CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

Involvement of the people is an essential part of democratic process. People's participation in the political process is very crucial as it will determine the success of democratic political system. Effective functioning of democratic political system not only needs procedures and institutions but also the commitment of people to certain values and norms. The commitment to certain values and norms by people constitutes a major dimension of political culture which provides structure and meaning to the political sphere in the same manner as culture in general gives coherence and integration to social life.¹ This ensures an alert and informed people in that political system. Alert, informed and wise citizens in a democracy choose better representatives to govern the country.

The performance of democratic political system is primarily dependent on the kind of elected representatives that the people choose through the election process. Therefore, a democratic political system requires political culture consistent with it. Both individual and collective orientations influence the system because individual political culture provides controlling guidelines for effective political

behaviour and collective orientation gives a systematic structure of values and rational considerations which ensure coherence in the performance of institutions and organisations. In democratic set up people are supreme and it is assumed that people exercise powers. In practice, however, it is a myth. In fact, those who really exercise power are a few, whom we regard as elites. The governance of a country is mainly determined by how elites use or exercise their power in a political system. The exercise of power by the elites is influenced by their commitment to the values and norms. Therefore, elite political culture is a determinant of their performance, which is a part of political culture, in terms of promoting the well-being of the country.

The way in which the political system functions depends on the institutions and people. Here functioning of the political system indicates its performance in terms of fulfillment of hopes and aspirations of the people. In this context, functioning of the political system cannot be explained meaningfully without referring to elite political culture and mass political culture.

The position of elites in a political process differs from one political system to another. A greater awareness developed over time in the literature of the importance of studying elite political culture, given that the influence of individuals in the political process varies.

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significantly. It may be difficult to strengthen democratic politics without effective participation of women, since they constitute almost fifty per cent of the population. The participation of women in politics is mainly determined by their political culture and the role of women elites. The kind or type of political culture of women explains the nature and extent of participation of women in politics. This is significantly influenced by women elites as they play an influential role in promoting awareness among women. In this context, elite culture determines their commitment, concern for others' beliefs, identity etc., which ultimately is an indication of the extent of promoting the interest of common women.

Statement of the Problem

A democratic politics is not meaningful unless it ensures empowerment of women since they constitute fifty per cent of the population. The problems of empowerment of women are not being tackled effectively in India. Empowerment of women is not merely a legal or constitutional issue; it is also a cultural issue. Legal and constitutional provision for empowerment of women may not serve the purpose in the required political culture. In view of this, problems of empowerment of women can be analysed or understood in various ways. One of the major approaches of understanding the problems of empowerment of women is through study of elite political culture.

Elite political culture approach helps us to understand how the functioning of various institutions of political systems is not able to deal with the problems of empowerment of women very effectively.

Here we assume that elite political culture determines the effectiveness in the functioning of various institutions. Therefore, it is very pertinent to understand women elite political culture.

In this study, an attempt has been made to understand Indian urban women elite political culture. For this purpose, we have attempted to identify factors shaping Indian urban elite political culture. We have also attempted to evaluate the contribution of women NGOs to the process of shaping the political culture of urban women elites in India.

For understanding the political culture of women elites in India, we have selected only urban women elites with the assumption that they have better exposure and competence to analyse the implications of the problems of empowerment of women in Indian politics. From this perspective, it is very significant to understand the political culture of urban women elites. This understanding of urban women elite political culture contributes in understanding Indian politics.

Urban elites have better perception on public issues, and as such will influence common and political elites. This will enable them to focus their attention on the constitutional provisions. After independence, urban women have been able to increase their socio-
economic and political activities. Besides, opportunities for higher education, growing interest in increasing family income, expansion in employment opportunities, etc., as also modernisation of women, has contributed to increased socio-economic and political activities and helped them to save time from household activities and utilise this time in social work, career development and extra-curricular activities. This also promotes awareness among women. In spite of all this, the empowerment of women is not perceivable in the true sense of the term. In view of this, it is relevant to understand the orientation of urban women elites towards politics and reasons as to why empowerment of women has yet to reach a significant level.

This study deals with the orientation of women elites towards politics. Here, we assume that the orientation of urban women elites towards politics is subjected to the influence of their socio-economic background. From this perspective, it is very pertinent to understand the various types of elites who come from different socio-economic background. The women elites selected for this study are classified into the following categories:

1. Academic elites,
2. Business elites,
3. Professional elites,
4. Journalist elites,
5. Political elites,
6. Bureaucratic elites,
7. Mahila Mandal elites, and
8. Literary elites.

This study is based on the assumption that the women elites selected are not homogeneous in their orientation towards politics.

The sampling area selected for this study is Hubli-Dharwad. To understand the perception of Indian urban elites basically, it is essential to examine the role of local women elites and their functioning. Hubli-Dharwad is partly representing the political culture of a metropolitan city like Bangalore and partly represents the political culture of towns and talukas. It is, therefore, relevant to understand the political culture of Hubli-Dharwad women elites. In Karnataka state, Hubli-Dharwad is the cultural capital of North Karnataka. It is famous not only for having produced Jnana Peetha Awardees like late D.R. Bendre, Late V.K. Gokak and Girish Karnad but also for stalwarts in Hindustani music like Sawai Gandharva, Bhimsen Joshi, Gangubai Hangal, Mallikarjun Mansur and Basavaraj Rajguru. It is also well known for eminent Kannada litterateurs like Shanta Kavi Sakkari Balacharya, Gangadhar Madivaleshwar Turmari, Betageri Krishna Sharma, D.S. Karki and many more. In addition, the four institutions, Karnataka Vidyavardhaka Sangha, Murusavir Math, Jagadguru Shankarcharya Pathashala and the Karnataka University are known all over India. These factors have created a considerable impact on the orientation of women elites of Hubli-Dharwad towards politics.
Despite the fact that women account for almost half of the population in the state as also in the country and the fact that there are no legal or constitutional bindings to select their political career in national, state and local level, the proportion of women in this field is very negligible. Education, social and economic status along with other factors do not encourage them to participate freely in large numbers and make politics as their profession.

The objective of this study is to find out the socio-economic background of women elites and its impact on their orientation towards politics, i.e., political culture. Moreover, weak leadership among women may have been one of the factors for not encouraging them to participate in politics. Most of the able, and better educated women, especially from middle class background, do not wish to get themselves involved in political activities for many reasons. In fact, if proper decorum is maintained in political life, more women are likely to come forward to join politics. These will have significant impact on the political culture of women.

Review of Literature

Empowerment of women will not be ensured in the true sense unless we are able to deal effectively with the problems associated with it. Notwithstanding this many works on women studies have been undertaken and published. The term “women’s studies” is a term borrowed from the west. It was pioneered in the US in the late nineteen
sixties. In India we started using the term more frequently after the International Women’s Year, that is, 1975. In India, a few women's studies experts, under the leadership of Vina Majumdar, have defined “Women’s Studies”, as the “Pursuit of a more comprehensive, critical and balanced understanding of social reality”. Its essential components include: 1) Women’s contribution to the social process. 2) Women’s perception to their own lives. 3) Roots and structure of inequality that lead to marginalisation, indivisibility and exclusion of women from the scope, approaches and conceptual framework of most institutional framework and social action.

During 1970’s, there was a global awakening on the issues of women and a number of initiatives were taken against discrimination of women. 1975 is an historic year since the United Nations General Assembly declared it as the International Women’s Year. As part of this, many debates and conferences all over the world were organised. The earlier works on women focussed their attention more on the evil customs like sati, widow re-marriage problems, etc. The concept of women’s studies is confusing till today and even the experts in the field are not able to give similar or identical definitions. The concept of

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women studies does not hold a common understanding even for those who are in the field and the basis is only ‘women and their issues’.\textsuperscript{6}

The earlier writings on women and their issues were concerned mainly with the theoretical discussion on dimensions like law, work, violence, health, religion, etc. In this regard, women studies need to evolve their own explanations for the subordination of women in politics. In case of India, there are more than 800 to 900 works on women which include books, journal articles, proceedings of conferences and seminar reports, doctoral theses and certain special issues of journals.\textsuperscript{7} There is no clear idea about how many researches have been done on this subject. This is because publishing is very expensive and takes considerable time. Many new ideas, innovative techniques and interesting findings do not get published in book form, and remain for long periods in mimeographed form or get printed in Journals, which may not be easily available.\textsuperscript{8}

As a part of celebration of International Women's Year, the Government of India took a decision that studies on women should be encouraged at all levels. In this connection the University Grants Commission and the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) decided to support studies and research and teaching in

\begin{itemize}
\item Ibid., p. 389.
\end{itemize}
women's studies in the universities. Table 1.1 shows the areas covered in research done work on women.

### TABLE – 1.1

Works on Women's Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Areas covered in research work done on women</th>
<th>Books</th>
<th>Reports</th>
<th>Journal/articles</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Concept theories</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>General Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>a)</td>
<td>Family, caste</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>Religion and culture</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Work, work wage and house work</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Political participation of women, women's movement</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Social issues—dowry, prostitution, widows, violence</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Dalit, tribal and Muslim women</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Development, science and technology</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Legal status</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Health – mortality, abortion, foeticide</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Media-Mainstream, alternate</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Reports and general reviews of women's studies</td>
<td>--</td>
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<td>--</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 1.1 indicates that there are many works on political participation of women, but there is no work on political culture of women, which is a pre-requisite for understanding the role of women in politics. In view of this, the present study is quite distinct from earlier works. In this regard, a brief review of major works relating to women
and politics is necessary to explain in what way this study is distinct from earlier works and how this work contributes to women's studies.

**Vijay Agnew**'s work, *Elite women in Indian Politics*, explains the background of women's movement and the participation of women in nationalist movement, suffrage movement and women's organisations.

**Annapurna Devi** and **N.M. Pati**, in their work *Women in State Politics (Orissa)*, have attempted to assess the actual condition of women in politics in the state of Orissa, their level of participation and points out the reasons for the indifferent attitude of women towards politics.

**Sanjay Ketan Jena**, in his work entitled, *Working Women and Modernisation*, has attempted to explain the political participation of women, their attitude towards elections, membership in political parties and their participation in political decisions.

**Raj Pruthi** and **Bela Rani Sharma** in their work, *Post-Independence India and Women*, explain the historical background of the struggle for women's suffrage and the position of women under the constitution.

**Neera Desai** and **Vibhuti Patel** in their work, *Indian Women - Change and Challenge in the International Decade 1975 to 1985*, have
explained the governmental measures, policies and programmes to improve the status of women and strategies of struggle.

Anil Dutta Mishra's work, *Gender Perspective participation, empowerment and development*, discusses the social discrimination practised against women. He also explains the perspectives of women's participation and their empowerment in India.

Ranjana Kumari, in her edited work *Women in Decision Making*, examines the state of women's organisations and their participation in decision making.

In another edited work, *Global Experiences of Setting up Commission for women*, Ranjana Kumari, attempts to analyse the problems of political empowerment of women in India.

J.K. Chopra's book, *Women in the Indian Parliament: A Critical Study of Their Role*, explains the origin and growth of Indian women's movement, its ideology, the campaign for political representation, women and legislation, participation of women in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, their debates and discussion.

K. Subha, *Women in Local Governance*, in this book the author explains about participation of women in political process and decision making in the corporations and the position of women in the local political parties.
There is another work by D’ Lima Hazel, entitled *Women in Local Government: A Study of Maharashtra*. This work examines social and political groups from which women representatives are drawn and the extent of the awareness of their special role as women’s representatives. It also examines the scope and the actual degree of participation of these members in the local governing bodies.

**Jana Matson Everette, Women and Social Change in India.** In this work, the author deals with the campaign of Indian women’s movement for political representation in two phases; in the first phase [1917-1928], the issues discussed are female enfranchisement and eligibility for legislation. In the second phase [1928-1937] the issues discussed are liberalisation of the terms of enfranchisement and increasing female representation in legislatures.

**Mukta Mittal** in her edited work *Women Power in India*, discusses the participation of women in the political process and problems connected with women power.

Working of women’s organisations have been evaluated by **Malladi Subbamma** in her work, *Women Tradition and Culture*.

**Vina Muzumadar’s** edited work *Symbol of Power: Studies on the Political Status of Women in India*, provides quantitative data on women’s political participation and its impact on the political process and the realities between the law and society.
Shipra Sen, Political Women in India – An Assessment of her Status and Role. This work describes the participation of women in politics, before and after independence and their impact on the political process.

Jane S. Jaquetts, Women in Politics. In this work the author explains political participation of working women and their political life in freedom movement in the erstwhile Bombay state as also in Gujarat.

P.M. Mathew and M.S. Nair’s in their work Women’s Organisations and Women’s interests, explain the participation of women in politics with reference to the social reform movement.

Sheila Rowbotham’s work, Women in Movement Feminism and Social Action, explains about women’s power and politics, and their rights.


J.P. Singh’s work, Indian Democracy and Empowerment of Women, discusses the political and economic empowerment of women in the present context.

V. Mohini Giri in her work, Emancipation and Empowerment of Women, discusses issues from equality to empowerment of women.
F. Benedicta, and F. Pinto, A. C., in their work *Women Power: Technical Education and Development*, explain the significance of women power, women awakening, and ways for empowerment.

Arun Kumar Singh's work, *Empowerment of Women in India*, explains about the role and impact of women's organisations on empowerment of women.

R.A. Thakur's work, *Elite Theory and Administrative System*, attempts to examine the role of elites of the class I and class II cadre officers of the central and state government in the Bhagalpur district of Bihar state on administrative system.


Ananda Arora's work, *The Women Elite in India*, explains the status of women in pre-independence, and post-independence period. He also examines self-perception of women in higher jobs and the problems and involvement in their jobs.
There are a number of other works dealing with general elites by sociologists, psychologists and political scientists. But our intention here is not to discuss their conceptual framework because they are not of direct concern to the present study. However, in this regard we may mention some of the studies. A number of articles are also published on the issues of women and politics and on general elites.

The brief review of related literature of this study indicates that there is very little work has been done on the state of women elites in Indian politics. It appears that no systematic attempt has been made to examine elite political culture and its relation with the problems of political empowerment of women. The works on political participation of women in the political process cover various states like Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Bihar and Gujrat. Here, we regard that political culture of women constitutes a determinant of empowerment of women. Political culture of women influences their political participation and representation. In view of this, it is very significant to understand the political culture of women elites.

There are also some works, which examine the role of women elites in Indian politics. However, this brief review of literature indicates that there is no work on political culture of women elites. Therefore, this study enables or contributes to overcome the research

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lacuna. Besides, the reviewed works on women and politics do not cover the recent position of women in Indian politics.

The Conceptual Framework

First we shall deal with the definition of the concepts and then discuss the interrelationship between the concepts. A definition of the concept is essential to understand the use of the term in any context and it is essential to study the nature of the concept.

Elite

The term ‘Elite’ is derived from the Latin word ‘elegere’ which means “to choose or to select”. The first and foremost use of the word ‘elite’ was made in military terminology in which it came to be applied to a choice of persons ... ‘hommes ‘d elite’ and “companied elite”. In the fifteenth century A.D., Froissart applied the term to “The best of the best” ‘meilleursdes meilleurs’

According to Webster’s Dictionary, elite means “The group or part of a group selected or regarded as the finest or the best, most powerful” etc.

Dwaine Marvick states that in the newer approach “elites” are routinely understood to be incumbents.

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Vilfredo Pareto defines the “elites” as, “those who are most capable in their particular branch of activity; whether this be playing chess or playing prostitute, thieving or defending thieves in the law courts, writing poetry or governing the country are, i.e., “Classic elite”."\textsuperscript{11}

Gaetano Mosca, a leading exponent of elite theory, defines elites as “an organised minority which holds domination over the unorganised majority”.\textsuperscript{12}

In the words of Harold D. Lasswell, the “elites are the Influential.”\textsuperscript{13}

Even though various terminologies are used by the scientists, elite is the most commonly used term to describe those who play a major role in decision making process on behalf of the masses through their merit and influence.

**Political Culture**

According to Lucian Pye, Political culture is a set of attitudes, beliefs, and sentiments which give order and meaning to a political

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process and which provided the underlying assumptions and rules that govern behaviour in the political system.\textsuperscript{14}

Political culture is defined as patterns of orientation to political action or objects.\textsuperscript{15}

According to Sidney Verba, “The Political culture is the system of empirical beliefs, expressive symbols and values which defines the situation in which political actions take place”.\textsuperscript{16}

Gabriel A. Almond states that political culture consists of:

1) The set of subject of orientations to politics in a national population or sub-set of a national population.

2) It has cognitive, affective and evaluative components. It includes knowledge and beliefs about political reality, feelings with respect to politics and commitments to political values.

3) The content of political culture is the result of childhood socialisation, education, media exposure, and adult experiences with governmental, social and economic performance.


4) Political culture affects political and governmental structure and performance constrains it, but surely does not determine it. The causal arrows between culture and structure and performance of both ways.17

According to Sameul Beer, “The components of the culture are values, beliefs and emotional attitudes about how government ought to be conducted and about what it should do”.18

Lowell Dittemer, attacks prevailing definitions of political culture as “the subjective perception of an objective political reality.”19

Taking into account all these definitions, we shall conceptualise political culture as attitude, beliefs and sentiments of people to the political system.

Political System

David Easton says that, the political system “as a system in which the authoritative allocation of values or powers or functions is made”.20

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Gabriel A. Almond and G. Bingham Powell argued that, “If political culture is subjective dimension of the political system, then it must be divisible set of orientations towards various structures and aspects of the political system”.21

According to *International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences* the political system means the study of the interactions that provides the basic subject matter of political science.22

**Politics**

Quincy Wright defines politics as “the art of influencing, manipulating or controlling (groups) so as to advance the purpose of some against the opposition of others”.23

Harold D. Lasswell, summarises the conception of politics by saying that, “Participants (with various value perspectives) employing base values by various strategies interact in an arena to influence outcomes and effects”.24

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24 Ibid., p. 132.
Taking into consideration the above concepts, politics can be defined as a struggle among groups in fulfilling the conflicting desires on public issues.

**Political Process**

According to International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences, Political Process refers to “the activities of people in various groups as they struggle for and use power to achieve personal and group purposes.”

**Empowerment**

According to Webster’s Dictionary ‘Empower’ means “To give official authority or to delegate legal power or authorise or to give faculties or abilities”.

Srilatha Batliwala defines empowerment as, “The process of challenging existing power relations, and of gaining greater control over the sources of power, may be termed as empowerment.” Feminist scholars and activists within the context of their own regions define this broad definition.

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Inter-relation Between the Concepts

Democracy does not become meaningful unless there is gender equality. In traditional society, it is difficult to have gender equality. The role of women in politics is not only depending on legal or constitutional provisions but also on their political culture. If the women have the required type of political culture to democratise the society, it will make their role in politics meaningful in terms of their representation and political participation. This is mainly dependent on the nature of the political process. The involvement of women in the political process will enable them to gain experience and this will have significant impact on their orientation towards politics. In this respect, orientation of women is significantly, influenced by various organisations like political parties, NGOs, and pressure groups. Such institutional mechanism will plays an influential role in shaping the attitudes, values and beliefs of women. In this regard political parties, NGOs and pressure groups should encourage women by providing necessary opportunities. Specifically, women's organisations are supposed to educate women about politics. All these contribute to empowerment of women. In the Indian context, many women's organisations are not working satisfactorily in terms of educating women.

In democracy, power is vested in everyone, but in practice power is actually exercised by a very few, whom we regard as elites. Elites play a significant role in the functioning of democratic political system
as representatives of people. Political culture plays a crucial role in evaluating the performance of elites in terms of the fulfilment of hopes and aspirations of the common people. In this context elites as a group or as an individual represent the aspirations of the people. We regard elites as guardians of the people. People look towards elites for guidance whenever an issue of public affairs affects their interest or draws the attention of the public. The functioning of elites as representatives of common people in democratic process is substantially influenced by their attitudes, values, beliefs etc., about politics.

The attitudes, values, beliefs etc., constitute major dimensions of political culture. Elites' perceptions and opinion on public affairs are closely related with these major dimensions of political culture.

Elites play a significant role in the functioning of democratic political system as representatives of people. The functioning of democracy depends upon the aspirations of the people, which are greatly influenced by the political orientations of the elites. There is difference between elite culture and mass culture. When we compare the attitudes of elites with masses, elites generally express greater concern for public affairs. This is because elites are better informed, and better exposed. In a democratic political system elites strengthen the voices of the masses as representatives.
Though democratic political system is the role of all, in practice very few people like elites are capable of understanding the implications of policies and participate in policy making. In this system, elites even though they are excellent and talented, still they represent the interests of common people because they are the representatives of the people. Through this viewpoint, elites strengthen the voices of the masses in running the governmental machinery.

Adequate representation and participation of women in politics with strengthen democracy. As regards issues and problems of women in politics, the debate on empowerment of women has drawn the attention of every one in India. In this study, we assume the representation for and participation of women in the politics constitute major components or indicators of empowerment of women.

In India the modernisation process is very slow which will have its bearing on the way in which elites perceive and evaluate policy issues and related problems. Here, the elites' way of perception and evaluation of policy issues and related problems are influenced by the attitudes towards politics.

Participation women in political needs a critical thinking about public affairs. This thinking comes only when they have particular kind of values or attitude or their views on public issues. This makes the participation meaningful. The experience that the elites and
common people acquire through their participation in the public affairs constitutes a major determinant of elites' thinking, perception, opinion etc., about politics.

Without adequate representation and effective participation of women in politics, democracy does not become meaningful. The representation and participation of women in politics is ineffective, due to lack of required kind or nature of political culture among women. In this context, it is the responsibility of women elites to promote awareness among common women. In this respect, the kind of orientation towards politics determines the extent of commitment of women elites in the right perceptive towards certain norms and values for promoting the interests of the society. Therefore, empowering women politically at local, state and national level depends on the kind of orientation that they have. Year 2001 was declared as ‘Women Empowerment Year’ by the Government of India. It has declared many projects for the welfare of women. Without political empowerment of women the social and economic empowerment becomes ineffective. If women are to be economically empowered, they are to be provided with additional channels of credit, training, employment, greater viability, management skills and social security. If women are to be politically empowered then they should get opportunities to participate in decision making process.

To increase the number of women representatives in the governmental machinery and to implement the policy of empowerment
of women in a true sense, it is essential to adopt reservation policies for women in formal institutions like national, state and local levels. Implementation of policies of reservations for women in politics must be viewed not as a pre-requisite but as an important and necessary enabling condition for their empowerment. Until and unless the problems of empowerment of women are not seriously tackled by the governmental and non-governmental organisations, there will not be any increase in the representation of women in politics, which is ultimately going to affect the political orientation.

To create political awareness among women, and to increase their participation and representation in the political process, it is very essential that political parties should encourage active women party workers for campaigning and also allot tickets for women candidates in large numbers at the time of elections. Political parties in India do not indicate much inclination to nominate adequate number of women candidates to fight elections.

The 73rd and 74th Amendments of the Indian Constitution, passed by the Parliament in 1992 and ratified in 1993, provide 33 per cent reservation for women in the local governments and it is an achievement in the empowerment of women. As a result of this, over one million women have joined Panchayat posts as Presidents, Vice-Presidents and members of committee administration. The position of women elites at the grassroots level enables them to gain some experience about local politics. Because experience is a very
important factor in the process of shaping the political culture of elites. In the beginning, the quality of participation of women in local politics is not so effective. Education, male dominance and traditional family background, are obstacles for promoting awareness among women.

In this context, we can observe that very few women elites will get an opportunity to involve themselves in electoral politics. Consequently, this will have adverse effect on orientation of women towards politics. To increase the participation and representation of women in Indian politics, it is essential to create awareness among them about their rights and status. In this regard, it is the responsibility of the elite women to encourage and mobilise common women by conducting seminars, workshops, conferences and training programmers with the help of governmental organisations. This will definitely result in increasing the number of women representatives in Indian politics.

**Objectives of the Study**

The following are the main objectives of this study:

1) To analyse urban women elites' attitudes, perception and opinion on issues of empowerment and some issues of Indian politics in general.

2) To examine the concern of various organisations like, women NGOs and political parties about empowerment of women.
3) To examine the relation between political culture and political empowerment of women.

Assumptions (Hypotheses)

The following are the hypotheses of this study.

1) Socio-economic status of urban women elites determines their political culture.

2) The nature of political process affects the process of shaping the political culture of urban women elites.

3) NGOs largely influence political culture of urban women elites.

4) Political culture is a major determinant of political empowerment of women in Indian politics.

These hypotheses are tested in the light of data collected through the questionnaire.

Methodology

This study is empirical. The data used in this study are from both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources constitute information provided by the respondents through Schedule and Interview Method. Besides, the study is based on secondary sources of data like books, journals, reports and newspaper clippings available in some of the leading libraries in India. The area sampling selected for this research work is Hubli-Dharwad. This study covers both political
and non-political elites. Three hundred women elites belonging to different categories of Hubli-Dharwad were chosen in a random way. We have identified elites on the basis of their excellence established in different fields.

Table 1.2 indicates the total number of women elites in each group and sample size.

**TABLE - 1.2**

Women Elites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Name of the group</th>
<th>Approximate total number</th>
<th>Sample size (No. of respondents)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Professional elites</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Business elites</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Journalist elites</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Political elites</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Bureaucratic elites</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Mahila Mandala elites</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Literary elites</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The minimum number of respondents selected for this study is 25 per cent of the total strength of each category, namely, professional elites, academic elites and Mahila Mandala elites. Where the number of respondents is limited, namely, journalist elites, bureaucratic elites, and political elites all of them have been approached. In case of business and literary elites, have selected fifty per cent of the respondents have been selected.

One of the basic problems in this empirical study was getting responses from the women elites especially from bureaucracy who were reluctant to give their responses to the schedule. With great difficulty...
at last, they agreed to give the interview. There were some very rare instances in which some of the respondents gave friendly welcome to the researcher.

Outline of the Present Study

The study is divided into seven chapters.

Chapter – I

The first chapter begins with the significance of the study, statement of the problem, review of literature, conceptual framework, objectives of the study, assumptions (hypotheses) and methodology.

Chapter – II

This chapter discusses the elite theory, political culture theory and empowerment theory along with national policy for empowerment of women in India.

Chapter – III

This chapter discusses the representation of women in the Indian political parties and legislatures. It also discusses the role of women’s organisations in empowering women and policies/programmes/projects/schemes for empowerment of women.
Chapter – IV

This chapter deals with women and electoral politics in Hubli-Dharwad.

Chapter – V

This chapter attempts to examine the association between socio-economic status of women elites and their perception and opinion about empowerment of women.

Chapter – VI

This chapter explains the women elites’ perception of political process, women’s representation in legislative bodies and political participation.

Chapter – VII

The last chapter presents the findings of this study and some suggestions for further research.