal franchise and she has a highly creditable record in regard to enactment of laws to protect and promote the interest of women.

This singular step had secured the participation of about one million women in decision making at the local and grass root levels. This will definitely facilitate women's access to the "outside" domain. It can easily be described as the most revolutionary step towards the empowerment of women. The women Panchayat members at all the three levels are bound to bring a change in the agenda. Their status, easy accessibility and sensitivity to the legitimate interests of women would improve the conditions of women in the rural areas.

II. Women In Bureaucracy

Women in India have participated in public life in different forms depending on their class, caste and socio economic background. History does not give much evidence of their participation in bureaucracy. This need not be taken for granted because history has long been alleged for ignoring women. In the recent times, however, more women are placed in good and powerful positions.
An examination of the persons selected in the prestigious services through the Union public service commission during the years 1985-1987, reveals that the female male ratio was higher in Foreign and Postal services in 1985. The ratio improved in the administrative and economic services in 1987. However, not more than 6 percent of the positions are occupied by them though their share has increased during 1985-1991. Female to Male Ratio has also improved for different services. During this period there was marked improvement in FMR. This is an evident of the growing consciousness among women as well as among their male relatives and guardians regarding the need to their access to power and decision making positions. 7

Some eminent women have no doubt, occupied important administrative positions such as Secretaries to Departments in the National Government as well as Chief Secretaries to State Governments. Some women occupied post of Chairperson of the Union public service commission, and the University Grants commission.

The following are some examples which give a picture of eminent women occupying some important positions in India:

a) The first woman to become the Chairperson of the Estimates Committee of the Lok Sabha was Smt. Chandra Tripathi. As a Chairperson of this Committee in the Eighth Lok Sabha during
1986-88, she conducted the deliberations of the committee with utmost objectivity and impartiality and could win the confidence of all the other members of the committee.

b) As a Prime Minister of India Smt. Indira Gandhi, shaped the destiny of India for almost two decades. As the leader of the World’s largest democracy, she made India a self reliant Nation, especially in the fields of agriculture and economics. She gave a strong welfare bias to Indian economy under the pledge of Garibi Hatao. Twenty Point Programme, Minimum Needs Programme, etc. She can be credited with several socialist progressive measures like abolition of the special privileges of the former princes, Nationalization of the major Banks, enactment of the Monopolies Act to regulate the activities of about eight hundred big firms. She extended the facilities of Green Revolution to dryland, giving emphasis on land reforms and land ceilings. In the arena of foreign policy, some of her remarkable achievement were

(i) Liberation of Bangladesh

(ii) Indo Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Co operation of 1971

(iii) Simla Agreement with Pakistan in 1972.
Above all, she provided content, cohesion and a dynamic leadership to the Non Aligned Movement.

c) Kum. Mamata Banerjee, took the lead in the management of food grains by FCI and also in the rehabilitation of persons displaced from Pakistan, closure of the Government of India Press at Calcutta, problems of unemployment.

d) Bali Beneka, the Delhi girl made history in the US by becoming the first Asian women to join the American Army. She joined the 82nd Airborne Division of the US Army.

e) Smt. Bandopadhyaya, was the first woman Air Commodore of the Indian Air Force. She is also the first woman doctor to carry out research on the North pole.

f) Ms. Kiran Bedi the first Indian woman IPS officer in the year 1972. Ms. Kiran Bedi, Special Commissioner Delhi police has been appointed to the prestigious post of United Nations Civilian Police Adviser in the Department of peace keeping operations.

g) A Khashi tribal woman, Neekharball Bathew from Meghalaya became Chairperson of Union public service commission.

h) Ms. Kanchan Choudhary Bhattacharya became the first woman Director General of police in the country.
i) Ms. Shanti Chakrabarti, a senior lawyer specializing in Human Rights law has become the first Indian to head ‘Liberty’ one of Western Europe’s oldest civil liberties organization that has repeatedly challenged the British government on an equal footing particularly of the treatment of asylum seekers and immigrants. Ms. Chakrabarti was also responsible for the implementation of landmark Human Rights Act.

j) Smt. Najma Heptulla, was the former Deputy Chairperson of the Rajy Sabha and the distinguished Human Development, Ambassador of the United Nations Development Programme was elected as the President of the Inter Parliamentary IPU Union in Berlin on Oct 16, 1999. She is the first woman in the 110 years history of the IPU to be elected to the highest office of the union. 8

III. Policy Implications

The important role that women play in Third World Development process is now widely recognized. The first UN decade for women, (1975-85), played a crucial role in economic and social development of these countries and communities. A narrow focus on women for reducing population growth in the past years has given way to a more holistic approach to population planning. It addresses the issues such as empowerment of women, reproductive health, planned
parent hood, reducing the gender differences in educational and environment issues.  

The National Commission on Self Employed was set up in 1987 with Ela Bhatt as its chairperson. The members of the commission went to all states meeting government officials, voluntary organizations and working women. The National Policy for the Empowerment of Women, NPEW, 2001 is yet another government document which admits of the wide gap between the goals enunciated in the Constitution, legislation, policies, plans, programmes and related mechanism and the situational reality of the status of women. The goals and objectives of the policy include among others, formulating positive economic and social policies, changing societal attitudes and community practices, strengthening legal systems aimed at removal of discrimination, in order to enable to realize their full potential.

**Struggle for Political Participation By Governments:**

1) Commitment for achieving a gender balance in government organizations, public sector and judiciary with specific targets and implementing measures.

2) Taking measures to encourage political parties to achieve gender balance in elective and non elective bodies.
3) Ensuring that men and women participate equally in political activities with freedom of association and for equal membership of parties and trade unions.

4) Reforming the electoral system if it is coming in the way of women to participate in politics.

5) Constant monitoring and evaluation of data about women’s representation at various levels of decision making.

6) Providing support to NGOs and research bodies conducting such studies.

7) Encouraging involvement of local women in decision making

8) Ensuring gender balancing in government subsidized organizations.

9) Taking steps to provide women an opportunity to come out of their homes.

10) Nominating equal number of women in the country’s representatives in the UN bodies.

Through Political Parties

1) Examining bottlenecks in the party structure which prevent women from participation.

2) Taking initiatives to involve women in internal policy making structure including decisions on party candidates.

3) Including gender issues in the political agenda
Through the United Nations

i) Ensuring parity in employment with various UN agencies

ii) Promoting more women in the senior position

iii) Constantly analyzing gender disaggregated data on men and women in decision making levels and aiming towards getting the Secretary General’s target of total parity between men and women at decision making levels by 2000 AD

Through Women’s Organizations, NGOs Trade Unions

a) Advocacy to make women influence the decision making bodies and also to make the elected representatives accountable in gender concerns

b) Keeping data on qualified women to be given to government and other bodies for its appointments. 10

Women in the Five Year Plans

The concept of women’s development in the First Five Year Plan of 1951-56, has been mainly welfare oriented. In the second Five Year Plan of 1956-61, women have been organized into Mahila Mandals to act as focal points at the grass root levels for the development of women. The third, Fourth and other Interim Plans of 1961-74 accorded high priority to education of women.
In the fifth plan of 1974-78, there has been a shift in the approach for women’s development from welfare to development. The new approach aimed at an integration of welfare with developmental services. The sixth Five Year Plan of 1980-85, has been a landmark in the history of women’s development, as it received recognition as one of the developmental sectors. In this plan, it has been included Document as a separate chapter for the first time in the history of developmental planning.

In the Seventh Plan of 1985-90, the development programmes for women continued with the major objectives of raising their economic and social status and to bring them into the mainstream of national development. The Eighth Five year plan, which has been launched in 1992, promises to ensure that the benefits of development from different sectors do not by pass woman and special programmes will be implemented to complement the general development programme.

Empowerment of women has been one of the nine primary objectives of the Ninth plan. The stress is laid on an enabling environment where women can freely exercise their rights both within and outside the home and are acknowledged as agents of social change and development. To achieve the goals of women empowerment following strategies have been adopted:
a) To create an enabling environment for women to exercise their rights both within and outside homes, as equal partners along with men through early finalisation and adoption of National Policy for Empowerment of women."

b) To expedite action to legislate reservation of not less than 1/3rd seats for women in the state Legislative Assemblies and thus ensure adequate representation of women in decision making.

c) To adopt a special strategy of "Women's Component Plan" to ensure that not less than 30 percent of funds/benefits flow to women from other developmental sectors.

d) To organize women into self Help Groups and thus mark the beginning of a major process of empowering women.

e) To institute plans for free education for girls up to college level, including professional courses.

"The Tenth Plan approved aims at empowering women through translating the recently adopted National policy for Empowerment of Women into action and ensuring survival protection and development of women and children. To fulfill this objectives the following commitments were made during Tenth Plan.

i) To create an environment for the development of women through positive economic and social policies.
ii) To allow women to enjoy not only the de jure but also de facto right and fundamental freedom at par with men in all spheres like political, social, economic, civil and cultural.

iii) To provide equal access to participation and decision making in social, political and economic life of the nation.

iv) To build and strengthen partnerships with civil society, particularly women’s organizations, corporate and private sector agencies.

v) To strengthen legal system in order to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women.

vi) Mainstreaming a gender perspective into the development process. 11

Tenth Plan, the following measurable and achievable goals set in the Tenth plan having a direct bearing on empowerment of women and the girl child, will be adopted in proposed Action Plans:

- Reduction of poverty ratio by 5 percentage points by 2007 and 15 percentage points by 2012.
- Providing gainful employment to the addition to the labour force over the Tenth Plan period.
- All children in school by 2003, all children to complete 5 years of schooling by 2007.
• Reduction of gender gaps in literacy and wage rates by at least 50 percent by 2007.

• Reduction in the decadal rate of population growth between 2001 and 2011 to 16.2 percent.

• Increase in literacy rate to 75 percent within the plan period

• Reduction of IMR to 45 per 1000 live birth in 2007 and to 28 by 2012.

• Reduction of MMR to 2 per 1000 live births by 2007 and 1 by 2012

• All villages to have sustained access to potable drinking water by 2007.  

To translate the above goals into action, the Tenth Plan reaffirms the major strategy of mainstreaming the gender perspectives in all sectoral policies and programmes and plans of action. This will help achieve the ultimate goal of eliminating gender discrimination and creating an enabling environment of gender justice, which would encourage women and girls to act as catalysts, participants and recipients in the country’s development process. Further, women specific interventions will be undertaken to bridge the existing gaps.

Acknowledging the fact that women’s equality in power sharing and active participation in decision making, both in administrative and political spheres, is a strong instrument to achieve the goals of
empowerment. The Tenth Plan will initiate all necessary steps to guarantee equal access and full participation to women in decision making bodies, including the legislative, executive, judicial, corporate, statutory bodies and their advisory Commissions and Committees, Boards. Affirmative action such as reservation and quotas, including in the higher political, administrative and legislative bodies, will also be considered if necessary on a time bound basis. Introduction of women friendly personnel policies will be an additional feature during the Tenth Plan to encourage women to participate effectively in all the administrative decision making processes.

Defining the Women’s Component Plan clearly and identifying the schemes and programmes, and projects under each Ministry and Department, which should be covered under WCP and ensuring the adoption of women related mechanisms through which funds and benefits flow to women from these sectors. Initiating action for enacting new specific legislations and amending the existing women related legislation, if necessary based on the review made and recommendations already available to ensure gender justice, besides, reviewing all the subordinate legislations to eliminate all gender discriminatory aspects are quite essential.
• Expending action to legislate reservation of not less than 1/3 seats for women in the Parliament and in the State Legislature Assemblies and thus ensure that women in proportion to their number reach decision making bodies, so that their voices were heard is the need of the hour.

• Taking action regarding a Gender Development Index based on which the gender segregated data will be collected at national, state and district levels. These will be compiled/ collated and analysed to assess the progress made in improving the status of women at regular intervals with ultimate objective of achieving equality on par with men.

Effective Enforcement of Legislation

Taking into consideration the recommendations of the review made by the National Commission for women and the Task Force on Women and Children, the Tenth Plan will initiate action in consultation with the concerned Ministries and Departments either for amending the existing legislation and for enacting new legislation, wherever necessary. In continuation of this, an attempt will also be made to review all the subordinate legislations related rules and regulations, as well as the executive and administrative orders and guidelines and eliminate all the gender discriminatory references. This will be evolved
through a consultation process involving all the gender discriminatory references. This will be evolved through a consultation process involving all the concerned under the guidance of the National Commission for Women. In addition, the following specific measures will be taken to implement the legislation effectively, as suggested in the National Policy on Empowerment of Women –

(i) Strict enforcement of all relevant legal provisions and speedy redressal of grievances with a special focus on violence and gender related atrocities.

(ii) Measures to prevent and punish sexual harassment at the work place, protection for women workers in the organized and unorganized sectors and strict enforcement of relevant laws such as Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 and Minimum Wages Act 1998

(iii) Regular review of crimes against women, their incidence, prevention, investigation, detection and prosecution etc by the center and states at district levels.

(iv) Women’s cell in Police Stations, Women Police stations, Family Courts, Mahila Courts, Counseling Centers. Legal Aid centers and Nyaya Panchayats will be strengthened and
expanded to eliminated violence and atrocities against women.

(v) Widespread dissemination of information on all aspects of legal rights, through specially designed legal literacy manual and programmes.

**Increasing the Numbers in Decision making**

Adding to the serious problems listed above, lack of education, information and awareness generation aggravate the deprivation of women, thereby excluding them not merely from political, social and economic processes, but also from decision making as low as 7.6 percent in 2000, at the Premier services of Indian Administrative service and Indian Police Service. Their representation in political decision making is 8.5 percent in 2001 at parliament and 10.8 percent in 2001 in the Central Council of Ministers. No doubt, they represent 26.7 percent in 2001 in Panchayat against the 33 1/3 percent reservation for women. When more and more women are positioned at various levels of decision making, it is bound to have a definite impact on public policy in favour of women. Therefore, efforts in the Tenth Plan will be to increase the number of women in decision making places at various levels both in administration and political spheres, through affirmative discrimination, if called for. In this context, the Tenth Plan will not
hesitate to make an attempt to expedite the process of approval of the pending Bill to provide 33 percent of seats for women in the state legislative Assemblies and in the Lok Sabha.

The National policy of 2001 was formulated with a view to bridging the gap between the goals enunciated in the constitution, legislation, policies, plans, programmes and related mechanisms on the one hand and situational reality of the status of women in India. On other hand, it was noticed that discrimination against girl children, adolescent girls and women persists in many parts of the country. Consequently, the access of women, particularly those belonging to weaker sections including SC and ST, OBC and minorities, and the majority of whom are in rural areas and in informal, unorganized sector of education, health and productive resources, among others, is inadequate.

Some of the important features of policy include their active participation in decision making, including political processes at all levels, adopting a gender perspective to ensure main streaming of women in all developmental process, as catalysts, participants and recipients. Thereby, women's issues and concerns will specially be addressed and reflected in all concerned laws, sectoral policies, plans and programmes of action.
All the women members favoured development programs for improving living conditions and promoting equality in the society. Women members were aware of the social legislations, concerning compulsory primary education, prohibition of untouchability, prohibition of child marriage and abolition of dowry. Land reforms, tenancy and land ceiling legislations, legislations relating to widow remarriage, medical termination of pregnancy, debt relief and abolition of bonded labour system were known only to some educated women members.

Women members had a fair knowledge about development functionaries such as Agricultural officers, Revenue officers, BDO, Rural Development, Agricultural Field officers of Banks, Education officers at local and Block level.

Role performance of women members:

The role performance of women members was assessed with reference to their attendance at party meetings, participation in standing committees, undertaking follow up activities and involvement in development activities of political field like state legislatures and in panchayats. The factors those contributed to effective role performance of women members; training of women members about their role, women members assessment of the functioning of Panchayat Raj
Institutions; suggestions offered by women members for effective participation of women in panchayats were also examined.

Women members involved themselves in discussions of the meetings by way of asking for more developmental works as well as funds, expressing views and giving suggestions on the mode of executing development works. The meetings of the standing committees were seldom held during their five years tenure though they were supposed to be conducted at least once in a month according to the Act. Hence, women members had no opportunity to participate in the Standing committees and show their leadership roles.

In rural areas, a large percentage of women members has secured development benefits to the people of their villages mainly in the field of agriculture, public works, welfare and education. They had also involved themselves in organizing health programmes for the benefit of people in their villages and madal areas. The assistance secured by women members to the people under different programmes were economic in nature and this reflects upon the basic needs of rural communities.

Representatives of women on Panchayat Raj bodies enables women to take part in public life, interact with different sections of rural population, develop personnel for higher level leaders without the
consideration of traditional barriers. This enables them to achieve full and equal partnership in development as well as to work for the establishment of the more equitable, healthy and prosperous society besides improving their developmental and political perceptions. The more women grow in awareness of political and developmental activities as well as of existing social need, the better they will be able to participate in rural development.

The Panchayat Raj bodies have provided an opportunity to women to appreciate the needs of their local community and seek development benefits. There is an increase in the role of women members in decision making on development projects, specially the programmes relating to the welfare and development of women and children. The opinions expressed by women members on different socio economic issues and their role in different activities of panchayats are the indications that rural women are capable of progressive thinking and that they have the potential for effective participation in the national progress. There is enough evidence in the present study to show that given the right type of orientation and opportunity, women can play a more meaningful role in Panchayat Raj Institution.

The table given below gives an idea about women's participation in Panchayat Raj Institution in India.
## Women in Panchayat Raj Institutions

**Table 5.3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of G.P</th>
<th>Total No of Members</th>
<th>No. of women members</th>
<th>No. of (PS)</th>
<th>Total No Of members</th>
<th>No.of Women members</th>
<th>No. of (ZP)</th>
<th>Total No Membres</th>
<th>No. of women members</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Gujarat</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>13.256</td>
<td>64052</td>
<td>19936* (31.1)</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>3.765</td>
<td>1.275 (33.84)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>761</td>
<td>254 (33.38)</td>
<td>*415 more women members are to be elected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Haryana</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>5958</td>
<td>54159</td>
<td>17928 (33.10)</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>2418</td>
<td>807 (33.37)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>101 (33.33)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Karnataka</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>5641</td>
<td>80627</td>
<td>67689 (46.74)</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>3340</td>
<td>134 (40.2)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>919</td>
<td>335 (36.4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Kerala**</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>990</td>
<td>10700</td>
<td>3878 (36.2)</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>1543</td>
<td>565 (36.6)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>104 (34.6)</td>
<td>** Election will be held on 23625 Sept 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>30922</td>
<td>443429</td>
<td>147809 (33.33)</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>9097</td>
<td>2991 (32.88)</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>942</td>
<td>315 (33.44)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>11596</td>
<td>60584</td>
<td>8776 (14.49)</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>24024</td>
<td>8222 (34.22)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>89 (32.60)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>9189</td>
<td>103712</td>
<td>36722 (35.4)</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>5231</td>
<td>1738 (33.23)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>997</td>
<td>331 (33.20)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>5427</td>
<td>1809 (33.33)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>67 (34.18)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>24 (34.29)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>3223</td>
<td>61011</td>
<td>21489 (35.22)</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>9453</td>
<td>3182 (33.66)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>656</td>
<td>224 (34.15)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Country Report 1995
The emergence of Panchayat Raj Institutions offers an unique and remarkable opportunity to empower local communities to accomplish major goals set out in the Constitution of India, and for democratic the power. This opportunity was utilized by women members in large scale and with success in the Panchayat Raj. Successive governments including Karnataka have endeavored to streamline Panchayat Raj Insitutions and several committees have gone into this subject in detail but at last, Mahatma Gandhi’s dream of Gram Swarajya is realized with the adoption of the new panchayat raj Act known as the Constitution Seventy Third Amendment Act 1992.  

In Karnataka, they have far exceeded the 33.3% reserved quota. Many of them, elected for the first time, are perhaps inexperienced and hesitant, but they are there to make their presence felt. They have ushered in social revolution and they have presented the women’s agenda. There can no longer be development without their participation because there can be no decision making without their involvement.  

The political culture of women is combined with a degree of political awareness that is expressed not merely in terms of their mobilization at the time of voting, but also in the way they cast their votes. It is now an accepted fact that women do not vote blindly, or as ordered by their men. Recent elections have shown that women have a
mind of their own and exercise their vote independently, pointing to the decisive role of women in electoral outcomes. This political culture of women is found in every field of politics.

There was need of maximum involvement of people for the success of democracy. For that Panchayat Raj is an important political instrument and vital conduit for popular participation in democratic development. Women's participation in these institutions assumes vital significance in the content of their visibility in local decision making processes. For a majority of women living in rural areas and from the weaker sections of society, participation, initiative and leadership in rural political institutions can be of immense help not merely for their own empowerment, but also in bringing to bear a feminine perspective to the processes of planning, policy formulation and execution of rural development programmes.

As analysis of women's participation in elections and their culture in politics over the past five decades brings out the following facts:

i) The extent, nature and level of Indian women's participation is much greater than in most other countries including developed and underdeveloped countries.

ii) The participation has been steadily expanding over the years by way of voting, as candidates, and participation in campaigning and so on.
iii) The gap in the turnout between men and women is narrowing.

iv) The percentage of women elected to representative bodies is increasing.

v) In Karnataka, their representatives in local bodies has increased up to 45% though there is 33% reservation is Panchayat Raj. This show the political culture of women and as to how it is changing day by day. The political parties were also developing political culture among women.

The political culture of women was the process of representation. The women’s participation in politics nowadays increase and it motivated them to shoulder their political responsibilities. Iqbal Narain regarded such a measure as an integral aspect of necessity for broadening the political elite structure. *

As Rajiv Gandhi said “We cannot strengthen the roots of democracy if we do not take cooperation from women. He felt that status of women in society is a yardstick of nation’s advancement”. It was quite right for the success of democracy. This culture is developing in politics by participation of women in modern days in India.
REFERENCES


2. Ibid


10. Ibid

