

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

India is the biggest democracy in the world, where women constitute nearly half of the population. There is no hesitation that democratic and secular India activity to provide necessary conditions for better participation of women in all fields of life. A democratic country in principle is a participative country in which command is shared and authoritative decisions relating to the society are taken by the representative of the citizens. In a democracy country, development is one of the primary functions of the state and the state is governed by the elected representatives of the citizens. As women constitute a most important segment of the population, their participation in the politics is not only essential for the success of democracy but also for the overall development and progress of the society and the nation.

The growth of women in India has passed through various stages. During early Vedic era, the Indian society was patriarchal; however, women enjoyed a significantly high status. In the post-Vedic, the basis of women's long subordination to men, especially in socially and legally perspective was organized. In the medieval era with the coming on the Muslim empire, the decline was more marked and more visible. Female infanticide, child marriage, purdah and sati had become very common. However, women of certain noble families were extended certain privileges like education active in politics. When the British rule established in India, the women position had reached the lowest depth. Women were denied equality in social, economic and political arena. However, some rare examples of extraordinary women like Rani Laxmi Bai, Chand Bai left a noteworthy impact in the political field. In the twentieth century, the great effort for freedom was initiated. Indian women proved to be enormously patriotic and entered politics in large scale. They even participated in the National struggle bravely.

During the National Movement when the leaders were arrested and jailed, women assumed leadership jobs. The participation of women in the national movement was quite unique. That time, when women in the West were challenging suffrage, motivated by the interests of their own gender group, our women's major concern was the liberty of their country. The principle of equal rights for women was accepted without any aggression or conflict when freedom came. Right to vote under the democratic constitution brought political equality for women.

The constitution of India has guaranteed equality, liberty and justice to women in all spheres. But their political participation is not satisfactory till yet. In India, political participation of women's is low in the voting turnout, decision making process and as member of any representative body. There is huge gap between the constitutional guarantees and the real representation women. Even though, women constitute half of the total population, but their representation in the political arena has not been satisfactory. Women contesting elections still constitute only an insufficient percentage of the total number of contestants elected as a member of representative body. The percentage of women legislative leadership in various state assemblies of India has never exceeded even 15 percent. In Punjab, the depiction is as miserable as in the rest of India. Women are disgustingly underrepresented in the authoritative positions.

Women of Punjab have a long custom of participating in the political movement for struggle the independence of India. They had equally shared the ambitions of their countrymen and join the freedom struggle, not only to share their imaginations but also to hold suffering and misery, beliefs and sentence and power and responsibilities as a award for the reason they held dear. Since the establishment of the struggle for liberty, a large number of women of Punjab have made notable contribution in the extended and unique fight for India's

freedom movements and have left behind permanent marks of their achievements. Raj kumara, Amrit Kaur from Punjab became the first women minister in the centre Government.

Punjab is rich and wealthy state but patriarchal formation is strongly deep-rooted in its social life. The social cultures are such that women's work is restricted to the four walls of the house. Their main responsibilities still considered towards their children and their family. Due to cultural and social structure, public, social and political leadership have remained male monopolies. The major reason for the under representation of women in the state legislature is the socialization procedure which scheme politics as exclusively a male domain. Moreover, the nature of socialization procedure is such that politics is presented not only, as a male activity but also as something dirty. The term politics is given very marked derogatory connotations making it something mismatched with feminine traits. The increasing criminalization of politics and ever increasing role of money have further increased the thought that politics is gender definite activity and appropriate only for men.

Punjab is measured to be a developed state and has accepted women's leadership in theory but in real life there has been a strong tendency to exclude women from leadership positions. Although, thousands of women participated in the struggle movement for freedom and many came to fame on the national scène, yet it can be said the center of their anxiety was the National Movement and not the women's cause specifically. Women's huge scale participation in the national level and their recognition with the cause of freedom did not through a rational transition lead to their uniformly large scale participation in politics after the independence. It is a odd contradiction and paradox that after India independence through a strange reversal the women were made to be traditional to extremely orthodox patriarchal inhibitions.

This is obviously reflected in the fact that in Punjab, women have the right to vote and make up about half of the voters but they rarely achieve any office or have equal admittance to careers in politics. After independence, political arena in India commonly and Punjab specially, has been declared and captured by men. Women are thoroughly excluded from high positions in political parties and government offices and continue to play an unimportant role in high level political law making and decision-making bodies. The basically patriarchal reasons for the abolition of women are indeed marked by a very successfully engineered justification mechanism. There is big scale indoctrination of the instruction that politics is, by nature, a field basically suited to men, to which mean women should not be acknowledged and only in exceptional situations and within severely defined restrictions can be the conditional participation of women take place.

Punjab is religiously Sikh dominated state and Malerkotla is only constituency of Punjab where Muslim are in majority. Malerkotla is one of the 117 constituencies of Punjab Assembly. It used to be a Princely state. Malerkotla is a Muslim majority constituency in which approximately 68.50 Percent Muslims followed by 9.50 Percent Sikhs and others lives. A sample of 300 Women respondents has been taken up, comprising 150 each from Sikh and Muslim communities respectively. It is further divided into rural and Urban Women (75 each). The present study has tried to details in objective terms that particularly Sikh and Muslim women of Malerkotla constituency have had a unimportant and insignificant presence in political arena.

## **MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

The main findings of the study are as under:

- Sikh and Muslim women of respondents has chosen for the study. The in general socio-economic status of these women is found to be low down, as is obvious from the profile of our sample of three hundred women respondents from Sikh and Muslim communities.

The data of age is concerned, it was found that age is the most significant element in one's overall orientation and in the decision making process of the women. Decision making process is broadly influenced by age factor, in as much as it was found that the women in younger age group i.e. 18-35 years of age, are more dynamically participating in politics and they have constructive perception about such participation because they consider more liberal and in the wider sense. This finding is substantiated mainly, in the light of most important reason that they have free viewpoint towards the socio-political matters being in the younger age. In general younger age group, women are more conscious and excited by the political happenings compared to others. Moreover, Women in this age group are generally educated and show keen interest in politics. They understand the importance of government and their policies. The women in the middle age group (above 35 years of age) do not take so keen interest because of certain handicaps or impediments in their way. Since they like rearing their children or bringing up their children, shouldering the responsibilities of the family and spouses, no spare time at their disposal for active political participation. Moreover, they lag behind in the education also. It is also found that the educated women, both from Muslims and Sikhs communities are more aware about politics. It has also been noted that in Malerkotla constituency, women in the age group of (18 to 35years) are more educated comparatively to those above 35 years age. The women in the age group above 60 years are least interested in political participation.

Education has been found to be of dominant importance in the matter of political participation for women in the constituency because it brings consciousness, awakening and an urge for political participation. During the field survey, it has been found that most of the women are uneducated. It is also observed that mostly women had got married at the earlier age even their education is not complete yet. It is a fact of Malerkotla constituency; the young generation of women of

both the communities is more educated comparatively elder one. It is also found in the survey that Muslim women are less educated as compared to Sikh women. So far, the percentage of educated women both the communities is concerned; it has been found that those living in urban areas are more educated as compared to rural areas. Thus through education women can see this world in better way.

As far as the caste wise composition is concerned an identical trend has been observed in Sikh and Muslim women. In Malerkotla there is no scheduled caste in Muslims but there are SC's in Sikhs. Both the communities have general categories and backward classes. Voting pattern is certainly affected if any particular caste is dominant and so is the impact of political participation. In Malerkotla constituency caste impact is seen in election time. Mostly people of Malerkotla constituency cast their vote accordingly their cast, women have also effected by caste.

The study also reveals that as far as occupation profile is concerned, it has been found that majority of women (from the both communities) are housewives and they financially dependent upon their husbands or fathers. But some of them who are working and earn for by self or their family; they are more financially independent and have unhindered political participation. They enjoy their independent entity in spite of being a family member and more aware about politics. They are not puppets in the hands of their spouses or parents.

Another important finding of the topic is that majority families in Malerkotla constituency still live in joint families from both the communities and remain busy in household jobs. The women neither find time nor have any interest in political participation. With the passage of time and change in the attitude and life style of the people, joint family system is withering away from the society having the way for nuclear families but there are still, all the important decisions are taken by the elder or male member of the families. Being dependent on their husbands for all types of monetary requirements, it is but natural

that they follow suggestions and advices of their spouses to remain away from political activities.

- The level of political awareness is found quite well among the Sikh and Muslim women respondents. There was no major detectable difference between the levels of political consciousness among respondents in the two communities (Sikh and Muslim). The level of consciousness about politics was judged by asking question like the names of leaders, political news etc.

As far as the reactions of interest in politics are concerned it is found that Sikh women respondents (40 percent) are comparatively less interested in politics to Muslim women respondents (54 percent). Interestingly, Muslim women respondents are show more interest in politics. But majority of women are from both communities shown no interest because they think politics is not game of women. It is a dirty game and there is no safe sailing for women in it. If someone has interest in something, only then he/she can be a part of it.

Another finding of the study is concerned, as far as the question of women's awareness about politics; the study reveals that women of Malerkotla constituency are quite aware about politics. Data shows that Muslim women (70.44 percent) are slightly better aware about politics as compared to the Sikh women (69.33 percent) respondents. Further analysis of the data reveals that to be specific, the level of awareness is more among the educated women because they read daily newspapers and have overload to local area public opinion about various elections and daily happening in political circles. Women in the younger age are also fairly aware about political participation because most of them are college going or doing the post graduates studies and they take knowledge through the peer groups or news. The illiterate segment of women from the both the communities has also been found to be to a certain extent aware about the political activities but the tempo of awareness becomes many times more during the election time through Mohalla gatherings, Local TV news and campaigning by contestants.

They also come to know the most recent political happenings from their spouses.

The Study reveals that both the Sikhs and Muslims communities' respondents are not very keen on watching latest news and show no interest in them. There are many reasons for not showing interest in news, newspaper etc, main reason for it is that as per tradition of joint families in both the communities of Malerkptla constituency, where due to large size of family, there is hardly any time left to listen to the daily news on a normal basis for the women of the families. Illiterates women have also showing no interest in it because they cannot read or understand any newspaper, may be in any language. So far the literate women are concerned, they also prefer to read Punjabi and Hindi newspapers, listen to news on radio and TV. There are even such women who come to know about the political news through the talking with other women or with their husbands during the free time as and when available to them. Also, it is seen that in free time, they do not prefer to listen to news. They prefer to watch TV serials or dramas and spoil in gossiping because they have no other entertainment source. But some women from the both religions (Sikh and Muslim) show their interest to listen to local news, because these women are regularly in touch with those actions which occurred in their areas. They have a sense of belongingness with them and they have no language difficulty. But, women respondents are show least interested in the National or International news and don't watch them because of time or language problem.

- As the main research question was concerning the level and pattern of political participation, a number of questions were asked about the different activities which are also included under the subheading of political participation.

Another important finding of the study is that the pattern of casting the votes by women from both communities is almost similar. Mostly there is hectic campaigning by different contestants and also

there is enormous support of the voters to their beloved candidates. The present tendency of voters is such that young women voters are keenly engaged and ensure that they must cast their votes. Women voters of younger age being educated have come to understand the importance of their votes and they hope to use this right to vote according to their awareness. Interestingly, the women voters in rural areas cast their votes in larger number but it may not be so in the urban areas. May be a sense of laziness and lack of time be the major reason for urban women to remain restricted to their homes instead of since to booth to cast their votes. One must exercise one's right to vote.

The present study reveals that even today most of the women can't take a judgment in whose favor they have to cast their vote. They seek the advice of the family head or their husband for the reason last they should earn for her and their children. The main reasons for this is their illiteracy, lack of awareness, lack of confidence, pressure of family members and ignorance about the government polices about women etc. Being illiterates also they don't have confidence to take their decisions by themselves. Further being uneducated, unemployed or unskilled and financially dependent upon their husbands, it prompts their husbands to instruct them to toe to the row of the family in casting the votes. In a lot of joint families there is the system of accord of command. Head of the family gives them the directions and all others members of the family follow them. So, there it becomes normal for recently married woman to cast her vote on family guide. Surprisingly, Sikh women (46 percent) are comparatively less than Muslim women (52.67percent) who are cast vote more independently.

The Study also finds that women from both the religions (Sikh or Muslim) strongly reject to participate in election campaigns (Muslim 74 percent), (Sikh 85.33 percent) women respondents did not participate in election campaigns, and only 20.33 percent of women (Sikh / Muslim) have participated. They campaign from side to side requested voters, door to door campaign and do contribution/collection of funds for party

or elections etc. but mostly women participate in campaigns at the request of the voters, preparation of the banners, door to door canvassing. For negative response to participate in election campaign is that on account of gender prejudice and inferior position of women, there is feeling of lack of confidence among them. Even in the male dominated society, women voluntary believe it is shocking and worthless for them to guide the campaign with their male members. Surprisingly, it is seen that Muslim women are more lively in election campaigns as compared to Sikh women.

Another finding of the study is that majority of women are not interested in contesting elections. The study shows that are Muslims (67.33 percent) and Sikhs are (82 percent) from both the communities' who do not want to take part in contesting elections. It is the historical fact that unmarried women are not allowed by their parents to contest the elections on ground of social privacy. Those women who are married, they have to look for direct or indirect permission of their spouses to participate in the contest in elections. Furthermore, it is also a reason that they are also not financially so strong as to meet with all election expenses. Women, who desire to take part in contesting election, these are from the family segment of society, which are mostly from established families having conventional background. Their awareness about politics is also not very good. They think that politics is the unsafe and male oriented game.

As per their membership of any representative bodies are concerned, the study shows that among the Women respondents from both the religions majority of respondents comprising are not members of any of representational bodies. Among them Sikh women are less in numbers and Muslim women are more in number as member of any representative body. The reason for very low participation is it seems that the same which are talked about for not contesting the election. Accordingly to the present study and based on the responses from the sample, there are many reasons for not participating in representative

bodies' i.e. family restrictions, lack of education, financially dependence on family members etc. The remaining only 18 percent women have leadership quality and they can follow, motivate and address the grievances of the people. It may be added here that most of the representative women do not be present at meetings, rather their husband's register proxy presence behalf of them. Even during in election campaign, voters came to know of them through the picture of their husbands in hold on the posters or banners.

The present study also reveals that among other factors, the religion is an important factor influencing politics. It affects various political activities to a considerable extent. Malerkotla being the Muslim minority dominated constituency, if we take into consideration the effect of the religion on voting choice, finding of our study reveals that minimum (30.67 percent) of the women from both the communities including rural and urban agree that religion does have impact on the voting pattern. However, maximum (69.33 percent) of the women respondents positively deny that there is any impact of the religion on voting option. It shows that women respondents of Malerkotla constituency have loyal to their nation. They are not guided by contracted consideration of religion in electing the candidate of their choice or opinion. There has not been any communal tension or problem among the people on the base of religion in any elections.

As far as the question about women leadership is concerned, it has been found from study that majority of women both from Sikh and Muslim communities admitted that women have very much competent to become a leader. The quality for leadership is uncommon and all are not rewarded with it. The collected data reveals that both Sikh and Muslim women respondents from rural areas said that women are fully capable but the number of urban women respondents is comparatively more who admitted women are also have quality of becoming a leader. From the response sheet, very few women respondents stated that women are not capable of leadership quality. The modern age belongs to

women empowerment and uplifting of women. The message from all of them is to afford alike status to women and undo the injustice which they have suffered so far.

As regards the question about suggestions for the improvement of women in political participation is concerned, the data shows that about half of total women respondents' had laid more stress on education, as education plays important role in socio-political and economic fields. Through it, women have known their rights and duties. Both communities women respondents also emphasis upon economic independence of women because it is important to improve the political participation of women first gave them their financially security. Some of the women respondents said equal shares in politics by reservation in Parliament, state assembly, quota in political parties etc must improve the women participation in politics. Since social environment is same for Muslim and Sikh women, therefore their thinking or traditions are similar, irrespective of any religion or class.

## **SUGGESTIONS**

It will be suitable to enroll some of the recommendations for women to their improved political participation. These recommendations would be supportive for the active political participation of women in Malerkotla constituency and elsewhere:

- 1) One of the essential sources of empowerment of the women is education. Education can play a very important role in bringing about the attractive behavior alteration among the women and make them well prepared in terms of knowledge, capability and ability to deal with unusual political problems.
- 2) Political participation is very closely related to their economic independence. Women have to be economically independent to be capable to declare their point of view. The economic confidence will positively bring improved participation in politics of women.
- 3) A huge number of women are still unaware of the policies of the government, legal provisions and development schemes propose

for their advantage, due to this, they do not know how to protect their rights. A concentrated attempt will have to be made to educate them in this way. For this, state government and NGO's must take some responsibility to give them legal literacy to the common population particularly the women.

- 4) Media should play an important role in modern society, specially the newspapers and television. Declaration of women in a variety of films and T.V serials has a great psychological impact on their minds or behaviour. The media must play an optimistic role in development the women of their problems and solutions.
- 5) It was noticed during the field survey that the membership of women in political parties was very limited. It will be in the interest of political parties to connect women from all sections of society for the betterment of democracy. If women are connected, with party automatically, political participation can be easily improved.
- 6) Lawful empowerment approaches should be adopted by government as part of the resolution to advance women's admittance to justice. Investing more resources to recognize and design attain, strategies to encourage gender equality.
- 7) The women law implement machinery should be made really helpful with resourceful monitoring watchful system to apply the constitutional and legislative provisions.
- 8) A number of welfare programmes for women have been start during the last years but their genuine achievement at grassroots shows to be weak. The focal point has, therefore, to be on the performance and strengthening of machinery at various levels.
- 9) Women should be promoting to participate in politics. There should be reservation of seats for women both in the state assemblies as well as in parliament. Women should independently attach with politics, so that they can have a voice in nation building and help the reason of women in common.

- 10) There should be spread of higher education among the women so they come forward and participate more effectively in the functioning of Punjab legislative assembly. Education and training need to be provided to so women legislators so that they are made aware of rule and regulations of punjab vidhan sabha.
- 11) Indian society has been erected upon the myth that leadership is a male prerogative. Governments, business firms, trade unions, the legal system – equality of opportunity is established in law, it exists only in from unless and until the surrounding social context is changed.
- 12) In order to improve the status of women and to eradicate social evils, there is also a need to bring about a change in the mindset and psyche of parents, teachers, leaders, etc. towards girl child and women.
- 13) Skill oriented courses should be also encouraged at school and college level to make them able to earn their livelihood or to make them self-dependent.
- 14) A number of welfare programmers for women have been initiated during the last few years but their implementation at the grassroots seem to be weak. The focus has, therefore, to be on the implementation and strengthening of machinery at various levels  
On the whole it may be concluded that though the government has been provided with constitutional safeguards and reservations but the common woman in Punjab is still not getting full benefit of the opportunities. Only the elite section of women is reaping the harvest. The poor, marginalized, simple women population has still not become politically aware and active. Still a good number of women don't turn for voting and also lag behind in other activities of political participation. Very few women offer for being a contender. They are rather discouraged by the family to come to the forefront and lead others. There is a need to create better awareness among the women masses, so that they can participate in the politics of the state more actively.

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