

CHAPTER-VI

CONCLUSION

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Empowerment may be described as a process which helps people to assert their control over the factors which affect their lives. Empowerment of women means developing them as more aware individuals, who are politically active, economically productive and independent, and are able to make intelligent decision in matters that affect them. Generally power result from interplay between individual consciousness and the external forces and pressures. Thus, empowerment denotes reorientation of all these forces, values and beliefs so that they support and liberate the person. It liberates new currents of activity and enthusiasm often from people who have lowest status. It would necessarily mean redefining the notions of femininity and masculinity changing man, women relationships; recognizing women's contribution, women's knowledge, helping them to fight their own fears and feelings of inadequacy and inferiority, enhancement of their self-respect and self dignity, controlling their own bodies, becoming economically independent and self-reliant; controlling resources of work specially within the home; creating strengthening women's group and organizations, promoting qualities of nurturing, caring gentleness not just in.

The concept of women's empowerment, throughout the world, has its roots in women's movement. The interplay of these powerful new discourses led, by the mid-1980s, to the spread of 'women's empowerment' as a more political and transformatory idea for struggles that challenged not only patriarchy, but also the mediating structures of class, race, and ethnicity. In India, caste and religion determined the nature of women's position and condition. By the beginning of the 1990s empowerment held pride of place in development jargon. And though it was applied in a broad range of social-change processes; there is little doubt that the term was most widely used with reference to women and gender equality. The World Congress of women at Beijing in 1995 reiterated the importance of increasing women's participation in Politics and in its "Platform of Action" recommended ways and means to the participating countries to increase "space for and visibility" of women in political institutions and processes. This is the important step towards women's empowerment.

Political empowerment is a crucial issue. In the empowerment process participation of women in decision making at all levels has special significance especially in democratic setup. As women constitute half of the population in a Political System which supports equally, and where both women and men are legally eligible for political office, their participation should be equal to that of man. If this is not the case, it indicates deep flaws within the Political System. The under-representation or invisibility of women in decision-making reinforces their deprivation, leading to an unequal distribution of resources, neglect of their interest, needs, perspectives and priorities and to say in policy making. It is

therefore, imperative for women to be in the corridors of power to negotiate a better deal for themselves and to influence policy decisions, relevant for receiving justice for themselves.

The political performance can be possible if the women socialized with the right kind of Political culture (civic culture), where in the average citizen are actively participates in the political process and possesses a high sense of political competence. Through political socialization as the process of political learning women can learn and acquire political knowledge and develop active participant orientations towards the Political System and its political objects, which in turn empowered them to be a responsible citizen in the decision-making process of Political System. Thus, women's equality in power sharing and active participation in decision-making is important to achieve the goal of Empowerment. Hence, for an in-depth-study on empowerment of women, Kalahandi district has been selected.

From the view point of economic and social conditions, the district is most backward. The Kalahandi district is well known for its backwardness, death cause by starvation, child selling and many other social ills. The district has high concentration of Scheduled Tribe (28%) and Scheduled Caste (18%) population. About 93 percent of population lives in rural areas where the level of poverty is very high. The district is primarily agricultural area, with over half of the area in the district cover in dense forest. Industrial activity is limited although bauxite and graphite deposits have been commercially exploited. In this backdrop, the women's situation is worse than anybody. As their literacy rate is ~~47.27~~

percent compared to ~~60.22~~ percent of men in the district. Looking to the situation both central as well as state governments, started to implement developmental projects in the district. Hence, it is urgent need to empower the women politically to take part in the developmental process of the district as well as state. Hence, the Sample of this study consists of women political leaders of Kalahandi District.

II

The Sample of this research work is composed of the elected women members of Municipality, NAC, Zilla Parisad, Panchayat Samiti and Gram Panchayat of the Kalahandi District. As such a total of 206 women political leaders constituted the Sample. Firstly, the socio-economic profile of the Respondents of the Sample in term of variable such as age, education, income, cast and occupation has been enquired into and ascertained. Secondly study has enquired into the pattern of political culture of these Respondents and thirdly an enquiry has been undertaken to find out the extent of the influence of the agents or Socializers in the process of their Political Socialization. On the basis of enquiries and inferences conclusion have been presented.

The findings as to the socio-economic profile of the Respondents are as following:

In terms of age, the Respondents are grouped under three age groups such as the young-age group, the middle-age group and the old-age group. On analysing, it is found that the Sample has been dominated by the Young leaders followed by the

Middle-aged and the Old Age leaders, in respect of the variable of Caste, by the Schedule Tribe group followed by other backward cast (OBC) and Scheduled Caste, by the High school educated leaders followed by the primary and college educated leaders in respect of the variable of Education, by the leaders with the Middle income group followed by High income group and the Low income group in respect of the variable of income, by the leaders of House Wife group followed by the women leaders with Business and Agriculture as occupation. Thus, the women political leadership structure of Kalahandi District has been found to be mostly characterized by the domination of Young Women of Scheduled tribe with High school-education, Middle Income group and House Wife as Occupation. Such an emerging pattern of leadership, of course, stands in sharp contrast with the general notion that the leadership structure is usually dominated by the high socio-economic group of the individuals. But in case of the women political leaders of Kalahandi District, such a change is noticed perhaps due to the implementation of 73rd and 74th Amendment Act to Indian Constitution. The 73rd and 74th Amendment Act of the Constitution of India in 1993 has introduced a new political will to empower women. This amendment ensures one-third seats in the three tiers of Panchayats and Municipalities, especially reserved for women including SCs and STs Women. This has a vibrant effect on the political empowerment of women. Due to reservation a new patterns of power structure is emerge at the local level.

IV

Such a classification of the women political leaders of Kalahandi District in respect of these major socio-economic variables has cast light as to the emerging pattern of women political leadership and the women political power-structure at the local level and, also has facilitated our enquiry and delineation of the pattern of their Political Culture. For this purpose, an endeavour has been undertaken to find out the patterns of their cognitive, affective and evolutionary orientations, in the most general way, in respect of four major political objects such as the Indian Political System as a general objects, its input and output objects and the self as an actor in the political process. For delineating the patterns of their political cognition, an assessment has been made on their response to questions concerning their awareness of the basic values of the Indian Political System, the form of Government in-Vogue in India, the Impact of Governmental Activities and the prevalent party system in India. It has been found that a large majority of the women political leaders of the Sample is aware of Democracy, Secularism and Social justice as the basic values of the Indian Political System, of Parliamentary Democracy as the form of government in -vogue in India, of the prevalent multiparty system in India and an average of them is aware of the great impact of the governmental activities on their day to day life. On computing their response on the above items taken together, it has been found that a large majority of them has high level of political cognition. Their response have also been analysed in respect of the variables of Age, Gender, Education, Income and

Occupation. The analyses reveals that the Middle age group women political leaders have greater political cognition than the Young-aged and the old age women leaders; that the higher cast group than the other backward ward cast group; that the college educated women leaders have greater political cognition than the High School and the primary-educated women leaders, that the women leaders with High level of Income have greater political cognition than the leaders with the Middle-level and the low level of Income, and then the leaders with Agriculturalists group have greater political cognition than the leaders who have Business and Housewife as Occupation. Thus the level of their political cognition has been found to have increased with an increase in their Age and socio economic status characterized by Education, Income, and Occupation.

Besides the pattern of political cognition, political effect and evaluation are two other components of Political Culture. Therefore, an endeavour has been undertaken to enquire into and analyse the attitudinal patterns of the women political leaders of the Sample in respect of some major objects such as their preference as to the form of Government, attitude towards governmental policies in general, attitude toward the public bureaucracy, perception of the gravest national problem, attitude toward the prevalent electoral system, preference as to the party-system, attitude toward some important democratic values such as the right to universal franchise, the right to freedom of speech and expression, the right to freedom from arbitrary arrest, attitude towards state secularism and attitude toward human nature and also their attitude toward themselves as actors in the political

process, especially relating to their sense of political competence. It has been found that a large majority of them possesses positive and favourable attitude toward the prevalent Parliamentary Democracy in India, the Governmental policies in general, the prevalent electoral system and the plural party-system, the right to universal adult franchise, the right to freedom of speech and expression and personal freedom, secularism of the State and human nature characterised by interpersonal trust. It has also been found that a large majority of them possesses a high sense of political competence and that; it increases with an increase in their Socio-economic Status characterized by Education, Income and Occupation. On computing their responses on all these items in respect of these broad categories of political objects, a large majority of them is found to have been positively and allengiently oriented toward the Indian Political System as a general object, its input objects and self as an actor in the political process, where as fifty percent of them is found to favourably oriented toward the output objects. On the whole, on computing their responses on all these political object taken together, it has been found that a large majorities of them possesses positive and allegiant orientations toward these objects. Their positive attitude toward these political objects, have also been analysed in respect of the socio-economic variable of Age, Cast, Education, Income and Occupation. The analyses revels that positive orientations toward these political objects taken together, is found to be greater in the middle age group women leaders followed by the young age group women leaders, in the higher cast group followed by the other back ward class group women leaders, in the college educated leaders followed

by the high school educated women leaders, in the high income group leaders followed by the middle income group women leaders with agriculture as occupation followed by the leaders with business as occupation. Thus, such positive and allegiant orientations are found to increase with an increase in their Age and Socio-economic Status characterized by Education, Income and Occupation.

On the whole, this academic enquiry has found out that a large majority of the women political leaders of the Sample are cognitively oriented as well as allegiantly oriented toward the Indian Political System, its input and output objects and towards the self as a political actor. Therefore, the pattern of their Political Culture is “Allegiantly-Participant Political Culture”.

V

This “Allegiantly-participant” pattern of Political Culture seems to have been learned and developed by the women political leaders of the Sample through the process of Political Socialisation where in some major socialisers such as parental family, school, peer group, mass-media; secondary groups and political world are found to have played crucial roles at different stages of their life such as childhood, adolescence and adulthood. The role and the impact of these socializers have been enquired into and examined especially in respect of formation and development of the sense of political competence in the women political leaders. It has been found that those who recall to have been reared up in politicised parental family and have interacted with democratic parents during their childhood and adolescence and have been

exposed to democratic teacher-authority structure during school life possess a high sense of political competence. Thus, a strong relationship has found between their sense of political competence on one hand and politicization of the parental family, democratic parental authority-structure and democratic teacher authority-structure on the other. Moreover, those who are exposed to media-communications regularly and have experiences of participation in election campaigns and voting at election regularly possess a high sense of political competence. Thus, parental family, school, peer group, non-political voluntary organisation, political party and political world are found to have provided congenial environment to the women political leaders of the Sample, at different stages of their life, from childhood to adolescence to adulthood, where in they have gained participatory experiences in both non-political and political arenas. Such participatory experiences are also found to have cumulative impact in the sense that the more in the non-political areas and the more in the political areas in which they have gained participatory experiences, the greater has been their sense of political competence. Their participatory experiences seem to have contributed a lot toward the formation and development of a high sense of political competence in them. It may therefore, be inferred that the, 'Allegiantly-Participant' pattern of Political Culture as found to characterize the women political leaders of the Sample is, most probably, the outcome of participatory experiences gain by them in the process of Political Socialisation wrought under the ageis of political socializers such as parental families, school, peer groups, mass-media, non-political voluntary organisations, political parties and the political world.

VI

This empirical research work, thus, constitutes an academic endeavour in characterizing the pattern of Political Culture of a Sample of women political leaders of Kalahandi District of Odisha. On the basis of responses collected from them, through interview and investigation and on analysing their responses, the pattern of their Political Culture has been discerned as “Allegiantly-Participant Political Culture”. This pattern of Political Culture tends to characterize their psychology and mind set and seems to have been formed in them through the process of Political Socialization. On analysing and examining it with the democratic structural arrangement of the Indian polity, the relationship between them seems to be congruent and allegiant. Such “Allegiantly-Participant” pattern of Political Culture is expected to issue forth in supportive behaviour and role towards the Indian political system in general and therefore, to contribute towards the latter’s stability and viability. It is also likely to foster the process and the pace of democratization on political life especially aimed at realization of the goals of an egalitarian society. Of course, this pattern of “Allegiantly-Participant” Political Culture bears resemblances to the elite culture in India as typified by Myron Weiner (India: ‘two political culture’ political culture and political development”). Therefore the Allegiantly-participant political culture of the women political leaders as discerned and delineated in this work ought to be distinguished from the mass Political Culture that tends to characterise the people of India in general. However, since the leaders are at the centre of decision-making and trends-setters and people tend to look toward them for guidance and direction, the

successful working of the democratic polity in India, both at the national and local levels, seems to be crucially dependent upon the pattern of their leadership which is determined by their Political Culture.