CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION

The term 'Local Government' or Local Self Government', means the government of elected local bodies which are endowed with power, discretion and responsibility to be exercised and discharged by them without control over their decisions by any other authority. Their actions are, however, subjected to the supervision of the national and state government.¹

In the words of Professor M. Venkatarangaiya, local self government means:

"the administration of a locality, a village, a town, a city, or any other area smaller than the state by a body representing the local inhabitants, possessing fairly large amount of autonomy, raising a part at least of its revenue through local taxation and spending the proceeds on service which are regarded as local and as distinct from state and central services"²
In the words of G.D.H. Cole, the expression, local government signifies a government, representative of local inhabitants, more or less autonomous in character, instituted under state legislation, in a village, a district, a city or in urban areas to administer local service as distinguished from state and central services.

Local Government and its importance:

Local government is an important component of every system of government irrespective of its political form of governance. It is recognized and created under law for the management of local affairs by the concerned governments in a given geographic boundary. Local government is a realization of Decentralization concept like other levels of government. Local government embraces the principle of sharing power, among the totality of its residents. It also embodies authority in
relation to local residents but unlike other levels of government, its authority is jurisdictional in content. The jurisdiction of local government is limited to a delimited area and its functions largely relate to the provision of civic amenities to the population within its jurisdiction. It is subordinate to the state or provincial government, which exercises control and supervision over it. Under certain circumstance, the state government can suspend or dissolve a local government.

As an urban local body, "A municipal corporation is defined as a body politic and corporate, established by public law, or sovereign power, evidenced by a charter, with defined limits and a population, primarily to regulate the local affairs of the territory and secondarily to share in the civil government of the state in the particular locality"  

Charles, S. Rhyme, remarks that the essential and distinguishing characteristic of the
municipal corporation is its, duality of purposes, namely, (1) to assist in the government of the state as an agent or arm of the state, and (2) to regulate and administer the local affairs of the area incorporated for the benefit of the community".5 thus, the municipal corporation refers to a unit of government which acts as an agent of the state and serves the local community.

According to William A.Robson, Local Self Government may be said to involve the conception of a territorial, non sovereign community possessing the legal right and the necessary organization to regulate its own affairs. This in turn presupposes the existence of local authority with power to act independently of external control as well as the participation of the local community in the administration of its own affairs.6
The local government derives its power and authority, no doubt, from the central government in a unitary state and from provincial government in a federal state and is subordinate to it. Though it is subordinate to the authority that creates it, the local government has certain amount of independence of action within the limits that are set for it. Within a framework of its autonomy, it exercises authority in the field of local taxation in order to raise the required money for rendering the local services like supply of water, sanitation and other public amenities. Thus, the local government refers to the operations of corporations, municipalities, district boards, panchayats, and such other bodies entrusted with the execution of functions relating to and concerning the residents of a given area or locality. While the distinction is also made between the two terms: (1) Local Government and (2) Local Self Government to mean the power to determine and execute measures within a definite area but over the
whole state, the Idea behind it is to express clearly the geo-political limitations of these governments. However, the term Local self Government means that the local institutions should be endowed with the freedom "to decide and act at its will in a given jurisdiction" G.M. Harris observed that the term 'Local Government' may signify (1) the government of all parts of a country by means of local agents appointed by and responsible only to the central government, and (2) the government of local bodies are subjected to the supremacy of the state government, and are endowed, in some respects, with power which they can exercise without control over their decisions by the higher authorities. He maintains that although the first is a local government of a kind, it is the part of a centralized system and therefore, may be called "Local State Government", whereas the second one is called in many countries as "Local Self Government".
This being the importance of the study of decentralized governing institutions, any study in the direction of working of Municipal corporation can not be done without understanding its geographical location and the texture of politics in that region. Especially when, these institutions are charged with the task of empowering women.

OBJECTIVES:

The objectives of this study are three fold:

a) To understand and examine the process of empowerment of women
b) To evaluate the performance of decentralized institutions in the process of empowerment of women and finally
c) To assess the efforts of empowerment of women if any in the border district of Karnataka which has a historic reputation for being a progressive district.
METHODOLOGY:

Methodology is the essence of any research work undertaken. It is all the more important if it is an empirical work. The current study is a combination of a both normative and empirical study therefore; the method employed for analysis of this dissertation involves a conscious attempt to synchronize both normative and empirical methods. The study is proposed to be undertaken in the border district of Karnataka viz., Belgaum and the choice is made keeping in view its history and the current status. Belgaum is said to be a progressive district in North Karnataka, which is said to have played an important role in the National movement also. The district is close to the (border of the) state of Maharashtra and was also a part of Bombay province during the British regime. Keeping this historic perspective in focus this study is proposed. Chikkodi is to the north-easterly part of Belgaum
district and is constantly represented by Congress and this taluk has played an important role in the National movement too. Keeping these facts in mind the study is proposed, with the tools of research such as a schedule and informal discussion as its methods. Other methods that would be employed include descriptive and historical methods. Statistical test would be employed to verify the hypothesis laid down.

HYPOTHESES :

The following are the hypotheses:

a) That the process of empowerment has yielded quantitative and qualitative results in empowering women and

b) That the decentralized institutions have failed to take any credit in matters of empowerment although their 'role' has been crucial.
REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

It is important for any researcher to survey all available literature concerning the problem at hand. He/She must necessarily survey and examine the literature available before a definite research problem is chosen and research design designed. This means that the researcher must be well conversant with relevant theories in the field, reports and records as also all other relevant literature. He/she must devote sufficient time in reviewing of research already undertaken on related problems. This is done to find out what data and other materials, if any, are available for operational purposes. Knowing what data are available often serves to narrow the problem itself as well as the technique that might be used. This would also help a researcher to know if there are certain gaps in the theories, or whether the existing theories are applicable to the problem under study are consistent.
or inconsistent with each other, or whether the findings of the different studies do not follow a pattern consistent with the theoretical expectations and so on all this will enable a researcher to take new strides in the field for furtherance of knowledge i.e., he can move up starting from the existing premise. Studies on related problems are useful for indicating the type of difficulties that may be encountered in the present study as also the possible analytical shortcomings. At times such studies may also suggest useful and even new lines of approach to the present problem. Hence the importance of review of literature. The following some of the chosen books for this review.

Bose, Ashish. 1970. Urbanization in India: An Inventory of Source Material is a book that throws light on the introductory part of urbanization in India. As the itself suggests it is source material
to gain an insight into the world of urbanization in a developing country like India.

Bulsara, J. F. 1964. Problems of Rapid Urbanization in India. Deals with the problems faced by urbanization including the increasing slum dwelling, problems of hygiene and a host of civic, health, and managerial problems.

Burgess, E. W. (ed.) 1926. The Urban Community. Chicago: is a book that gives a clear perception about the problems faced by urban communities in developed countries.

Das, Biswaroop. 1993. Socio Economic Study of Slums in Surat city Surat: Centre for Social Studies. This book throws light on the much-needed study of slums exposing the realities of their socio-economic status. The limitation of this study is its
restriction of the study area. However it a very important study.

Desia, A. R. and S.D. Pillai (eds.) 1970. Slums and Urbanization. This is similar to the study of Surat, as discussed above. This book throws light on the slum dwelling in Bombay and its effects on urbanization. This is more of a sociological study but it is useful for those who study any aspects of urbanization.

D'souza, Alfred (ed.) 1978. The Indian City: Poverty, Ecology and Urban Development, is a book deals with the major concerned of modern India that includes the economic disparity and ecological degradation. The book brings to light the contradiction between development and the socio ecological problems.

Diddee, J. and Vimala Rangaswamy. 1993. Urbanisation: Trends, Perspectives and Challenges. This book examines the core of urbanization explaining the trends perspectives and challenges. This is useful for any one who is seriously involved in search which holistically assumes importance to futuristic studies in urbanization.

Fox, Richard G. (ed.) 1970. Urban India: Society, Space and Image. The book deals with the nature of urban India and shrinking space in the urban areas. It attempts to highlight the new trends in the society and kind of image that these major cities in India are aiming at.
King, Anthony D. 1976. Colonial Urban Development: Culture, Social Power and Environment, this is a book which deals with the trends in urban development in relation to its colonial past it is a treatise on culture, social power and environment there are also many other books which deal with urbanization in India and urban studies in general.

Many articles, research papers specially in EPW Economic and Political Weekly journal Asian studies and Indian Labor journal etc., are worthy of review. However what is apparent none of these through any light on working of any municipal corporation in particular or tries to characterize any municipal corporation or its working hence the importance of this literature survey and the study. Further as one can notice these days’ There are of late a large number of books that are published covering that theme of empowerment "Indian Women : Society and Law", Vol-2 by Aryan Amita directly deals with the question of empowerment of women through
education. "Literacy and empowerment' by Athreya (et.el) is yet another book in this direction. Govinda (et.el) is another book having similar theme. Uma Shankar's "Indian Women today", is a book that indirectly touches upon the theme of empowered women through power sharing. "Women in Politics" by Pandey, shares similar approach. Banejee's work on "Gross root empowerment" is a book which comes close to the kind of Study we are proposing here. This book reviews the attempts at decentralization and its effectiveness. "Neera Desai and Maithereyi Krishnaraj's "Women and Empowerment", Sushma Sahay's, "Empowerment of women in South Asia", are some more books that care to study the processes of empowerment of women. In this direction, one may find no dearth for literature, but, as the subject chosen for our study is an exercise to link the local governments and empowerment, it is our felt opinion that there still exists a gap. Hence, this study to fill this gap.
PROBLEM TO BE INVESTIGATED:

'Empowerment' is a process. It is fairly a recent addition to the lexicon of development. While there is no consensus on its definitions, it is used to mean, a greater share of participation in decision making especially for the women (gender specific) and the weaker sections (class specific).

Empowerment as understood encompasses a range of activity that include self assertion to collective resistance. This in other words has a goal to redeem those individuals and a cross sections of population from the subjugation of and subordination from others who are probably in advantaged positions. Then, in this context, empowerment is a process that begins with an individual and his mind and contributes to collective emancipation.
In the current case, the focus of the study has been the 'women', as a gender specific group, which is subjugated both culturally and in the context of society. The focus, then is not mere 'women', but empowerment of these 'women politically' especially through the decentralized institutions. Since much of decentralization vocabulary did not superficially aim at 'goals' specified but only embarked upon participation and democratic process an attempt is made in this study to link decentralization as a process aiming at a specific goal viz., empowerment of women.

In an era of welfarism, the government is overburdened with multifarious activities and functions. Moreover, a governmental machinery functioning at a remote place cannot obviously find time and the requisite knowledge of all the different areas. They can be understood and
appreciated better, and attended to efficiently by an organization which is constituted in the locality or area itself. This constitutes the basic need for effective decentralization. Decentralization or distribution of governmental powers and responsibility to the different units of the government is of paramount importance in a democratic set up. As Laski points out, we cannot realize the full benefit of democratic government unless we begin by the admission that all problems in their incidence require decision at the place, and by the persons, where and by whom the incidence is most deeply felt. Local problems need variety, whereas the central government aims at uniformity. "The local bodies are the outcome of natural groupings and associations which should be cherished and given a full scope in any scheme of genuinely national self government. Besides, local governments is itself the best school of political training for the mass living in the villages who cannot take part
in the provincial or the central government except through their representatives, and it is also to be cherished a school of social service and a most efficient factor of social progress.

In modern times local institutions are outposts of democracy. It is here that the programme of national development is put to action, and people learn participation in public affairs. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru rightly remarked, Local administration is the foundation of our democracy. A democracy at the top cannot be a success until the foundation on which the superstructure rests, is strong. It is no use starting such a superimposed democracy without proper base.

According to De-Tocqueville, Local institutions constitute the strength of free nations. A nation may establish a system of free nations. A nation may establish a system of free government but without
municipal institutions, it cannot have spirit of liberty.

Further, the observation made by Aristotle is worth mentioning. He said: "If liberty and equality are chiefly to be found in democracy, they will be best attained when all powers alike share in the government to the utmost" 20.

As the actions of the welfare state have multiplied rapidly, it tends to go beyond regulatory functions and becomes involved in the welfare of the common people, and this calls for decentralizations of powers to the local government. Hence, the need for local government. In fact, local government today is more important in the daily life of a citizen than the state or central government. "Local authorities have greater opportunities today than ever before. If the powers of the central government are increasing so are the powers of the local
councils. Such has pointed out: "the local government of a developing country assumes the primary responsibility for national development but local government also has its share to contribute. Indeed, national government is not likely to succeed without a genuine partnership between the two".

Local problems are numerous and are of local character. Local governments can solve local problems in an efficient and speedy manner. Besides, it may become economical to manage local problems at the local level. It enhances the importance of local government also. Further local government serves as agencies for the town citizenry to participate in decision-making and in implementing them. It provides an outlet for competent and public-spirited persons of locality to render social service to the community. From can take up responsibilities for state and national levels. Local government thus ensures a regular flow of talent to higher levels.
The purpose served by local government is valuable on account of its service for the common welfare of the community. Former president of India, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan said: "the local bodies must have the sole objective of promoting the well being of the people." One writer has listed the major objectives of the local government as under:

1. The municipal government fulfils all the domestic needs of a civilized community.
2. It also creates among the citizens personal interest in their common affairs and throws the field open for their constructive and creative activities.
3. It serves as an expression of political consciousness and as a means of political education and renders the citizens fit for their civic duties and responsibilities by enabling them to participate in public affairs.
4. It generates in the people an aesthetic sense that makes them beautify and adorn the land they inhabit.

5. It provides the best opportunity to men and women to bring their local knowledge and enthusiasm to bear on the solution of their own peculiar problems.

Under these circumstance it becomes evident that the study a municipal corporation in the post welfarist period is an important area for an academic to work on since, in the era of globalization much of the civic services are planned to be privatized. Hence the problem to be investigated is very clearly to understand and dissect the working of municipal corporations especially in Belgaum region and to measure its success/failure and its limitations in the post welfarist scenario in the light of empowerment of women in the region.
PROPOSED RESEARCH DESIGN:

A good design is often characterized by adjectives like flexible, appropriate, efficient, economical and so on. Generally, the design, which minimizes bias and maximizes the reliability of the data collected and analyzed is considered a good design. The design, which gives the smallest experimental error, is supposed to be the best design in many investigations. Similarly, a design, which yields maximal information and provides an opportunity for considering many different aspects of a problem is considered most appropriate and efficient design in respect of many research problems. Thus, the question of good design is related to the purpose or objective of the research problem and also with the nature of the problem to be studied. A design may be quite suitable in one case, but may be found wanting in one respect or the
other in the context of some other research problem. One single design cannot serve the purpose of all types of research problems. "A research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure." In fact, the research design is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data. As such the design includes an outline of what the researcher will do from writing the hypothesis/es and its operational implications to the final analysis of data. Keeping in view the above stated design requirements the thesis is divided in to five chapters.

Chapter- I Introduction, covers methodology employed and choice of the subject etc Chapter- II. Empowerment: A conceptual assessment deals with
concept of empowerment and makes an analysis of the various schools of thought in this respect.

Chapter- III. Decentralization and Empowerment; covers an Empirical Analysis Survey and data analysis undertaken in the area for study. Belgaum district was chosen for the study with special focus on Chikkodi taluk. Chapter- IV is the conclusion, where in inference of analysis made in the previous chapters are presented.

Thus, this study of working of Belgaum District is Empowerment of Women. an unique one and will through light on the future research in the areas of decentralized governance.

Empowerment undoubtedly is a process. This process is has to be approached differently depending on the target group involved. Women who constitute 67.7% of Indian Population thus form a formidable target of this programme. But, this huge
task of empowering can not be achieved by government alone. They need the involvement of the people in this task. Decentralized institutions being a part of this process of involving people in development and progressive activity thus, form a major institutional structure in the task of empowerment. It is therefore, essential to study as to how these institutions perform in this new and challenging task of empowerment, which forms the central theme of this study. Hence the problem to be investigated.

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