Introduction
CHAPTER – 1

INTRODUCTION

“Every woman is a creator in the ideals of nationhood. I want the women of India to have consciousness of the great and dynamic nation whose energies have to be mobilized and harmonized for common purpose.”

Smt. Sarojini Naidu

“Women must be regarded as great ideals and beneficiaries of change. Investing in women’s capabilities and empowering them to exercise their choices is not only valuable in itself but is also the surest way to contribute to overall development”.

Human Development Report UNDP, 1995

“Woman is the mother of race and liaison between generations. It is the women who have sustained the growth of society and moulded the future of nation. It is truly said, “the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world”. In emerging complex of Social scenario, woman all over the world have a pivotal role to play. They can no longer be considered as more harbingers of peace, but are emerging as the source of power and symbol of progress.”
Politics decides destiny of people and as such active participation of people in political activities of the state is extremely essential. This is especially so in democratic countries, where the government is run for the people, by the people and of the people. The people and the popular opinion is the sole deciding factor in formation of any national policy of government. India is considered as a spiritual Guru of the world because of its rich cultural heritage and glorious civilization. Our glorious past opines that 'Yatra Nari Pujan Yante Ramante Tatra Devate; history bears the testimony glorious past of women in India. Women have immense potential of strength. She is the symbol of sacrifice. We have had instances of world renowned Women like Panna Dharva symbolizing as valiant warrior and Razia Sultan as an able administrator.

India is among the very few countries in the world that she successfully sustained a relatively open and stable political system in her post independence phase. India is a Nation of 844 million population located in the heart of Asia. For approximately 150 years during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, she was under British Colonial rule. Since independence, the States and Union Territories have been organized into a federal system. The National Government consist the President and a Bicameral Legislature, namely
the Rajya Sabha and more powerful House, the Lok Sabha. The President’s rule much like that of the British Monarch is primarily symbolic. The Lok Sabha has 545 members, elected from single member constituencies based on population. The Rajya Sabha has 238 members, elected by the people indirectly and 12 members nominated by the President of India.4

The Constitution of India aims at caring social, economic and political justice, equality of status and opportunity of assume of dignity of the individual unity and integrity of the Nation. Specific provisions to achieve these objectives have been made in part III and part IV of the Constitution. The Constitution has taken due care of the interest regarding women and has laid emphasis on equality of men and women.5

We have heard the comment that the “Gender is a Western concept. We do not need it in India”. The number of arguments are used to justify this stand, we say that India is the original land of the mother goddess. In our ancient history, we have many instances of women scholars and folklore. It is proved that women in India have always been honoured and respected. We are proud of the fact that India was one of the first countries in the world to give women the right to vote. Indian Constitution is most progressive in the world and
guarantees equal rights for men and women. All this is cited as evidence to support the contention that the Indian women are free and equal members of Society.

In Vedic and post Vedic period, women actively played her intellectual and social role in our country. Sucheta Kripalani states that in Rig Vedic age, the women enjoyed exceptionally high status. The Vedic word 'dampati' used to denote jointly the husband and wife, it means the joint owners of the house. Her higher education was regarded as a necessary accomplishment for being well placed in life. No less than twenty women were among the composer of the Rig Veda Hymns, Gargi and Matreyi were the leading philosophers of that time.

The Conceptual Frame Work

Here I have dealt with the definition of the concept. The definitions are essential to understand the use of the term in any content and to study the nature of the concept.

The Concept of Politics

Broadly speaking the term concept of Politics means the ways in which people gain, use and lose power. Ancient Greek thought and its heirs also stress a view of politics as constitute of legitimate social life in so far as it provides ways of individuals to express their opinions, influence each other and build institutions. The later responsibility
includes deliberation over means and ends as well as the implementation of collective decisions. Some perspectives take the state as the central actor, possessing potentially independent prerogatives and goals. The traditions of GEO POLITICS and real politics operate within this framework, others look to the process by which groups and interests negotiate and vie for control.6

According to Curl Schmitt, the concept of politics stands as an independent sphere of its own, apart from other, relatively independent spheres of human thought and action, such as moral, ethics, economics, the complete commeration of which is not required here, politics must, therefore, possess its own ultimately independent, distinguish, characteristics to which all specification can be farced back.7

To quote Miller, “Politics is the natural rifles of the divergence among the members of a society”.8

Quincy Wright observes”, Politics enlists where the ends and means are controversial. Political history is as old as the human process. The classic Conceptions of Greek and Romans represent the initiation of the study of politics which is about 2500 years ago from now. Ever since Aristotle conceived the study of politics as the “Master Science”, as the Science comprising not only the principles of governance but also the ethical norms of conduct and social vision. The politics has long
remained steeped in highly normative sense, primarily value oriented, prescribing what is good.  

Defining the political content as "power in public life is vested in and exercised by government institutions both at national, local level and within the administration. This itself is an imperfect measure, because political power is often exercised outside the established instruments of governance, particularly where representative institutions remain underdeveloped and unrepresentative."  

Quincy Wright defines politics as "The art of influencing, manipulating or controlling the groups so as to advance the purpose of some against opposition of others".  

Harold Lasswell defines, politics as participants with various values and perspectives employing base values by various strategies interest is an arena to influence outcomes and effects.  

Political Participation  

According to Myron Weiner, "The concept of political participation refers to any voluntary action, successful, unsuccessful, organized and unorganized, episodic and continuous, employing, legitimate and illegitimate methods, intended to influence the choice of public politics." The administration of public affairs or the choice of political leaders at any level of government, local or national.
Anthony M. Orem defines political participation, as the variety of ways in which people try to influence the political process. He has ought to identify the channels through which citizens attempt to influence the leaders as well as to isolate the kinds of citizens opt to use these channels on a regular basis.14

Political participation as a process in which people try to affect the government by means of taking part in voting behaviour, persuading others to vote, becoming a member of any political party, keeping oneself informed about politics, discussing politics with friends, colleagues, any family member, attending political meetings, political rallies street demonstrations, agitating to get public official, to correct political wrongs, on active member of an organization engaged for political cause and working with others in this way trying to solve some of the problems.

**Politicization**

The process through which certain issues become objects of public contention, debate and are thereby legitimated as concerns of state or political realon. Politicization is therefore, generally a continuous process, in so for as it introduces now demands for resources, justice, and recognition. The politicization of diverse aspects of social life has been a prominent feature of ninetieth and twentieth
Concept of Mobilization

Mobilization refers to the process through which peoples' consciousness towards its needs, objectives. It has two dimensions, political, social and both have deep political implications. On political level, mobilization is a process where by a party and group acquires control over power resources which it did not previously had. It also refers to the process where the party invests the power resources under its control.16

Concept Of Political Mobilization

The political mobilization process is viewed from ‘Social Movement perspective which sees the political organization of members who are largely socially deprived sections gaining political power with main objective of making members capable of resources, knowledge, position of authority and assets, for instance, to create a just society for evaluation items considered are:

1. Leadership
2. Ideology
3. Issues and Objectives
4. Programs
5. Participants
7. Strategy-Widening base, Alliance and confederacy
8. Goal-Attainment-Looking at the nature of social movement of deprived sections.17

Political mobilization on the other hand deals with those factors which brings together people so as to organize a support base for the process of the system in a big way. The voting turnout in any election is attributed to that of the process of political mobilization. It may involve a highly variegated set of activities oriented to achieve different objective. The process of mobilization may be aimed to bring change in the political regime through elections. It may also aim at expanding participation which provides the impetus for developing higher level of participation and there by of institutionalization. Political mobilization depending upon constituency intensity of demands and extent of participation and capacity of the system to accommodate the demands may prove dysfunctional.18
Women And Political Mobilization:

Women’s political mobilization takes many forms; it includes not only voting and holding public office, but also collective action in association and organization. In the sphere of electoral politics, women have made great strides forward in obtaining the right to vote and right to contest elections.19

The Concept of Political Culture:

According to Almond and Powell, “Political Culture is the pattern of individual attitudes and orientation towards politics among the members of political system”.20

Roy Macridis observes, “Political Culture means commonly shared goals and accepted rules”.21

In the opinion of Pye and Sidney Verba, “Political Culture consist the system of empirical belief, expressive symbols and values which define the situation in which political action takes place”.22

According to A.R. Ball, observes that “Political Culture is composed of the attitudes, beliefs, emotions and values of a society that relates to the political system and issues”.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To study the political mobilization of women.
2. To examine how women have been mobilizing in political field.
THE BUILT HYPOTHESIS:-

The Women Have Been Politically Mobilizing In India.

THE METHODOLOGY ADOPTED

The adopted methodology is survey research. For the purpose of data collection, a structured questionnaire has been designed to seek information from women political representatives. The present study is analytical in nature. It heavily seeks data from primary and secondary sources. The primary data is collected from Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, Legislative Assembly Debates, Questionnaire, Commission, Committee reports and Government Gazetteer. The Secondary sources are the books, articles, periodicals, journals, magazines and newspapers.

The area of sampling selected for this research work is Dharwad District. The study covers both women political representatives and common women.

The sampling area selected for this study is Dharwad District. To understand perception of Indian women in politics and to examine how women have been mobilizing in political field. It is, therefore, relevant to understand the role of women in politics of Dharwad District. In Karnataka State, “Dharwad District is the Educational and Cultural capital of North Karnataka, Dharwad is on the forefront among the cities of Karnataka State. It has nurtured the talents of many
distinguished musicians, artists, and educationists. The monumental work done by the Vidya Vardaka Sangh, Dharwad is a pioneer institute devoted to the cause of Kannada and the interest of Karnataka State is incomparable. Another major institution which had rendered service to the Kannada speaking population is the Lingayat Education Association.

Leading Kannada writers, poets, social workers and freedom fighters are associated with this institution. It is famous for Jnana Peeta Awardess like late. D.R.Bendre, Late. V.K. Gokak and Dr.Girish Karnad. Many notable Hindustani singers like Pandit. Bhimsen Joshi, Kumar Gandharoa, Smt. Gangubai Hangal. In addition to this, Karnataka Vidyavaradaka Sangh, Murusavirmath, Murghamath, Jagadguru Shankaracharya Pathashala and the Karnatak University, University of Agricultural Science are known all over India. These factors have created a considerable impact on women of Dharwad District for mobilization of women in political field.

Review of Literature:

A review of literature on “Political Mobilization of Women: A case study of Dharwad District” shows that a few people have worked on this subject. Not much work has been done at the state level, more so in the case of the Dharwad District. Secondly, the problems of women
in India are such that need to be studied from various viewpoints and perspectives. However, the studies of women’s political participation in politics are briefly reviewed here.

Vijay Agnew in her book ‘Elite Women In Indian Politics’ examines the historical background of women’s movement and role of elite women in national struggle and congress.


Vina Mazumdar in her edited book, “Symbols of Power’ brought out women’s role in national politics and the demand for women’s franchise in India 1917-1937. She mentions the women in electoral process as voters and contestants. The book also reveals the role of women in different State Assemblies.

The evolution of women’s status in society from a historical perspective, has not attracted the attention of many scholars. A.S. Atekar is boon on ‘The position of women in Hindu Civilization 1938 is one of the better known works on this subject. He discusses women’s role as wives and daughters, scholars, soldiers and politicians, their
right to properly, position in religious ceremonies and rituals. In a systematic manner, he traces the evolution of various rules and conventions referring to women. He goes on to recommend the changes which in his view are necessary to improve women’s status in a present day society.

Scholars and women politicians who were actively involved in nationalist politics have written several articles on Women’s participation in nationalist movement. Generally, these articles do not give us any insight into the movement but merely catalogue the events and facts. Two of the published articles are Kamaladevi Chattopaddaya’s, “The Women’s Movement Then and Now” and Lakshmi Menaris “Women and the National Movement”. These articles outline the participation of women in nationalist movement, women’s organization, their contribution in promoting women’s welfare and declining interest among women in such activities in post-independence years. They discussed, what is by now commonly known about women’s participation in nationalist movement and Mahatma Gandhi’s support to women.

A useful study of women politicians in post-independence years is Mary Katzensten’s “Women in India-Political participation and Socio-Economic Change. The article analysis the number of women in both
houses of parliament, provides social and political explanations of their presence in politics and studies their significance on the socio-economic status of women. The number of women in Indian politics is however much higher than in the industrialized countries and other developing nations.

The biography of Kamaladevi Chattopadhaya's career is a catalogue of events in which Kamaladevi featured and were reported in the news papers. There is no assessment of the contribution made by Kamaladevi Chattopadhaya to the various activities in which she was involved, such as the national movement, women's activities, theatre and handicrafts.

THE PLAN OF STUDY

The research work is divided into seven chapters.

The First Chapter deals with the introduction of study. It includes the Hypothesis, Objectives, Methodology and Sources of Date. It also presents the brief account on the significance and relevance of the present study.

The Second Chapter concerns with the historical background of women in political field. It also includes all the periods such as ancient, medieval and the modern.
The Third Chapter refers to a profile of Dharwad District. It includes geographical, socio-cultural, educational, economic, political and historical factors of the district.

The Fourth Chapter deals with politicization of Women in Dharwad district.

The Fifth Chapter analyse about the political culture of women in Karnataka in general and Dharwad District in particular.

The Sixth Chapter highlights about political Communication and Mobilization of women both in Karnataka and Dharwad District.

The Seventh Chapter the last one, denotes the concluding part, covering the various observation and suggestions for political mobilization of women.

The Political modernization does not discriminate participation of people on the bases of caste, region, language, ethnicity, class and sex. Therefore, with picking up of the modernization process throughout the world, political participation of women was considered as inevitable. Subsequently, countries which were exposed to modernization process allowed women to take part in political process. The principle of adult franchise seeks to ensure women's full participation in shaping and sharing of power. The study of general election not only demonstrates
unmistakably certain quantitative measures of participation of female citizens as electors and candidates but also provides requisite.

Gender equality and empowerment of women is recognized globally as a key element to achieve progress in all areas. It is one of the eight Millennium Development Goals to which world leaders agreed at the Millennium Summit held at New York, in 2000. The charter of the United Nations signed in 1945 in first International Agreement that proclaimed gender equality as a fundamental right. Ever since, there had been conventions, programs and goals to help mankind by conferring on them human right which are 'universal, indivisible' and interdependent. In order to promote development of women and to protect their rights, the General Assembly of the U.N., adopted 'Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women', on 18th December 1979, which came into force on 3rd September 1981.

India as signatory to the UN convention, taken several measures including legislation to ensure full development and advancement of women for the process of guaranteeing them to exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men. It is necessary for women to attempt a definition of political participation. The women's participation includes political activities
including voting, support of political groups, communications with legislators, discussion of political views, opinions among the electorate and other related activities. Political participation can be considered to include an involvement in any form of organized political activities. These seek to affect the power relationships.

In India, women for many years have organized themselves and undertaken notable service in many fields to help those who were distressed. Our women have pioneered new paths and have contributed significantly towards creating a wider social consciousness and awareness of the problems which are faced not only by women, but by society as a whole. It has often been said that the level of any society is judged by the level of its women. Certainly, it is true that the country’s progress can be measured by the progress of women folk.

The Government of India announced the year 2001 as the women’s empowerment year. Its objectives are;

➢ To create awareness of women’s issues with active participation and involvement of women.
➢ To initiate and accelerate action to improve and control of resources by women.
➢ To create an enabling environment to enhance self-confidence and autonomy of organized and new initiatives. These include
adoption of National policy for the empowerment of women; review of existing legislation on women, introduction of new Bill on Domestic Violence against women. The launching of new programs, such as ‘Swayamsidda’, which is a Self-Help Group based programmes for social and economic empowerment of women. The ‘Swadhar’ introduced which is a scheme, for empowerment of women in difficult circumstances. These programmes, activities and initiatives have been successful in creating large-scale awareness on various issues concerning women.

The political process is concerned with authoritative allocation of resources and values in a society. The participation in this process includes all activities related in making and execution of policy for society. It is a process by which people take part in political activities with more choice and performance. To attend the public meetings to take part in agitational activities, study circle of political parties, voting in elections, participation in election campaign, membership in representative bodies are some of the important occasions of political participation.

The politicization and participation of women in our country depends upon political situation. In our country, there are certain
factors which favour participation of women in political life. The background of freedom struggle specially during the Gandhian era was very conducive to this process. Thousands of women, all over the country participated in freedom struggle and Gandhi’s emphasis on socio-political emancipation of women contributed to the process too.

Since the dawn of Indian Republic, our Constitution guarantees equal rights to male and female. Women in contemporary Indian society, enjoy such political freedom and equality, which can be a matter of every women of many other societies of the world. India, the biggest democratic country in the world, had chosen a women Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi. This proves the dignified position which Indian women have occupied in political system of the country.

The Constitution of India pledges equality of status and opportunity, social economic, political justice, and dignity of individual to men and women equally. The two major factors which are instrumental in bringing about the recognition of political-legal equality of women were:

➢ Women’s participation in National Movement.

➢ Gandhiji’s vision that women must play an equal and important role in day-to-day affairs of the nation and our society was to be transformed to a just human one. The constitutional rights were
serving as instruments for achieving equality of status and opportunity in other spheres of life. These rights are far from reality. The presence of a few women in high offices has projected on inflated image of women’s access to power and dignity.

Why is women’s participation so important in political field? This is because, the women’s participation is changing the world, in which we live by bringing new priorities and perspectives to the political process and the organization of society women’s participation will make society more responsive to the needs of all the people.

If women’s participation in politics and decision making of their countries is a measure of democracy, then all countries still have a long way to go to achieve true democracy. Consciousness of the emergence of new awakening in women governments all over the world have started giving share to the women in power structure of society. Over the years, the government of India has also been putting offers to evaluate to social status of women. It announced many policies for their upliftment like, reservation in education, jobs and also in political front the quote has been fixed for women in different offices of panchayat and also in municipal bodies.

While the value and impart of women participation in voting and the pattern of their exercise of this power cannot be underestimated.
These are ongoing activities during the inter-election period, their cumulative effect influences on the policies manifestoes, campaign issues, campaign methods, techniques and above all, the change of candidates by the parties in electoral fray.

The participation of women in electoral process is a manner of their political consciousness as well as their aspiration of states enhancement. A quick glance at women’s participation in elections over the last five decades and fourteen general elections have confirmed the initial hopes placed in them. The figures concerning women’s formal participation in electoral process both as actors and the objects of attention bring unto few facts, they are:

- The extent, nature and level of Indian women’s participation is much greater than in many other countries.

- The women’s participation has been more or less steadily expanding over the elections as voters, candidates and in terms of participation in campaigning.

- The gap in polling turnout between the men and women is increasingly narrowing down.

- The number of women getting elected to representative bodies has been steadily increasing.
According to political scientist Katzenstein, the political factors, especially the mobilization of women during the struggle for independence and Gandhian ideology, as well as the importance of kinship, have combined to create opportunities for women to move into leadership positions.24

The concept of political participation of women is broader than the one covering women's participation only in electoral and demonstration process. It includes the voting support of political groups, communication with legislators, discussions about political views and opinions among the electorate and other related activities. So, political participation includes an involvement in any form of organized activities of power.

Women are an integral part of humanity, as men and women together constitute humanity being to halves of the same. Empowerment of women is a topic of help in achieving the goal of gender equality. Every member of society should be concerned with gender equality as it is the basis of a just society. The women's liberation and progress does not mean hatred for the men. We should realize that if women are neglected, then we should mean that the humanity is deprived half of its energy and creativity.
Emancipation of women mainly depends on three aspects—

- Education,
- Socio—Economic status and,
- Political Empowerment.

Out of these, their political empowerment is considered as a core factor to gender justice. Women have greater participation in governance in India through Panchayat Raj Institutions.

History abounds with great women namely Helen of Tory, Cleopatra, Elizabeth Cathrine, the great Razia sultan, Noorjahan, Rani Laxmibai, Sirimavo Bandarnaike, Beanazir Bhutto, Magreat Thacher, Aung San Soo Key, and Indira Gandhi. There is no shortage of greatness in women.

The greatness of man lies in woman, with him there is a woman. Chatrapati Shivaji became the great, because of his mother Jijabai. Therefore, like all bearing earth, all the enveloping sky, air we breathe, woman is always with us.

Women's participation in politics and policy making spheres has increased significantly over the years throughout the world. More and more women whose inherent potentials were long subdued are finally stepping out of their domestic confinement and venturing into the traditionally male dominated realm of politics. With advent of
In Britain the right to vote was given to women in 1918, U.S.A. and Canada in 1920. With the passage of time, this right to vote instilled in women a sense of public responsibility that helped to change the patriarchal perception of politics. It too gave a credence to the two thousand years old prophesy of Aristophanes stating, "women in power would have a radical influence on politics." In India, it was during the freedom movement a very large section of women came out of their domestic seduction. They even went to jail willingly in large numbers, braving the harsh and brutal treatment by the British Army. The women's wing of Indian National Congress attracted a large number of women into its fold who not only actively participated in political process like elections, but also organized bundhs, and strikes. They fought against issues like price rise, communal riots, 'Sati', dowry both at the centre and state level. Even after the attainment of Independence, women contributed their mite to various national causes, but their number dwindled rapidly. During the agitation for Samyukta Maharastra in 1956-60, women in large numbers organized 'morchas', restored to 'Satyagraha' and influenced the movement significantly. Similarly, during the Nava Nirman Movement in Gujrath,
launched by Jayaprakash Narayana in 1975, the role of women was laudable. In recent years, Medha pathkar's 'Narmada Bachao Andholan' and Sunderlal Bahuguna's 'Chipko Movement' have both been big success mainly due to the relentless support and co-operation of women from all over the country.

On the occasion of Golden Jubilee of Independence in August 1997, Parliament hold a special session in which a resolution was that gender justice be established. The Action of the U N Fourth World Conference on women in 1995, be practiced as a way of life.

On the occasion of International Women’s Day in 1999, a resolution was passed unanimously by the House. While referring to similar resolutions adopted earlier, it was suggested that attention may be focused on the following issues-

(1) The adequate reservation for women in both the Houses of Parliament is made, so as to give representation to all sections of society.

(2) The parliamentarians can play in the process of social change. It is important to build their capacities, strengthen their network and equip them with resources.

(3) Women’s voice should be promoted in decision making process including the macro-planning process.
(4) The fulfillment of Ninth Plan objective to empower the women and strategy of sector woman's component plans need to be closely monitored, women's voices and perspective should be a part of the monitoring.

(5) There should be ongoing process of gender mainstreaming machinery and the National Commission for Women.

(6) Gender sensitization of enforcement mechanism, judiciary, central and state ministers should be matched with resources.

(7) The reform of laws to address issues of gender based violence should be closely monitored.

(8) There is a need for enhanced UN system to support the gender equality and development.25

Our Constitution under article 326 deals with adult suffrage, that is to say, every person who is a citizen of India and who is not less than eighteen years of age, shall be entitled to be registered as a voter. The right to vote is basic towards achieving political equality for women. Democracy means power of people. The people without half of its women population are meaningless. For success of democracy, the women should participate in national political process.

The historic 73rd and 74th amendments to the constitution empowering women to participate in grass roots have added not only
the strength and vigour to our democratic institutions but also reduced the disparity. These landmark amendments have at once posed before our women, both opportunities and challenges. This opportunity of sharing of power on equal role in decision-making process would lead to vast improvement in status of women. In regard to the challenges, many apprehensions are entertained with regard to the capabilities of women to effectively carry out the responsibilities cast on them through the 1992-amendment inserting parts IX and IX A to the constitution on Panchayats and the Municipalities respectively. It is fervent hope that our women representatives will not lag behind.

“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights” which was included in Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by General Assembly of the United Nations on 10th December 1948. The Fourth World Conference on Women held at Beijing in September 1995, further glorified the concept of “Equality” and obtained commitment from nations not only to reduce gender inequalities and inadequacies in all spheres, but also to ensure that gender perspective is reflected in all spheres.26

Political participation is the hallmark of a democratic setup. As the women comprise about half of the population, this segment of society cannot be ignored but requires a special attention. We have to
know the nature and scope of their participation, without which we would not be in a position to have a true eye upon democratic participation and to frame right policies and strategies.

The predominantly liberal conception of democracy is "a fair procedure for political decision making, if each citizen is given an equal opportunity by the procedural rules to cast his/her vote in election". The democracy will fail in its objective, if a vast number of citizens and that too women in particular lack equal opportunity to participate in governmental decision making process. They are an equal partner in nation-building and political development.

Citizen's participation in political affairs is also important because a situation which results in high participation by members of a group normally has higher potential for democracy. Jan Leighley is of the view that "Participation in national problem solving and campaign activities enhances political conceptualization as individuals are exposed to the conflict of ideas, through participation they develop more abstract understanding of the political significant."27

The study of political mobilization of women is most significant, because women have become more beneficial to political parties and political leaders due to their natural qualities of honesty, affection, sense of duty and above all they comprise about half of the nation's electorate.
If half of the voters are women, we have to know their attitudes without knowing which we would not be in a position to frame right policies, strategies and laws for their welfare, otherwise they would remain what they were in the past. Women’s participation does not mean only the mobilization of power to solve their problems but it is much more than this aspect. It is necessary to apply the women’s point of view in policy making which affects the whole society. Women’s presence in policy-making bodies will at least make a mark in male-dominated patriarchal politico-cultural structure. It will also hit the age old sex stereotyping system.

According to Rounaq Jahan, two contradictory images came to mind whenever one thinks of women in politics in South Asia, namely India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Srilanka. The powerful women leaders like, Indira Gandhi, Banzir Bhutto, Sirimao Bandarnaike, Hasina Wazed and khaleda Zia. Since 1960's a large number of women have been leading at government in South Asia.

In India, Indira Gandhi was a powerful Prime Minister and Sucheta Kripalani, Nandini Satpathy and Shashikala Kakodkar, Sushma Swaraj, Mayavati, Margreate Alva, Rabri Devi, Uma Bharati and Mamata Banerjee have shown their political acumen while administering the affairs of their states. In spite of ability in
administration and art of political articulation, some women have captured the seats of power as Cabinet Ministers namely Amrit kaur and Sushila Nair served in union Health Ministry.

The background of elite and politicised families always helps women to have smooth entry into politics. Some women have played supportive role in politics to the male members in family like Indira Gandhi, as Nehru’s daughter, Menaka Gandhi, Kamala Bahuguna. After they came out of these they carve out their own political career as did Indira Gandhi and Maniben Patel. Again, it is not unusual in Indian political arena to have some couples engrossed in politics in their individual capacity, such as Acharya Kripalani and Sucheta Kripalani, Madhu Dandavate and Pramila Dandavate, P.K. Gopalan and Sushila Gopalan, Pheroze Gandhi and Indira Gandhi, Sanjay Gandhi and Menka Gandhi, Laloo Prasad Yadava and Rabri Devi. In each of these cases, the women has emerged as a powerful in her own perception. In all the leading powerful parties women always have been associated on footing of equality with men. The Indian National Congress Working Committee, a high level policy making party executive always has a woman on it. The socialist party has made it a rule that 10% of the delegates to National Conference should be women associated with the party executives in various states.
The participation of women is great and gigantic task of nation building is enabling India to march onward to the goal of establishing the socialist co-operative commonwealth, which is the principal aim of the Congress. Not only in administrative sphere where women are functioning with ability and distinction at all levels from Ministers down to the Panchayats. They have also been connected with all public movements, whether they are political, trade union and social. Specially in the constructive sphere of nation building, women have been moving in a dynamic way and stirring up the nation from old ruts creating a new life and new revolution.

The concept of political participation of women is broader than the one covering women's participation only in electoral and administrative process. It includes the gamut of voluntary activities with a bearing on the political process including voting, support of political groups, communication with legislators, dissemination of political views and opining among the electorate and other related activities. However, political participation can be considered to include on involvement in any form of organized activity that effects, or seeks to affect these power relationships. Women's participation of activities including movements, protest and support meetings on all issues like
labour, dowry, rape, domestic violence, pressurize, food adulteration and deforestation for the promotion of peace.

Women in India are becoming more and more conscious of their Constitutional and Statutory rights, even rural and tribal women include in this process. This consciousness has awakened in them a sense of urgency in experiencing equality and social justice. Without equality and social justice there cannot be democracy which is the exercise of general will of the people.

The Road To Political Empowerment

The political landscape of the twentieth century is bottled with gain in realm of women’s political rights, especially in recent decades. The United Nations has contributed to political landscape. They are –


2. The Convention on the Elicitation of all forms of discrimination of women, 1979, with over 100 reifications to date, which urges to govern and ensure that women have the opportunity to hold public office to participate in formulation and implementation of government policies.
3. The Nairobi Forward looking Strategies for the advancement of policy adopted in 1985 at the end of the United Nations Decade for women, emphasized the fact that women were still inadequately represent national and international political process. It suggested that effect intensified to overcome prejudices stereotyped thinking obstacles to joining the diplomatic service and denial of career prospects. It declared that the role of women in national liberation struggle should be expanded to allow their equal participation in nation building process afterwards.

4. The United Nations Decade for Women also played a pivotal role in recasting objective of bringing women to political foreground, as a part and parcel of process of development. In this sense, dialogue between the women of developed and developing countries strengthened the appreciation of the close linkage between gender issues and development.

5. One of the most beneficials outcome of decade was development of political and social information about women that was not available earlier decades. At the end of 1985, more than 90 percent of united nations Member states had official bodies for woman’s placement.
It is necessary that the context of woman to attempt definition of political participation in women's participation includes, the gamut of activities with bearing on political process including voting support of political groups, communication with legislators, dissemination of political views and opinion among the electorate and other related activities. Besides social relationships which are generated and institutionalized by being used to encourage, control people's behaviour attitudes and benefits in specified directions. The New Delhi Document on women in development 1985 recognized that despite the rapid growth of informal political activity by women, their role in formal political structure had virtually remained unchanged.

There is growing evidence that women in India are coming forward to participate in political affairs along with male. Every political party has a women wing addressing itself to the nature and extent of expection, deprivation dominance, especially the organization are seeking political solutions of their problems. It was hypothesized that the higher the level of modernity of the women, the greater would be their approval of women's political parliapation.

People's parltipation in public affairs has been subject of abiding interest in political science since the days of Plato. And Aristotle, the emphasis has been on democratic government through sharing of
responsibilities of public officers. Aristotle defined citizen as one who shares in the administration of justice and holding the office.

According to Roper, political participation includes a series of voluntary activities, which have nearing on political process, these activities include;

1. Voting in elections,
2. Supporting pressure groups,
3. Personal communication with the regime,
4. Participation in political activities,
5. Engaging and involvement in dissemination and,
6. Political opinion to other citizens.

Women’s participation in polities is mainly influenced by the attitudes of women towards polities, attitudes of family and above all the society’s attitudes. In India, women could play an effective role in polities.

In pre-independence period, mainly because of their attitudes both women as well as their families were favorable for political participation. According to Sucheta Kripalani, “Gandhi’s personality inspired confidence not only in women, but also in their guardians, husbands, fathers and brothers, who did not object to their women folk, coming out of their shattered homes to march in the streets.” Society
did not object to women's participation in politics because the atmosphere of the country was towards nationalistic one.

It has been generally believed for long that the quality and quantity of women's participation in politics is determined by factors like

(a) Political rights given to women by law,
(b) the stage of society,

The concept of political participation of women is broader than the one covering women's participation only in electoral and administrative process. It includes a lot of voluntary activities with a bearing on political groups, legislators, dissemination of political views, opinions among the electorate and other related activities. However, political participation can be It refers broadly to "activities by these not formally empowered to make decisions, these activities being mainly intened to influence the attitudes and behaviour of those who have power for desition –making."

Women who are successful in political career tend to come from middle and upper class background, from professional occupation.

Women are a major force behind people's participation in societies life today, not only do they comprise the majority of those included from participation, but they play leading role in the emergence
of groups organization and movement world wide and are becoming increasingly active in their communities, governments and in international area.

Why is women’s participation so important in political field? In first place, there can be no true democracy, no true people’s participation in governance and development without the equal participation of women, and men in all spheres of life. Second the goals of development cannot be attained without women’s full participation. Thirdly women’s participation is changing the world in which we live by bringing new priorities and perspectives to the political process and organization of society more responsive to the needs of all people.

Participation in politics whether through electoral process, non-governmental organizations and movements, women are empowering themselves, ‘Empowerment’ is a word widely used, but seldom defined. Long before the word became popular, women are speaking about gaining control over their lives and participating in the decisions, those are most effective at home, community, government and international development policies.

The word empowerment captures the sense of gaining control, participating and decision-making. Most recently the word has inferred
the vocabulary of development agencies, including international organizations and the United Nations.

Empowerment is a process and is not something that can be given to the people. The process of empowerment is both individual and collective. Since it is through involvement in groups in which the people most often begin to develop their awareness and the ability to organize to take action and bring about change. Women’s empowerment can be viewed as a continuum of several interrelated and mutually reinforcing components, they are -

(a) Collective awareness building provides a sense of group identity and the power of working as a group.

(b) The capacity building and skills development especially the ability to plan, to make decisions, to manage, to carry out activities, to deal with people and institutions in the world around them.

(c) Participation and greater control, decision-making power at home, community and society.

(d) Action to bring about greater equality and change between men and women.

The 73rd and 74th constitutional amendment in 1992 were provided one third reservation to women in Panchayat Raj Institutions.
These amendments were taken as a good beginning towards women empowerment.

The representation for women’s empowerment bodies through a quota system has been identified as one of the important means of achieving gender equality in India as elsewhere. Those countries which have enhanced the presence of women in their national parliaments have usually achieved through reservation for women. Further more, empirically; those countries have multi-member rather than single member constituencies, offer more favourable conditions for women politicians. Inspite of this, the inclusion of women into political decision-making bodies, especially if implemented through affirmative action such as quota, is still politically contested and theoretically debated. The practice has gone beyond its theoretical foundations.

The most salient feature of the empowerment is that it contains the word “Power”. Power is one of the most distinctive and contested concepts in non-scientific theory. Interestingly, the term empowerment, which is so closely connected with the term power, has been largely ignored from mainstream of political science so far.

Kumud Sharma gives a comprehensive definition of empowerment as seen from grass-root level. “The term empowerment refers to a range of activities from individuals self assertion to
collective resistance, protest and mobilization challenge the basic power relations. For individuals, groups, class, caste, ethnicity and the gender determine their access to resources and power, their empowerment begins when they recognize the existing power relationships. Empowerment is a process aimed at changing the nature and directions of systematic forces which marginalize women and other disadvantaged section in a given context”. Stydziensky defines empowerment as ‘a process by which oppressed people gain some control over their lives by taking part with others in development of activities and structures that allow people increased involvement in matters which affect them directly. In its course, the people will be enabled to govern themselves effectively. This process involves the use of power, but not power over others.

Power is also the most conspicuous ingredient of the term empowerment. The normative agreement for bringing women into position of power and to empower them in a more general sense lies in the assessment of structure barriers that have historically marginalized women in politics, society and the economy. To bring women into the political decision – making bodies and moving into position of power.

The political status of women can be defined as “the degree of equality and freedom enjoyed by women in shaping and sharing of
power and value given by the society”. Participation in politics has to be viewed at the level of acquisition, exercise of power and the rights of citizens. Political participation of women can be measured both as candidates and voters in general elections.

In post independent India, women contested elections and were elected to the legislative bodies at the centre and the states. They have accepted and successfully carried the position of Prime-Minister, Ministers, Governors and the Ambassadors. However the percentage of women MPs in India is larger than those of USA, Great Britian, Japan, West Germany, France, Yugoslavia and Norway. The number of female ministers in India is higher than in other countries. In addition to Parliamentary and State Assembly elections, a large number of women also contested in elections and got elected to the Local bodies, Municipalities, District Boards and Taluka Boards.

The politicization of women is combined increasingly with a degree of political awareness that is putting 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 and do not listen their men. The extent, nature and level of Indian women’s political participation is much greater than in most countries of the
world, whether developed and developing countries. The following table shows the facts and figures:

### Table – 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region/Country</th>
<th>Parliamentary Seats occupied by women. Percentage 1975</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Year of Women's Right to Vote</th>
<th>Women Members In Govt.</th>
<th>Decision percentage Of Ministerial Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>India</strong></td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>15.1</td>
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<td><strong>Developing Countries</strong></td>
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<td><strong>SAARC Region</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Bangladesh</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>1947</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.8</td>
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<td>2. BHUTAN</td>
<td>N.A</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1953</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>28.6</td>
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<td>3. Maldives</td>
<td>N.A</td>
<td>N.A</td>
<td>1932</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
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<td>4. Nepal</td>
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<td>5.8</td>
<td>1951</td>
<td>2.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Pakistan</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>1947</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>0.0</td>
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<td>6. Srilanka</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>1931</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>5.1</td>
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<td>7. Egypt</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>1956</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Tanzania</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>N.A</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Brazil</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>1934</td>
<td>3.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Venezuela</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>1947</td>
<td>3.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. China</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>2.5</td>
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<td>12. Philippines</td>
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<td>N.A</td>
<td>1939</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>10.0</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>II. Developed Countries</strong></td>
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<td>13. Japan</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1945</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. U.K</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>1918</td>
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<td>8.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. U.S.A</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>1920</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>5.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. Australia</td>
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<td>1901</td>
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<td>17. U.S.S.R</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. Canada</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>1918</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>17.1</td>
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</table>

If we look around the world, we find that women have secured a strong political foothold only in those societies, where institutions function according to well-defined democratic nations.

By the end of ninetieth century, women in many parts of the world had realized any kind of gender equality required for empowerment was possible only if they participated in elections of their representatives to the national, regional and local bodies and played a role of decision making process.

The Commission on Status of Women was set up in June 1946, and caused for women's political rights in all countries. In December 1952, the General Assembly adopted the UN Convention on political rights of women which was the first instrument of international law aimed at granting and protection of women's rights on a worldwide basis.

Let us take the examples of some developed countries. Britain gave suffrage to all women above 18 years in the year 1928, Denmark, provided women's suffrage in 1915. Finland also which was the second country in world after New Zeland to grant women's suffrage in 1919. In India, it is in the year 1950. Women were able to participate in political life of their countries since their active participation at decision making level was a prerequisite to full exercise of equal rights. The
world Plan of Action exhorted the national government to take the following action.

1. It should be ensured that women shall have in law and in fact, equal rights and opportunities with men to vote, to participate in public and political life at the national, local and community level. They should be made aware of their responsibilities as citizens, the problems affecting society and affecting them directly as women. Participation in political life implies participation as voters, elected representatives, trade unionists and public officials in the various branches of government including the judiciary.

2. Where special qualifications for holding public office are required, they should apply to both sexes equally and should relate only to the expertise necessary for performing the specific functions of the office.

3. Governments should establish goals, strategies and time tables for increasing within the decade 1975-1985 namely in the number of women to elective bodies public offices and public functions at all levels.

4. There should be special efforts to achieve these objectives
a) The reaffirmation and wide publicity should be given for the official policy concerning the equal political participation of women.

b) There should be special governmental instruction for achieving an equitable representation of women in public office, and the completion of periodic reports on the number of women in public service as well as on levels of their responsibilities.

c) There should be organization of studies to establish the levels of economic, social and political competence of women.

d) There should be undertaking of special activities for the recruitment, nomination and promotion of women, especially to fill important position, until an equitable representation of sex is achieved.

5. The special efforts and campaigns should be initiated to enlighten the women electorate on political issues and on the need for their active participation in public affairs, including political parties and other political organizations such as pressure groups.

6. Educational and informational activities should also be undertaken to enlighten the public at large on the indispensable
role of women in political process and on the need to promote their greater political participation and leadership.

7. Special drives should be undertaken to encourage the increased participation of women, girls in rural community, youth development programmes, in political activities and to facilitate their access to training for leadership in such programmes.

By the time of the National Perspective Plan was formulated by India in 1988, the issue of active political participation of women had assumed great significance nationally and internationally. First of all, the plan formulated its own definition of political participation. It went beyond their traditional definition which included only electoral and administrative areas and brought in voluntary activities like voting, supporting political groups and communications with legislators. The plan made a number of recommendations on educating and sensitizing not only women but also people in power on the need to get women into active politics and on women’s issues. It also suggested that the government should take the initiative for effective participation of women at national, state and local decision-making level, not in soft sectors, but in core sectors of development too.

After independence, India has proved that it is the largest and most successful democracy of the world, where all sections of society
enjoy equal rights and where women and downtrodden are standing shoulder to shoulder with high castes.

India is one among the few countries of the world, where one third seats of Panchayat Raj Institutions and Urban Local Bodies are reserved for women. Besides, 81st constitutional amendment bill providing for reservation of one third seats in Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies is under consideration in Lok Sabha.

Women captive in the four walls of the houses are now electing their rulers themselves. It can be termed as the success of democracy that a simple woman belonging to a downtrodden community of society was the Chief Minister of Bihar.

A healthy administration in democracy depends upon the political awareness of the people. The political interest of members in society functions as the early inspiration to one’s political career. This is no exception to women. Income may also be considered significant for analysis of women taking interest in politics. In modern democratic society interest in politics and actual participation of members in politics are generally manifested through several kinds of behaviour. Among these, membership of political parties and participation of women in public meetings are very common. The system of voting of modern democracies has become a fundamental pre requisite of the
substance of democratic order. Not only the men but also the women have been granted the right to vote and elect the candidate of their choice.

One of the important factors for giving representation to women in democracy, for the fact those women could understand women's problems more than men. So, by way of electing women leaders they could redress their grievances better. Though, only a few women reached the highest level of power and authority, those who did so have been recognized for their administrative skills and capacity to manage their own affairs. Since 1952, several women have served the Union Ministers and several have served as Chairman of both Houses of Parliament. Many have been members of Standing and Ad-hoc Committees. In States, many women have been Governors, Chief Ministers, Speakers and one Deputy Speaker. Though few have held Cabinet Ministerial berths and office in most of the States, compared to their overall number in the legislatures, the number of women holding offices is not low.

“The World Conference on Agrarian Reforms and Rural Development had also recommended that the Governments “should” promote collective action and organization for rural women to facilitate their participation in full range of public services and to enhance their...
opportunities to participate in economic, political and social activities on an equal footing with men”.

Politicization and participation of women in a country will necessarily depend on overall political situation. In our country, there are certain factors in situation which favour politicization and participation of women in political life. Political parties have a major responsibility in facilitating women’s participation. Parties must take deliberate efforts to place women members in both, party organization and out side position of authority. This might need changes in party constitution and strategy in favour of women. In context of Indian political culture, it can be expected that there should be far greater participation of women in politics.

Historically speaking, women have played a very significant role in the growth and development of parliamentary democracy in India. They have held important position both in legislatures and governments. Their contribution to the growth and development of parliamentary procedures and practices are significant.

One aspect of the present situation that needs to be highlighted is the close relationship that exists between women’s activism and the process of politicization. On the other hand, women who begin their
activism under the general banner of a political movement begin to develop some consciousness regarding women’s issues.

The steady increase of women voters in each election shows that the response of women to the political rights conferred on them by the Constitution is improving. Keeping other things equal, development of literacy and mass communication may help to draw an even larger number of women into the political mainstream.

The Indian women have amply proved in the past and continue to do so in the present that has given the right conditions, exercise their important right in a responsible and mature manner. If this political power being given to them no doubt, they will be equally capable of wielding it judiciously with courage and conviction. The Indian women had a capacity of unique decision-making at home like many of their Asian counter parts too. They have proved that they could seize all kinds of conceivable opportunities. Smt Vijayalaxmi Pandit was India’s Ambassador to the Soviet Union and the first woman President of the UN General Assembly. Smt.Hansa Mehata and Smt. Sareefa Hamid Ali were on several Commissions and most recently Smt. Najma Heptulla was the President of the Council of the Inter Parliamentary Union. Though only a very few women were able to reach the highest level of
power and authority, those who did so were recognized for their administrative skills and capacity to manage their affairs.

One of the common characteristics of the women leaders in political process during the period immediately after independence was their experience of participation in freedom movement. The women members of Constituent Assembly, which also functioned as the Central Legislative Council in the first five years of independence were mostly veterans of freedom struggle. Most of them had worked in movement for women’s welfare and development. They were the spokesmen of women’s cause in the Legislative Body and played an important role in mobilizing public opinion in support of social legislation’s that changed the legal status of women within the first few years after independence. Some of them also played their part in shaping policies and programs of women’s development were taken up by the Government of India.

While most of the women leaders who had attained a national stature during the freedom struggle were found in the circles of central Government and the Legislature in the States, a new generation of women entered the political process. Particularly representation depends more on their support within the party rather than the electorate, Women’s participation in political process has shown a
steady increase both in elections and in their readiness to express their views on the issues directly concerning to their day-to-day life.

Women are now entering higher professions, like engineering, space, architecture, business management, public administration, political, diplomatic representation all branches of higher education and scientific research. In all these fields they have been accepted their merits.
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