WOMEN AND POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT: A STUDY OF MUSLIM WOMEN REPRESENTATIVES IN PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS OF MANIPUR (1997-2017)

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CERTIFICATE

This thesis titled "**Women and Political Empowerment: A Study of Muslim Women Representatives in Panchayati Raj Institutions of Manipur (1997-2017)**",submitted to the Centre for Political Studies, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** is my original work. The thesis has not been submitted for any other degree to this university or any other university.

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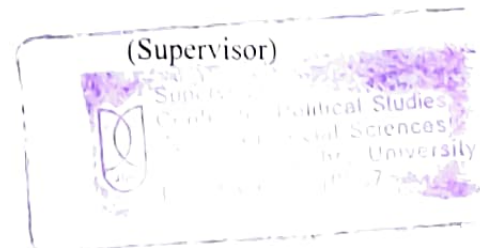We recommend that the thesis be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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Acknowledgement

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List of Abbreviations

A.D	Anno Domini
AFSPA	Armed Forces Special Power Act
ANC	Antenatal Care
ANM	Auxiliary Nursing Midwifery
ASHA	Accredited Social Health Activities
AWW	Anganwadi Workers
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
CD	Community Development
CDPO	Child Development Project Officer
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CSWI	Committee on the Status of Women in India
CSDS	Centre for the Study of Developing Societies
DPC	District Panning Committee
DRDA	District Rural Development Agency
EWR	Elected Women Representative
GI	Gender Institution
GP	Gram Panchayat
GNM	General Nursing and Midwifery
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Scheme
INC	Indian National Congress
MARG	Multiple Action Research Group
MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
MSFC	Manipur State Finance Commission

MWS	Muslim Women Survey
NES	National Election Survey
NFHA	National Family Health Survey
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NRHM	National Rural Health Mission
NSS	National Sample Survey
OBC	Other Backward Class
PHUB	Please be Upon Him
PMEYSA	Panchayat Mahilla Evam Yuba Shakti Abhiyan
PRI	Panchayati Raj Institutions
PRJA	People Resurgence and Justice Alliance
PRIA	Participatory Research in Asia
PYSA	Panchayat Yuva Shakti Abhiyan
RD&PR	Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Department
SC	Schedule Caste
SHG	Self Help Group
SSA	Sarva Shiksa Abhiyan
SSFC	Second State Finance Commission
ST	Schedule Tribe
UEE	Universalization of Elementary Education
UK	United Kingdom
ULB	Urban Local Bodies
UN	United Nation
UR	Unreserved
USA	United State of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republic
ZP	Zilla Parishad

Introduction

The fundamental component of democracy is political representation, where citizens participate in formulating policies and participating in the decision-making process. One of the most crucial aspects of democracy is political representation. The growing call for greater participation at all levels of governance should not come as a surprise. The representation of the people supports both the government's programmes as well as the legitimacy of the system. Minority women have an impact on the type and breadth of political representation and contestation, their democratic involvement is a crucial factor. Their presence in politics, significant change will be made in the patriarchal political and cultural structures that are dominated by men.

The term 'political empowerment' can be defined from the domain of empowerment. It is the process of building capacities and confidence about their lives both at an individuals and collective level. It is an active process enabling women to realise their identity and power in all spheres of life. The constitutional mandate will give them greater choices, put them in charge of their own future and make them self-reliant and confident. Liberal democratic theory started to wrestle the problems of marginalization in institutional politics that sprang up from group rather than the individual rights. The questions of women identity plays out on the political stage when it comes to the matter of political representation, group's right and affirmative action. Nancy Fraser argues that quota echoes politics of recognition and indicates that the identity politics invites the space of recognition of inequality within society, under which recognition can leads to the path of politics of redistribution. When we look at the 'politics of redistribution', it augments the quality of deliberation. Young, Phillips, Fraser are towards the deliberative democratic theory and give the aspects of women identity in politics and demanding for the minority groups rights. The study therefore aims to explore the women empowerment by this quota base representation of Muslim women representatives in the PRIs of Manipur.

From the feminist perspective, observing from the first wave of feminism to the 21ˢᵗ century, they have long grappled with range of women issues. Feminist philosophical scholars have

grown their increasing focus with respect to women's roles and locations in society as well as globally. Questions can be raised here. What are the parts of social or political locations that women are considered to be with or excluded from them? How are the identifications of complexities of women situated including sex, caste, class or gender? What is their status perceived in society? How have women's roles been considered valued or devalued? Feminist philosophers stand to attempt dealing with such arising questions. Following this, a diverse school of feminist came up. A number of departures could be witnessed from the position of analysis of feminism. The debate is mainly emphasised on liberal feminism. It attempts to define itself with the notion of self-modernity and enlightenment. The treatment of this form of feminism in political subject turns out to be individual autonomous and ability of deliberative reasoning relying on freedom of equality.

The contemporary debates for freedom and dignity encompasses the questions of identity and recognition. A sum of theorists like Irish M.Young, Charles Taylor and Alex Honneth have centralised on the concept of recognition, not just for individual rights or resources but also considered as members of social groups that tries to find recognition of their distinctness. The classical political philosopher views that the concept of justice covers "the just" that is that is redistribution which is legitimate, fear and reasonable. According to John Rawls, famous

> "difference principle" asserts that "social and economic inequalities means inequalities in the distribution of primary social goods wealth, authority and status are justified only when the least of people get benefit in the society. Institutionally, it is the welfare state where the principle of redistributive justice has been given shaped." [1]

However, philosopher like Arendt diagnosis exclusion did not emphasize in terms of lack of socio-economic redistribution or socio-cultural recognition which she has referred as social perspective. It prescribes a political over social struggle for ensuring participation, delivering political equality, enhancing empowerment and freedom. The feminist and political philosopher opposes to Arendt ignoring of social approach with regard to political issues. She discards social approach on the range of political issues. It attempts its approach leveraging on socio-economic and socio-cultural justice. "Benhabib critique Arendt for anti-modernism

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[1] John Rawls: *A Theory of Justice*, Harvard University Press, 1971.

because of her exclusion of social "Arendt's agonistic model is at odds with the sociological reality of modernity as well as modern political struggles for justice."[2].

Here, Benhabib observed that differentiation between social and political has turned porous and meaningless as the effort to make something public remains a struggle for justice, identity, freedom and recognition. Benhabib referred the agenda of unrecognition/misrecognition of social and cultural as "Blind Spot." It appears important to concern regarding the nature of socio-economic and cultural status of women in society. The constitution of India guarantees political equality under the provision of article of 325 and 326. The argument lies on the question whether Indian women will be able to reap benefits from the provision of these rights.

In the society of Manipur, the role of women and their contribution to the society can't be undermining. They are known in the history for their fight for social justice and honour as human rights defenders. They are famous for the two Nupi Lal (Women's war), civil society organizations, Ima Keithel (Women's Market).In the valley, women from every community are being part of these activities. They make a space in public domain and acquired empowerment in the society. Among the different communities settled in Manipur, Muslim women shape a great part in the society.

According to the census 2011, the population of Muslims in Manipur is 2,39,836 where female population is 119432. Women in the rural areas are largely confined to the domestic domain. Her status is subsumed under that if the husband and family. But in contrast, Muslim women did not cover themselves with a burqah. A minute proportion of women adopted the burqah, when they ventured out to the public domain. Despite of polygamy being permitted under Islamic law, the incidence is negligible in Manipur. The most distinctive character of economic role of Manipur Muslim Women is visible in their direct involvement in extra familial economic activities like care of life stocks, marketing, selling of goods etc. Women because of their work and because of their close proximity to each other in the market place (Women's Market) forge bond which give birth to a collective solidarity. It seems that, the Muslim women of Manipur have exercised a sort of liberation when we compare to the condition of other Muslim women in India.

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[2] Seyla Benhabib, 'Model of Public space: Hannah Arendt the Liberal Tradition and Jurgen Hebermas' in "*Situating the Self : Gender Community and Post Modernism in Contemporary Ethics*", 1992.

However, Muslim women in Manipur, while executing comparison with women of other communities, they remain lagging behind in almost all the socio-economic, political, educational and health aspects. This situation is arguably from the lifestyle of Muslim women which is primarily family centred. The social structure of Muslims in Manipur is patriarchal. Generally, the role of women is confined within the four walls of the house. Marriages between Muslims follow the Sagei (clan) system and going against this structure is regarded as taboo. However, women do not accept the Islamic rule of Purdah strictly and continue to enjoy considerable freedom. Still, Muslim women face discrimination at the hands of men folk. Sometimes, men divorce their wife without any well-founded reason.

Over the years, Muslims cannot remain isolated and they are gradually opening their eyes to the consciousness of the distance that they stand lagging behind with respect to the other communities. This can be known from the fact that they have established Muslims women's organisations which are going at par with other women organisations in the state. Some organizations are United Manipuri Muslim Women Development Association, the Kangleipak Muslim Chanura Marup, The Muslim Chanura Developmnent Organization, All Manipur Muslim (Pangal) Women Organization etc. The organizations functions for the social and the rights of women that are discriminated in society. They have political connotation by dealing the rights of the minority women, this may leads to political awareness to the community. There are other women organization known as Meira Paibi (Women Torch Bearer) actively functioning in the village. These variables made an objective to study the Muslim women political empowerment in the state.

 In the political sphere the influence of Muslim women in Manipur is minimal. There is no reference to a Muslim women administrator or government official either before 1891, or even in between, 1891 to 1947. Nevertheless, Muslim women's participation is recorded during the Nupi-Lan (women's war) on 12th December 1939. The peculiar nature of the war was based on women that took the lead in defying and raising their voice against the injustice done by the British.

However, in the post 73rd and 74th Amendment Bills, Muslim women have increased their participation to 33 percent in the grassroots level governance. There are many Muslim women in Zilla Parishads, Pradhans, and Members in different tier of local governance. Is that making a sense in the society? Are they representing as a symbol of representation through reservation

policy? Under this context the study is based on the elected Muslim women representatives in the Panchayati Raj Institutions became a significant to study.

By considering the economic status of Muslim Women, it is found that work participation is under the unorganised sector. One of the main reasons for this is high rate of illiteracy, 41.6% is the Muslim women literacy rate in Manipur. It is very low as compare to other community women of Manipur and makes them less empowered. These variables triggered to the lack of empowerment. Infect, 96% of the married women are making decision, 70% of women owning assets alone or jointly and 35% of women with money control (National Family Health Survey, 2014-15). These are the indicators of empowerment where women have some space of empowerment in society. The underlying point is that, at some level they have high empowerment and some indicators their place of empowerment is low. There are some gaps to get the average parameter of empowerment, which we need to study. As far as concern to the Muslims women of Manipur, they need and external potential which can be transform into a successful way.

In order to overcome the situation of Muslim women in Manipur, the role of the state became important aspects to analyze. Muslims are being stigmatized by the dominant community. The Muslims organization as an apex body introduced for the identity of Muslim in the state. Not only this, Muslim women organization also set up and work comparatively as a pressure group. The question is- What's the role of the state towards the Muslim community? How the identity politics operates in the states?

The state neglects their duties in the development of this specific community. Muslims are OBC in the state. In 1972, Manipur got the statehood, since then Muslim have low income, lower in employment rate. In every status Muslims are underrepresented. But after several struggles, in the year 2006, Muslim got 4% reservation. After this, the status of Muslim is developed, having white colour job. The rate of education is becoming higher; changes in priority towards their daughter regarding education could be seen. They are empowering through education. The reservation system allows the minority community an equal opportunities who have been excluded in every aspects of development. The impact can be seen in the field of social and economic status of Muslim society. However, in politics despite of getting women reservation seat in democratic local governance system, does their presence in politics make changes in society?

The study is based on Muslim Women Panchayati Raj representatives in two districts of Imphal East and Thoubal districts of Manipur. The first election for Gram Panchayat and Zilla Parishad was conducted in 31st January 1997. In the election, a total of 598 women representatives were able to be elected, of which there were 576 in GP and 22 in ZP. This contributes an amount of 37% of women in GP as well as ZP (NCW, 2001). The study is designed to look on the socio economic background of these representatives and examine the issues of those representatives' women. It will further analyze the relationship between the civil society and role of the of the women's organization for the women empowerment.

Research Questions

1. How has the reservation of seat for women in the local governance under 73rd and 74th Amendment bill empowered women in politics?

2. To what extent women members in Panchayats are successful as administrators in the local self-government?

3. What are the impacts of the reservation of seats for women in Panchayats upon the social life of women in society? Whether they have positive or negative outcomes, if so, how do they maintain their power in politics?

4. How does the deliberative democracy allow examining on whether the politics of presence or recognition rather than of outcomes or redistribution should be kept under the limit?

5. Does the shift in social hierarchies and the power relations with the quota base participation of women in politics underpin the existing social relations of power recognition and respect at institutional politics/ in the society?

6. How do the states intervene by breaking the vicious circle towards the development of equilibrium to the Muslim community with others community?

Hypothesis

Muslim women have double disadvantage as a minority women and Muslim women, despite of granting quota base representation in local governance, does their representation converts to empowerment.

Methodology

The study is based on both qualitative and quantitative method within the broad framework of women empowerment through participation in politics at local governance with special emphasis on Muslim women in Manipur. The data and information are based on two sources. The primary data is collected from the field work in the selected area and tried to find the objectives. The secondary sources consist of books, journal articles, newspaper reports, research documents include government documents of India and Manipur and other relevant materials.

Sampling

The study focuses on two districts of Manipur, the Imphal East and Thoubal. It is based on data from primary and secondary sources. According to the 2011 census report, the total population of Manipur is 2,721,256 where male comprises of 1,369, 764 and 1,351,992 females. Thoubal district population is 2,86,687, comprising 1,43,203 male and 1,43,484 female. The percentage of Muslim in Thoubal district is 25.42% with 82 villages. The number of assembly constituencies in the district is 22 constituencies with 50 Gram Panchayats in the district.

On the other side, Imphal East district population is 4,56,113, comprises 2,26,094 and 2,30,019 females with 172 villages. The population of Muslim is 17.58%. There are 19 Assembly constituencies with 27 Gram Panchayats.

These two districts are chosen for the study because the Muslims are mainly populated in these areas. The Muslims are the second largest population in the valley. Muslim population in the state out of total Manipur population is 2,39,836 where 1,19432 are female population. Even though Muslim women in Manipur are behind women from other communities in nearly every socioeconomic, political, educational, and health category. This problem may be related to Muslim women's primary focus on their families in their daily lives. Muslims in Manipur have a patriarchal social structure.

Two Gram Panchayats from Imphal East district and seven GPs from Thoubal district have been chosen out of these two districts. The two GPs are Kairang Khomidok GP and Khetrigao GP, both of which are in Imphal East district. Seven Gram Panchayats, namely Lilong Turel Ahanbi GP, Irong Chesaba GP, Sangaiyumpham Part I&II GP, Moijing GP, Hayel Hangoon GP, Maibam Uciwa GP, and Pallel GP, are chosen from the Thoubal district. 100 Muslim women elected representatives from Thoubal district and 27 Muslim women representatives

from Imphal East district were interviewed. Given the nature of the topic, this study have been conducted interviews with some individuals—political leadership, serving and retired heads of the organisations in Manipur and people from academia, the panchayat secretary, the beaurocrates, local youth club members, Meira Paibi members, Asha and Anganwadi workers in order to collect the performance of the Muslim women representatives and the presence of women in politics at PRIs of Manipur.

Chapterization

In order to study the political empowerment of Muslim women representatives in PRIs, the thesis is divided into 6 parts. The introductory parts, deals the basic premises of the study, methodology, the areas of research that are adopted in the study.
The first (I) chapter discusses the ideas of empowerment in general and the feminist perspective of women empowerment.

The second chapter focuses the historical background of Indian women towards the panchayat representation by taking the states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharasthra, Kerala and West Bengal. The 33 percent reservation of the seat for women in the local bodies was a great move towards the political empowerment. The Act brought out many women from the 'private' domestic sphere to the 'public' political sphere. This has to be viewed in comparison with the conditions of women in pre 1990s period and post 1994 after the implication of quota system in Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs). This chapter discusses the condition of women in Indian politics in general by giving more importance on panchayat.

The third chapter mainly focuses on the traditional panchayat system prevalent in Manipur with the modern changing system of local governance. In the Panchayati Taj Institution Act, 1994, the governments shifted powers and functions to the elected representatives of the PRIs. Do the representatives have necessary power to carry out function assigned by the government? How far the political development could be seen in decentralized self - governance process? Are PRIs acquired the functions listed in Eleventh Schedule of the Constitutions? These are some arguments to discuss with the works of the PRIs.

The fourth chapter discusses the factors that shaped women participations in electoral politics and explores whether women's presence make a difference, particularly women's right. The critical overview of women's substantive representation with the argument- How female

legislator/representative act for women? It mainly focuses on the data of Manipur Women representatives in PRIs.

The fifth chapter presents the case study of Muslim women representatives in Panchayat. The study is based on the field report of two districts at Imphal East and Thoubal , findings are studied and analyze. The chapter made an attempt with the outcomes of the Panchayat Raj system and the entrance of Muslim Women in grass root politics of the decision-making process of the state.

The sixth chapter mainly focuses the perceptions of the elected Muslim women representatives with the implementation of women reservation in PRIs in the state and analysed the outcomes of women political empowerment.

The last chapter is the summary and conclusion part of the thesis and shows the impact of the reservation policy of women in politics.

Chapter 1

Women Empowerment and Its Discourse

Introduction

In the contemporary debate the topic of women empowerment had been growing its importance around the world. This concern can be seen in different level in the discourse of empowerment. It includes in the government institutions, bureaucracy, non- government organizations, researchers etc. For the social, political and economic empowerment, the demand of women's equality has witnessed a shift during the phase of development in 1990s.

It is a process of improving women's control over resources, ideology and self. The term empowerment can be defined in terms of rendering power or authority. The key elements which can be categorized for exercising empowerment are associated with enabling and delivering power and they posed to reinforce to each other. Sisodia and Singh observe that "Women empowerment is the process of learning by which women identity their own potential and accordingly they change to perform better in the society. Empowerment is not given by anyone but it is a process of gaining inside and to use it for the adjustment of life, knowing own potential and feeling it will give a definite shape to the performance. It means to invest with power and in the context of women's empowerment the term indicates women who have increased control over their own lives, bodies and environment" (Sisodia and Singh, 2009). Carr, Martha and Renana (1966) argue if empowerment is the ability to exercise power, then everyday forms of women's empowerment is the ability to exercise power in the social institutions that govern their daily lives; the household and extended family; local community councils and associations, local elites, local markets and local government. In this regard, emphasis is given on women decision making roles, their economic self- reliance and their legal rights to equal treatment, inheritance and protection against all forms of discrimination . The idea of empowerment invoked in different context, speaking about human rights, about basic needs, about economic security, capacity building, skill formation or the conditioned of a dignified social existence. It is seen as a way of addressing the problems of right that remain unforced. Beteille argues the idea of empowerment is a certain theory of social change, in particular of change from a hierarchical to an egalitarian type of society.[3] According to Datta

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[3] A. Bateille, "The Idea of Natural Inequality and others Essays", 1983

and Kornburg, "empowerment consists of four dimensions, each equally important but none sufficient by itself to enable women to act on their own behalf. These are the cognitive or critical understanding one's reality, the psychological or feeling of self -esteem, the political or awareness of power inequalities and the ability to organize and mobilize and the economic or the capacity to generate independent income." [4].

Empowerment may be defined as "the means by which the individual, groups and /or communities become able to take control of their circumstances and achieve their own goals, thereby being able to work towards helping themselves and others to maximize the quality of their lives"[5].

Adam said, "No final, so called 'authoritative 'definition is possible. The authority for this should not rest in books written by academics or practitioners. The concept of empowerment should be constantly redefined and reconstructed not just by so called professionals but also through the actions and words of people wanting greater control over the services they received".[6] This means that empowerment should be in transformational activity. There is no authentic form of empowerment. The authenticity of this concept is being rooted in the circumstances. This can be applied to different aspects of the human services. Regarding theory and practices, Adam argues, empowerment is central emerging features of social work. No practices are complete without the notion of empowerment, something fundamental can be said disappearing from the practices of the social work. Empowerment should be in all domains and sectors of practices for those who are oppressed in the society. The following part of the chapter is the discussion of women and empowerment with different institutions.

Women Political Empowerment

The approach or notion of women political empowered are derived from the existing general concept of definition of women's empowerment. The United Nations in its Millennium Development Goals has included women's empowerment to realize its objective. Various scholars paid their more emphasis on the question of women's empowerment beginning from the idea of disempowerment. It seems to drive from an agentic process. Kabeer claims women's empowerment- "inescapably bound up which those who have been denied the ability

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[4] Rekha Datta and Judith Kornburg, "Women in Developing Countries: Assessing Strategies for Empowermwnt", 2002.
[5] Robert Adam, "Social Work and Empowerment",1999.
[6] Ibid, p.3

to make choices acquire such as ability."[7] Bennet also stated that empowerment is nothing but the enhancement of assets and capabilities of diverse individuals and groups to engage influence and hold accountable the institutions which affect them. Empowerment denotes a process from a position of no or limited agency to one of greater agentic opportunity and effectiveness. [8] This captures the transformative essence of empowerment process with large under the systematic marginalization of women as a group from access to and achievement of equal levels of political influence, representation and integration that, while to varying degree is observed universally across our world today.

Women's political empowerment relies on distribution of power more evenly between men and women and wears away patriarchal social structures. It is seen that realization of gains in women's empowerment directly diminishes the role of gender inequality as a hurdle to the state of political incorporation, and open rather than close the political domain to all members of society. Breaking the historical barriers and worldwide encounters in the effort of political incorporation, women's political empowerment can be considered as a fundamental process of transformation for benchmarking and understanding more general political empowerment gain across the globe. As a result, the political empowerment of women is treated as political public good in so far as the witnessed progress in empowerment will tend to legitimate and strengthen the process of bringing larger commitment to meet equal political incorporations generally.

We come across different schemes and acts of central and state governments targeting at empowerment of women in various dimension of society. However, it is fact that cannot be denied that the women in India experiences various forms of discrimination and marginalization, be it in social, political or economic participation, access to education or reproductive health care. On the background of various forms of disabilities, the government of India passed the 73rd and 74th Amendment Acts in the year 1992 for the transition from disabilities to political empowerment of women in India. The amendments provided the room for representation of one third of women in the Panchayati Raj Institutions as well as in the municipal elections also. This was treated as the landmark in the transformation of women

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[7] Naila Kabeer and Journal of International Affairs, 'Women's Empowerment and the Question of Choice', pp. 209-214.
[8] Amy C.Alexander, Catherine Bolzendahl and Farida Jalal, " Measuring Women's Political Empowerment across the Globe: Strategies, Challenge and Future Research", p. 4

political empowerment in India.[9] Compared to the males, women have met lower empowerment level. Empowerment is, according to sociological frame of reference, warranted for altering the creating imbalance of power and structure in society.

The present discourse on women empowerment takes its center-stage on equality in the workplace and psychological aspects of empowerment. When we observe from the economic angle, women empowerment can be linked to their share of the earned income and employment. From a political frame of reference, "empowerment refers to the presence of women in decision making posts and elected offices with access to political and economic networks." (Lindberg, 2004).

Women are now gaining structural empowerment through government actions and policies. Reservation in position for women among panchayat members is one such constitutional provisions in India. However, the improvements in service delivery are still an issue of concerns. In the context of organizations, "empowerment has been conceptualized in two ways, psychological empowerment. It is believe that one has the control over decision making and structural empowerment "which encompasses elements such as opportunities to grow and developed, resources that include supplies and equipment, flexibility and access to data"[10]It is thought to rely on workplace conditions whereas psychological empowerment characterizes a response of employees to structural empowerment.

The concept of women empowerment was generated from the stage of critiques and debates triggered by the women's empowerment movement during the 1980s when the feminists started growing discontent with the adoption of women empowerment concept particularly in third world. The augmented interaction was witnessed between feminism and the concept and practice of popular education. It was based on the Paulo Freire's conscientisation approach developed in Latin America in the 1970s as part of his liberation theology. the activist and social movement for women empowered were also assisted by the discovery of Gramsci's 'subalterns' and the hegemonic role of dominant ideologies along with the emergence of social construction theory and post-colonial theory. The 1980s witnessed the rise of women's

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[9]Lakshminarayan, 'Empowerment of Women Through Panchayati Raj Institution', from, "Gender Perspective :Participation, Empowerment and Development" by Anil Dutta Mishra (ed), p. 78.

[10] Jay A. Conger and Rabindra N. Kanungo, 'The Empowerment Process: Integrating Theory and Practice, pp. 471.

empowerment as more as more political and transformatory ideas for struggle. This struggle came to confront and challenge not only the penetrating character of patriarchy but also the mediating structures of class, race, ethnicity which determined the nature of women's position and condition in developing societies.

In reference to women's development, 1980s saw the term empowerment becoming very popular. Srilatha Batliwala claims that "empowerment replace the earlier terminology of "women's welfare, women's development and women's upliftment".[11] It has virtually replaced terms such as welfare, upliftment, community, participation and poverty alleviation to describe the goals of development and the policies during the 80s were made for the upliftment of women in India. It was the Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85) which can be taken as a landmark for the cause of women. The concept of women and development was used for the first time. On other hand, the realistic development efforts are in progress if women could get proper educational advancement, economic independence. These basic questions would rise to answer the very important concept of women empowerment.[12]

Empowerment is treated as a process something that can be materialzed to people. Women's empowerment can be observed as a continuum of several interrelated and mutually reinforcing component:

- Awareness building about women's situation, discrimination and rights and opportunities as a step towards gender equality. Collective awareness building provides sense of group identity and power of working as a group;
- Capacity building and skills development, especially the ability to plan make decisions, organize, manage and carry out activities, to deal with people and institutions in the world around them.
- Participation and greater control and decision-making power in home, community and society;
- Actions to bring about greater equality between men and women.[13]

The term empowerment can be defined as a "process and capacity building leading to greater participation, to greater decision-making power and control, and to transformative action." It

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[11] Batliwala, Srilatha, "Taking the power out of Empowerment: An Experiential Account", p. 559.
[12] Sushma Sahay, "Women and Political Empowerment: Approaches and Strategies", p. 18.
[13] H.M Hemalatha, 'Empowerment of women- A perspective', from the book, "Empowerment of people: Grassroots Strategies and issues", (ed) R.V Reddy, V N Reddy and M. Venkataraman, pp. 7-8.

can also be considered as social change process. Some of generalizations regarding women empowerment can be made. It can be seen that empowerment neutralized women's oppression. If the community of women doesn't take decisive actions on their behalf, maximum of women victimization will continue through their traditional societal culture and norms. Women's empowerment is a platform for human liberation and providing empowerment for all. At the initial stage women may neutralize patriarchal structure to exercise their own rights in social realities. However, they cannot be empowered effectively at the expense of others. Doing this can create more balance to the male value hierarchies in the present traditional and modern societies. Women empowerment can be seen too as a viable social process and therefore, it is possible to experience development for all people along with this empowerment in fiercely competitive patriarchies. Empowerment can be seen in the context of identity, difference and the politics of women. The latter part of this chapter will discuss their relations among each other.

Identity, Difference and the Politics of Women

The second wave of feminism particularly focus on political movement, to the idea of shared oppression which unites women in the struggle for liberation. "It is often seen as marking the emergence of women's liberation movements while their subsequent fragmentation is linked to the recognition that "sisterhood" hid differences and that women automatically shared neither interest nor identities. The idea of differences was acknowledged by debates around sexuality and 'race'/ ethnicity and was associated with the emergence of identity politics and the fragmentation of western women liberation's movements at the end of the 1970s"[14]. The characterization of women's liberation movement tends to be not accurate. Western women liberal movement had been based on a very specific identity that of white, middle class, young, highly educated and often heterosexual women, their demands and goal of such movements had been in their interest rather than in the interest of all women. A politics based on this identity is divisive.[15]

However, the presence of three political ideologies, liberal feminism, socialist liberalism and radical feminism made various assumption about the women's right as 'sameness'. Liberal feminist concentrating on inequalities or differences between men and women and not concern

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[14]Ramazanoglu, Caroline, "Feminism and the Contradiction of Oppression, 1989.
[15]Chandra Talpande Mohanty, 'Feminist encounters: Locating the Politics of Experience,', in Michele Barrert and Anne Philips (ed), "DestabilisingTheory: Contemporary Feminist Debates", pp. 75-93.

to theorize difference between women. Marxist and Socialist feminist recognized theoretically and politically that women were divided by class and attempted in their political organizing to work with working class women (Rowbotham, 1989). Marxist analysis focused on the structure of production, arguing "women were structurally oppressed because their involvement in the production was conditioned by their primary involvement in reproduction. On the other hand radical feminist argued that patriarchy was a worldwide system that reduced women to the status of housewives and made them dependent on men." [16]. This turned out be repeating and penetrating male dependency through commitment of violence against women. An attempt exists there to understand the ways in which class can interact with sex gender systems to produce women's subordination. It looks like women always remain with the private domestic spheres and men with the public.

Firstly, the analysis revolved around the distinction between nature and culture, stating that all human societies give importance to culture above nature and associate women with nature. This explanation results to the subordination of women, devalue and differentiate in gender's role and assumed these phenomena as universal i.e., women oppression. It locates the women oppressions in structures whether these can be class structures, sex gender system or structuring of the symbolic order.

The notion of oppression was not abandoned but instead of analyzing in terms of structures and system, the construction of gendered subjectivities and identities was problematized. The focus shifted from class to culture, from structure to agency, from a concerned to systematic gender divisions to a concerned with gender identities based on difference.[17]

It means that, identity formation is bound up with cultures, sub cultures, different cultures are being associated with different identities. Identity came to represent structure and a hierarchy of oppressions. These circumstances can be seen within the British women's liberation movement. The notion of women's oppression and women's liberation assume that there is an identifiable, bounded subject, women who is oppressed. Deconstructing the subject appears to undermine the feminist project. Poststructuralism is opposed to the humanist notion of 'conscious, knowing, unified, rational' subject. This conceptualization of subjectivity questions the possibility of any essential self or essential identity, the self is socially

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[16] Maria Mies, "Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale", p. 4

[17] Michele Barrett, 'Words and things: Materialism and method in contemporary feminist analysis', from the book, "Destabilishing Theory: Contemporary Feminist Debates", pp. 200-20.

constructed within discourse/ language and has no essential, fixed nature. This is highly problematic for feminism which as a political ideology, shares many of its assumption with humanism. Foucault deconstruct the active human subject, conceptualizing it as a product of humanist discourse. Subjectivity exists only within discourse and is a product of the technology of power. Whereas feminist argued that feminism is based on a humanist vision and is in that respect, part of the enlightenment project of increasing freedom and equality for every human subject as Foucault's attack on subjectivity as anathema to the feminist political project [18].

The discourse of women's liberation assumes a subject, woman who is capable of empowerment and liberation. The structure of feminist discourse is dependent on the notion of human, female subject.

Gender and Power

For practicing women in politics 1980s is the turning point for political empowerment. This led to the formation of political activities, such as the women's peace movement and also the feminist involvement in the organizations, such as Labour Party and trade unions. Many women have been active in feminist social movement joined political parties and focus their activities in their places of employment. There is an assumption from the feminist perspective, that gender relations are related with power. Power is therefore central to feminism. Power is conceptualized in various ways. It can be linked to access to resources, particularly productive resources as in conceptualizations derived from Marx. It also can be theorized as Weber describe as the imposition of the will of one person or a group of people even in the face of their resistance. Foucault conceptualized as "constitutive of social relations and intimately connected with every aspect of social life, even the constitution of the self. Feminist uncovered the war in which systematically disempowered because of gendered inequalities in access to resources, male violence against women demonstrates the power that men can exercise by virtue of force. Studies have shown that power may not only be oppressive, it is not only exercised by some over others but is also constitutive of pleasure."[19] Therefore, feminist have analyzed sexuality and dynamics of power relations in the kindling of desires. This concept of power owes to Foucault and has provided us to understand the active involvement of women's

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[18] McNay, L. "Foucault and Feminism", 1992.

[19] Michele Barrett, "The Politics of Truth: From Marx to Foucault" 1991.

power. It should not be seen as something that is exercised over someone is seen as a set of relations in which we are all implicated. Power is not located at one place any more than another but is ubiquitous. As Barraett state "Foucault developed a concept of power that did not locate it in agencies (whether the state, individuals, economic forces etc.) but saw it in terms of 'micro' operations of power and by means of strategies and technology of power" [20].

This means that resistance to power is possible, not only through organizing to comfort the might of the state, but also in daily interaction and intimate relations. Indeed, according to Foucault, wherever power exists there also is resistance. This way of theorizing power has been significant in restoring political responsibility to individual social actors (Barreett, 1994). Though it has been problematic for feminists because of its apparent denial of any extra discursive, material reality in which power is based, many feminists therefore distance themselves from Foucault's theorization. For instance, Hartstock argues that his theory of power is dangerous for feminism as a political project because 'systematic power relations ultimately vanish in his work' [21]. According to her, *"domination is not a part of this image; rather, the image of a network in which we all participate carries implications of equality and agency rather than the systematic domination of the may by the few"*.[22]

This statement made sure that the feminist insistence on the importance of collective as well as individual action in order to transform social relations that systematically disempower women, and the danger of focusing too exclusively on resistance and accommodation at an individual level.

Identity in Politics

The issue of identity and practicing feminism is also the focus by Celia Kitzinger, Sue Wilkinson and Charlotte Davis. Kitzenger and Wikinson argue in common with Roseniel, that identity, in the politics of liberation, is essential but finds nothing essentialist about this. On the flip side of it, identities are socially constructed. Their discussion focuses on sexual identities and the way in which they contribute to feminist politics. They argue that lesbian

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[20]Ibid, p 134.

[21] Nancy Hartstock , 'Foucault on Power: A theory for women?', in Linda J. Nicolson (ed) "Feminism/ Postmodernism", p. 168

[22]Ibid, pp. 156-74.

feminists embrace the categories of lesbian and feminist see them as mutually reinforcing and positive. The issue of the invisibility of the identity of dominant groups to themselves is discussed by Kitzinger and Wilkinson. Both mainly focus on the social construction of sexual identities enables them to demonstrate the fundamental importance of identity to a politics of resistance. The position shared by Rosenielin and her discussion of oppositional identities in the context of Greenham. This is the critique of postmodern deconstructions of the subject. Deconstructing the subject and arguing the identities are essentially fragmented maintains the disadvantaged position of those whose identities or sexual behavior are marginalized and defined as 'deviant'.[23]

Empowerment and Power

The most important term in empowerment is the 'power'. It means "control over material assets, intellectual resources and ideology." While regarding control over ideology, it signals the ability to create capacity to spread, ability to sustain and institutionalize sets of belief principles, values, attitude, actions and behaviours. It tends to determine how people think and functions in the scenario of socio-economic and political environment. In today world, notions of power are determined on the areas of divisive, destructive and oppressive value. The empowerment for women must revolve around a new type of understanding of power and experiment. This will generate ways of democratizing and sharing power for setting new mechanisms for collective responsibilities, decision making and accountability.

The power held by individuals or groups extends based on the sorts of resources availability that they can control and through which they can shape their ideologies whether it is social, religious or political. This control in turn translates the power of decision making. The process of challenging prevailing power relations, and of maximizing greater control over the availability of sources of power may be termed empowerment.

However, the term empowerment refers to a range of activist from individual self-assertion to collective resistance. Protest and mobilization that challenge the basic power relations. For individuals and groups where class, caste, ethnicity and gender determine their access to resources and power, their empowerment begins when they not only recognized the systematic forces that oppress them, but act to change existing power relations. Empowerment, therefore, is a process aimed at changing the nature and direction of systematic forces which marginalized

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[23] Nickie Charles, "Feminist, Practices: Identity, Difference, Power", p.6.

women and other disadvantaged sections in a given context. Theories that identify any one system or structure as the source of power, for instance the assertion that economic structures are the basis of powerlessness and inequality, imply that improvement. In one dimension it would result in a redistribution of power. However, activists working in situations where women are economically strong know that equal status does not necessarily result. If anything ample evidence exist that strengthening women's economic status, though positive in many ways does not always reduce their burdens or eradicate other forms of oppression. Rather, it leads to intensifying pressure.[24]

As women specially in South Asian counties, women are being abide by societal, cultural and religious norms even if they have empowerment in any field, they will be under the structure of patriarchy. In continuation of this, Faith describes the relation of power and domination, "Resistance to power is resistance to specific strategies by which power relations are specifically organized according to the interplay among the traditional discourses which have controlled women's bodies" [25]

Feminist attitudes towards the power has been an ambivalent one. Different scholars have claimed power can be seen as generative of both liberating and constraining aspects of human life and identity. Identity Politics, Feminist associated with feminist identity- gender attitude, political attitude and ideology, discrimination and harassment, social and economic status are mainly problems faced by women in every aspect.

Feminist on identity politics views the concept of collective identity. The concept of collective identity may not essentialist or exclusive or apolitical but provides an area of understanding of feminism as a political identity. It is repeatedly negotiated and revised. It is treated as an assertion of identity in public life. Collective identity to be understood is attempted to be constructed, activated and sustained through the rope of interaction in social movement communities.

According to this ideology, Taylor and Whittier point out three processes involved in the formation of politicized identitiesaa:

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[24] Joni Lovenduski (ed), "State Feminism and Political Representation" , p.3
[25] Moya Load, "Beyond Identity Politics: Feminism, Power and Politics, p. 73

a) "The creation of boundaries that mark off a group;

b) The development of a consciousness of the group's distinct and share disadvantage;

c) Politicization of everyday life, embodied in symbols and actions that connect the members of the group and linked their everyday experiences to larger social injustices."[26]

The history of feminism indicates that feminist identity stands not dictating to an identity or political style. From the perspective of social movement scholars, solidarities and collective identities work in tandem to structure how activities define themselves the claims they made, and even their way of doing politics. Then feminism can be explained as a political identity only in reference to reference to women's movement and their organizations.

William Gamson suggests collective identity is embodied by three layers: organizational, movement and solidary. The organizational layer consists of identities constructed around network or group that may or may not be part of a larger movement. Again, the movement layer is broader and sub-ordinates individual organizations to larger cause. Finally, movements may or may not be based in even broader solidary identities- such as gender, race, class and ethnicity, derives from people's social location[27].

Empowerment and Political Representation

The definition of political representation takes many forms. Hanna Pitkin defined the concept of political representation in a standard way. She identifies four types of political representation. They are authorized, where a representative is legally empowered to act for another, descriptive: the representatives stand for a group by virtue of sharing similar characteristics such as race, gender, ethnicity or residence, symbolic where a leader stands for national ideas and substantive, where the representatives seeks to advance a group policy preference and interest. Political representation underpins the legitimacy of democratic states. The requirement of political representation are matters for negotiation and subject to change. Debate of political representation are part of the process which democracies involve. It concerns about the nature of political institutions, the processes of decision making and the

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[26] Verta A. Taylor, and Nancy Whittier, 'Collective Identity in Social Movement Communities: Lesbian Feminist Mobilization', in "Frontiers in Social Movement Theory", (ed)Aldon D. Morris and Carol M. Mueller, pp- 106- 30

[27] W. A Gamson, 'The Social psychology of collective Action' in A.D. Morris and C.M Mueller(eds), "Frontiers in Social Movement Theory", pp. 57- 80.

quality of political implication. This debate highlights the inclusion and exclusion of social groups and individual (Gramson,1992).[28]

The question arises is that whether the presence of women in politics get the political empowerment? How would the women representatives ensure their empowerment through representation in politics? These differences invite comparative analysis to determine the circumstances under which women achieve higher or lower shares of political offices.

The concept of representative also given by Burk through his speech-

> Certainly, gentlemen, it ought to be the happiness and the glory of a representative to live in the strictest union, the closet correspondence and the most unreserved communication with his constituents. Their wishes ought to have great weight with him; their opinion; high respect, their business, unremitted attention. It is his duty to sacrifice his repose, his pleasures, his satisfactions, to their; and above all, ever, and in all cases, to prefer their interest to his own. But his unbiased opinion, his mature judgement, his enlightened conscience, he ought to be sacrifice to you, to any men, or any set of men living. These he does not derive from your pleasure; no, nor from the law and the constitution. They are a trust from providence, for the abuse of which he is deeply answerable. Your representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgement; and he betrays, instead of serving you, if he sacrifices it your opinion [29].

Burke's speech to the electors of Bristol suggests that representative should be mere transmission belt for constituent preferences. He argues that representative owes the citizen his industry but also his judgement and he betrayed it if he sacrifices to public opinion. It means that the representative not only as a right but also a duty to exercise independent judgement.

Democratic representation fundamentally views as the solving problem of the state. Some scholars challenge these views; they claimed that this account is failed for many ways in which the actions of representatives actually create their constituent interest, rather than reflecting their pre-existing preferences and interest. As Hanna Pitkin argued "there are ways of making "making present" in a political sense people who are not literally present that stand at odds with basic democratic principles, such as political equality and inclusiveness in collective norm making" (Pitkin 1967).

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[28] Ibid, p.3
[29] Ian Shapiro, Susan C. Stokes, Elisabeth Jean Wood and Alexander S. Kirshner, " Political Representation", 2010, p.1

By structural inequalities which means asymmetries in access to resources and opportunities and in the social capacity to act which are built into structures such as laws and other institution (Iris Young, 2000). These inequalities in resources and opportunities built into law to illustrate the short coming of views of the monitoring problem. Most of the deliberative democracy theorist often overlooks how the political interests are shaped, but they are failing to reform institutional reform which has to promote equality or inclusiveness in government. So, the interest of democratic representation is to remove the inequalities and to promote free and equal principles which political institutions are legitimate. However, Young's concept of structural inequalities brought to the ideas of women's representation. Their representation becomes an important debate.

Empowerment and Gender

Gender can be said as a concept that has diverse meanings. It is a synonym of sex which is also a contested term.

Gender is the set of social meaning attached to the category 'male' and 'female. Another way of conceptualizing gender is to think of it as a scale of attributes ranging from masculinity to femininity. It expresses the effects of relationship between women and men. These relationships are manifested indifferences of political power, special roles, images and expectations resulting in recognized characteristics of masculinity and femininity that differs over time and across culture. Therefore, gender is not only a set of attributes, it is also a "process, gendering that should be thought of as a changing contextualized social, psychological and political phenomena that effects the way of group of women and men define and express their interest. One of the principle arguments made by feminist has been that there is something internal to women which determined gender identity" [30].

It is this essence that is given expression in gendered behavior. By contrast, Butler finds her argument in the form that gender is performative. According to her, it can defined as what we take to be an eternal essence of gender is manufactured through a sustain set of acts, posited through the gendered stylization of the body. Butler contends that gender is not an expression of what one is, it is something one does. As she claims

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[30] Ibid.p.7

"if the ground of gender identity is the stylized repetition of acts through time and not a seemingly seamless identity, then the spatial metaphor of the "ground" will be displaced and revealed as a stylized configuration, indeed a gendered corporealization of time. The production of a gendered identity relies upon the repetition through time of those acts, gestures, modes of behavior and so forth that are seen to represent a certain gender identity. The gendered self has no ontological status apart from the act which compose it. It has no abiding essence, except as effect of performative enactment (Butler, 1999).

Gender identity according to Butler, can never be achieved once and for all, rather the effect of an identity is generated by its continual reiteration on a daily basis. It indicated that all gender identity is imitative in the sense of being reiterative. It is in the necessity for reiteration that alteration is gender identity can be inaugurated. For every reiteration of the norms and practices that produces gendered identity is a reiteration with a difference. Butler's theorization of performativity indicates unlike some other accounts, how the subject's constitutive practices can be the raw material for its own transfiguration. Gender is thus not a fix or stable category for its modification. The performative subject is an entity produced in the complex interplay of discourse, norms, power relations, institutions and practices. The constituted subject in particular, the theory assumes that politics play an important productive role in this process.

During the late 20th century, the issue of gender equality became a major issue on the global agenda. The UN Decade for women, which ended in 1985, initiated the integration of women for Women, which ended in 1985, initiated the integrating of women into development, formation of women's organization and networking them across the world. In 1993, the Vienna World Conference proclaimed that women's right were human rights, in 1994, the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development place women's empowerment and health at the center of sustainable development programs. Not only this, there are several international platforms for women empowerment adopted seeking to promote the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all women. Although, there has been sustainable progress towards gender equality in much of the world, great disparities persist, as systematic indicators of demonstrate.

Economic growth and legal institutional reforms are both important in any long term comprehensive strategy to promote gender equality. The critical important of culture is that women as well as man adopt the predominant attitudes, values and belief about the appropriate division of sex roles within any society. There is an argument that cultural change is necessary

condition for gender equality. Feminist movements in many countries have long emphasized cultural differences in family and sex roles, and the critical importance of changing traditional patriarchal norms for transforming relationship between the sexes.[31] Cultural changes lay the basis for the mass mobilization of women's movements and accelerate the process of gender equality. Though cultural traditions are remarkably enduring in shaping men's and women's world views, shift is taking place that moves systematically away from traditional values and towards the more egalitarian sex roles.

Empowerment and Culture

In order to promote gender equality culture matters a lot. The perceptions of dividing roles of man and women in home and family, paid employment and the political spheres shaped by the predominant culture and the practice of social norms, belief and the existing in any society. Developmental theory is based on the assumption that traditional societies are characterized by differentiated gender roles that discourage women from working outside the home. In postindustrial societies, gender roles have increasingly, converged because of a structural revolution in the paid labor force, in educational opportunities for women and in the characteristics of modern families. Social trends raise questions about moral values towards family and gender roles. These practices were taken as granted in the early period. Though, Ronald predicts in his book "Gender equality and cultural change around the world", give four major predictions to find systematic differences in cultural indicators of gender equality. They are-

1) "Between societies based on their level of economic development;
2) Within societies based on generational cohorts;
3) Between men and women, and
4) Within societies based on structural and cultural factors such as education and class."[32]

There are great cross-cultural differences in belief about gender roles among societies across the globe. Feminist movement in many countries have long emphasized cultural difference in family and sex roles, and the critical importance of changing traditional patriarchal norms for transforming relationship between the sexes. It is assumed that the culture matters towards gender equality. Though, how much is matters? The answer is unclear still now? However,

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[31] Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris, "Rising Tide: Gender Equality and Cultural Change around the World", p.9

[32] Ibid, p.8

cultural traditions are remarkably enduring in shaping men's and women's worldview's, nevertheless, glacial shifts are taking place that move systematically away from traditional values and towards more egalitarian sex. This shift is intimately related to the process of societal modernization and to generational replacement. Here comes the argument of culture matters towards the gender equality, where there are more egalitarian attitudes, these are systematically related to the actual conditions of women's and men's lives. It is an interactive process, because changes in life affects underlying attitudes and values. The broad direction of value change is predictable, although the pace is conditioned by the cultural legacy and institutional structures of any given society, as exemplified by the role of Islamic heritage in the Middle East, the legacy of the Communism in Central Europe and the egalitarian tradition in Scandinavia. In order to developed the arguments, there should be evidence of rising tide of support for gender equality in societies around the world. The causes of this shift and its consequences for women's political power, including civic engagement, support for the women's movement, women empowerment and political representation.

Political Rights and Empowerment

Women's political participation means taking part in the activities related to electoral politics, like voting, campaigning, holding party offices and contesting election. The rights of franchise were given after 1920s. Only few women are taking interest in accessing their political rights. Different women organization played roles for the women's political right, like Indian Women's Association, The National Council of Women in India and the All India Women's Conference were much applauded. In spite of this the level of accessing political awareness are very low as compare to man. The main reasons found in illiteracy, patriarchal dominance and nature of dependence may be responsible for the poor situation in Indian women. Several women's right activist raising the voice of women for active participation in political affairs. They made voices against discrimination and injustice in all sphere of life. The community understand the idea of empowerment, for them does not only mean the activities of electing representatives and governing, it also includes the increased the increased political awareness.

Discussion

The word empowerment got much currency in the recent developmental debate. It is because feminists, human right champions and other social activists have been invoking this idea in

their pursuit of freedom and justice. It is not only because of its strong appeal for change, but also because of its capacity to challenge the existing socio-political, economic and cultural subordinations of weaker sections in a society. These subordinations are often rooted in the prevailing social and power structure, gender relations, culture and ideology.[33].

Now the old formulation of growth with social justice has been reformulated as development with empowerment. Empowerment to put it simply implies "giving power to a certain underprivileged section of the society"[34]. This view of empowerment is very much consistent with the dictionary meaning of the term, that is, "to give some one the official or legal authority or the freedom to do something. Etymologically the word empowerment is rooted in the concept of power. Power is central to any understanding of empowerment."[35] That is, any notion of empowerment cannot be separated from the idea of power.

As Beteille observes, "although the concept of power in it (empowerment) is generally left unspecified, ultimately it is all about power."[36] Power is a universal phenomenon in human societies; it is inherent in all kinds of social 26 relations. That is power is not simply political, it is very much social also. Broadly referred, political power--legal, administrative, military, economic-is only one of several and various kind of powers. Power in sociology is not a consensually defined concept. It has diverse meanings and connotations.[37]

As pointed out by R. Bierstedt :"In the entire lexicon of sociological concept, none is more troublesome than the concept of power".[38] According to Lewis Coser, there are two major traditions in the conceptualisation of power. First, "power may be seen as the imposition of the will of actor A (who may be either an individual or a collectivity) upon actor B, even against B's resistance: so that B is dominated by A". Secondly, "power may be conceptualised as a resource at the disposal of collectivities and used for their benefits, allowing them to attain their objectivities".[39]

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[33] Manoranjan Mohanty, 'On the Concept of empowerment, pp. 1434-1436.
[34] Ibid., pp-1434-1435.
[35] Cambridge International Dictionary of English, p. 453.
[36] Andre Bateille, 'Empowerment', pp. 588- 597.
[37] R. Bierstedt, 'An Analysis of social power', in Lewis Coser and Rosenberg (eds), "Sociological Theory", pp. 137-148.
[38] Ibid., p. 149.
[39] L. Coser, 'The Notion of Power: Theoritical Developments' in Cose and Rosenberg (ed), "Sociological Theory", p.50

First explanation is basically that of Weber's who defined power as follows, in general, power can be understand, the chance of a man or a number of men to realise their own will in a social action even against the resistance of others, who are participating in the action."[40] Here power is based on the notion of domination and subordination or action and resistance. In it's very nature power is asymmetrical and represent the 'power over' view of power. According to this understanding of power, one party can enhance its power only by reducing the power of others. So empowerment of some sections of society has to be accompanied by disempowerment of the other.[41] As per the second tradition, the focus is on resources. This is mainly drawn from the definition of Talcott Parsons. According to him,

"power is a generalised facility or resource in the society. It has to be divided or allocated, but it also has to be produced and it has a collective as well as a distributive function. It is the capacity to mobilise the resources of the society for the attainment of goals for which a general public commitment has been made or may be made."[42]

So power is not simply what some have over others, but is a resource too. Resources are usually considered as productive or generative as well as distributive. It may be of any kind like property, land, knowledge, skill, money, information, and decisions.[43] In this case it is certainly understandable that every increase in the power of some may not require a corresponding diminution in the power of the other. Here, empowerment involves mainly the redistribution or reorganisation of resources, hence power. According to some feminists understanding of power, which is largely drawn from the thinking of Foucault, what is important is an analysis of 'how internalised oppression' places internal barriers to women's exercise of power thereby contributing to the sustainability of inequalities between men and women. Feminists like Jo Rowlands, Bunch and Frost argue that most of the theories of power take the view of 'power over', which itself is constraining.

Instead, other forms of power, that is 'power to', 'power with' and 'power from within' are important for providing a different meaning for empowerment. In this kind of understanding power is enabling, and generative. For Foucault, power is relational and is something which

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[40] M. Weber, "Economy and Society", Vol. 2, Roth Guenther and Wittich C.(ed), p. 926.
[41] Beteille, op.cit
[42] Talcott Parson, "Politics and Social Structure", p.200.
[43] Beteille, Op. Cit.

exists only in it's excercise.[44] Empowerment then is not restricted to achievement of 'power over' but development of 'power to', 'with' and 'from within'.[45] For feminists, 'power over' is to be distinguished from 'power to', conceived as the ability to determine the course of one's life and to actively participate in society and culture. An international feminist workshop during United Nation's World Conference for Women in 1980, defined power as ability to control their own lives within and outside the home. It notes that, power is used not as a mode of domination over. others but as

a) "a sense of internal strength and confidence to face life;

b) the right to determine our choices in life;

c) the ability to influence the social processes that affect our lives and

d) an influence on the direction of social change."[46]

Here power is a multi-dimensional process that directs social change, while empowerment is a wholistic process aimed to improve women's standing in the society. Keeping the various theoretical orientations of power in mind, various scholars defined empowerment in different ways. According to Bunch and Frost, "empowerment is a process that aims at creating the conditions for the self-determination of particular people or a group".[47] Empowerment is about social change. It is about radical social transformation and about ordinary people.[48] It is a way of addressing the problem of rights that remain unforced. Reorganisation of power and redistribution of resources are very much essential to social transformation. So, empowerment is all about development and change in existing social structure.

The idea of conscientisation is also central to empowerment, which means consciousness raising, changes in thinking, ideology, belief, self-image and the definition of reality. Empowerment is also about capacity building and confidence making. It requires full participation of the people in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of decision, determining the functioning and well-being of societies. The process of empowerment involves capacity building, self-realisation, ability to make decisions, making choices and sharing the life situations.

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[44] Afshar Halel (ed), "Women and empowerment: Illustration from Third World", 1998, Macmillan Press Ltd., London.
[45] Ibid., p. 15
[46] Bunch and Frost, "Empowerment' in C. Kramarac and Spender Dale(eds), 2000, *International Encyclopedia of Women, Routledge*, New York.
[47] Ibid., p.556.
[48] Bateille, Op.Cit., p. 590.

According to the National Plan for Education (India) the process of women "empowerment meant development of women's capacity to make informed choices and expansion of their capacity".[49] Participation and mobilisation are inherent in this process. That is the process of empowerment may be understood as mobilising women in groups and collectivities, thereby strengthening them to share and question their life situations. Hence, empowerment and participation as well as mobilisation are both means to an end and an end in itself. Democratic Decentralisation, participation and empowerment are closely related. Decentralisation is an institutional arrangement, participation is an instrument and empowerment is the end product of the former. Democratic decentralisation can be understood as an extension of democracy to the grassroots. Hence, it facilitates mass participation, which in-turn leads to empowerment. Participation is very much close to the demands of equality.[50] At the same time socio-political inequalities may affect the level of participation as well. Participation also contribute not only to the shaping of new values and choices but also prioritising them. In the more specific context of our study of democratic decentralisation, the reference is to the provision of assured representation to the deprived groups in local institutions, through the electoral process, so that their participation is assured. Such a participation not only help people to share the resources and other life situations but also would enable them to acquire social, economic and political equality. Hence the 73rd amendment of Indian Constitution becomes significant as an instrument of empowerment.

As observed by Beteille,[51] the Indian way of securing empowerment through protective discrimination and quotas as extensively as possible on the basis of community, caste and gender seems to be the safe way of achieving it. This is because it gives opportunity for people who are marginalised and side-lined for centuries. The 73rd amendment not only recognised the people's right to participate in the decision-making process but also constitutionalised one-third reservation of seats for women at all the three levels of local bodies. It also created the provision of Gram Sabha, thereby providing opportunities for the common men and women to participate in the democratic processes at the grass root level. Therefore, protective discrimination policies should be understood as a necessary step, though it alone is not sufficient, to achieve the goal of gender equality, participation and empowerment.

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[49] Sadhana Arya, "Women, Gender Eualiy and the State", p. 141.
[50] Jean Dreze and Amartya Sen, "India Development and Participation", 2002.
[51] Bateille, Op.cit.

<center>**Chapter 2**</center>

<center>**Women and Panchayat System in India**</center>

Introduction

The Indian Constitution, 73rd and 74th Amendment Act, 1992 made a landmark in the history of Indian democracy for the political empowerment of Indian Women. The 33 percent reservation of the seat for women in the local bodies was a great move towards the political empowerment. The Act brought out many women from the 'private' domestic sphere to the 'public' political sphere. This has to be viewed in comparison with the earlier situation in Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) as well as with other areas of politics, where no such reservation is ensured. This chapter attempts a review of the condition of women in Indian politics in general by giving more importance on panchayat. Before going to the context of Indian women, there is various international conventions and human rights instruments committee to secure equal rights of women.

International Scenario

Prior to eighteenth century, women were not allowed to participate in the political process of the state. Later demand for political equality of women begun during the eighteenth century in different countries of the world. In Western Europe and North America where the idea of equality of the gender first started, a change in the status preceded through legislation and with the important exception of suffrage, was often not dependent on law. New Zealand was the first country to enfranchise women in the year 1893, Australia and Canada in the year 1908. In Britain, attempts were made before World War I to enfranchise women but they were not successful, but during the war period women did such responsible works in such a variety of fields that by the year 1928, all women over 21 years of age were allowed to exercise their franchise. In many countries like USA and France women had to struggle relentlessly for equal political rights. In USA, women's struggle for suffrage was secured in the year 1920 and France ensured the women's suffrage in the year 1944. In Western Europe, after the World War II many countries enacted legislation enfranchising women, these included Greek, Italy and France. In Germany, women were enfranchised by the Weimer Constitution of 1919. In Norway, it was in the year 1913, Danish women were enfranchised in the year 1915 and in Switzerland women were enfranchised in the year 1971. In USSR, it was stipulated in the 1936

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constitution that no legislation or agreement should deviate from the principle of women's equality with men. Same as with other countries like Poland, Bulgaria and Hungary. In the Middle East countries like Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Yemen, women have no voting rights. Other Arabian States granted either limited or total suffrage to women during late 1960s. In South Asia, the position of Hindu, Muslim and Chinese women was also not good, though in Burma, Thailand and Malaya women have had much greater freedom than in India, the middle east, China and Japan. In Pakistan, the emancipation of women has had to combat traditional Muslim practice. However, women have been legally able to reach the highest office since the 1949 constitution. In 1960, Ceylon became the first country to have a woman Prime Minister. In Burma, female enfranchisement was achieved in the year 1935 and in Thailand in the year 1932. Chinese women received the right to vote in the year 1947 and the women of Japan also got the right to vote in the year 1947. All the states of Latin America have universal suffrage. In Africa, women acquired the suffrage by the year 1960, Liberia in the year 1947; Eastern and Western regions of Nigeria achieved the same in the year 1960. Uganda women got the right to vote in the year 1958 and Botswana and Lesotho women got their political rights in the year 1966. The South African women like men did not have the right to vote but, for the first time in April 1994 the blacks were given the right to vote.[52]

Universal Declaration of Human Right

The United Nation was established in 1945, half of the 51 members had extended franchise for women and the commission concentrated on the political rights and considered as the most important fundamental right. In the year 1952 established the UN convention on political rights of women adopted by the General Assembly. It states that "to vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies"[53]. This declaration given women can participate in all elections on equal terms with men without any discrimination.

This shows that international organization focus their attention on the problems of women with the objective of integrating women in politics as well as social and economic activities of the states. During this time, western nations established feminist movement and received wide publicity about the rise of women status and enhancing their role in the process of development. On the other side, such movement were not established for development of Indian Women.

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[52]K. C Vidya, "Political empowerment of women at the grass root", (1997)
[53] International Legal Materials, "United Nations: Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women", p.37

They are mainly concerned with the traditions and culture values. Though franchise was given and exercise, but their representation in the political is low.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, initiates the socio economic and political rights of women. According to Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, everyone is entitled to all the rights, freedom, without discrimination on the ground of race, colour, sex, gender, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. To go further details, Article 7 states that- everyone has the right to own property, no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his/her property and everybody shall have the right to social security.[54] Hence, according to this declaration, women are equal before law in every aspect including decision making process and participation in the governance of the state and implementation of government plans and programmes.

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

There is another international initiative which ensured rights of all people. The UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights was established in the year 1966. It is an instrument for insuring civil and political rights of women. Article 3 ensures equal rights or men and women to enjoy all civil and political rights without any discrimination. Again, Article 16 states that everyone has the right to be recognized as a person before the law. Further, Article 26 again states that all persons are equal before law without any discrimination. The covenant assures to protect against any discrimination on the ground of race, colour, sex, gender, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other issues. From this context, women are equally eligible to enjoy the privileges which provide under International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966).[55]

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

In the same year where ICCPR established, there was also international organization named, UN Covenant on Economic, social and cultural rights. Article 9 of the Covenant states, the state shall recognize rights of every citizen to ensure social security of all men and women[56]. The state is obliged to ensure equality between men and women in their political representation

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[54] BMJ: British Medical Journal, "Universal Declaration of Human Rights", p.1455.
[55] International Covenant on civil and political rights: Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) of 1966 December 1966, entry into force 23rd March 1976, in accordance with Article 49. www.ohchr.org/Documents/professionalinterest/ccpr.
[56] International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, p. 278

or participation. According to this covenant, it is the duty of the state to give equal protection and eliminate all forms of discrimination against women on the basis of sex, marital status, guaranteeing enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedom in the field of socio economic, civil and political rights[57].

In 1975, there is a remarkable declaration by UN international organizations as UN International Women's Year. All member states of United Nations Organization acceded to the UN resolution and celebrated the UN International women's year during 1975. The main objective is to give priority to women in all aspects of governance and to ensure socio-economic and political rights in their respective countries.[58] India being a member of the organization adopted the measures for the development of women in the country and ensured to give political rights, participation and representation in all aspect of governance to administer the country.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

There is also an influence of UN on Convention of Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW). This is another important international initiative for the welfare and development of women, the main centre of this organization is the women involvement in political empowerment. It includes three UN decades Conference, on rights of women held in Mexico 1975, in Nairobi 1985 and at Beijing in 1995. It gives an impact on the rights and status of women[59]. Declaration of UN Year of development of women, 1980, initiated the planning policy measures for women development during the sixth five year plan period (1980-84). It was an instrumental in empowering women to ensure their socio economic and political rights in India and to encourage the participation in the governance and decision-making process. The plan mainly includes the shift of women approach from "welfare" to "development" of women.[60]

The Human Development Report of the UN focused attention on the need to put the people at the centre of development. Inspite of that poverty, hunger and disease remain widespread and

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[57] Ibid., p. 274.
[58] Krishna Ahooja patel, "Women and Sustainable Development: An International Dimension" p. 19
[59] Bandana Rana and Victoria Perrie, 'CEDAW: A Tool for Addressing Violence Against Women', p. 11
[60] Paranan Konwar, "Women empowerment in the Five Year Plans of India",p.65

women and girls continue to comprise the majority of the world's poorest people. The real conditions of women in international scenario are as follows: -

- Out of 192 countries in the world, only 12 have a female head of the state.
- 70 percent of the world's 1.3 billion poor those who are living on the equivalent of less than one dollar per day are mostly women.
- Women on average earn two third of what men earn.
- Majority of the world part time workers are women, range between 60 percent and 90 percent .
- Some countries like, Australia, Canada, Thailand and the US over 30 percent of all business are now owned or operated by women, with Thailand topping the list at least 40 percent.
- In contrast of this, some countries like Sub Sahara Africa, most of the female workers force is mainly in the informal economy: for example 97% in Benin, 85% in Guinea and 83% in Kenya.
- Women possess roughly one percent of the land in the world.
- Nearly 100 years, only 24 women have been elected as head of states.
- Of the 27 million refugees around the planet are women.
- Two thirds of the 300 million children who have n access to education are girls.
- Almost a billion people who are unable to read and write are women.
- Over 200000 women die every year as a result of back street abortion
- Officially, 110 million girls worldwide between the ages of 5 and 14 work, and this does not include domestic tasks.

  By considering the status of women in world-wide scenario, it is estimated that nearly 1300 million persons in the world are poor and nearly 70% of them are women. In developing Countries, women bear an unequal share of the burden of poverty, which has become a major hurdle for their empowerment.[61]

The above discussion is the international measures for the welfare and development of women which give influence to the Indian government planning and policy process. The main objective is to actively participates women in mainstream areas -the socio-economic and political affairs

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[61] Gopal Sharma and Ranjan Kr. Das, 'Women in Grassroots Democracy: Non -Governmental Organizations and its possibilities', pp. 815- 823.

in the country. The part is the discussion of legal and constitutional rights of Indian women, and their participation in local politics.

Women's Political Right in India

Women for the home and men for the world was more or less the law of the world till women raised the standard of revolt in the U.S.A and U.K. Their achievement in fact paved the way for similar demands by women in India. Political radicalism side by side with social reformism has been characteristic of the Indian scene all along. There was seldom any prejudice against women sharing the burdens of public life with men. Both Annie Besant and Sarojini Naidu were Presidents of the Indian National Congress before independence. Women always attended the annual sessions as delegates. During the days following the arrest of our leaders in 1942, women came forward as leaders. Women showed no inhibition in venturing forward into the storm of the struggle. The Indian National Congress had included women in its political agenda and as a result, in the year 1917, it elected a woman President, Annie Besant as the head of Indian National Congress Party. This Session of Indian National Congress had adopted a resolution in favour of women's franchise. Although the Indian Act of 1919 did not confer franchise on women, the provinces were given power to extend the right to vote to them. During this period also the demand for the vote was put forward by a group of women to the Montague Chelmsford Committee on Constitutional reform, Madras was the first province to grant limited franchise to women in the year 1921, followed by other provinces. In the year 1923 women for the first time voted for the legislative assembly and provincial councils and in the year 1926 they were also considered eligible for seats in the provincial legislature. The franchise, however, was based mainly on property qualifications, which were same for men and women. Under the existing laws of inheritance, a large majority of women never owned property and so very few had the requisite qualification for participation in that political process.

The Government of India Act of 1935 was also instrumental for extending the franchise. Only after independence in the year 1947 and with the adoption of Indian Constitution in the year 1950, all the Indian women above the age of 21 years were given the right to vote. The Constitution of India clearly states that "the state shall not discriminate against any citizens on grounds only of religion, race, sex, place of birth or any of them"[62]. In India, women's franchise

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[62] D D Basu, "Shorter Constitution of India," p.15

has been described as 'easy victory'. The architects of Indian Constitution in granting women's franchise were more influenced by the world history and the Gandhian philosophy, rather than of any widespread demand from Indian women.[63] There was several committee lead by women for the case of women franchise in India. The prominent leaders were Sarojini Naidu, Annei Beasant and Hiraban. The Sothborough committee or the Lothain committee were working on the franchise which came to India in 1932 and under the act of 1935, as a result of the representation made by women and women organizations. In the election held in 1937, eight women were elected from the general seats, 6 women took the charge of office, one as Minister and other as Deputy and parliamentary secretary.

These shows, before independence, women were able to contest elections and hold political office which ensures their political participation in a normal way. Though they have limited franchise, but they are making a space in politics. These Indian women involved in politics were against the reservation policy framed by the Indian new Indian Constitution. They want equal rights with the male counterpart. Under Universal franchise, Indian Women have the right to vote, contest election and hold public offices on the same term as men. However, practically the women are represented in the public affairs was very limited till the legal framework were adopted in the field of politics, administration and governance.

Therefore, the dimension for women participation in politics, the legal and constitutional were amended to determine their powers, functions and accountability of the government. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act insured the political rights and the socio-economic development of the disadvantage section of the society in the nation. The notion of women power in politics are mainly influence by the international laws, treaties disused the women issues in national and international level. In the first part of the chapter discussed the international laws and provision provide for women with equal rights as per man which include, politics, administration, decision making, at national and international level.

Grassroots Democracy and Indian Women

Democracy is a popular form of government as it is based on the will of the people. Equality is the core of democracy. Democracy in practice is flawed by the very persistence of inequality in one form or the other. Democracy is now the only basis for legitimate exercise of coercive power by those who exercise state power. Democracy belongs to the sphere of collective

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[63]H. Forbes and Geraldine, "Votes for women in Vina Mazumdar (ed.), p.3.

decision making. It means every member who is affected by a decision should have equal right of participation in the decision-making process. It should include every section of society in the decision-making process. One such way is to build up gender equality because the condition of Indian women is very much shocking. They are the victims of the circumstances which have been created due to gender discrimination which persist in India from cradle to grave. Discrimination against women finds place in the deep-rooted structure of society. Democracy implies equality for all human persons, men and women. As against this basis notion of democracy, what is normally seen is that women are excluded from different walks of life, less visibly in politics. As women comprise about half of the population, this section of society require due attention in the system and a due share in process. Citizen's active participation in political affairs in a democracy is crucial and necessary because it provides legitimacy to the system and also strengthened the democratic fabric. Equal treatment to women in political life should start from the grassroots level. To provide training and practice in the process of decision making, the rural democratic institutions are the ideal structure to begin with.[64]

According, the 73rd constitutional Amendment Act was passed to achieve women political empowerment. This amendment provides reservation of seats and post of chairperson in all grassroots level democratic institution in the panchayat. The introduction of the constitutional Amendment provision has created a scope for accomplishing development with social justice, which is the mandate of the new Panchayati Raj system. Women's participation in panchayat provided opportunities to women in the decision-making process. Indian women are directly participating in the local politics. The percentage of women at various levels of political activity has shifted dramatically as a result of this constitutional change from 4-5 per cent before Panchayati Raj Institution to 25-40 percent after PRI.

Democratic politics in reality is the interplay of vested interest between women and the political process. The position of women in Indian politics has far long remained undefined and hence there was a sharp demand and vice versa for the same with the establishment of PRIs in India. The inclusion of women in the politics of India has undergone various phases.

In the year 1946, there were 16 women out of 150 members in the Constituent Assembly. After a decade, in the year 1957, when Panchayat Raj was introduced, the concept was to co-opt two

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[64] Sanjib Saikia and Ankita Baruah, 'Deepening Democracy in India by Building Gender Equality in Politics', pp. 273-282.

women "who are interested in work among women and children" (Balwantrai Mehta Committee Report). In the year 1961, Maharastra ZillaParishad and Panchayat Samiti of 1961 provided for the "nomination of one or two women" to the Panchayat bodies "in case women were not elected". In 1973, the West Bengal Panchayat Act, also provided for co-opting 2 women. In 1976, the report of the committee on the status of women (CSWI) demanded representation of women in Panchayat as well as the establishment of "All Women Panchayat at village level". Again, in 1978, Maharashtra Panchayat, only 6women were elected although 314 were nominated. In most parts of India, Women were bought into Panchayat only through co-option. In 1983, As many as 25 percent seats were reserved for women in the Karnataka ZillaParishad, Taluk Panchayat Samities, Mandal Panchayat and Nyaya panchayat Act of 1983. Elections under this act were delayed for various reasons and could only be held in 1987. Some, 14,000 women were elected out of 30, 000 candidates who contested. In 1988, elections were held in Utter Pradesh for 74000 village Sabhas, the first elections for 22 years. There was a provision made for the co-option of only one woman. In1991, Orissa Panchayat Samiti provided for "not less than one third of the total number of seats to be reserved for women". Elections were held in 1992, and over 22000 women were elected. In Kerala Districts Councils elections, where reserved for women, 35 percent seats were won by women. In1993, about 71000 women candidates contested elections and with 33 percent seat reservation, 24,900 women came in through the ballet box. In 1994, Madhya Pradesh 150,500 women were elected to village, block and Zilla Panchayats. 33 percent were reserved for women in village Panchayat and women captured 43 percent of the seats[65] .

Feminist Politics and Grassroots Democracy

Women's community based on grassroots organizing and actions signify the profoundly political nature of these forms of activism.[66] Whether acting to protect their communities from toxic waste dumping or fighting for better schools and education for their children, campaigning for better wages and working conditions or challenging authorities to provide improved services to the community, or resisting domestic abuse, many women challenge patriarchal and inequitable gender relations and institutions. In so doing, they draw attention to many aspects of what are conventionally seen as private matters, redefining them as politically relevant issues of public concern. They also redefine politics to include women's

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[65] Gopal Sharma and Ranjan Kr. Das, 'Women in Grassroots democracy in India: Non- Governmental Organizations and its Possibilities, pp.819- 820.
[66] Bystydzienski, Jill M.and Jyoti Sekhon(ed), "Democratization and Women's Grassroots Movement", 1999.

grassroots organizing. Women's actions also challenge the dominant liberal definition of democratic politics, a definition that limits democracy to individual rights and electoral politics related to the formation and regulation of government and state institutions. This narrow and formal definition of democratic politics maintains the invisibility of patriarchal structures in society, especially in community and domestic life, that are inherent in institutions, and that have a significant influence on the ability of humans to participate effectively in public life and exercise their rights. Historically, women and minority groups in particular have been limited in this respect. Feminist rethinking of politics and democracy allow us to re envision democracy as a broad participatory process in which citizens and women "take part directly in decisions making affecting them, their community, their work their interpersonal relationships and of course their formal political institution.[67]

The key objective of feminist politics and organizing is to translate women's community activism into real power to make institutional changes that improve the quality of private and public life. This necessitates greater participation by women in formal political institutions at the local, state, and national levels. Given that much of women's political action is community-based, it is at the local level that women's participation in electoral politics can have a significant impact on challenging and changing patriarchal structures. Women's participation in electoral politics remains low world- wide, and India is no exception[68]. By the late 1990s, women accounted for 11 percent of seats in elected legislatures, an actual decline of 3 percent from the 1980s. While women's representation has increased in many parts of the world and is highest in the Scandinavian countries, the trend has been uneven at best. The lowest representation is in East Asia and North Africa, with declines in both Eastern Europe and East Asia. In India the percentage of women in the Lok Sabha, the lower house of the Indian Parliament, has ranged from 2.8 percent in 1952, to 3.5 percent in 1977, 8.10 percent in 1984, and in 1998 it was 7.9 percent[69] . Though accurate statistics are not available, women's participation in state and local elected offices in India is also very low. The reservation of seats in electoral politics at the local village council level instituted through the 73rd Constitutional Amendment in India, therefore, assumes significance in ensuring that female candidates are elected. Women need to prepare for participation in formal electoral politics, they also need to enabled to act independently and be confident in setting and implementing policies. This

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[67] Joti Sekhon, 'Democratic Theories and Women's Practices', pp. 880-881.
[68] Shawn Meghan Burn, "Women across Culture: A Global Perspective",pp.186-190.
[69] E.K Santha, "Political Participation of women in Panchayati Raj: Haryana, Kerala and Tamil Nadu ", p.15

usually requires challenging traditional patriarchal institutions that limit political participation and activism. Scholars like, Bystydzienski and Sekhon, Dietz and Pateman note that the assumption of a separation between private and public spheres of life in the conventional approaches to democracy tends to ignore the patriarchal structure of domestic life that translate into the unequal position of women and men in public life. Here, the role of women organizations play very important role in shaping the private and public life of women.

NGO's and Women Organization

In recent decades, women groups, non-governmental organizations have emerged as important players at local, national, and global. In India, which has had a formal imperfect democratic system of government since independence in 1947, NGOs have played a significant role in expanding spaces for public participation[70] . Activists, academics, and intellectuals associated with organizations, such as Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), the Indian Social Institute, Aalochana Centre for Documentation and Research on Women, Multiple Action Research Group (MARG), and Institute for Social Sciences, is engaged in participatory action research, training, and advocacy with and for women at the local level. Broadly, in participatory action research, knowledge is generated from people in the communities through an interactive research process. Action on the basis of this knowledge and analysis may be directed back to the residents through training programs, and used for working with other groups, disseminating information, and advocating with government and NGO agencies for assistance and implementation of policies and programs[71].

Focusing on the work of the above organizations generates information about the experiences of people who live and work in villages, and create a space where their voices are more likely to be heard. In the last decade, NGOs have been working to enable effective participation by women in local politics, especially in Panchayati raj institutions (PRIs) or "rule of the panchayats" as the local council system is called. Their work provides a unique insight into the ways in which civil society organizations can work to improve the formal electoral process and enhance the potential for a more participatory representative democracy. The work of Aalochana may be termed as what Naples describes as feminist activist research on behalf of progressive social change(1998). As scholar activists, the Aalochana team members have engaged in participatory research using dialogue and conversation, have developed a training

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[70] Rajni Kothari, " Memories: Uneasy is the life of the Mind", 2002.
[71] Participatory research in Asia (PRIA), "Doing Research with People: Approaches to Participatory Research", 2000.

program, and have created a network to "sustain and promote progressive analyses and alternative political strategies"[72] . However, it provides background information about panchayats in India and women's political participation.

Panchayat System in India

Panchayats have a long history in India, with the earliest evidence from the Rig-Veda texts dating to 1200 B.C. Over time, these self-governing sabhas, or councils, evolved into panchayats or councils of five people. These councils, usually controlled by upper-caste men, were responsible for governing village affairs and managing land and taxes. Caste panchayats also existed to monitor social conduct and ethics of caste members as well as their occupational affairs. During medieval times, and especially after the institution of Mughal rule in the 16th century, the self-governing powers of the village panchayats were eroded alongside greater administrative centralization. Initially the British, who consolidated their rule in India in the 18th century, did not pay much attention to the villages as long as the local elite collected and paid taxes, but after the revolts of 1857, the British initiated a series of measures to decentralize local government. However, the administrative structure remained every hierarchical with little effective control at the local level[73]. The leaders of the Indian independence movement also debated the issue of village self-governance, but there was little action. Mohandas Gandhi was in favour of autonomy for villages, while B. R. Ambedkar, a leader of the lower-caste groups, argued that villages in India were oppressive for many groups, and believed that parliamentary politics would best meet the needs of people in rural India. Panchayats, therefore, were not afforded important status in India's constitution. After independence in1947, however, there were periodic calls for incorporating local participation in planning for community development projects. The government of India set up several commissions that recommended measures to facilitate local involvement through panchayats. The issue of women's participation in panchayats was first proposed in 1959 when the Balwantrai Mehta Commission Report recommended that two women be appointed to panchayats. At this time, however, the women appointed were often from rural elite families.

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[72] Nancy A Naples(ed), "Community Activism and Feminist Politics: Organizing across race, class and gender, p.18
[73] Manoj Rai, Malini Nambiar, Sohini Paul, Sangeeta U. Singh and Satinder S. Sahni (ed), "The States of Panchayats: A Participatory Perspective", P. 1-6.

The Balwantrai Mehta Committee

The committee recommending the three tier Panchayati Raj System for the country. The committee considered the questions seriously. It considered the conditions of rural women at length and argued they should be assisted to find ways to increase their incomes and improve the conditions of the children. There was a section in the report dealing with the measures to be taken for the purpose of women development. It recommended for the appointment of gram sevikas and women officer to facilitate effective development programme and policies of the women in rural areas of the country[74]. The Balwantrai Mehta Committee, therefore, did not take a serious view of the nature and significance of women's participation. It seemed to have considered the question of women in panchayats against the backdrop of the implementation of women and children development programmes. They were interested in making improvement of the house-keeping functions of women. Clearly, they had taken a conservative attitude to women. Women as participants in decision-making escaped the attention of the committee.

In 1974, the Report of the Commission on the Status of Women in India suggested the setting up of women's panchayats, but this idea was implemented in only a few places-mainly in the states of Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh.

Ashok Mehta Commission

The Ashok Mehta Commission Report in 1978 recommended a more radically decentralized structure of panchayats with strong decision-making powers, as well as the inclusion of women and other disadvantaged groups like the lower-status castes and tribes. The idea for the reservation of a percentage of seats in electoral office gained momentum during the 1980s, but several measures for a constitutional amendment did not pass in parliament. Finally, the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act was passed in 1992, effective April 24, 1993, as part of the effort to deal with poverty and other problems in rural India[75] .

The question of women's participation in rural development process merited attention of the Committee on the Status of Women in India (1974). It considered the question of establishment of statutory all-women panchayats at the village level with autonomy and resources of their

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[74] S. Waseem Ahmad, Nilofer and Gazala Parveen, Women's Political Participation and Changing Pattern of Leadership in Rural Areas of U.P, p.662.
[75] Bidyut Mohanty, 'Panchayat Raj Institution and Women', In the book " From Independence Towards Freedom: Indian Women Since 1947" (ed), Bharati Ray and Aparna Basu, pp.18- 35.

own for the management and administration of women and children development programmes. It was conceived as a transitional measure to break through the traditional attitudes that inhibited- most women from articulating their problems of participating actively in the local bodies. Like the panchayats women would be directly elected to these bodies, and should have the right to send their representatives to the panchayat samitis and/or zilla parishads. To ensure a viable relationship between existing gram panchayats and the proposed women's panchayats the chairman and secretary of both these bodies should be ex-officio members. The Committee on Panchayati Raj Institutions headed by Asoka Mehta (1978) laid stress on the need for recognizing and strengthening women's role in the decision-making processes of the panchayati raj. Greater representation of women in the panchayati raj bodies and participation in the elective process are in a way related. This measure is likely to influence both the directional and the implementational level. The Committee recommended the reservation of two seats for women in panchayats and to co-opt women, in case they did not come through elections[76].

With regard to women's participation in elections the Committee felt that part of the idea in the Punjab Panchayat Samities and Zilla Parishads Act, 1961 would be relevant. The Act provides that two women securing the highest number of votes amongst the women candidates in the election, will take the seats reserved for them. This is a method of co-option by election. The Committee suggested that these seats would be in addition to the seats which they might win by a majority in the normal course. The Committee had also felt the need for an institutional arrangement in the form of a committee with all women members of the mandal panchayat represented on it. It would ensure that decisions were taken by "women themselves on priorities and choices in welfare and development programmes specially means for women and children"[77]. The Asoka Mehta Committee had felt the need for associating women with the process of decision making.

The Act provides for a three-tier structure of elected representation in panchayats, which includes the village level, the block (intermediate) level composed of a group of villages, and the district level. At each level, at least one-third of the total seats are reserved for women. In addition, there is reservation of seats for the weaker castes and tribes in proportion to their population in the area. These are groups that were formerly known as "untouchables," as well

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[76] Ibid.
[77] Prabha Dutta, 'Women and Panchayat Bodies in India, pp- 67- 68.

as many indigenous tribes and other historically oppressed groups, most of whom are now referred to as Dalits. The foundation of the Panchayati Raj System is the gram sabha or village assembly, composed of all adults in the village, that must meet at least three times a year. The Act outlines the responsibilities of the panchayats, as well as the mechanisms for planning and implementation of programs. As a result, every five years three million people are elected, about one million of them women, covering almost the entire rural population of India.

Women Political Participation in India

Before progressing further, the term "political participation" needs clarification as do the definitions and connotations of words associated with this issue such as "power, "empowerment" and "representation." The general usage of these words influences expectations concerning how women will gain entry into the political sphere, the social paradigms women are working within, and what is achievable once women have gained entry. This chapter uses political participation and representation to refer to the involvement of women in the various different layers of governance. At the most basic level, the right to vote is the most common way that women participate politically. In addition, this study focuses on the literature regarding women as active participants in local and regional layers of governance, the diversity of roles which they occupy within these structures and the positions of decision-making seniority they possess.

For scholars such as Evelin Hurst, framing the idea of the political empowerment of women in terms of women's proportionate representation in governance – an assumption which is implicit in much of the discussion about gender-based quotas – neglects the complexity of the situation on the ground. She, therefore, calls for a thorough examination of exactly what is meant in development discourses by empowerment. In particular, how the power element within "empowerment" is being defined, and the implications this has for the expectations of what political empowerment will yield in terms of improving the overall situation of women It is important to discuss the discourse of empowerment and women in politics.

Discourse of Empowerment and Women in Politics

Michel Foucault (1980) argued for a relational view of power, which also goes against the notion of power as a finite entity. In Foucault's conceptualization, power cannot be held, but it can be exerted through the web of social relations in which each individual is enmeshed.

However, the degree of agency that individuals have is contested. According to Foucault, individuals internalize oppressive social norms to become self-limiting and self- disciplining. People are therefore socialized subjects who are constrained in their actions by the overarching social paradigm. In relation to this discussion of the political sphere, the dominant paradigm is patriarchal and therefore women can only operate within the parameters of this framework. This has substantial repercussions for the idea of "power" particularly in relation to "women's empowerment."[78] The frameworks within which women must act inherently favour men, as the value system that underlies the structures is based on male characteristics. This prevents women from being able to act as equals within the political sphere.

Spike Peterson and Anne Sisson Runyan argue that political power usually refers to "power-over," which is the ability of one person to make some- one does something they previously had no intention of doing. This definition of "power is masculinist to the extent that it presupposes androcentric notions of strength, competition, aggression, and coercion and because it understands power only in terms of public-sphere activities that are dominated by men[79].

Given to the complex nature of power, questions emerge concerning what the reality of women's empowerment might be, and if to be empowered women must adopt the characteristics commonly associated with men. When political participation is considered to be empowerment, this questioning of the power concept is essential to framing the entire discourse on participation. Rowlands favours a combination of definitions to capture the meaning of the word "power." She suggests that "... empowerment, can involve the development of power to, with and from within." [80]To get into positions of power is one step but attaining other forms of power is very important also. The notion of achieving political equality without also restructuring social relations in general is impossible. Therefore, Hurst concludes that bringing women into formal positions of power could be one path leading to empowerment, but it is by no means a guarantee of it. In this way reservations or quotas can be seen as an enabling condition for empowerment only [81].

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[78] Ranjana Kumari , 'Creating Political Space for women in South Asia', in "Gender and Politics: The State of the Descipline" (ed), Jane H. Bayes, p.80
[79] V. Spike Peterson and Any Sisson Runyan, "Global Gender Issue in the New Millinium", p. 69.
[80] Evelin Hurst, "Women's Political Representation and Empowerment in India: A Million Indiras Now?"p.48.
[81] Ibid, p. 49.

This brief discussion paints a bleak picture of the task ahead if true equality is it to be reached for women. However, the progress being made by women should not be disregarded just because it is taking place within a patriarchal ideology and it subscribes to challenge the predominant models of power. Increasing the number of women in decision-making positions has many real effects such as the development of women friendly policies was well as raising women's awareness of the different roles women can play in society[82]. Empowerment is the process as well as the goal of changing the structure of oppression. This definition of empowerment seems to encapsulate the way the term is employed in much of the South Asian literature.

Politics and Women Inclusiveness

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment has allowed a significant number of women to be involved in formal or electoral politics for the first time, a trend with enormous transformative potential. Though women's participation in state and national legislative bodies has been limited, Indian women have actively participated in numerous social movements before and after independence, such as the independence movement, the lower- caste movement, communist movements, movements for land rights, tribal rights, environmental movements, and women's movements (Sen1990; Gandhi and Shah 1991; Omvedt 1993; Kumar 1993; Ray and Basu 1999). The women's movement in India has largely operated on the basis of groups and organizations autonomous from formal political parties. In fact, women's groups have been somewhat skeptical of the utility of electoral politics in bringing about significant gains for women. However, there was a gradual rise in calls for reservation of elected seats for women to enhance political participation and women's rights in general. Even before the constitutional amendment, several states such as Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Kerala had enacted legislation reserving a certain number of seats for women in village councils, but in many cases, women were appointed and not elected. Once the 73rd Amendment to the Indian constitution was passed, Indian women's movement organizations could no longer ignore the issue of women's participation in local electoral politics.

However, effective participation was limited by barriers rooted in patriarchal social structures and norms about a woman's proper place and appropriate behaviour in society. These barriers include the responsibility of housework and child rearing, lack of education and knowledge,

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[82] R. Chattopadhyay and E. Duflo, 'Women as policy Makers: Evidence from a Randomized Policy Experiment in India', p. 1424.

economic constraints, fear of failure and ridicule, corruption, fear of character debasement and bringing shame to the family. Clear evidence of these limitations became available after the first round of local elections in the two years following the amendment. At the same time, however, early studies also show significant gains for numerous women as a result of their participation.

A review of several studies after the first round of elections reveals that most states met the minimum percentage of women in local elected offices. Demographically, most of the women elected were from the dominant castes in their villages, and most were married, ranging in age from their 30s to 50s.[83] This is not surprising as older women have somewhat lessened child-rearing and house- hold responsibilities, and married women, as compared to single women, tend to have less to fear in regards to their reputation in the community. Elected women representatives (EWRs) also tended to have very little prior political experience compared to their male counterparts. Though the literacy rates varied from one part of the country to another, a majority of the elected women were illiterate. However, most of the women became the sarpanch, or head of the village council, were literate. This is in keeping with the overall literacy rate for females in India of approximately 40 percent [84].

Traditional political parties also reflect the hierarchical social structure of the villages, and are reluctant to challenge it for fear of losing votes. Government officials and state agencies have also not been very responsive to effective electoral participation by women, as in many instances it is more expedient and advantageous to go along with the entrenched interests. These studies, therefore, reveal the limits of the liberal democratic focus on electoral politics and individual rights that also conceal barriers to electoral participation imposed by patriarchal norms and structures. Several women have, however, emerged as assertive leaders and have become independent and effective as they have become better informed. They were more responsive to issues of drinking water, health, education, income generation, income generation, and pensions for widows, and in some cases, they have also taken up the issue of alcohol abuse. Gradually, many women have challenged limiting norms and practices. As Mohanty notes, "once women become aware of the issues they try to execute programmes

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[83] S.M Rai (ed), "International Perspective on Gender and Democratization", p. 106-28.
[84] Ibid.

successfully and in the process their self-perceptions undergo change. This has a multiplier impact on the children, the family, the neighbour- hood and the village" (1999, 31).

Overall, individual characteristics, such as education, skill, determination to learn, initiative and drive, ability to mobilize the community and interact with the socio-cultural environment, serve as enabling or inhibiting factors. Women were more likely to be effective in their work and in challenging traditional power structures when they had the support of their family, the community, other panchayat members, and government officials, and when there was presence and support of voluntary community groups and organizations.

Muslim Women Participation in the Political Process

In elections women's political participation and political activities is an important means by which women gain status and autonomy but their presence in party politics and leadership remains limited. Women are quite conscious of the importance of their vote and regular exercise their franchise. The numbers of women turnout shown a steady rise. In the 1999 Lok Sabha elections for example, 58 percent female voters exercised their franchise[85]. In order to access women's involvement in political activities, the Muslim Women Survey (MWS), finds some variables to collect the ideas of Muslim women consciousness in politics. They are

Voting trends: Voting is an indication of participation. Most women are exercises their right to vote. It shows a level of participation that has not only kept pace with the upward trend in voting since the 1991 election. Generally, women as constitute the largest group of non- voters. There are some variables which constitute the political consciousness of women. Some of them are- women's autonomy in voting, participation in election campaign, political awareness[86].

It is found that, MWS (Muslim Women Survey) shows that greater participation and political awareness are linked to higher education levels. Urban educate women are more aware of rights and policies and more likely decide their rights as to which party they should vote for. Maximum of women in MWS are illiterate though they do not lack in political activities. They actively participate in the political process[87]. This means that, illiteracy or low levels of education do not discourage them from looking for an active role in political participation. Women show a keen awareness of the importance of democratic institutions and political

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[85] Zoya Hassan and Ritu Menon, "Unequal Citizen's: A Study of Muslim Women in India", p. 206.
[86] Ibid, pp.207-216
[87] Ibid.

participation but had little opportunity and little contribution to them. While democratic rights are to be vale for themselves. It seems that the value of democratic rights are kept in themselves. However, inadequate women participation in this institution, beyond voting is one of the deficits of democratic governance in India. This is where issues other than election and voter turnout become important in strengthening the linked between democracy and social development. It is self-evident, democratic governance facilitates human and social development only when institutions are accountable to people and the people themselves can fully participate in local and national debates and are involved in decision making. In the age of democratic politics, we cannot overstate the importance of mobilization and voting because the unorganised can rise their voice only at election time. Then the discrimination, which is institutionalised by society in gender, community and socio-economic status means that participation in the democratic process can only be a symbolic value. several surveys shows that, when it comes to exercise the right to vote, Indian Women, including Muslim Women may show a greater determination than voters in more advanced democracies. Without this, women from the poorer classes or the minorities are victims of political vulnerability and are absent when the state's agenda are fashioned.

However, their experience with institutions of democracy is an increasingly unhappy one as it has failed in insuring better economic outcomes. By considering the low levels of literacy of the group of Muslim women in conjunction with the occupational and work participation, it hardly needs underscoring that the conditions for effective agency are absent.[88]. The most important part is weather its Muslim women or other community's participation and representation in local politics are accountable in their works?

Local Institutions and Accountability

Panchayati Raj institution is also among the group of local governance. It is important to look on the issue of accountability. Either they have official local accountable for their performance or they have some significant gender difference in the perception of accountability. The representatives of women engaged in local public institutions to seek justice and improve their welfare. In India, government accountability increased following the introduction of reservation, quotas mandating that women occupy at least one third of local elected council's post. After the implementation of reservation, beginning in 1993, women's willingness to

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[88] Ibid, p. 19

report crime is increased by 46%, likelihood of the police registering relevant crimes rose 27% and women likelihood of bribing police to resolve crimes dropped by 36 percent. In the US, accountability to women grew following their 1920 enfranchisement. As a result, spending on public health increased, causing an 18- 15% drop in children mortality. Accountability has both an instrumental value for improving public goods and an intrinsic value as a substantive component of democratic practice.[89] Accountability occurs where some actors have the right to hold other actors to set a standard, and to impose sanctions if they determine that these responsibilities have not been met. A large body of work focuses on formal accountability based on voter ability to sanction politicians via elections. It provides citizens with a political voice, the perceived ability to enter the political system by engaging local officials to express demands and critiques.

Panchayat System and the Indian Women

The first and pioneering effort that have been made through the Constitutional 73rd Amendment Act which mandates the transfer of power and resources in the rural areas to local democratic councils known as the Gram Panchayats. Most revolutionary of all, one-third of all Panchayats seats are to be reserved for women guaranteeing them a role in determining the future of their communities. Now women are changing governance in India. They are elected to local bodies unprecedented numbers as a result of amendment to the constitution which mandates the reservation of seats for women in the local governance system and participation in the process of rural governance and to make and implement plans for their own development. In the words of Mahatma Gandhi as long as women of India do not take part in public life, there can be to salvation for the country'. So, every effort should be made to empower the women through their participation in governance system. The sayings of Mahatma have been materialized to some extent by the enactment of 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act.

The traditional working pattern of many political parties and government structure continued to be barriers to women's participation in public life. Political status of women can be defined as degree of equality and freedom enjoyed by women in the shaping and sharing of power. The Indian Constitution guarantees political equality through the adult franchise and the right to equality, which also prohibits discrimination on the ground of gender in political participation. Voting right alone cannot ensure equal status of women in political affairs, if adequate

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[89]Albert of Hirschman, "Exit, Voice and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Forms, Organizations and states", p.19

opportunities in the deliberation of the nation are not provided though participation, political participation has no meaning. Political equality is meaningless in a country where the most of population sufferer from different social and economic problems. Women's participation in active national politics is also not up to satisfactory margin. Women's representation has not exceeded 11% any time in Parliament. But the Constitutional 73rd Amendment Act has reduced this gap through the amendment of state Acts of Panchayati Raj Systems. The Act has also provided adequate percentage of reservations to the women and weaker sections in the three-tier system of rural governance starting from Gram Panchayat to Zilla Parishad level just to ensure their political representation and participation in the rural governance system. But in the rural context has been found that even though reservations provided to the women, Scheduled Caste, and Scheduled Tribe women through the Constitutional 73rd Amendment, but the women representatives are reluctant to discharge their functions in proper way and they are always guided and handled by their spouse. They are obliged to their spouses as back seat and drivers in discharging their functions. Lack of political education, training and orientation also serves as a huddle in the way of their effective political participation.

Now it's time to examine the way the provision of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment have been made operational in some of the states of the country keeping in mind the participation of women in the rural local governance systems. It is important to emphasize in this study that not only subjects that are stereotypically considered as those directly concerning women like the subjects of Eleventh Schedule such as Women and Child Development or Family Welfare but almost all others among the 29 subjects listed in the Eleventh Schedule also have a crucial relevance to women, considering women's multiple roles as bread earners, heads of the household,' mothers, manager of the household economy and potential and actual leaders of the community.

Some states are mentioned below their work in Panchayati Raj Institutions through the reservation policy. The states like Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, West Bengal and Kerala were practices women representation in panchayat before the 73rd Amendment Act, 1992. The following is the role of their participation in the decision making of local governance.

Andhra Pradesh

According to Andhra Pradesh Gram Panchayat Act, 1964 which provide for reservation of 2 seats for women if the total strength of the panchayat is 9 or less, 3 seats if the strength is

between 10 and 15 and 4 seats if the is more than 15. The act ensures between 22- 25% representation of women in these bodies. At the lowest level, the principle of reservation has been applied only in respect of women's membership in gram panchayat and not to the offices of Sarpanch.

The Narasimham Committee (1981), made a specific recommendation that 5% of the post of surpanch in each block should be reserved for women. This committee was not in the favour of reservation for women in Panchayat Samitis and felt that they should contest along with men for general seat. It is observed that, this is a big lucuna in the context of ensuring representation of women in the middle level bodies, Mandal Praja Parishads under the existing system. Those women who could successfully contest along with others for their position of Sarpanch would become members of Mandal Praja Parishads, i.e the middle level rural political institution in Andhra Pradesh. However, they suffer underrepresentation of women in local governance.[90]

From the year 1995, due to the implementation of the 73rd Amendment Act, the state functions the same as the other state. Women represented in panchayat by this reservation policy.

Karnataka

In Karnataka, before the Naya Panchayat Act 1985, there was an amendment by providing 25 % reservation of seats for women in the Mandal Praja Parishad. Out of which one have to reserve for women belonging to Schedule Caste and Schedule tribe. The act enjoins the social trustee committee which exist at Mandal and Zila Parishad levels. There should at least be one woman. Around 1988, women participation in Panchayat Samiti was limited. However, significant improvement could be seen in terms of participation were increases after the 73rd Amendment Act, 1992.[91]

Maharashtra

During the 80's Maharashtra's women were very aware of their rights. They are more conscious for their rights because, there was an evident of Chipko movement in Uttarakhand. The community asking themselves, why women are not in the Surpanches/ gram panchayat members? Few women's collectively decided to get into gram panchayat and they prepared a

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[90] Prabhat Datta, 'Women and Panchayat bodies in India', pp. 70-71
[91] Ibid, p.72

women panel for gram panchayat elections. Now, the women are empowering themselves through Panchayati Raj Institutions and became of of the top 5 empowering its PRI's of India.[92]

Kerala

There was one tier village government at district level called District Council. According to Kerala District Council Act, 1984, 30 percent of seats are reserved for in the district council for women. In Kerala, women have contested and won in open seats besides 30 percent of the reserved seats. This was possible because of the progressive women's movement. This radical transformation could be seen due to the high rate of female literary in the country.[93]

West Bengal

The performance of women in PRI's of West Bengal is not encouraging. Before 1993, elections which were held on the basis of reservation for women, there were less than 1 percent women member elected to different panchayat bodies in the state. The very weak participation of women was criticized by many. The main reason was lower level of education, isolation from public life. However, in recent years the WB government took steps for more participation of women in the panchayat bodies through reservation before the 73rd Constitution Amendment Act came into being. Though a late starter, with regards to reservation of seats can claim distinction for three reasons. They are-

1) First state in the country to go for one/third reservation of seats for women
2) Secondly, the objective conditions for affective and real participations were created through land reforms unlike the other parts of the country. The state create history by making it possible on parts of the small marginal and landless farmers to get elected to the panchayat bodies.
3) Thirdly, WB was the first state in the country to bring into more women participants in elections through reservations that was stipulated in the legislation.[94]

The question of effective participation of women in Panchayat in India cannot be ensued simply by amending the Constitution of India. The constitutional amendment definitely brings increase

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[92] Ibid, pp. 72-73.
[93] Ibid, p. 73
[94] Ibid, p. 74.

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percentage of women in Panchayat. The amendment of the constitution providing reservation of seats for women is a step forward. However, the amendment needs to be change in some conditions, through land reforms, progressive women's movement and creation of new to get more political empowerment in the decision-making process. It can be seen from the West Bengal experience, despite a number of constraints, the goal is unattainable.

Chapter 3

The Panchayat System in Manipur

Introduction

The chief instrument s of decentralization is the Panchayati Raj Institution formed at the grassroot level and assume importance owing to the requirement to deal with the relentless demographic pressure and full use of scare resources for development[95]. Bharagava and Subha outlined political empowerment as as "the capacity to steer decision- making method, planning, implementation and assessment through integrating them into political system. It implies political participation which incorporates proper to vote, contest, campaign, celebration club and representation in work place. In any respect tiers and efficiently influences decisions thereby leading to political empowerment"[96].

The term "Panchayat" is a discourse relating to the community of a segment. The idea behind traditional panchayat system was giving more importance with the maintenance of peace and order in the community. Whereas the modern, Panchayati Raj are mainly concerned on empowerment of rural people and over all development of village community[97].The Panchayats have been in existence in Manipur for a long time. There are various accounts of their presence in the State. The discourse of village/local government can be divided into three phases. First is the traditional Panchayat, second is the panchayat system during the British rule and lastly the panchayat after independence.

Traditional Panchayat System

In the valley of Manipur, the king administered his state in pursuance of a system called 'Lallup'. The system was divided into 'Pannas'. This Pannas are likely, the modern state's districts and sub districts. The division was made according to the entire population. Each Pannas consists of a number of families, selected from his family or tribe the men who render service (lallup) to the king for and on behalf "Panna" to which they belong[98]. The liability to

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[95] Subha K. and Bhargava B.S, 'Feminism and Political Empowerment of women: The Karnataka Experience' in M. R Birju (ed.) "Decentralization: An Indian Experience", p.8
[96] Ibid., p. 158
[97] R. Abraham, "Socio Economic and Political Status of Panchayat', p.14.
[98] Gouragopal Singh, "Local Self Government in Manipur (1891-1981)", p.22

'Lallup' commence as soon as a man reached the age of seventeen when he also become entitle to cultivate one Pari of land with tax in kind exacted by the King. A man liable to 'Lallup' had to attend 'Loishang'(Royal Office) for ten days and to work according to his skills and grade. It covered all the state works. In time of peace, it did work for economic development of the country, in times of war it did military services. For due and efficient working of the Lallup, the Pannas were minutely divided. The total number of divisions reached the high figure of 107. It can be said that, nearly all the divisions had an office headed by an officer known as 'Lalup Chingba' who was an active intermediary between the offices at the capital and the men in the village.[99]

Panchayat System During the British Period

From the period of 1892, the process of decentralization had started in the administration system of Manipur. Village Panchayat were established on 30th Hiyangei (October-Novermber) 1903 A.D. Villages of Kakching Khulen, Kakching sekmai khunbi, Sekmai shikhong, Ningen were set up the panchayat system.[100]There were five numbers in each of the Panchayats elected by the political Agent. For every two years, two of the members were retired by rotation. The works and theirs functions were mainly adjudicatory rather than administrative.[101] The state was taken by the British government of India after the Anglo Manipuri war 1891 A.D. The Chief of the state was a minor, Churachand Singh. The administration was controlled by the British Political agent as superintendent of the state. He was given the power to adopt such measures that are beneficial to the people with instructions by respecting the existing customs, traditions and the institutions. After attending majority age of the king Churachand Singh, reign the administration of the state. The king added Darbar, comprising a council of ministers to assist in administrational work. Those ministers were appointed by the Rajas and each Darbar member was responsible for the department of which he was in charge.[102]

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[99] M. Ibohal Singh., "A Study in Local Self- government in Manipur", pp.2-3.
[100] N. Ibobi Singh, 'The Manipur Administration (1709-1907)', p 197.
[101] M. Ibohal Singh, Op. Cit., p 4.
[102] Ibid. p 4

The valley of Manipur was divided into four circles. In each circles there was a panchayat court and each contained about 1000 houses[103]. The name of four courts were- 1) Town Court 2) Rural Panchayat 3) Mohammadan Panchayat and 4) Office of the Choukidari. The functions of these courts are given below-

Town Court: The Court was instituted on 15th November 1891. The town panchayat has jurisdiction over the town areas of Imphal[104].

Rural Panchayat: The court was established at Sekmai, Kaklong, Foiching, Moirang, Wangoi, Kakching, Chairel, Ningae and Bamon Kampu. These places are in the valley area of the state. The Panchayat members were paid with a pari of rice land free of revenue while in office[105].

Mohamaddan Panchayat: This Court was special because, it was for the Muslim in the state. It was in the place of Lilong for the trials of cases between the Muslims and others. There were five Muslim members in the Panchayat.

Office of the Chaukidar: The state needs an institution for maintaining the law and order. Here, the panchayat circle found to be very convenient to function in administrative system. An officer called the rural chowkidar appointed for every 100 houses. He had to report the daily happenings to the Panchayat of his circle. There were 202 chaukidars according to the 1921 and 1922 reports[106]. In a village panchayat, there was five members including the head of the village. They were appointed by the Political agent. The functions of the panchayat were judicial in nature rather than administrative. The system of local government was continued to functioned till 1955[107].

The Panchayat System After Independence

India got independence in 26th January 1947, accordingly the democratic government was established in the year 1948 under the Manipur state constitution Act, 1947. There were six councils of Ministers elected by the members of the Manipur State Assembly. The Assembly elected members were contested on the basis of adult franchise. On the principle of joint electorate from the category of general, hills and Mohammodan constituencies at the ratio of 30: 18: 3. However, the Chief Minister were appointed by Maharaja in consultation with the

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[103] N. Ibobi Singh, Op.Cit. pp. 177-178

[104] Ibid

[105] Ibid, p. 179

[106] Government of Manipur (Directorate of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj), A note of Panchayati Raj Manipur, 1987, p 22.

[107] Ibid, p.5

ministers. There were the additional seats and members were represented for the departments of educational and commercial interest. These Ministers were in charge of their own portfolio. The process of appointed Chief Minister by Maharaja is linked between the monarchical system and the newly established democratic government. It didn't not last long, the state was merged with the India on 15th October, 1949 under the Manipur Merger Agreement[108].

Manipur was placed as a part of state when the constitution of India was enforced on 26th January, 1950. The administration was carried on under a chief commissioner. There was no Assembly as law making body. During the period of Advisory council and territorial council from 1950 to 1956, the central government was responsible for the legislative and financial matter of the state. The central government could extend to Manipur or any part of any enactment which is in force in a state[109]. Modern Panchayat system was first introduced in Manipur in 1960 by adopting the U.P Panchayat Act 1947. The Hill areas, the Municipal area, cantonment areas and the notified areas were excluded from the jurisdiction if this Act. The first election to 227 Gram Panchayat and 43 Nyaya Panchayat had been entrusted with some development work as agents of state Government in the execution of plan schemes. The Nyayas Panchayat were engaged in judicial matters. The rules necessary for carrying out the purpose of the said Act were also framed in the year 1962. After the second election in 1970, the number of Gram Panchayats came down to 221 and Nyaya panchayats increased up to 44. The people of Manipur were not satisfied with the working of gram panchayats and Nyaya panchayat[110]. They demanded for the introduction of higher-level panchayats like panchayat like Panchayat Samitis and Zilla parishad. In response to the aspiration of the people, the Manipur Panchayati Raj Act, 1975 was passed by the Legislative Assembly of Manipur.

The Manipur Panchayat Raj Act, 1975 was a turning point in the history of Panchayat Raj in Manipur. Necessary rules have already been framed under the Act. There shall be Gram Panchayat, Panchayati Samiti and Zilla Parishad. But in Manipur only two-tier system of Panchayti Samiti and Zilla parishad. But in Manipur only two-tier system of Panchayat Raj i.e Gram Panchayat and Panchayat Samiti was introduced. Steps have been taken for the establishment of Zilla Parishad also. Under the Act, 107 Gram Panchayat, 37 Niyaya

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108 L. Ibohal Singh, 'An Introduction of Manipur', p. 36
109 Ibid, p. 37
110 M. Ibohal Singh, Op. Cit, p 5.

Panchayats and 6 Panchayat Samiti were constituted[111]. Elections to these bodies have been held regularly and they started functioning properly in the state. The state government keenly considered for the establishment of Zilla Parishad under the provisions of Manipur Panchayat Raj Act, 1975. The first elections under the Act to these bodies were held in May 1978. The 2nd and 3rd general elections to the panchayat bodies were held in May, 1985 and September 1991 respectively. The advantage given to women under the Manipur Panchayati Raj Act, 1975 were the reservation of one seat for women in every gram Panchayat[112]. Women especially in rural area are the deprived section of the society. But after the enforcement of the Act women were encouraged to participate freely in the panchayats of Manipur. But the Panchayati Raj Act 1975 was not free from drawback. The process of development was found to be slow at level of Panchayats affecting the welfare of the rural people in the state.

The Manipur Panchayat Raj Act 1994 provided, the establishment of two tier system of Panchayat. The Gram Panchayat and at the village level and Zilla Parishad at the district level. The Act provided different functions to the gram panchayat in the matters relating to Agriculture, fisheries, forestry, animal husbandry, khadi and cottage industries, rural housing, roads connectivity, Education (both primary and secondary), Adult Education, Poverty elevation programme, pubic distribution system, cultural activities etc.

The functions of Gram Sabha mainly focus on the implementation of development schemes, identification of beneficiaries, promote the adult education schemes, promotion of unity and harmony etc. The Gram Sabha is a larger body consisting of all voters in the area and the Gram Panchayat is the executives. The works of Gram Panchayat mainly managed the functions entrusted assigned by the government and the amounts of these functions are decided by the government itself. However, the Zilla Parishads works at the district level and have larger scope in their functions. They prepared plans for economic development and social justice, agriculture, irrigation, horticulture, statistics, marketing, health and hygiene drinking water, social reform, social welfare, rural electrification etc.

Manipur Panchayat elections was held on 31st January 1997. There was 166 Gram Panchayat and four Zilla Parishad had been established. In the month of March, 1997 , three Zilla Parishad

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[111] G S Oinam, 'State of Panchayati Raj in Manipur', E- pao.net.
[112] M. Ibohal Singh, Op.Cit, p.7.

and 166 gram panchayat had been constituted in the districts of Imphal, Thoubal and Bishnupur. Due to the bifurcation of Imphal district into Imphal East and Imphal West, one more zilla parishad was formed[113]. This reorganization of panchayat gives main objectives for the rural development in the states and functions their works at two levels i.e the Gram panchayat at the village level and the Zilla Parishad at the district level.

The 73rd Amendment Act provides not only decentralized administration through local governing bodies but for direct participation of the people themselves in Gram Sabha. It gives a power to the common people through decentralised administration in the decision-making body of the state. At the grass root level, the act empowers people to have a greater role in local governance. In order to bring a meaningful socio-economic change, it encourages the people's participation in the formation and implementation of various development programmes. The act gives a notable feature i.e the one third reservation of seats in all panchayats for women in addition to the reservation of seats for the schedule caste and schedule tribe.

There are various accounts of their presence in the state. Here are three such accounts. According to one account, there was a Singlup in every village during the rule of Maharaj Chandrakirti (1850–1886.) It performed both judicial and extrajudicial tasks. The Gram Panchayats are comparable to this Singlup.[114] According to the second narrative, every village in ancient Manipur had village organisations under the Rajas, with two people named Hanjaba and Hidang serving as the chiefs of each. Cases of a social and theological nature were arbitrated by them. The villages that had a stronghold over this organisation were excluded when the Political Agent established the Village Panchayats in or about 1902. This institution could be compared to the Gram Panchayat that Mahatma Gandhi had in view.[115] Here is the third account: Rural Panchayats were founded in 1892 following the Manipur War of 1891, which brought Manipur under British rule, according to the officially recognised royal chronicle "Cheitharol Kumbaba"[116].

In the Manipur Administration Report (1891–1892), there were three courts in Manipur that were listed in decreasing order from the court of the Political Agent to the court of the Assistant to the Political Agent as follows: i) Cheirap (ii) Town/Sadar Panchayat (iii) Rural Panchayat.

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[113] Kunjamani Sharma, 'Panchayat Raj Khonjel, pp.1-4.
[114] R.K Jaljit Singh, "A Short History of Manipur, Local Self Government in Manipur", p. 23.
[115] L. Ibohal Singh, Op. Cit, p. 7
[116] Ibid.

The villages in the Valley were divided into circles that each had close to 1000 homes, and in each circle, a Panchayat of five members was constituted with the authority to hear cases of minor offences and impose fines no higher than Rs 50. Every 100 homes had a rural chowkidar officer who made daily reports to the Panchayat in his district. The Political Agent reestablished the Village Panchayats in 1902. By means of an open ballot, all Panchayat were elected. They were given sole authority over the resolution of minor disputes. When the Maharaja of Manipur signed the Merger Agreement with India in 1949, these Village/ Salish Panchayats were still in place. They were only eliminated on March 1st, 1956, with the passing of the Manipur Court Act, 1955[117].

The Manipur Gazette ((No.l77-E-130 dated 22.3.60) issued the United Provinces Act, 1947, which served as the legal foundation for the formation of the contemporary panchayat system in Manipur in 1960. The UP Act was enlarged in Manipur because it was a Union Territory at the time. But the implementation was delayed. In April 1962, there were 43 Nyaya Panchayats and 227 Gram Panchayats, respectively. In 1966, it was decided to let Panchayat Pradhans participate in Block Development Committees. In implementing development programmes into action, the Gram Panchayat became a collaborator. Manipur adopted the Manipur Panchayati Raj Act in 1975 after becoming a state in 1972. Three levels of panchayats are available. The Act of 1975 was revised when the Manipur Panchayati Raj Act of 1994 was enacted by Parliament.

Panchayati Raj Institution in Manipur

The PRIs were granted Constitutional recognition by the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. It developed a system of uniform organisation, regular election processes, and flow of funds through Finance Commissions. These entities needed to have the necessary authority, duties, and obligations from the States in order to operate as institutions of self-government. It refers to the PRIs in particular, who are mandated to basic plans and implement various social justice and economic development programmes, including those included in the Constitution's Eleventh Schedule. The Manipur Panchayat Raj Act, 1994 was passed in accordance with the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992, to establish a system of two tier PRIs at the village levels with elected bodies of Gram Panchayat (GP) at the village level and Zilla Parishad (ZP)

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[117] Ibid.

at the district level for increased public participation and more efficient implementation of rural development programmes.

State Profile

The state of Manipur is encircled by hills. The total geographical area of the state is 22,327 sq. km. It is divided into 11 districts, 7 of which are in the hilly regions and 4 of which are dispersed throughout the valley. Manipur has a total population of 27, 21,756 people, or 0.22 percent of the Indian population, according to the 2011 census. 18,99,513 people in Manipur are rural (69.79%). While in previous decades population growth was 24.86% of the total population involved in agricultural and related activities, the population growth in the decade of 2001–2011 was 18.65%.[118] The following table is the demography of the State as per the 2011 census.

Table 3.1: Statistic of the State[119]

Sl. No.	Indicator	Unit	Value
1.	Population	1000s	2722
2.	Density of Population	Person in sq.km	122
3.	Gender Ratio	Female per 1000 males	987
4.	Gender Ratio Rural	-	966
5.	Gender Ratio Urban	-	1038
6.	Literacy	Percentage	79.85
7.	Number of PRIs	Numbers	169
8.	Number of Zilla Parishad	Numbers	4
9	Number of Gram Panchayats	Numbers	165

More emphasis will be placed on the numbers of PRIs, Zilla Parishads, and Gram Panchayats from the above table. Geographically speaking, Manipur is divided into the valley region and the hill portions. While hilly regions are largely tribal, valleys are predominantly non-tribal. The Manipur Hill Areas District Council Act, 1971, governs the hilly areas. It falls outside of the 73rd Amendment Act's scope. States like Assam and Tripura have some territories covered

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[118] Annual Technical Inspection Report for the year ended 31 March, 2011, p.1.
[119] Ibid, p 2

by the 6th schedule of the Indian Constitution, so not all of the North Eastern states have implemented the 73rd and 74th amendment acts. States like, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland wholly are outside the purview of the 73rd Amendment Acts and practiced the traditional councils instead.

The structure of PRIs in the state are organised in well manure. There are four ZPs and 165 GPs in the state. For the effective functioning at the state level, the Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Department (RD&PR) of the state Government is responsible. The organizational set up of the department and the PRIs of the state is given below –

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                 ┌──────────────────────────────┐
                 │  Panchayati Raj institutions  │
                 └──────────────────────────────┘

                          State Level

                 ┌──────────────────────────────┐
                 │  Principle Secretary, Rural   │
                 │  Development & Panchayat Raj   │
                 │         (RD&PR)               │
                 └──────────────────────────────┘
                              │
                              ▼
                 ┌──────────────────────────────┐
                 │       Director (RD &PR)       │
                 └──────────────────────────────┘
District Level                │
                              ▼
                 ┌─────────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────┐
                 │ Chief Executive     │   │ Elected Body of  │
                 │ Officer, Zilla      │   │ ZP headed by     │
                 │ Parishad            │   └──────────────────┘
Block Level      ├─────────────────────┤
                 │ Block Development   │
                 │ Officer (BDO)       │
                 └─────────────────────┘
                              │
Village Level                 │
                              ▼
                 ┌─────────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────┐
                 │ Secretary Gram      │───│ Elected body of  │
                 │ Panchayat           │   │ GP headed by     │
                 └─────────────────────┘   └──────────────────┘
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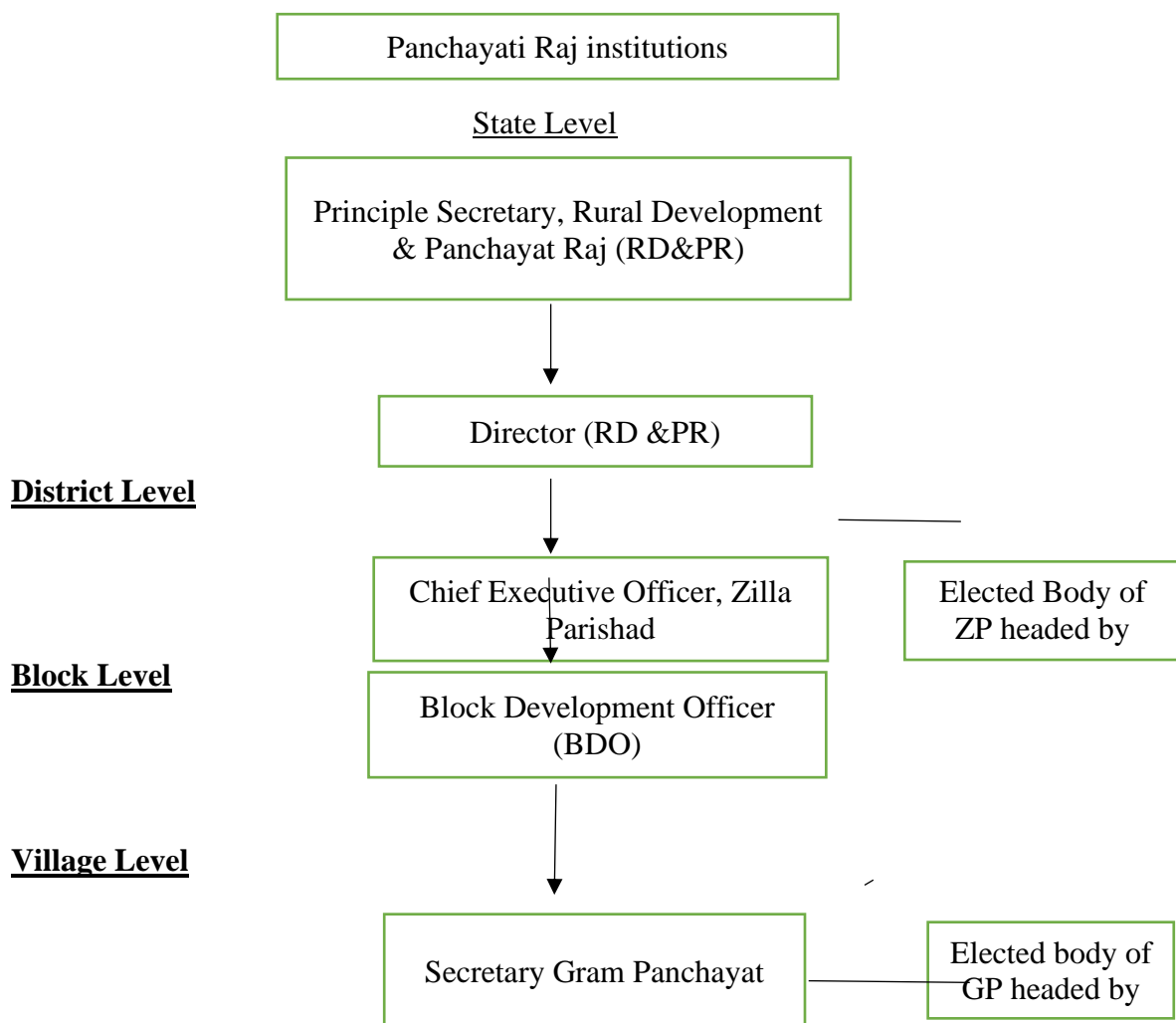
These shows the organizational set up of Department and Panchayati Raj Institution in the state, Manipur[120]. Each and every section of department of PRIs are functioning in different way. The details of responsibility of PRIs functionaries are given below through table.

Table3.2: Responsibilities of PRIs Functionaries[121]

Authority	Functions
Principle Secretary (RD&P)	Administers the overall monitoring and implementations of schemes relating to PRIs
Zilla Parishad (Elected Body)	Preparation of Plan for economic development and social Justice of the district
Chief Executive Officer	Carries out the policies and directives of the ZP
Gram Panchayat (Elected Body)	Preparation of Annual Plan and Annual Budget
Panchayat Secretary	Keeping of records and maintenance of Accounts

In continuation of the functioning of PRIs, there are standing committees to perform the functions assigned to them. The details are given below-

Table 3.3: Details of Standing Committee[122]

Level of PRIs	Chief Political Executive	Standing Committees	Political Executives
GP	Pradhan	a) Production Committee b) Social Justice Committee c) Amenities Committee	Pradhan is the Chairman of the three committees
		a) General Standing Committee b) Finance, Audit and Planning Committee	Adhyaksha is the chairman of each committee

[120] Ibid.
[121] Ibid., p. 3.
[122] The Manipur Panchayati Raj Act, 1994 (Act No. 26 of 1994, Directorate of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj Government, pp. 29-30.

		c) Social Justice Committee	Up- Adhyaksha is the chairman
ZP	Adhyaksha	d) Education & Health Committee e) Agriculture and Industries Committee f) Works Committee	Chairman is elected from the members of these committees

Source: The Manipur Panchayati Raj Act, 1994.

A District Planning Committee (DPC) required to established by the government in each district in order to combine the plans created by the GP and ZP in the district and to prepare a drafts development plan for the district as a whole. Its under the Article 243ZD of the Constitution of India and section 96 of the Manipur Panchayat Raj Act. The Manipur Panchayati Raj Act of 1994 stipulates that the DPC must be composed of members. The DPC was established in the districts of Thoubal and Bishnupur on August 30, 1997, and in the districts of Imphal East and Imphal West on May 3, 2003[123]. The members of DPC are given below-

I)   Adhyaksha of the Zilla Parishad (Chairperson)

II)   Member of the House of the people representing the district

III)   Members of Legislative Assembly who are elected in the district

IV)   Such number of Councillors as may be specified by the government from the member of Councillors of Nagar Panchayat and Municipal Councils in the district and

V)   Chief Executive officer[124].

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[123] Ibid. p.4
[124] Annual Technical Inspection Report for the year ended 31 March, 2011, p. 4

Two Tier system

In Manipur, there are two tier system that are mainly confined to the four valley districts, consists of four ZP. The Zilla Parishad wise break up of gram panchayat are given below Table

Table 3.4: Name of Zilla Parishads and number of Gram Panchayats

Sl. no	Name of Zilla Parishad	No. of Gram Panchayats
1.	Imphal West	43
2.	Imphal East	56
3.	Bishnupur	24
4.	Thoubal	42
	Total	165

Government of Manipur, Report of the Second Manipur State Finance, 2004, pp. 7-8

The first election held in accordance with the Manipur Panchayati Raj Act of 1994 was held once more in 1997. The second round was held in 2002. Seats in the GPs and ZPs are reserved for women at a minimum of one-third of the total number of seats reserved for Schedule Castes, Schedule Tribes, and women in proportion to their populations. The outcome was positive; 35% of women are represented, and in some GPs, women are seated in general positions. The community successfully contested and their representation gives a positive impact in the PRIs system of India.

In order to provide a clear image of the reservation seats for SC, STs and Women among the members of Zilla Parishad, Pradhans and Member of Gram Panchayat are given below-

Table 3.5: Reservation seats of Zilla Parishad member for the Panchayati Raj Election, 2002

Sl.no	Name of district/Block	Member of Zilla Parishad				
		R/W	S.T	S.C	Unreserved	Total
I	Imphal East District					
	1)Imphal East-1 C.D Block	6	-	-	3	9
	2)Imphal East-II C.D Block	1	-	-	7	8
	3)Jiribam C.D Block	-	1	1	-	2
	Sub-Total	7	1	1	10	19
II	Imphal West District					
	Imphal West-I C.D Block	2	-	1	7	10
	Imphal West-II C.D Block	3	-	-	2	5
III	Thoubal District					
	1)Thoubal C.D Block	2	1	-	7	10
	2)Kakching C.D Block	4	-	-	2	6
	Sub Total	6	1	-	9	16
IV	Bishenpur District					
	1)Bishenpur C.D Block	3	-	-	3	6
	2) Moirang C.D Block	1	-	-	4	5
	Sub Total	4	-	-	7	11
	Grand Total	22	2	2	35	61

Source: Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Department, Government of Manipur.

Notes: W/R: Reserved for Women, S.C: Schedule Caste, ST: Schedule Tribe, C.D: Community Development.

Table 3.6: Reservation seats of Pradhan of Gram Panchayet, 2002 Election

SL.No	Name of the District/Block	Pradhans				
		W/R	S.T	S.C	Unreserved	Total
I	Imphal East District 1) Imphal East I C.D Block 2) Imphal East II C.D Block 3) Jiribam	8 7 3	1 1 -	- - 1	16 17 2	25 25 6
	Sub Total	18	2	1	35	56
II	Imphal West District 1) Imphal West I C.D Block 2) Imphal West II C.D Block	7 6	1 -	1 (W) -	19 9	28 15
	Sub Total	13	1	1	28	43
III	Thoubal District 1) Thoubal C.D Block 2) Kakching C.D Block	8 5	- 1	- -	19 9	27 15
	Sub Total	13	1		28	43
IV	Bishenpur District 1) Bishenpur C.D Block 2) Moirang C.D Block	4 4	- -	- -	8 8	12 12
	Sub Total	8	-	-	16	24
	Grand Total	52	4	2	107	165

Table 3.7: Reservation seats of Member of Gram Panchayat, 2002

Sl.no		Gram Panchayat Members						
		W/R	Schedule Tribe		Schedule Caste		Unreserved	Total
			Women	General	Women	General		
I	Imphal East District	82	3	6	-	-	135	226
	1)Imphal East I C.D Block	78	1	3	-	1	124	207
	2)Imphal East II C.D Block	14	1	4	6	10	22	57
	Jiribam C.D Block							
	Sub Total	174	5	13	6	11	281	490
II	Imphal West District	49	-	3	6	10	125	223
	1)Imphal West I C.D Block	47	1	1	-	-	81	130
	2)Imphal West II C.D Block							
	Sub Total	126	1	4	6	10	206	353
III	Thoubal District	111	2	4	-	-	193	310
	1)Thoubal C.D lock	60	1	4	-	1	104	170
	2)Kakching C.D Block							
	Sub Total	171	3	8	-	1	297	480

III	Bishenpur District 1)Bishenpur C.D Block 2)Moirang C.D Block	38 37	- 1	- -	2 1	2 -	67 71	109 110
	Sub Total	75	1	-	3	2	138	219
	Grand Total	546	10	25	15	24	922	1542

Source: Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Government of Manipur, 2002.

Women's representation in the General, SC/ST category in the PRIs of Manipur is shown in Table Nos. 3.5, 3.6, and 3.7. Table 3.5 shows the women who represent Zilla Parishad, table 3.6 shows the women who represent Pradhan, and table 3.7 shows the women who represent the position of Member, where women are overwhelmingly represented.

This information demonstrates that they are included in the quota system. More than the reserve seats, it has been observed that women do not turn out for election. Since seats at both the GP and ZP levels are reserved for members of the Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribe in accordance to their numbers, and at least one-third of all seats are set aside for SC and ST.

Table 3.8: Distribution of GP in Community wise

Distri-cts	CD Blocks	No.of GP	Members							
			Meitei (Gen/ SCs)	Naga (ST)	Kuki (ST)	Muslim (OBC)	Other-s (Gen/ SC/ST)	Women (Gen/ ST/SC	Total	Wom-en %
Thoubal	Thoubal	26	218	1	2	81	-	112	302	37.09
	Kakchin-g	16	138	1	3	21	8	67	171	39.18
Imphal East	Imphal East I	25	190	4	2	12	8	92	216	42.59
	Imphal East II	25	149	3	3	50	2	86	207	41.55
	Jiribam	6	12	5	4	9	27	19	57	33.33
Imphal West	Imphal West I	28	189	1	1	0	28	95	219	43.38
	Imphal West II	15	122	2	0	6	0	57	130	43.85
Bishenpu-r	Bishenpu-r	12	105	3	-	-	-	56	108	51.85
	Moirang	12	97	0	1	12	-	37	110	33.64
Total		165	1220	20	16	191	73	621	1520	40.86

Sources: Government of Manipur, *Status Notes on PRIs in Manipur*, Planning Department.

Table 3.9: Community Wise Distribution of ZP Membership

Name of ZP	Total Number of Members	Meitei	Naga	Kuki	Muslim	Others
Imphal East	19	16	1	-	2	-
Imphal West	15	14	-	-	-	1
Bishenpur	11	10	-	-	1	-
Thoubal	15	12	-	1	2	-
Total	60	52	1	1	5	1

Sources: Government of Manipur, *Status Notes on PRIs in Manipur*, Planning Department, June, 2006.

Here, table 3.8 and 3.9, shows for community wise representation. It shows that, general category is more represented, followed by Muslim women representatives. Their level of representation is very least. Because, there is no constitutional provision for the mandatory presence of separate OBC women representatives.

Manipur State Finance commission

The state government may specify in the official Gazette in respect of items listed in the 11th Schedule of the Indian Constitution how the panchayats—the gramme panchayat at the village level and the zilla parishad at the district level—performed functions with power and authority. The first Manipur state finance commission was established by the Manipur government in May 1996, and it made recommendations to the government in December 1996, in accordance with Article 97 of the Manipur Panchayati Raj Act. The report was authorised by the state government with certain conditions.

In January 2003, the Second Manipur State Finance Commission (MSFC) was established, and in April 2004, it made recommendations to the government. It suggested that local governments receive 10% of all state resources, including the state's portion of central taxes. The Commission also suggested that the District Councils in the Hills receive the remaining 45% of the entire devolution, leaving 55% for the PRIs and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) in the Valley. Based on the ratio of the Valley's rural to urban population, the corresponding proportions of the PRIs and ULBs would come to 34.38% and 20.62%, respectively[125].

The State Legislative Assembly passed the SSFC (Second State Finance Commission) recommendations in December 2005, making them effective as of April 1, 2001. The State Government's distribution of SSFC grants to PRIs throughout the past three years, from 2008–09 to 2010–11. The amounts are given in terms of crore and the table is given below-

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[125] Government of Manipur (2004), Report of the Second Manipur State Finance Commission, pp. 116-119.

Table 3.10: Funds Release to PRIs Under SFC Grant[126]

Sl. No	Name of PRIs	Amount		
1	Zilla Parishad	Released during 2008-09	Released during 2009-10	Released during 2010-11
i)	Imphal East	0.87	1.12	0.81
ii)	Imphal West	0.59	0.76	0.55
iii)	Thoubal	0.94	1.21	0.87
iv)	Bishnupur	0.62	0.79	0.57
	Total	3.02	3.88	2.80
2)	Community Development Block			
i)	Imphal East I	2.19	2.82	2.04
ii)	Imphal East II	2.23	2.87	2.08
iii)	Jiribam	0.52	0.67	0.49
iv)	Imphal West I	2.32	3.00	2.17
v)	Imphal West II	1.02	1.32	0.96
vi)	Thoubal	3.55	4.58	3.31
vii)	Kakching	1.76	2.27	1.64
viii)	Bishnupur	1.78	2.30	1.66
ix)	Moirang	1.71	2.20	1.59
Total		17.08	22.03	15.94
Grand Total		20.10	25.91	18.74

In the above table the amounts pertaining in every year is different. The year 2009-10 had the highest amount followed by the year 2008-9 and 2010-11. Among these, the amounts for 2010-11, were released as per the guidelines contained in the recommendation of the SSFC under the head Assignment & compensation during 2010-11.

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[126] Annual Technical Inspection Report, Op. Cit, p.6.

Power Vested Over PRIs

In the Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution of India, 29 functions listed with the powers and functions vested over PRIs. Its according to the Manipur Panchayat Raj Act, 1994, functions of 16 departments have been transfer to PRIs out of 29 departments as of 2011.The details of the functions transferred to ZPs and GPs are shown in table below-

Table 3.11: Departments to be transferred to PRIs[127]

Sl. No	Departments	Activities transferred to ZPs	Activities transferred to GPs
1)	Agriculture	i) Distribution of improved agricultural tools and implements and any other inputs to farmers ii) Establishment & maintenance of rural markets.	i) Selection of beneficiaries through Gram Sabha. ii) Selection of suitable marketing sites through Gram Sabha
2)	Arts & Culture	i) Supervision and monitoring of cultural programmes ii) Maintenance of rural libraries under Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Rajiv Gandhi Foundations	i) Implementation of cultural programmes through cultural Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)
3)	Cooperation	i) Recovery of crop loan and extending credit to farmers with the assistance	i) To associate with the departments, ZPs/MSCBs in the recovery of loan and

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[127] Annual Technical Inspection report on Panchayati Raj Institutions and Urban Local Bodies, 31st March 2011, Government of Manipur, p. 35.

		of Manipur State Cooperative Bank (MSCB)	identification of farmers for extending crop loans
4)	Education	i) Organization of adult education/ Non Formal Education Centre ii) Repair and maintenance of primary school building	i) Selection of adult Education/ NFE centre ii) Identification of works through Gram Sabha & formation of beneficiaries committee
5)	Fisheries	i) Selection of beneficiaries under CSS FFDA programmes/ Schemes ii) Distributions of feed/fishing equipment to progressive farm	i) Identification of beneficiaries through Gram Sabha
6)	Health	i) To manage all public health institutions under National Rural Health Mission (NRHM)	i) Implementation of activities, preparation of village action plan under NRHM
7)	Horticulture	i) Implementation of expansion programmes and demonstrations programmes	i) Selection of beneficiaries/ sites through Gram Sabha

		ii) Assistance to small marginal farmers in the construction of small Engg structure and land lavelling iii) Construct of water harvesting structure	
8)	Industries	i) Association in selection of beneficiaries of KVIs and entrepreneurs in service ii) Association with the task force for selection of beneficiaries under PMRY	i) Recommendation of beneficiaries through Gram Sabha
9)	Transport	i) Maintenance of bus stands and terminus along National/ State High ways/ District Roads ii) Collection of parking fees as prescribed by the transport Department under a notification	i) Maintenance of Bus stand along Inter village Roads ii) Collection of parking fees in the rural markets in the respective areas of GPs.

10)	Tribal Development	i)	Implementation of family oriented schemes like animal husbandry, fisheries, industries etc	i)	Selection of beneficiaries through Gram Sabha
		ii)	Maintenance of village approach roads, community hall, school buildings		
		iii)	Implementation of rural shelters scheme for SC		
11)	Minor Irrigation	i)	Maintenance of river Lift Irrigation &Surface flow Schemes and collection of water charges	i)	Identification of work sites and collection of water charges
		ii)	Association with the task force for selection of beneficiaries under PMRY		
12)	Science & Technology	i)	Establishment of non conventional energy sources such as bio gas plants/ scholar cooking plants	i)	Selection beneficiaries with the approval of Gram Sabha
		ii)	Introduction of smokeless Chulha		

		iii)	Improved portable Chulha.		
13)	Social Welfare	i)	Supervision, Implementation and monitoring programmes	i)	Identification of beneficiaries
		ii)	Prevention of drug abuse		
		iii)	Implementation of BSY(Balika Samridhi Yojna)scheme		
14)	Rural Development	i)	Planning and implementation of works programme/self of projects	i)	Identification of location of works with the approval of the Gram Sabha
		ii)	Implementation super vision and monitoring of various CCSS Poverty Alleviation programme	ii)	Identification of Location of work with the approval of gram Sabha.
15)	Family Welfare	i)	Implementation of family welfare schemes	i)	Selection of beneficiaries through Gram Sabha
16	Veterinary & Animal Husbandry	i)	Maintenance of Veterinary Dispensaries, Health Centre	i)	Identification of beneficiary trainees for the schemes programmes through

		ii) Distribution of fodder seeds	a meeting of Gram Sabha
			ii) Identification of beneficiaries for fodder cultivation.

The above table describe the detail functions of ZPs and GPs of the state. They should have necessary powers to carry out all the functions assigned to them. It's under the Manipur Panchayati Raj Act, 1994, to exercise all powers specified to them. However, there is non transfer or partial transfer of funds and functionaries in the PRIs were not performed the functions assigned to them. The 73rd amendment Act of the constitution, enable these rural/village local bodies to functions as an Institution of decentralised self -governance. Perhaps, absence of devolution of power, the PRIs have become mere instruments/ less agents of economic development. Their right to self-governance/ political development becomes nullified in the process. As can be seen from their functions in 16 departments out of 29 functions listed in the Eleventh schedule of the constitution which have been transferred. It shows transfer of funds and functionaries to ZPs and GPs is not adequate and effective.

Chapter 4

Women and Panchayati Raj Institution in Manipur

Introduction

The concept of Panchayati raj in India is not new instead, considered as an ancient institution. It was prevalent in different forms of local self-government since time immemorial. Mention may be made from the Rig Veda, Dharmasastra, Upanishads, Jatakas, Manusmriti, Mahabharata, Arthasastra, etc. Kaultilya's Arthasastra visualizes a strong well verged village administrative system (Chandrasekhar, 2008). The downfall of local government started as the colonization process of British government advances. Many changes have surfaced during the British rule where, local self-government remained more or less defunct or confined at the hands of few individual members. However, a new era of local self-government has come after India became independent and particularly, the development of Panchayati Raj at a faster rate.

When discussing any institution, women's participation and contribution in the system cannot be ignored or neglected. Same is in the case of political institution where, many instances recalled about the importance of women and their role in the administration of a kingdom or a region. However, it is also the truth that women are generally back seated or taken as granted in decision making procedures ignoring their view points. Such experiences are not an exception in the Manipuri society, though Manipur is recognised for women power and skills in the social, economic and local organizational groups and activities. However, introduction of the Manipur Panchayati Raj Act, 1994 changes the political scenario of Manipuri women.

In order to discuss women access to elected office, some agenda needs to research, either in parliamentary, state or local elections. The first discussion will be based on the factors that shaped women participations in electoral politics and second explores whether women's presence make a difference, particularly women's right. The chapter are divided into three sections. The first is the critical overview of women's substantive representation with the argument- How female legislator/representative act for women? The second section outline and discuss the data of Manipur Women representatives in PRIs. The third section highlight the gendered institution to constructing the cases of women representation in PRIs of Manipur followed by argument- How formal and informal institutions structure the legislative process in ways that influence the actions of the weather women 's action will succeed or fail?

Women's Substantive Representation

Political representation is widely regarded as having a number of dimensions – formalistic, symbolic, descriptive, and substantive [128]. Most feminist work on the topic focuses on descriptive and substantive representation and the ways in which these two forms of representation may be linked [129]. More specifically, researchers ask whether an increase in the number of female representatives i.e women's descriptive representation and results in an increase in attention to women's policy concerns i.e women's substantive representation.

In the mainstream theories of political representation, dominated by Henna Pitkin's work, "The Concept of Representation". She identifies four types of representation but contends that only one – "acting for" representation - is the true type [130]. The other three - formalistic, symbolic and descriptive- are, in her view, limited. In formalistic representation, which Pitkin defines as the formal bestowing of authority onto a person to act for others or where a representative is 'held to account...for what he does', anything a man does counts as representation, leaving no guarantee as to the quality of representation as it occurs [131]. Similarly, symbolic representation involves symbols that are often arbitrary - which rules out criteria of accuracy - meaning that the quality of symbolic representation lies entirely in the represented "attitudes and beliefs", which are open to manipulation by representatives [132]. It means women may be persuaded that they are symbolically represented by male representatives, but this conviction may have little or no have substance.

Feminists, in particular, have devoted considerable efforts to conceptualizing the relationship between descriptive and substantive representation, between 'being like' and 'acting for' or 'speaking for' women[133]. In these efforts, they can and have drawn on Pitkin herself. A careful reading of 'The Concept of Representation' shows that she chose to take seriously the idea that elected bodies are determined to some (unsubstantiated) degree by those who constitute them even while she was aware that advocates of descriptive representation are concerned about ensuring such representation, "precisely because they expect the composition of a political forum to determine the activities"[134]. Proponents of descriptive representation emphasize the

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[128] H.F. Pitkin, "The Concept of Representation", p. 50
[129] Anne Phillips, "The Politics of Presence". p 202
[130] Ibid, p.225
[131] Pitkin, "The Concept of Representation,", pp.55-59.
[132] Ibid, p.100
[133] An Philips, Op. Cit., p. 30.
[134] Ibid, p.63.

need for a resembling composition to assure that the representatives would act the way the represented would. In the absence of direct democracy, descriptive representation is seen as a means of providing information about the represented, but also as a way to avoid representatives taking care of their 'own' interests rather than of those of the constituents[135]. Both, the descriptive and substantive representation have some linked and have their own position. It is not undermined Pitkin's claim that focus should be on what representatives do rather than what they are. It is to agree with Ann Philips that the sex of our representatives matters to how they act - in the sense that women's gender may be an enabling factor in women's substantive representation even when it is not only or all that matters. Such sentiments are evident in the numerous and explicit qualifications that temper claims about a strong relationship between women's descriptive and substantive representation: there may be a generalized agreement that the political actors central to women's substantive representation are likely to be women, but this is not the same as maintaining that they will, or have to be, biologically female [136]. This leads to a general recognition that in situations of social differentiation - namely, contexts of mistrust or uncrystallized interests – women's descriptive representation enhances women's substantive representation[137]. These are some discussions on descriptive and substantive representation. The next will more focus of substantive representation with the institutional policies and their outcomes.

In the case of women's representation, suggest shifting the terms of debate from questions like, 'do women represent women? " Or, 'do women in politics make a difference? " to questions like, 'what is the substantive representation of women? " or 'what do we mean by the substantive representation of women? The former set of questions reflects traditional approaches in the literature, which assume that only women can substantively represent women, that substantive representation occurs only in elected political bodies, and that the substantive representation of women requires that women be 'distinct' in some way from men [138]. In these studies, the assumption of "numbers matter", an increase in women's descriptive representation in parliaments will generally – even automatically – translate into an increase in the substantive representation of women's policy concerns. The latter set of questions, in contrast, leaves open the question of who might act on women's issues, where substantive

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[135] B. Brennan and Hamlin, A, "On Political Representation", pp 109-127.
[136] Irion Morris Young, "Inclusion and Democracy", p. 52.
[137] Jane Mansbridge, 'Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women?' pp 628-657.
[138] Cowell-Meyers, Kimberly, 'Gender, Power, and Peace: A Preliminary Look at Women in the Northern Ireland Assembly.' pp. 55-88.

representation might take place, and what the substantive representation of women might entail[139].

The concept of women's substantive representation is complex to go straightforward with the definition. When focus is made on one site of representation, the legislature – women's substantive representation occurs at multiple stages of the legislative process [140]. Women's interests are promoted when legislators introduce women's rights bills, when they try to mobilize support for these bills, and when women's rights laws are adopted. Women's substantive representation can thus be conceived as both 'process' and 'outcome' [141]. A number of existing studies, however, focus on either the legislative process, or policy outcomes, while drawing conclusions about women's substantive representation as a whole. Studies that focus on process, in particular those that compare the role of men and women in initiating women's rights bills, tend to find that female legislators are more likely than their male colleagues to take action [142]. These studies show that women's presence influences the legislative agenda and tells little about legislative outcomes.

Processes and Outcomes of Substantive Representation

It is important to discuss on legislative outcomes whether defined as women's empowerment within legislative bodies or the adoption of women's right law tends to be more pessimistic about the kinds of difference that women make. The researcher found that, the proportion of women in the legislature grows, political parties and policy outcomes may not change. The scholars explore in their studies that, both women's action i.e the bill introduction and their consequences i.e the adoption of women rights law. It gives some aspects of women's substantive representation which can occur separately. These ideas are involved in Childs concept of 'feminization of political agenda where women concerns and perspectives are articulated and a feminization of legislation where outputs has been transformed[143].

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[139] Sarah Childs and Krook, Mona Lena, 'Gender and Politics: The State of the Art', pp 18-20.
[140] Fiona Mackay, 'Thick' Conceptions of Substantive Representation: Women, Gender and Political Institutions', pp. 127-129.
[141] Susan Franceschet and Jennifer M. Piscopo, 'Gender Quotas and Women's Substantive Representation: Lessons from Argentina', pp 394–396 .
[142] Michelle M. Taylor-Robinson and Roseanna Michelle Heath , 'Do Women Legislators Have Different Policy Priorities than their Male Colleagues? A Critical Test', pp. 90–95.

[143] Sarah Childs, 'The Complicated Relationship between Sex, Gender and the Substantive Representation of Women', pp. 7–21

While analysing the conceptual framework focusing on both process and outcomes has at least two advantages. First, it allows a more precise analysis of women's roles in promoting women's substantive representation and of the gendered environment in which they act. Although existing studies that focus on process, such as bill introduction are explicitly addressing women's roles, studies of policy outcomes may be missing out on the role of women and the gendered environment in bringing about these outcomes.

A focus on both process and outcomes permits a firmer grasp of the gendered institutional dynamics in legislatures that either facilitate or obstruct favourable policy outcomes. Distinguishing between process and outcome also draws attention to a broader array of factors that affect women's substantive representation. By examining 'critical mass' i.e the proportion of women in a legislative body, have tested whether higher proportions of women increase legislative activity on behalf of women [144], and also whether the increased descriptive representation of women produces more gender-friendly outcomes [145]. Partly because this latter group of studies has produced such divergent findings, critical-mass theories have come under increased scrutiny in recent years. There seems to be an emerging consensus that a focus on numbers alone is problematic [146]. Instead, qualitative representation also matters in the outcomes.

The term 'political participation' has a very wide meaning. It is not only related to 'Right to Vote', but simultaneously it is related to participation in decision-making process, political activism, political consciousness, etc. Women in India participate in voting, run for public offices and political parties at lower levels more than men.

Political activism and voting are the strongest areas of women's political participation. To combat gender inequality in politics, the Indian Government has instituted reservations for seats in local governments. Women were substantially involved in the Indian independence movement in the early 20th Century and advocated for independence from Britain. Independence brought gender equality in the form of constitutional rights, but historically women's political participation has remained low.

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[144] Sandra Grey, 'Does Size Matter? Critical Mass and New Zealand Women MPs', pp. 19–29.
[145] Kathleen A Bratton. and Leonard P. Ray, 'Descriptive Representation, Policy Outcomes, and Municipal Day Care Coverage in Norway', pp. 428–437
[146] Karen Beckwith, 'Numbers and Newness: The Descriptive and Substantive Representation of Women', pp. 27–49

Women constitute more or less than half of the population of any country. But their involvement in politics is insignificant compared to men. A democratic country cannot progress if energies of its half population are concentrated in the kitchen only. The issue of women's participation in politics cannot be viewed in isolation from the general position of women in a society but despite their vast strength, women occupy a marginalized position in the political system. Political status of women implies a degree of equality and freedom enjoyed by women in sharing of power and importance given by the society to the role of women in the political system.

The equality and active political participation are inseparable. Participation of women in political arena is integral to the advancement of women. Their political participation means not only using the right to vote, but also power-sharing, co-decision-making, and co-policy-making at all levels of governance of the State. Women's equal status in every sphere is inextricably linked to country's progress and development. But most of the tribal women participate in the electoral process as voter.

They are less awareness about the Panchayati Raj Act of 73rd Amendment in the Constitution of India. They know that every village have a Panchayat which works for the development for the village but they do not know the various power, works etc. of the Panchayats. They have a very little knowledge about the reservation of seats for women in Gram Panchayats. It is true that most of the women cast their vote to that candidate whom their husbands choose. Even they do not have that right to cast their vote for their own choice.

Manipuri Women from Different Communities

Women from different communities are participated in the local governance body of the state. Both in traditional and constitutional women are represented. In the state various tribe and other communities are inhibit. According to the 1992 census, the number of tribes is 29 in numbers, categorized under the Nagas and Kuki groups. Other communities including Lois, under the Schedule caste, Muslim community also known as Meitei Pangal are categorized under OBC. However, these women from any communities/tribes enjoyed reasonable degree of freedom in some aspects of social spheres. Though, it doesn't mean that women have equal

status with men. They are all based on patriarchy and exist the system of gender discrimination. The following part is the status of women, what's their position in respective communities.

The Naga and Kuki Chin ethnic groups make up the majority of Manipur's hill inhabitants. Many other sub tribes exist among the hill tribes under the banners of Naga and Kuki. More than 90% of them profess faith in Christianity. Among the various tribes, there are undoubtedly some individuals who continue to practice their old pre-Christian belief. They all belong to the Tibeto- Burma Group and speak various languages.

Among the different tribes in Manipur, some major communities are- the Naga, the Kuki, the Meiteis, the Brahmins, the Muslim, known as 'Pangal', the Loes etc. Each have their own culture and identity. The role and status of women are varying in these tribes and communities.

The Naga

As the largest ethnic group in Manipur, the Naga practised patrilineal inheritance. They follow the ban on clan marriage. Women do not have any inherited rights to any of the property. The ornaments that the husband bought for his wife are only hers throughout her lifetime; after that, they become the property of her husband and his heirs. Girls may get property as a wedding gift from their parents at the time of their marriage [147]. Naga women participated in significant state and social spheres. plays a vital part historically and is fully responsible for the warfare. It is thought that if ladies wave while carrying objects like leaves or clothing, the battle must immediately end. It also holds true if the two men end up in a fight[148]. It appars that women's position was maintained at a high level in traditional culture. Naga women contributed a diplomatic and political strategy that helped put an end to the conflict[149]. This demonstrates how women's influence can be seen through their husbands or the village council members.

Women have diverse roles and status in the Naga subtribes known as Zeliangrong and Mao. Women in the Zeliangrong tribe are not treated equally, starting with their parents, despite being adequately protected. When a male is born, there are celebrations and casting shows, but girls are not welcomed into the family with the same excitement and enthusiasm that boys were. There are various situations where men can divorce their spouses if they were unable to have a boy[150] . In comparison to girls, boys show higher preference. Higher education is mostly a male domain, and women are not permitted to participate in social activities. Women are less

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[147] Masangthem Horam, "Social and Cultural Life of Nagas: The Tangkhul Nagas", p. 61
[148] Ibid.
[149] Ibid., 44
[150] Ibid, p.45

visible in public affairs as a result of this. These are the facts that demonstrate how gender discrimination begins in the home and spreads across society as a result of women being classified as second-class citizens. There were some customs where ladies experienced a lot of suffering. More punishments are laid out to girls than to boys when an illicit sexual relationship occurs. Before heading to battle for hunting, it was forbidden for a warrior to have sexual relations with his wife or even touch her undergarments[151]. Following the introduction of Christianity and western education, societal mindsets began to change. In the Naga tribe, the number of educated women is rising. Even still, women in Zeiliangrong are still not seen in public spaces according to custom.

Kuki

After the Naga, the Kuki is the second-largest tribe in Manipur. Clan endogamy was practised by them. They advocated matrilineal cross-cousin marriage among the Kuki. The polygamous system is used in Kuki civilization, primarily by chiefs and important people. This behaviour is regarded as a representation of their social standing. Levator marriage is widespread among them. Under specific circumstances, widows are permitted to remarry. In a system known as "Meithi", in which marriages are required, the younger brother must pay a fine if he chooses not to wed his brother's widow. Again, if the woman rejects her brother's marriage proposal, her bribe will be returned to her parents [152]. Inherent family traits, especially those from the father, are not present in female children. The property of the father is occasionally held by women, however this is rare. The role of Kuki women in traditional village politics is minimal, outside from the social setting[153]. The status of women is improving, nevertheless, and their lives are changing as a result of the development of education and the arrival of Christianity.

The Lois

Different contexts call for the term 'Loi'. When used as a separate word, a prefix, or a suffix, it is associated with being humbled, dependent backward, or lowly positioned[154]. For instance, Loi- Thaba represents exile to a village or outside of Manipur, Loi- Hanba denotes return from exile, Loi- Chanba denotes conquest of an area, and Loipot- Kaba denotes paying tribute to the conquistador power. Loi can be separated into two categories: Loi by birth and Loi by

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[151] Ibid.
[152] Aya Luikham, "Cultural Implication of Ethnicity in Manipur: A Study of the Socio- Political Relations", Dissertaion, Centre for Studies of Social System, School of Social Science, p. 46.
[153] Chander Sheikhar Panchani, "Manipur: Religion, Culture and Society," pp. 71-72.
[154] Ranjit Saha Kumar, "Valley, Society of Manipur: Cultural Frontier of Indian Civilization", p. 74.

punishment[155]. For their anti-social behaviours, such as extramarital affairs, stealing, marriages between clans, etc., the Meiteis group, a section of the Meiteis, or possibly one individual, received the punishment. Banishment to a Loi hamlet resulted in the degradation of the accused to a Loi.

As an autonomous princely kingdom, Manipur was invaded and subdued by Burmese, Chinese, Shans, and other peoples until being taken by the monarch of Meitei. It happened in the 18th century AD, under the reign of King Pamheiba[156]. They were permitted to establish themselves in the foothills. These tribes began coexisting with the Meiteis and contributing to the neighbourhood. But they resisted accepting the Hindu religion that King Pamheiba had enforced. This demonstrates that, prior to the advent of Hinduism, the Lao community was a part of a larger group. Their names are Singh (for men) and Devi (for women), just as the Hindu Meetei (female). Their forename is Sagei, the family name. They and their offspring are therefore non-meetei, not by birth but by branding.[157]Leimaren and Sanamahi are also highly regarded (the deities of pre Hindu faith of the Meeteis). They sacrifice pigs, dogs, ducks, and other animals to the gods, just like the Meeteis do[158]. With the exception of Vaishnavite elements, their lifecycle rites are comparable to those of the Meeteis. Even though the conservative Hindu Meeteis do not recognise them as such, some of them identify as Hindus. Lois was designated as a deteriorated portion of Meitei by Meitei. However, agriculture was listed as a good occupation in terms of skill sets.

The Bamon

The higher caste of Hinduism arrived in Manipur during the reign of Kyamba (1467–1508). They are Brahmins and go by the name Bamon there. The majority of relocated Brahmins in the fifteenth century seemed to be non-Vaishnavites. They accepted the Meitei community's ways because of the parallels in their customs. The Brahmins adapt their traditions, languages, lifestyles, and ways of life.[159].

The Bamon assert that they are a high caste in Hinduism. They were in charge of the temple's operations, the priesthood, the preparation of the feast, etc. Cooking is performed exclusively as a profession by the Bamon at every holy feast[160]. Marriage is traditionally restricted to those

[155] N. Vijayalakshmi Brara, "Politics, Society and Cosmology in India's North East", p 16.
[156] T.C Hudson, "The Meiteis", pp- 3-6
[157] R. Constantine, "Manipur Maids of the Mountain", p. 38
[158] T.C Hudson, Op. Cit., p 104.
[159] N. Vijayalaksmi Brara, Op. Cit., pp 109- 11
[160] B.K Ahluwalia and S Ahluwalia, "Social Change in Manipur", 1984.

who have the same caste position. Bamon and Meitei intermarrying is a frequent practise nowadays as a result of the passage of time.

Muslims (Pangal)

Manipur's Muslims are referred to as 'Pangal' The word 'Pangal,' which means "man of East Bengal," is derived from the word 'Bengal'. There was no definite time for the arrival of Muslims. However, beginning with the Maharaja Khagemba in 1606, there is an acceptance. The British political agents use the phrase 'Pangal'. In his work, T.C. Hudson refers to the Manipuri settlement as 'Pangal'. E. W. Dunn coined the term 'Musalmans' in reference to their knowledge and look, and discovered some Bengali Muslims who had some of the same characteristics.[161] Again, R Brown in his book, 'Statistical Accounts of Manipur', used Muslims as 'Meitei Pangal'. Not only this, in Chetharol Kumbaba of L. Ibunghal and N.Khelchandra Singh depicts Pangals with others skillfull artisans and animals who were captured after the war.[162] At the request of Sanongba, the brother of monarch Khagemba, they arrived as invaders. Following their loss, more than a thousand Muslims migrated to Manipur, where they were given permission to marry Meitei girls.

Muslims in Manipur adhere fervently to the Sagei (clan) structure. It was once considered forbidden to marry someone who is a member of another Sagei. Women continued to enjoy significant freedom in the socio-economic realm despite the fact that they were married to Muslims because they did not accept the strict adoption of the Islamic rule of Purdah.[163](Sircar 1984:183). Still, Muslim women experience prejudice at the hands of men, on the other side. Men will occasionally divorce their wives for ill-founded reasons by abusing the legal system. Several divorcees have went so far as to push their ex-wives to get remarried, which is against the law. In order to temporarily remarry their ex-wives, they would hire a man, who they would then divorce after a few days. The pangals refer such such illegitimate marriages as Nikah Khutnek (Manipuri Muslims)[164]. Iddat, or a period of three consecutive months, is observed between each marriage of the female divorces in order to determine whether a woman is

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[161] E.W Dun, "The Gazetteer of Manipur", pp 14-15

[162] L. Ibungohal Singh and N. Khelchandra Singh, "Cheitharol Kumbaba", p.23
[163] Chaki Masnjushree Sircar, " Feminism in a Traditional Society: Women of the Manipur Valley*",* p 183.
[164] Ahamad Ali Shah, 'A Brief Historical Study of Religion and Society of the Pangals of Manipur', (Unpublished)Dissertation, Department of History/ School of Social Science, Manipur University, Imphal, 1994.

pregnant or not. However, Muslims in Manipur typically ignore the maintenance provisions during this time.

Muslim women, despite having a significant role in domestic and social life, had to contend with the patriarchy and being underrepresented in all spheres of society. Women's empowerment is decreased as a result of gender discrimination. The 73rd and 74th amendments to the Constitution, which date back to 1992, ensure a 33 percent reservation in panchayat elections. These women begin to represent in a significant way and become active in public life. Numerous Muslim Mahila Mundals are involved in political activity.

As the women community in Manipur from all communities, empowered themselves in socio and economic sector. While comparing these sections of women with the counterparts in the rest of India. Somehow, they have some greater status and equality in society. However, in the field of politics, they remain underrepresented. Their representation ratio is very low in the higher decision making body including Autonomous village Councils, under the 6th Schedule at Hill districts of the state. The study is mainly focus on political empowerment of Muslim women in Manipur. It is important to discuss the status of Muslim women. What are the roles as an elected representatives played in their village? How are they participate and functioning the powers given by the state? These areas are going to discuss in the next chapter.

Status of Participation of Tribal Women in Panchayati Raj Institution

Status of Women' refers to the position of women in society in relation to men. Although, geographically, men and women share the same space, yet they are not treated equally in many professional fields. In reality, there exists inequality in women's access to education, health care, physical and financial resources and opportunities in the political, economic, social and cultural field. Participation level of tribal women in Gram Panchayats only limited, only to remain as voter. Some of the women even do not know the functioning of Gram Panchayat. In Gram Panchayat election their husband and family decided to whom they have to vote, in many cases tribal women do not have their own choice.

Life of tribal is not easy. Since time immemorial forest has been the habitat of the tribal. Tribal areas are the remotest as well as the most scheduled and generally inaccessible hilly tracts. The

life of tribal is full of adventures and susceptible. Tribal areas had drawn special attention of the administration since pre independent era. Village Council plays an important part in economic planning and implementations of policy programs at the grass-root levels.

However, it is very important to note that since time immemorial the tribal women folks are not given opportunity to participate in the functioning of village/local governments and till date such discrimination continues to exist in the Village Authority/Council. Therefore, to effectively pursue the various powers and functions of Local Self-governing Institutions, there is an urgent need to include women in such institutions through amending the existing laws. Some of their challenges are given below-

1) Often, the men of the village do not accord women the respect and regard that is their due. Official take advantage of their inexperience and poor education.

2) Tribal women were particularly vulnerable as a group because of strong traditional values maintained in village areas lack of women's education and access to information, poor exposure to the "outside" world and lack of power.

3) They have less awareness about the 73rd Amendment of Panchayati Raj Act and the working of gram Panchayats. Less participation is due to reasons like illiteracy, poverty, traditional family values and pattern of society, male dominance society etc. are responsible for their less participation in Panchayati Raj Institutions.

4) The progress of tribal women in Panchayati Raj Institution is slow and it will take more time to attain women's goal. Because tribal women are irregular in the Panchayat activities due to daily wage and worry about their crying babies and family.

5) The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act (CAA) included a provision for a 33% reservation of seats for women politicians in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). The awareness level of all Panchayat members are very poor regarding the importance of women's reservation in Panchayat Raj Institutions, as well as regarding laws pertaining to women, financial aspects of the Panchayat and issues to be addressed by PRI.

Manipuri Women in Local Self Government

The local government system of Manipur are practice from time memorial. It can be divided into three phases. The first phase of panchayat election was held in 1964 and 1970, following the United Provinces Panchayati Raj Act, 1975. The second phase was conducted under the Manipur Panchayati Raj Act, 1977 and consists of three elections. The final and third phase started from the 1997 election with the passing of the Manipur Panchayati Raj Act, 1994, till date. The election of 1997 mark as the first election of electing the post of Zilla Parishad in Manipur Panchayati Raj System. The following is the table of women participation in local government during the second phase of panchayat election in Manipur. It shows the details of the elected women pradhans and members of Manipur women.

Women and Second Phase of Panchayat Election

Table 4.1: Elected women representatives of Gram Sabha, 1978, 1985 and 1991[165]

Sl. No	Year	Name of Districts/Block	Gram Panchayats		Total no. of female in gram panchayat/year
			Pradhans	Members	
I	1985	**Imphal District**			104
		1)Imphal East		28	
		2)Imphal West		26	
		3)Jiribam		4	
II		**Thoubal District** 1)Thoubal		28	
III		**Bishenpur District** 1)Bishenpur	1	17	
I	1985	**Imphal District**			169
		1)Imphal East		51	
		2)Imphal West		46	

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[165] Gazetted of Manipur, 1999, Government of Manipur.

		3)Jiribam		6	
II		**Thoubal District**			
		1)Thoubal	-	30	
III		**Bishenpur District**			
		1)Bishenpur		12	
		2)Moirang	-	8	
I	1991	**Imphal District**			199
		1)Imphal East		62	
		2)Imphal West	1		
		3)Jiribam		7	
II		**Thoubal District**			
		1)Thoubal		35	
		2)Kakching		17	
III		**Bishenpur District**			
		1)Bishenpur		15	
		2)Moirang		12	

Sources: Gazetted of Manipur, 1999, Government of Manipur.

The above table shows an increasing range of women participation in the gram panchayat election from 104 of 1978, 169 of 1978 and 199 of 1991 respectively. It is found that, some unreserved group members were recorded in the gazette for the 1991 election where no explanations of the other elected seats have been mentioned. However, it has been reported from the record that one seat remain vacant in 1978 election. It was due to non-filling of the nomination from the Thongju Kendra of Imphal East. In case of 1991 election same case could be seen with 3 vacant seats from the Imphal district i.e Imphal East and Imphal West. In this situation, the representation of women from SC/ST or Muslim groups could not be surfaced. Though, the elected female of representation per year shows improvement in the process of political representation.

Women participation in local government becomes more visible after the introduction of 73rd Amendment of Panchayati Raj Act of 1993. The following table is the details of third phase of panchayat election along with women representation through reservation.

Women and Third Phase of Panchayat Election

Table 4.2: Elected Women Representatives of Gram Sabha, 1997.[166]

Sl.No	Name of District/block	Pradhans of Gram Panchayats					Members of Gram Panchayat				
		W/R (Gen)	ST	SC	UR	Total	W/R (Gen)	ST	SC	UR	Total
I	Imphal East										
	1)Imphal East I	9	-	-	1	10	74	3	-	8	85
	2)Imphal East II	9	-	-	-	9	74	-	-	9	79
	3)Jiribam	-	-	-	1	1	16	1	4	-	21
	Sub Total	18			2	20	160	4	4	17	185
II	Imphal West										
	1)Imphal West I	-	-	-	9	9	73	2	6	8	89
	2)Imphal West II	-	-	-	5	5	41	1	-	6	48
	Sub Total	0	-	-	14	14	114	3	6	14	137
III	Thoubal										
	1)Thoubal	9	-	-	1	10	107	3	-	4	114
	2)Kakching	5	-	-	-	5	56	1	-	3	60
	Sub Total	14	-	-	1	15	163	4	-	7	174
IV	Bishnpur										
	1)Bishnpur	4	-	-	-	4	38	-	2	-	40
	2)Moirang	4	-	-	-	4	40	-	-	-	40
	Sub Total	8	-	-	-	8	78	-	2	-	80
Total		40	0	0	17	57	515	11	12	38	576

Sources: Manipur Gazette, No. (541-44) March, 1997.

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[166] Manipur Gazette, No. (541-44) March, 1997

Table 4.3: Elected Women Representatives of Gram Sabha, 2002.[167]

Sl. No	Name of Districts/Block	Pradhans of Gram Panchayat					Members of Gram Panchayat				
		W/R (Gen)	ST	SC	UR	Total	WR (Gen)	ST	SC	UR	Total
I	Imphal East										
	1)Imphal East I	8	1	-	-	9	82	3	-	9	94
	2)Imphal East II	7	-	-	-	7	78	1	-	11	91
	3)Jiribam ##	3	1	-	-	3	14	1	6	-	21
	Sub Total	18	1			19	174	5	6	20	206
II	Imphal West										
	1)Imphal West I	7	-	1		8	79	-	6	17	102
	2)Imphal West II	6	-		1	7	47	1	-	11	59
	Sub Total	13	-	1	1	15	126	1	6	28	161
III	Thoubal										
	1)Thoubal	8	-			8	107	2	-	8	117
	2)Kakching	5	-			5	60	1	-	8	68
	Sub Total	13	-			13	169	3	-	16	185
IV	Bishnpur										
	1)Bishnpur	4	-			4	38	-	2	5	45
	2)Moirang	4	-			4	37	1	1	1	40
	Sub Total	8	-			8	75	1	3	6	85
Total		52	1	1	1	55	544	10	15	70	637

[167] Rural Development and Panchayat Department, Secretariat, Manipur.

Table 4.4: Elected Women Representatives of Gram Sabha, 2007[168]

Sl. No	Name of Districts/Block	Pradhans of Gram Panchayats					Members of Gram Panchayats				
		W/R (Gen)	ST	SC	UR	Total	W/R (Gen)	ST	SC	UR	Total
I	Imphal East										
	1)Imphal East I	8	-	-	3	11	78	6	-	26	110
	2)Imphal East II	10	-	-	-	10	75	3	1	31	110
	3)Jiribam	-	1	-	-	1	12	4	4	-	20
	Sub Total	18	1		3	22	165	13	5	57	240
II	Imphal West										
	1)Imphal West I	9	-	1	-	10	69	-	6	20	95
	2)Imphal West II	4	-	-	1	5	47	1	-	17	65
	Sub Total	13	-	1	1	15	116	1	6	37	160
III	Thoubal										
	1)Thoubal	9	-	-	1	10	111	3	-	8	122
	2)Kakching	5	-	-	-	5	56	3	1	2	62
	Sub Total	14	-	-	1	15	167	6	1	10	184
IV	Bishnpur										
	1)Bishnpur	4	-	-	-	4	38	-	2	3	43
	2) Moirang	4	-	-	-	4	39	-	-	4	43
	Sub Total	8	-	-	-	8	77	-	2	7	86
Total		53	1	1	5	60	525	20	14	111	670

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[168] Rural Development and Panchayat Department, Secretariat, Manipur.

Table 4.5: Elected Women Representatives of Gram Sabha, 2012[169]

Sl. No	Name of Districts/Block	Pradhans of Gram Panchayats					Members of Gram Panchayats				
		W/R (Gen.)	ST	SC	UR	Total	W/R (Gen.)	ST	SC	UR	Total
I	Imphal East										
	1)Imphal East I	10	-	-	2	12	79*	3*	-	37*	119
	2)Imphal East II	5	1	1	3	9	78****	3	1*	29	111
	3)Jiribam	2	-	-	-	3	14	3*##	7	2	26
	Sub Total	17	1	1	5	24	171	9	8	68	257
II	Imphal West										
	1)Imphal West I	5	1	1	3	10	69*	2	6	37	114
	2)Imphal West II	6	-	-	2	8	47	1	-	22	70
	Sub Total	11	1	1	5	18	116	3	6	59	184
III	Thoubal										
	1)Thoubal	11	-	-	1	12	12********	2**	-	30*	144
	2)Kakching	2	-	-	-	2	55******	2##	1	15	73
	Sub Total	13	-	-	1	14	167	4	1	45	217
III	Bishnpur										

[169] Rural Development and Panchayat Department, Secretariat, Manipur.

	1)Bishnupur	4	-	-	2	6	38*****	-	3*	11	52
	2)Moirang	4	-	-	-	4	37****	1	1	19	58
	Sub Total	8	-	-	2	10	75	1	4	30	110
Total		52	2	2	13	66	536	17	19	202	768

Notes: (*) Asterisk sign the numbers of uncontested elected candidates, sign of Hashtag shows 2 vacant seat of Jiribam CD Block and 2 ST seats remain vacant in Kakching CD Block.

The above tables is the details of women participation in Panchayati Raj Institution from the year 1997- 2012. Table 4.5 shows, the unreserved category showing greater involvement by contesting with the male counterparts. From the records, finds that women who are elected through uncontest. There are no competitor against her. Such cases of elected women candidate could be seen from the tables (2012 elections). Though, there is gradual improvement of women's participation from both the reserved STs & SCs and unreserved category. It highlighted the women's participation in the panchayat system of Manipur. They participated themselves and involved actively in the PRIs institution. However, these are the quantitative numbers, can't rely for their active participation. It needs to analyse the representation from the experience of the representatives. The next chapter will discuss the details of the representatives.

Reservation of Seats for Women in Elected Bodies

Indian society is a deep-rooted gender bias, discrimination against women, a patriarchal male dominated society. They are subject to exploitation and violence within and outside the families. Women since the time of Manu, they have been treated at worst conditions. Cultural and religious barriers to women's right were designed merely to placate vocal minorities and the mechanisms enforcing them are weak or non-existent. Gender inequalities are among the most subtle forms of inequality in this world.

The political participation of women both as voters and representatives is limited and lower in position as compare to male. In recent years, as a voters women are participated in large numbers and kept increasing. However, their participation as representatives has not made progress. Their representation in parliament and state assemblies is not only inadequate but

also not in proportion to their numbers of the total electorate. Due to inadequate representation, the numbers of women holding political powers or gained political offices are small. Their participation and representation in decision making process and in power sharing is much less compared to men. Despite of constituting 50 percent of the electorate, women have a low profile in India. The representation of women members in parliaments have never reach 10 percent. The weak representation of women in legislature is a worldwide phenomenon. The percentage of parliamentary representation of women in the world estimated at 12.7. the North American countries have the highest, Sweden 40.4%, Norway 49.4%. The reservation of seat for women as quota system was first established by Sweden in 1972. Women's reservation system in politics are followed by some countries- Argentina, Cuba, Venezuela etc. In India, 79th Constitutional Amendment Bill introduced in Parliament after 46 years of adoption of the Constitution for reservation of 33 percent of seat for women in parliament and state assemblies is a bold step in this matter.

During the 18th century, the world had raised the issues of women, yet the country India is not visible in all spheres of women's life. Though, the contribution of women to India's independence can be seen in the forefront of the movement. However, it was in the 1980s that women were recognised as a separate target group which marked the final break away from the welfare approach to women's problem followed in the earlier years. The government tried to shift for the overall development of women's status in the field of social, economic and legal and political at par with that of men. The approach has undergone a marked shift from the development to empowerment. A major step of women political empowerment has been with the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendment of 1993, ensuring one third of the total seats for women in all elected bodies in rural and urban areas in the country. About one million women are expected to emerge as leaders and decisions at the grass roots level including 75,000 as chairpersons in the rural areas. The representatives provide leadership training for women's panchayat members and chairperson. The National Commission for Women set up as a statuary body and monitor matters relating to the constitutional and legal safeguards provided for women and looks into the complaints involving deprivation of the rights of women. However, it seems to be late realization of the fact that the insertion of equal rights provisions in the constitution is not enough.

Feminist scholars highlight the ways in which gender is shaped by institution. Institutions affects the very identities, self- images and preference of the actors [170]. They are defining what is means to be a member of a particular institution. The gender institution (GI) approach supports the argument to studying women's substantive representation thereby avoids the voluntarism that is implicit in some accounts of substantive representation. Some studies of women in literature imply that if female legislature do not act for women. It is because, they do not hold feminist attitudes or do not prioritize women's right policies. However, institutional approach assumed that individual actions does not spring directly from attitudes and preference, but instead 'individual turns into established routines or familiar patterns of behaviour to attained their purposes[171]. Prevailing norms and patterns of behaviour can provide either opportunities or obstacle to the promotion of gender issues. In order to explain the kind of actions female legislator take on behalf of women, the electoral performance of Manipuri women can be discussed.

In the local bodies, Municipality and panchayats, after the 73rd and 74th Amendment Act 1992 and 1993, 33 percent were reserved and kept for women. There are 7 municipal councils and 27 Nagar Panchayat. According to the election results of 1995, 40 women out of 90 were elected in the Municipal Council and 66 out of 190 were elected in the Nagar Panchayat. These elected women were on the basis of reservation. Again in 1997, panchayat election 166 women were elected as Pradhan and 1557 as gram panchayat members, 16 as Zilla Parishad members were elected. It seems that electoral performance of the women candidates is not quit increasing and women voters do not cast their vote in favour of women candidates. There may be several reasons. It can be divided into two major issues.

First, the social conditions of women, lack of confidence in women itself, lack of awareness of the importance of women's participation in decision making process or the traditional norms and belief. The second, major issues are the process and outcomes of state institution policies. India has 33 percent reservation for women in local government policies, which is quite low and their presence are not making a difference in decision making body. More priorities are given to the male member of the electoral offices, mainly in the political party offices, lower post in the electoral office etc. The constitutional provision could not correct the gender bias

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[170] Peter A. Hall and Rosemary C. R. Taylor, 'Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms', pp. 936–957.

[171] Ibid, pp. 936- 937.

of the society. Discrimination against women are increasing. The political parties failed to rise the narrow chauvinism and gave unfear deal to women. In matters of party ticket distribution, they discriminated against women, thus restricting their participation in electoral politics. In 1974, a committee established on the status of women urged to political parties to distribute at least 15 percent tickets to contest election among women, the women candidates but the political parties ignored this. It discourages willingness of women who have interest in politics. This clearly shows that political parties have no faith in the ability of women to win and to lead. One of the main causes for less representation of women in parliament, legislatures and local bodies.

On the other hand, quota laws can be creating the idea that women are needed in politics precisely to act as substantive representatives for women. Gender quotas are a potential source of institutional change and a way of re-gendering politics in ways that legitimate both women's presence and their actions as substantive. Quotas constitute an explicit recognition of gender discrimination exist and needs to be remedied by institutional mechanism.

 In order to work with women's representatives and the institution needs an environment where some space should be given to this community. Women members of Panchayats needed to be educated and informed about politics; their rights, the nature of Indian democracy, policies and programmes for women and the underprivileged and voting rights. Women's centres and other organization can serve as catalyses to mobilize women and help solve political dilemmas. Elected women in each district may develop a network among them and hold meetings and discussions on routine basis about necessary measures to promote their participation and neutralize male domination in local-self bodies. Thus, it is important to make extra educational training programmes related to politics for enhancing knowledge of elected women members on government policies and programmes, bureaucratic structures and the issues of local concern. For this, government may make provision for mandatory attendance of an Awareness Programme/Orientation Programme by members of PRIs.

Sensitization of male members in PRIs is equally important so that they listen to women patiently, converse politely, acknowledge their suggestions in the meetings and implement them wherever feasible. It would lead to psychological empowerment of women. It is evident that men's attitude towards women's entry into politics has begun to change from that of total rejection to limited encouragement and in some cases even to active encouragement. This trend

needs to be strengthened through orientation courses and training programmes for officials and elected representatives, both men and women. Besides there is a need to train the women leaders at regular intervals to enable them to manage the responsibilities assigned to them in the Panchayats at all the levels. Bringing about an attitudinal change in both men and women. The feeling that women are meant for household activities and rearing children needs to be transformed into a feeling of equal partnership of women and men. To inculcate this, they should be imparted education for bringing about social and political awareness among both. The women should also be encouraged to organize themselves. The Mahila Mandals in the village can be effectively used as instruments to mobilize them for this purpose. Some successful women's organisations can also act as catalytic agents for encouraging the women's participation in social and political activities. The Government should provide finance and infrastructure to some of the deserving and successful women organizations to take up the responsibility of encouraging the women elected representatives. It may be considered that to achieve the women empowerment, advancement can be facilitated with the co-ordination of different sections of the society such as male gentry, religious heads, political leaders who should come forward and shun their interpersonal interest even ego to understand and appreciate that the women are equally as important segments of society as men. Unless the male ridden society is transformed and replaced by a better socio-economic set up where men and women are equal co-workers, the future of human set up appears to be bleak.

Chapter 5

Case Study of Muslim Women Representatives in Panchayati Raj Institution

Introduction

The previous chapter examined the status of women in Panchayati Raj institutions. The chapter will mostly focus on Muslim women, with brief discussions, continuing the work done by PRIs representatives. In addition to promoting good governance at the local level, the Panchayat system is developing into vigorous institutions of self-government that promote social justice in rural areas and economic development. In this chapter, an effort is made to analyze the socioeconomic situation of Muslim women who are in gram sabha Members, Pradhan, and Zilla Parishad members with the successful operation of the PRIs. They serve as the people's representatives in each Gram Panchayat through elections. Do they fully comprehend the decentralised government that the 73rd Amendment Act of the Constitution granted the authority to administer? In terms of panchayat work, are they competent to manage public employees that interact with people at all levels? Do they aspire to serve others and possess the leadership qualities necessary to advance women?

Socio Economic Status of Manipuri Muslim Women

The Manipuri Muslim family are family oriented. Muslim women's contribute in the process of agricultural production[172]. When social institutions like marriage, dowries, divorce, work cultures, religion, and educational systems are studied, it is possible to assess the socio-economic, political , and educational status of Muslim women.

Marriage

According to Mohammad Sakil Ahamad, Manipur Muslim have two process of marriage or Nikah. They are 'Thiba chngba" means, search of wife through engagement and 'Chenba'means the process of elopement[173]. The practice of 'Chenba' is taken from the majority community "Meitei". It is the combination of Islamic and Manipuri tradition[174]. It is based on the choices and willingness of adult man and women. Both spouses decided to have

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[172] Salam Irene, "The Muslims of Manipur", p.53
[173] Ibid. p.98
[174] Quazi Hamid Ali, "The Manipur Muslim", p. 28

a union strengthened by their relations of love. The practice is widely accepted in the state and society accept this without any discrimination.

While analysing the process of chenba, seems that the decision is given to the willingness of man and women. In order to choose their life partners, gave an independent space without any constraint of the society. Both the married husband and wife stay with family without any discrimination in society.

India is a country, where caste made a different identity of a person. As DD Kosambi's argument is based on the question of caste. For him caste is the centrality of Indian society. It is a category to understand socio economic differences and conceptualize caste as a structure.[175] The question of caste system is not prevalent among Manipur Muslim, though the difference of class exists. The point is, caste is not a factor dealing with marriage. The most important is mutual understanding between the spouse family.

Dowry and Gift

North East states is known for free dowry states. The concept of "Awonpot" (gift to the bride by her family) is practice in every community of Manipur. It is said that, there is no any conditions on giving the awonpot[176]. The system is done in order to start a happily married life that is the inner lining concept of Awonpot.

In context of Manipur Muslim, followed the Islamic shariah law. At the time of marriage, Islam made her husband responsible for her protection and to meet her all necessary requirements — fooding, lodging, clothing and cure. Along with this guarantee she must have some resources, have further feeling of economic strength. Islam has considered this aspect of her life as well and made her entitled to a financial payment called mahr or sidaq (dowry) from her husband at the time of marriage[177].

In Manipur Muslim society at the time of marriage, the material gifted as bride wealth in the marriage system have undergone changes with the passage of time in terms of forms and meaning. The amount of dowry can be decided mutually and depending on the financial

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[175] Kumkum Roy, 'Kosambi and Question of Caste', p. 78.
[176] Salam Irene, Op. Cit, p. 73
[177] Islahi, Zafarul Islam, "Aurat ki ma'ashi tamkin Quran-e Karim ki roshani mein (Economic Empowerment of Women in the light of the Holy Qur'an)", pp.11-12.

conditions of the husband and social status of the wife. It may be a very small amount or a very huge.

However, from the last few years, it seems that there is a social change while giving awonpot to the bride by demanding high amount as Mahr to the groom's family. This exorbitant amount may create some social problems. The value and sentiments that associated with the traditional are no longer present in today's marriage. That result a burden to the groom i.e giver of Mehr (dowry). Men with limited resources may not find wherewithal to marry causing delay in wedding and some men and women remaining unmarried. On the other hand, as women's rights in Islam regarding Mehr is compulsory in marriage. The competition of dowry is not allowed in Islam, it's the creation from society. Mehr is legally owned by her. Neither her parents nor the husband can take any part of it without her approval and consent. Muslim jurists are of the opinion that if the dowry was not paid at the time of marriage, the wife has right to demand the same from the husband any time. In case of delay or denial of the payment she is fully allowed to appeal to the qadi (judge) or to a court.

Divorce

The divorce or 'Talak' is an Arabic word which means 'freeing' or undoing knots which is permissible under circumstances. According to Prophet, marriage is a civil contract. It is not permissible without any rational reason. Divorce is only permissible when it comes impossible to live together with peace and harmony. If talak is given without any reason, it is stupidity and ingratitude to God[178]. Since, it is being misuse by the male dominant society. It does not mean that all the men folk in the Muslim community practice but some of them did.

The Pangals of Manipur have a system known as "Nikah Khutnek" where males can divorce their wives for any cause with triple talak. In some cases, he wishes to remarry his ex-wife without allowing her to wed someone else. In Islam, this is prohibited. Ex-wife should get married for a while. The former husband and wife could only reunite after the Nikah. Following a divorce, ladies observe a period called "Iddat."[179] The former spouse is required to provide maintenance to his ex-wife for the duration of this three-month term. This clause is rarely

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[178] Salam Irene, Op. Cit, p. 81.
[179] Ibid., p.82

followed in reality. Although a woman may divorce under certain circumstances, it is far simpler for men to obtain talak

During the time of the nikah/marriage, a written document known as the "Kabinama" is written down by the wife with specific restrictions. The marriage ends if these requirements are not met. This agreement was primarily created to limit men's ability to use arbitrary grounds to divorce their wives. The paper is prepared for the women's safety in order to prevent her spouse from engaging in such unfavourable behaviours.[180]

Economic Profile

Sir Johnstone, a political agent in Manipur, extolled Manipuri women as very competent weavers. In some instances, however, the unique manufacturing talent of the Hill tribes might surpass the other manufacturing task of weaving. The fact that Manipur achieved a high degree of master in this field is also acknowledged[181]. Again T.C Hudson wrote,

> "Nearly every house wife is capable of weaving all the cloths needed by her family and the simple looms stand in the verandah of the house. These cloths are mainly intended for wear and not for decorative purposes"[182].

The women in a household decide what garments are needed. The loom is typically kept in the veranda of the house and begins weaving when housework is finished. For the Royal family's clothing throughout the monarchy, women were required to perform a great deal of arduous labour and embroidery. Not only that, but women also used weaving to create basic clothing for the general populace. This demonstrates the superior weaving and spinning abilities of women.

These days, machines' new, cutting-edge techniques take the place of such activities. Even yet, Manipur continues to weave handloom clothing by situating loom stands in the veranda. This enables women, even Muslim women, to become economically independent and contribute to the family. They made cloth both for their own use and to sell. The majority of what it consists of are chaders (Khudei), phanek, shawls, beds, mosquito nets, towels, etc. Looms are used to

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[180] Md Ahamad Ali Shah, "A Brief Historical Study of religion and society of the Pangal of Manipur", Unpublished M. Phil Dissertation, pp 55-58.
[181] James Johnstone, "Manipur and the Naga Hills", p. 97.
[182] T.C Hudson, "The Meiteis", p. 27.

calculate the necessities for a Muslim bride. Women who are widowed or divorced and still at home primarily take up weaving in order to sustain themselves and their children.[183]

In this 21st century, women developed skills and utilizing them in a proper way. The culture of weaving with looms is changing to machine, the skilled work force like the system of embroidery in the clothes. The current demand for embroidery works is mainly on marriage bridal items and generates income.

According to the Report on Socio Economic Survey of Meitei Pangal, 90.12% of the female are outside the labour force.[184] So, in Manipur mainly the Muslim women are under unorganised sector. One of the main reasons for this is the high rate of women illiteracy. They invest in little amount and their earning profit result in a pittance. Their amount is not measurable with the time and labour spent in working.

Occupation and Work Culture

Engagement in economic activities and carrying business may not be always out of necessity. It may be done for empowerment of oneself which is accepted in Islam. It has been reported that during the days of the Prophet (PBUH) there were many women who engaged in economic activities and enhanced their own income and the income of their families. Umm al-Muminin Khadijah had international trading in pre- Islamic period (Ibn Kathir, 1:262–263) which she continued after Islam. Qilah al-Anmariyah was also a business lady. She inquired Prophet (pbuh) about bargaining in sale and purchase. He advised her to avoid quoting unrealistic prices. Al-Rubayyi bint al-Muawwadh also was engaged in perfume trading in Madinah. Hawla' had such a famous perfume business that she was known as al-attarah (one who sells itr, i.e.,perfume) . Umm al-Muminin Zaynab bint Jahsh was an expert of handicraft. Women engaged in cultivation. Jabir b. Abdullah reports that the Prophet (PBUH) allowed his maternal aunt (khalah) to go to work in the garden of dates instead of staying at home after divorce so that she might spend her earning in some charitable deeds [185]. The evidences show that in Islam women are free to engage in various economic activities to increase their fortune. They can decide, depending on the individual circumstances and with mutual consultation, to stay at home managing its affairs or to work outside it.

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[183] Syed Ahmed, 'Women Empowerment and Development: A Case Study of Manipuri Muslim Women', pp. 53-55
[184] Report on Socio- Economic Survey of Meitei Pangals (Manipur Muslims) , p. 32
[185] Toseef Azid, " Economic empowerment of women in Islamic world: Theory and practice", p. 30

Many Manipuri Muslim women can be seen as vendors or 'Pot Phambi' in most of the Keithel (Markets) in the valley of Manipur[186]. Vegetables and other food products are for sale. Manipuri women selling their goods in the women's market have their own plots in the Keithel (Market). Therefore, there are separate plots in the Ima Keithel (Women's Market) in Imphal. It is an inherited system that is also available for purchase or rental. Muslim women only hold 20% of the market share or plots under this system, however there were 1,00,389 Muslim women overall.[187] The percentage is very least. However, maximum of the Muslim women is seat on the road side of Ima Keithel for selling vegetables and other commodities items. They face several problems, for not getting plot, the security forces tried to vandalised as its illegal to seat on roadside. Although, population of Muslim had increases, according 2011 census, might be their sharing percentage of plot increase or decrease. The state needs special attention for the development of Muslim women. To analyse the status of Manipur Muslim women, they are directly participating in the field of economy is mainly due to the economic hardship and led them come out from home in the public domain.

A market is situated in the Muslim neighborhood village square, where Muslim women would frequently congregate in the morning and evening. They offer everything a family needs in terms of groceries. This is a smaller version of Imphal's larger Khwairamband Bazaar (Women Market), which may be seen practically everywhere there are Muslim settlers. Almost all of the daily necessities are sold by women sellers at stalls, including vegetables, grains, fresh and dried fish, fruits, oil, and other foods.

Apart from the economic activities, women share ideas and concept on the social and political interactions.[188] Because of their close contact, which fosters a sense of group unity, they became close. Muslim women participated in the Nupilal (Women's War) of 1939 and joined the agitation against the British attributed to the solidarity of the collective women's strength. The participation of Muslim women in politics has now reached a turning point. They also participated in and advanced the Meitei women's 18th June rebellion in 2002, the people's agitation of July 2009, and other similar protests.[189] For political reasons, the Muslim women's

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[186] Sayed Ahmad, Op., Cit., p. 10
[187] Salam Irene, Op, Cit., p. 35
[188] Syed Ahmed, Op. Cit, p.55
[189] Salam Irene Op. Cit., p.34

organisation continues to play a major role in collaboration with their sisters. This shows that, the work culture that exist in Manipur for women, leads to make a space in public domain with social, economic and political issues.

Muslim Women Political Participation

In the state Muslims women are undermined by other communities. In order to recognise their courage, bravery, determination and spirit, need to be concerned and study. Muslim women took part in the well-known women's movement known as Nupilal (women's war) on December 12, 1939. Muslim women who operated as street vendors and sold goods including vegetables, tobacco leaves, eggs, etc. participated in the Nupi-Lal[190]. Some Muslim women demonstrators, including Shara Bibi, Shajaobi Bibi, and Tombi Bibi, were imprisoned. Shara Bibi claims that the Muslim women who participated in the 1939 agitation were Yaima of Panggong, Apabi of Keikhu, Amubi, Noorjahan, Tombi, Amulala, Marem, Heiton, Hashi, Jamina- from Khergao, Jamila of Sabal Leikei, Garam from Khergao, Doli Achoubi of Porompat, Khambi of Khetri Awang, Meherani of Khetri Mayai Leikai, Gulzan of Khetri Myai Leikai, Safarzan of Khetri Mayai Leikai, Tomba Bibi of Khergao, Shajaobi of Khetri Awang Leikai, Kunjabi Bibi, Badon Tombi, and Sanabi Bibi[191]. They took part to the agitation, that was against the British government policy for exportation of rice outside Manipur and there was scarcity of rice.

For many years, 12th December is celebrated as the day of Nupi Lal. The people of Manipur could not mention their contribution and abilities, but from the last decades, starts to recognised them. The civil society and organizations of Muslim became active as well as the Muslim women's organization from 90s onwards. These are some of the organisations: The Kangleipak Muslim Chanura Marup, a development organisation for Muslim women, was the first such group. It was founded in 2003 with the intention of supporting and engaging in the state women's movement[192]. The majority community start to celebrate the day including the Muslim women who was involved in the war.

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[190] Md Kayamuddin, 'Mingsal', pp- 81-83.
[191] A Hakim Shah Khulakpham, "The Manipur Governance to the Meitei Pangal (Manipur Muslim) 1606-1949" pp. 258-261.
[192] Syed Ahmad, Op. Cit., p. 71.

Muslim women started taking an active part in elections for the first Manipur State Assembly in 1948–1949 after women were given the right to vote. They begin to engage in political discourse. Again, Pangal women took part in the elections that were held after the merger, although not as potential candidates for seats. They played a passive part by endorsing the voting decision of the male member of their family or leikai. Their influence on decision-making appears to be minimal. In the state's top levels of decision-making, there are no Muslim women.[193] However, Muslim women start to contest State Assembly election, 2017 by breaking the social and religious norms. Najima is a first Muslim women candidate, contesting from Wabgai constituency put up by the People's Resurgence and Justice Alliance (PRJA) of Irom Sharmial political party. She was attracted by Irom Sharmila's 16-year-old fast against Armed Forces (Special Power) Act (AFSPA), when she formed this party, she decided to join her[194]. Though, she lost in election. Her decision to join in politics and contest election, made a remarkable for the social and political empowerment to the Muslim women community.

Muslim women are slowly moving towards the path of political empowerment. At the grass root level, after the 73rd and 74th Amendment Act of the constitution, they do participate through reservation. Women held the post of Member, Pardhans ana Zilla Parishad. Women also fight in unreserved category but maximum defeated. Therefore, they are acquiring a stake in power and privilege that have been traditionally preserved for men.[195]

It is important for the minority Muslim women community to hold their accounts in politics. The chapter attempt to analyse the level of participation of Muslim women particularly in two districts of Manipur, the Imphal East and Thoubal district. The reason for selecting these two districts are Muslims populated in large numbers.

Profile of Imphal East District

Imphal East district came into existence on the 18th June 1997. When the erstwhile Imphal East district was bifurcated into two districts namely: Imphal West and Imphal East district. The district is bounded in the north by Senapati district, in the east by Ukhrul district, in the south by Thoubal and in the west by Imphal west district. It is situated at latitude of 24.48^{0} N and

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[193] Lalzan Begum, 'Muslim Women Educational Status in Manipur', p. 4.
[194] Manipur first Muslim women candidate vows to uplift women despite Fatwa, www.business-standard news.com, February 22, 2017.
[195] Syed Ahmad, Op. Cit., p 59.

25.30^0 N and longitude of 93. 57^{0}E to 94.15^{0}E longitude. The district is connected with all other valleys, hill district and other states by state highways and National highways.[196]

Imphal East district has 456113 population of which 226094 are males and 230019 are females. The population of children, between the age 0-6 is 59936 which is 13.14% of total population. The sex ratio of the district is around 1017 compared to 985 which is average of Manipur state. The literacy rate of Imphal East district is 71.18 percent out of which 76.66 percent males are literate and 65.8 percent female are literate. The total area of Imphal is 709 sq. km.

Out of total population, 50 percent of population are lived in Urban and 60 percent in rural area. 59.83 percent of population lives in urban area and 4017 percent in rural area. There are 3.47 percent Schedule caste and 6.06 percent Schedule Tribe of total population in Imphal East district. There are 4 Taluks, 195 villages and 18 towns in Imphal East district (2011 census). Muslim population in Imphal East district is 80199 with 17.58 percent.

There are four Taluks, namely i) Porompat ii) Sawombung iii) Keirao Bitra and iv) Jiribam. Porompat Taluk has Muslim population with 13.69 percent, Sawombung Taluk have 4.77 percent, Keirao Bitra have 33.81 percent and Jiribam have 34.07 percent (2011 census). By excluding Jiribam Taluk population, the total percentage of Muslim in Porompat, Sawombung and Keirao Bitra Taluk is 52.27 percent are taken for study.

Profile of Thoubal District

Thoubal district covered the bigger portion of the eastern half of the Manipur valley. It lies between 24^{0}30'24.688'' N to 24^{0}43'16.689''N latitude and 93^{0}531'17.016''E longitude. It is bounded on the north by Imphal west and Imphal East district, on the east by Kangpokpi and Tengnoupal districts, on the south by Kakching and Tengnoupal district. The district came into existance in May 1983 through a notification of the Government of Manipur under the Manipur Land Revenue and Land Reform Act, 1960.

As per the Census India 2011, Thoubal district has 85965 households with population of 422168 of which 210845 are males and 211323 are females. The population of children between age 0-6 is 60556 which is 14.34% of total population. The sex-ratio of Thoubal district is around 1002 compared to 985 which is average of Manipur state.

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[196] Brief Industrial profile of Imphal East District, Manipur, MSME Development Institute, Takyel Industries Imphal, Government of India.

The literacy rate of Thoubal district is 63.79% out of which 72.38% males are literate and 55.22% females are literate. The total area of Thoubal is 514 sq.km with population density of 821 per sq.km. Out of total population, 64.15% of population lives in Urban area and 35.85% lives in Rural area. There are 9.62% Scheduled Caste (SC) and 0.43% Scheduled Tribe (ST) of total population in Thoubal district. There are 3 Taluks and 103 villages and 10 towns in Thoubal district. It has three community development blocks i.e Lilong, Thoubal and Wangjing Tentha. There are six main towns, they are- Lilong, Thoubal, Yairipok, Sikhong Sekmai, Wangjing Lamding and Heirok are Municipalities under Thoubal district.

In Thoubal district, 25.42 percent of total is the Muslim religion population, according to the census, 2011. There are three Taluks namely, i) Thoubal ii) Kakching and iii) Lilong. In Lilong Taluk population, Muslim religion population is 78.6 percent with 66281 in number. The district has majority of Muslim populated and taking the area of study to analyse for Muslim women in politics.

Scope of Study

To make an objective assessment of the perceptions of the members of the PRIs, interviews were conducted on 127 respondents from two districts, 100 from Thoubal district and 27 respondents from Imphal East. Gram Panchayats of Kairang Khomidok GP and Khetrigao GP in Imphal East district while Lilong Turel Ahanbi GP, Irong Chesaba GP, Sangaiyumfm Part I&II GP, Moijing GP, Hayel Hangoon GP, Maibam Uchiwa GP and Pallel GP from Thoubal district. All the Gram Panchayat members from each of the Gram Panchayats were interviewed separately to elicit their independent reactions to the questionnaire.

Analysis of Field Work

It is desirable that some of the women panchayat members of the GPs and ZPs feel adequately empowered. An attempt is made to portray the socio-economic profiles of the members of Gram Panchayats and Zilla Parishads covered with field studies by taking five indicators, namely, (1) Level of Education (2) Age (3) Sex (5) Monthly family income of the members. The background variables of representatives elected in Panchayat elections have been examined in detail.

The Social Profile

Viewing profiles of the Gram Sabha Members

Table 5.1: Age wise distribution

Age	Imphal East		Thoubal							Tot-al	Perc-entage
	Kairang Khomi-dok (GP)	Khetri-gao GP	Lilong Turel Ahanbi (GP)	Sangai-yumpha m Part 1 & II	Irong Chesa-ba (GP)	Moiji-ng GP	Maib-am Uchi-wa GP	Hayel Hang-oon (GP)	Pall-el (GP)		
21-35	5	4	3	6	5	2	2	7	3	37	29.2
35-45	7	3	8	9	5	8	5	3	6	54	42.5
45-55	0	6	3	7	2	1	1	0	3	23	18.2
55 and above	1	1	0		0	1	0	1	1	7	5.2

Note: 100 respondents from Thoubal District and 27 respondents from Imphal East district.

Age is among the variables in analysing the political representation of women. The majority of Muslim women representatives are already married. Out of 127 respondents, it was discovered that 29.2% were between the ages of 21 and 35, 42.5% were between the ages of 35 and 45, 18.2% were between the ages of 45 and 55, and 5.2% were over the age of 55. Among these, there are two single respondents. The majority of the respondents are between the 35–45 age range. Married women are reportedly given preference while running for panchayat positions. The key justification is that single women might relocate to a different ward or village following marriage.

Education

The most important indicator to work for people in public is their educational qualification. Their knowledge is varied and help in removing ill practices in order to get their people's right. The researcher identified with four levels- literate/under matric, illiterate, high School, higher secondary and graduate.

Table 5.2: Educational Qualification

Responde-nt Education-al Qualification	Imphal East		Thoubal							Tot-al	Perce-tage
	Kaira-ng Khom-idok GP	Khetri-gao GP	Lilong Turel Ahanbi GP	Irong Chesa-ba GP	Sangai-yump-ham GP	Moij-ing GP	Haye-ng Hang-ool GP	Maib-am Uchi-wa GP	Pall-el GP		
Literate/ Under Matric	9	7	12	4	10	5	7	8	8	70	88.9
Illiterate	3	1	3	7	13	5	4	2	3	41	52.0
High School	0	3	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	6	7.62
Higher Secondary	1	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	5	6.35
Graduate	0	1	2	1*	0	0	1	0	0	5	6.35

*Irong Chesaba GP- one respondent is a college student.

The above table shows the qualification of Muslim women representatives. Education plays an important role in the process of socialization of children, aware of right and duties. It is necessary for maintaining their works and controlled powers in decision making process. Most of the representatives, are under matric, studied 7th, 8th or 10th standards. Table shows, 88.9 percent are under this category. They can write their names other than this, then don't understand to read or write in official panchayat works.

It is observed that, the respondents were honest regarding their educational qualification. It can be found from the above table, the second highest number is illiterate with 52.07 percent next to under matric. Those representatives who holds the post of Gram Sabha were illiterate and those who holds the post of Pradhan and Zilla Parishad mostly completed their high school or even graduate.

Table 5.3: Respondent Occupation

Sl. No	Imphal East		Thoubal							Tot-al	Perce-tage
Occupa-tion	Kairang Khomi-dok GP	Khetri-gao GP	Lilong Turel Ahanbi GP	Irong Chesa-ba GP	Sangai-yumpham Part I&II GP	Moij-ing GP	M. Uchi-wa GP	Hayel Hang-goon GP	Pall-el GP		
House Wife	8	10	8	7	19	4	5	9	4	74	58.3
Farmer	5	3	7	6	5	8	7	4	8	53	41.7
Private/ Govt.job	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	3.14

Occupation is an important indicator to analysis the socio-economic status of the respondent. As an elected representative, primary occupation is focus on the work of Panchayat Raj Institution. It is revealed from the table that, 58.3 percent is the highest proportion of house wife found to be as elected representatives. 41.7 percent as farmers.

It is observed that, Imphal East EWR does not entirely concentrate on farming. The primary cause is the absence of an appropriate irrigation system in their field. Once a year, they gather products from the paddy fields. Farmers in Thoubal district have access to these facilities and gather seasonal produce. Some of the respondents from the Thoubal areas identified their major occupation as farming or small business ownership. A minimum of 3.14 percent of respondents—including nurses, those who have obtained their LLBs and are currently in practice—were later chosen as gram panchayat representatives.

Table 5.4: Respondent Income

	Imphal East		Thoubal							Tot-al	Perc-en-tage
Income of respond ent per month	Kairara-ng Kho-midok GP	Khetri-gao GP	Lilong Turel Ahanbi GP	Irong Chesa-ba GP	Sangai-yump-pham Part I&II GP	Moij-ing GP	Maiba-m Uchi-wa GP	Hyael Hang-oon GP	Palle-l GP		
Under Rs 1000-1500	2	1	7	5	3	2	2	2	4	28	35.56
Above 1500-3000	1	2	5	3	7	4	6	3	6	37	46.99
Rs 3000-5000	7	5	3	2	6	3	3	3	1	33	41.91
Rs 5000 above	3	6	3	2	8	3	1	2	1	29	36.83

Income of the family depicts the overall economic status of a family. It was discovered that 35.56 percent of the respondents made up to Rs. 1500 per month. The income group of 1500–3000 is where 46.99 percent of respondents belong. 41.91 people earn between Rs 3,000 and Rs 5,000 monthly. The percentage of responders with incomes of more than Rs 5000 is 36.83. With 41.91 percent of monthly income, the category between 1500 and 3000 and above has the highest percentage in this case.

Most of the respondents are gram Sabha Members. They are farmers and their source of income is low. Those EWR who held higher post, observed that, they are dealing with small business as an entrepreneur.

Table 5.5: Respondent on the Idea of 73ʳᵈ Amendment Act:

Sl. No	Backgr-ound Knowle-dge for 73ʳᵈ Amend-ment Act	Imphal East		Thoubal							Tot-al	Perc-enta ge
		Kaira-ang Khom-idok GP	Khetri-gao GP	Lilon-g Turel Ahan bi GP	Irong Chesa-ba GP	Sangaiy-umpha m part I & II GP	Moij-ing GP	Hayel Hang-oon GP	M. Uchi-wa GP	Palle-l GP		
1)	Yes	1	3	2	1	3	2	3	2	0	17	13.3
2)	No	12	11	16	11	21	10	9	8	12	110	86.61

Table 5.5 depicts the respondent on the idea of 73ʳᵈ amendment act, 86.61 of respondents didn't have the idea of 73ʳᵈ Amendment Act except some of least number However, it is observed that, they know that there is a reservation system for women at local government election but don't have the knowledge of this act.

There are different reasons, why representatives don't have the idea of 73ʳᵈ Amendment Act? While analyzing the reasons for their ignorance is limited knowledge due to illiterate, early marriage, socially and economically low in status.

Table 5.6: Problem face by Respondent while Contesting Election:

Problems face by respond-ent	Imphal East		Thoubal							Tot-tal	Perc-tage
	Kaira-ng Khom idok GP	Kherti -gao GP	Lilong Turel Ahanbi GP	Irong Chesa -ba GP	Sangaiyu -mfam Part I & II GP	Moiji-ng GP	Hay-eng Han g-ool GP	M. Uchi -wa GP	Palle -l GP		
Societal Pressure	2	3	4	2	2	0	3	1	0	17	21.59
Character Assassin-ation	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	2.54
Gender Inequal-ity	3	1	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	7	8.89
Crimin alizatio-n in Politics	0		1	0	0	2	0	0	1	4	5.08

The representatives were elected through women's reservation. While contesting election, there was no such problem/constraint face from society. Families and society agree that women cannot be replaced by other candidates for reserved positions. The data still reveals that 21. 59 percent of people experience societal pressure. Even if there is 8.89 percent gender inequality, the 73rd Amendment Act is an attempt by the institution to empower women. Criminalizing politics has a 5.08 percent support rate.

The elected candidate from Lilong Turel Ahanbi GP in the Thobal district is discovered to have these issues. She was elected to the post of Zilla Parishad. The specific insurgency factions requested their share of the financing from the government. Threats prevent the respondent and her family from living in peace. She was forced to move from her house to the government-provided apartment for her safety as a result. On the other hand, she is proud of her status as a representative and has the respect of the populace. She acts alone and autonomously to make decisions. She wants more women to enter politics, up to 50% more than there are already,

despite the 73rd Amendment Act being unknown. She desires great social prestige for the entire female community.

Table 5.7: Criteria for Contest Election:

Criteria for contest Election	Imphal East		Thoubal							To-tal	Perc-tage
	Kair-rang Khom-idok GP	Khetr-igao GP	Lilong Turel Ahanbi GP	Irong Chesa-ba GP	Sangaiyu-mpham Part I & II GP	Moij-ing GP	Haye-ng Hang-ool GP	M. Uchi-wa GP	Pall-el GP		
Reserved category	8	12	10	8	24	12	12	10	12	96	75.6
Unreserved category	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1.57
Consciousness in Politics	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1.57
Others	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 5.7 illustrates criteria for contest election. 75.5 percent, Muslim women representatives are elected through reservation policy. They would not have been allowed to enter in PRIs with the system of dominant male society without the reservation. It is found that, women contest election without the counterpart of the corresponding GP, and won. The solid votes are given to that particular candidate, which can be seen from the Lilong Athoukhong Gram Panchayat.

It's observed that, women were contest election with the background of elected representatives of male member or relatives in the family. There is less influence of personal interest. It seems that 1.57 is a very low percentage who have political consciousness. These elected representatives have less experience in politics. Among those, 5 of respondents had elected in previous term. They want to be remained in politics and enjoyed the power in politics.

Table 5.8: Political Parties Approach to the Elected Representatives:

Political Parties	Imphal East		Thoubal							Tot-tal	Perce-tage
	Kaira-ng Khom i-dok GP	Khetri -gao GP	Lilong Turel Ahanbi GP	Irong Chesa -ba GP	Sangaiy - umpha m Part I &II GP	Moiji- ng GP	Hayen -g Hang- ool GP	M. Uchi -wa GP	Palle -l GP		
Congr-ess	4	2	5	4	20	3	2	5	3	48	37.7
BJP	1	1	3	0	0	2	1	0	0	8	6.2
NO/Neut -ral	8	11	10	8	4	7	9	5	9	71	55.9

In the Manipur Panchayati Raj Act, 1994, the Panchayati Raj Election does not include any political party events. The highest percentage in the above table—55.9 percent of respondents—takes a neutral stance. However, some respondents offered their opinions on the party support, with 37.7 percent going to the Congress and the lowest percentage going to the BJP at 6.2 percent.

It has been determined that concerned MLAs of their constituency tried to influence the election in a subversive manner. The Bharatiya Janata Party and National Congress Party, the two largest national parties, play a significant role. It has been noted that the respondents held a neutral stance when it came to supporting political parties in elections and were sceptics of party politics. The concerned MLA and their political party, however, are connected to elected panchayat members.

Table 5.9: Respondent on Participation of Political Activities

Political Activities	Imphal East		Thoubal							Tot-tal	Perc-entage
	Khabe-isoi Komi--dok GP	Khetri-gao GP	Lilong Turel Ahanbi GP	Irong Chesa-ba GP	Sangai-yumpham Part I &II GP	Moiji-ng GP	Haye-ng Hang-ool GP	M. Uchi-wa GP	Palle-l GP		
Election Rally	-			1		-	-	-	-	1	0.78
Door to Door Campaig-n	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.78
Distribut-ed Poster	1	-	-	-	2	-	1	-	-	4	3.14
All of the above	12	13	18	11	22	12	11	10	12	121	95.3

The respondents' political awareness is accounted for by active participation in political activities. The majority of respondents (95.3%) took part in election rallies, door-to-door campaigning, and poster distribution. 3.14 percent of respondents thought it was possible to distribute posters without them because they were typically focused on other advocacy efforts.

It is found that, these activities take place after nominations for election candidates have been filled out, their participation is limited. Before being nominated for office, they merely participated in such activities. Election campaigning, which was done by both candidates and workers in the state assembly election, cannot be distinguished from local government election. The way of campaigning system is somehow similar with state assembly election. Most often when the election date is set, they carry out social work and create spaces for voters' choices. Some respectable contestants who are running for election started doing social service in their area from the beginning.

Table 5.10: Respondents answer on the question – whether the increase in reservation will make better conditions for women community?

Does increase in reservation will make the better conditions for the women community?	Imphal East		Thoubal							Tot-tal	Perc-entage
	Kaira-ng Khomi-dok GP	Khetri-gao GP	Lilon-g Turel Ahan bi GP	Irong Ches-aba GP	Sangaiyu-mpham Part I &II GP	Moij-ing GP	Haye-ng Hang ool GP	M. Uchi-wa GP	Pall-el GP		
Yes	13	14	18	12	24	12	10	10	12	125	98.4
No	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	1.57

The table 5.10 provides respondents regarding the increase in reservation is making more better condition of women community. 98.4 percent are in favour of reservation system. The respondent believed, there should be increase in reservation in order to improve the conditions of women folks.

Irrespective of religion, they want to get at least 50 percent reservation for women, in order to work hand in hand with the male members with their identity as a women representative. After attending in power, they want to remain in politics. As a woman, the society simply treat them as second-class citizen. However, achieving any post in PRIs after election, there's a space for them in politics.

Table 5.11: Respondent on the Changes Made by the Quota System for Women in Society:

Respondent on the changes made by the quota system for women in society	Imphal East		Thoubal							Tot-tal	Percen-tage
	Kaira-g Khom i-dok GP	Khetri -gao GP	Lilon-g Turel Ahan bi GP	Irong Chesa -ba GP	Sanga-yumpha m Part I &II GP	Moiji-ng GP	Hayen g Hago ol GP	M. Uchi -wa GP	Pall-el GP		
1)Political Empowerment	3	6	4	5	10	3	6	3	3	43	54.61
2)Social Status	3	3	4	1	3	4	3	2	4	26	33.02
3)Gender Equality	1	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	2	8	10.16
4)Discrimination on works	6	4	8	6	10	4	4	3	5	3	62.23

Quotas for women in local governance bodies improved women's representation in politics and increase the perception of women as leader. The government is trying an objective of increasing the presence of women in respective position at PRIs. But these gains were not clearly perceived, from the above table, gender inequality and discrimination of women representatives exist with high as 56.61 percentage.

However, it seems that, the respondent was satisfied as an representative through this reservation and claimed they achieved political empowerment. It is found that respondent face several constraint- 1) from society as a Muslim woman and appear in public II) discrimination as women at official works in the department III) less confidence for controlling power. Here, most interesting fact can be seen from the respondent that, despite they want to be in this field, there should be someone to controlled their decision. It may be her husband or family member. On contrary, some respondents were very careless to perform their duty, instead all the works are done by her husband. From this, it can be observed that, not only the society/husband/family gives constraint in their works. It's the elected representatives itself were away from their particular panchayat duties.

Above all this, there is positive outcomes. The respondent places a social status in society. While they attend any meeting, invites in every function of marriage or village developmental works. As a woman and a representative, they gain a respect, high in status in front of male member of the society.

Table 5.12: Identity as Representatives in PRIs

Respondent on question: Do the women representative acquired their 'identity' as an representative in PRIs and feel equal with other citizen (men or society).

Acquiri-ng the 'identity' as represe-ntative in PRIs	Imphal East		Thoubal							Tot-tal	Perce-nt-tage
	Kaira-ng Khom idok GP	Khetri-gao GP	Lilong Turel Ahanbi GP	Irong Chesa-ba GP	Sangai-yumpha m Part I &II GP	Moij-ing GP	Hayeng Hangoo-l GP	Uchi-wa GP	Palle-l GP		
1)Yes	11	11	15	7	17	8	9	7	8	93	73.22
2)No	2	3	3	5	7	4	3	3	4	34	26.77

To this question, their 'identity' as an representative in PRIs felt equal with other citizen. They have the same position as the man does as a representative in politics. To the large extent, the respondents claimed they acquired 'identity' as representatives in PRIs.

It means that, they are being recognized as a representative. It can be observed that, before the quota system, women mainly remain in households' activities and their identity is subsumed as housewife. More than one identity, they were not being recognized. However, after the quota system, somehow power and resources are being distributed which was controlled by men in general.

Table 5.13: Respondent on the Question- Is there any 'Differences' as an elected women representatives among the community?

Any differences as elected women representatives among the Muslim Community	Imphal East		Thoubal							Tot-tal	Perc enta-age
	Kaira-ng Khom-idok GP	Khetri-gao GP	Lilong Turel Ahanbi GP-	Irong Chesa-ba GP	Sangai-yumpha-m Part I&II GP	Moij - ing GP	Hayen -g Hang-ool GP	Mai-bam Uchi -wa GP	Palle -l GP		
1)Yes	9	11	12	8	14	7	9	6	7	83	65.35
2)No	4	3	6	4	10	5	3	4	5	44	34.64

The table 5.13 illustrate, on the question of 'difference' as an elected women representatives among the community. 65.35 percent is the opinion given by respondent as they made difference after elected as representatives in GP. 34. 64 percent is not seen as they are different.

It is observed that, less percentage of respondent opined, there is no difference as elected women representatives. Their responses are different, can be discussed into two ways. First, respondents don't have any pride as a representative, no ego centrism, and feels like normal citizen, wants to work for the people and village development. On the other hand, they are being discriminated and feels 'difference' due to- 1) works are controlled by second person 2) societal pressure 3) ignorance 4) gender differentiation.

Table 5.14: Respondent on the question: Do you think the 73rd Amendment Act of the Constitution gives an positive outcomes in terms of women's political empowerment?

Does 73rd Amendm-ent Acts gives positive outcome-s	Imphal East		Thoubal							Tot-tal	Perc-en-tage
	Kaira-ng Khom-idok GP	Khetri-gao GP	Lilong Turel Ahanbi GP	Irong Chesa-ba GP	Sangai-yumpha-m Part I &II GP	Moij-ing GP	M. Hayen-g Hang ool GP	Maib-am Uchi-wa GP	Pal-l GP		
Yes	13	14	18	12	24	12	12	10	12	127	100
No	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

The implementation of PRIs, women got a chance to inter in politics, tried to be a good decision maker or a good leader. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, provides women a chance to come forward, by providing opportunity to women to come out of their houses and participate in administrative and political fields. It is clear from the above table 100 percent of the respondents were giving the positive outcomes in terms of women political empowerment.

In order to analysed the nature of Manipur Muslim women electoral participation as a voter or candidate in formal politics, it required to study the parameter/ variables that possess indirectly the nature of women participation and consciousness in politics- voting behaviour, election campaign/ door to door campaign, poster campaign, flag hosting, election feast etc.

Voting Behaviour and Muslim Women

The lack of political voice and low representation of women in parliament, accounts, exclusion of women on the gender basis. The argument can't stand strong regarding women's participation in politics at local grassroot levels. During the 90's, there was an increased participation of women in electoral competition. Women share their power as voters as well as representatives at local governance[197]. This reveals that voting behaviour regarding women are inclusive in nature and no more gender exclusive. The level of political awareness,

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[197] Praveen Rai, 'Electoral Participation of Women in India: Key Determinants and Barrier', p.47.

commitment and involvement of women's participation in electoral politics, their choices and increased in electoral behaviour shows, they are active in political activities.

Women participation in formal politics are determined by some factors as a host. How women are socialised in the state or society? Their roles in society can predict the values of voting. In India, women's participation in politics are less. They are being socialised differently. As far as concerned in marriage institution, women turn to family, the role of motherhood and engaged in household activities. They are giving less importance on employment or holding property ownership. However, it can be assumed that women are given less priority in a family, more advantage are achieved by the male member of a family. Gender disparity could be seen in family itself and this principle applied to society. From this practicing system, it is clear that women have fewer resources.

According to NES (National Election Survey), conducted by CSDS and women electoral participation index created from NES data set. It is found that, upsurge of women voters and achieve parity with men voters in election[198]. The main reason behind this, society is changing, encouraged women for electoral participation. There are several schemes, NGOs which gave the idea of voting importance to women voters. These promotions by state, insurge women for participation and start giving interest on politics, active in voting process.

Socio economic demographic is also a factor that determined their level of participation in the electoral process at different tiers of election system in India. According to Aggarwal, individual socio demographic, education and income, socio cultural norms and caste are associated in political participation[199]. In 2004, 2009 and 2014 General Election, seen the increase in women's turn out, impacts the overall turn out and the larger process of democratization. Analysing the data, among the predictor of their degree of participation in election voting, women's participation gave more importance on their 'vote matters' in general election, 2004[200]. It can be seen that, women's consciousness on politics is increasing, taking interest in politics. There are two sides of women role in voting for election, first are those women which give importance on individual's 'vote matter', while on the other side, there are women that their vote doesn't matter for running the government yet still voted. Since, the quantitative data for women's electoral process is mostly available for the national and state

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[198] Ibid., p. 52
[199] Bina Agarwal, 'Resounding the Alert: Gender resources and Community Action', p. 1375.
[200] National Election Study, 2004, 2009, 2014 Data Unit CSDS, Delhi.

level, but limited to the grass root women's participation in decentralized government of India. The study will be analysed in a qualitative manners to provide the pictures of Manipur Muslim Women 's representation in politics.

While analysing the voting behaviour of women in electoral politics, the area, locality, regions matters. The southern and eastern part of the country knows more right for casting vote in election. The main reasons are- I) the practising of matriarchal structure in these regions and II) women are given more freedom to access power. It is found that, Muslim women representatives from the Imphal East district, have more knowledge regarding their rights, functions and functionary of the Panchayat institution. The area where Imphal East located is near Imphal, the capital of Manipur. It means, the regions matters, locality are more liberal in terms of girl/women education and exposure in public, no differentiation are place between boys and girls.

Political Campaign and Women's Role

Women interest in politics emerged as key factor that determined the level of participation in election campaign. It produces a greater degree of politicization and involvement ultimately leads to political participation[201]. The role of media took another factor for electoral campaigning. In some extent, exposure to media increase women as election campaigner in recent years. The media exposure created a new phase of political campaign.

The other factor is the social networking system. This is the regional factor, that level women's participation in election campaign. As a part of social networking group like- Self Help Group, local religious organizations[202]. In Manipur, Campaign through feast by the candidates is very common during the time of election. Muslim women workers forms women wing known as Mahilla Morcha of the concerned polls in a constituency. While comparing the social networking groups between the Imphal East and Thoubal district, both the women workers are informally starts the campaign long before the election schedule is announced and continue till the last moment of polling. This is in the case of state assembly election. However, women candidates in PRIs, they do filled the nomination form for election and start the election campaign. Still, the procedure of political campaigning is same, by making groups among the

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[201] Ravindra Pratap Singh (1981), "Electoral Politics in Manipur: A Spatial- Temporal Study", p.89
[202] Praveen Rai, Op. Cit., p. 52

women folks to influence the choice of the voters. It is found that women with high profile of social networking leads to high level of election campaigners in election.

The reason for increasing women's participation in election campaign is due to high mobilization by political parties, including them in the campaign of election programmes. Political Party plays an important role in state/national election. In Manipur, party ticket preference are given to male member of the party. A gender gap is witnessed in contestation among the candidates during the election[203]. The parties are against taking a risk of putting up women as party candidates because of the social attitudes which disfavour women's entry into politics. Elected women candidates are very low, because the entire game of power is generates through party organization, that is dominated by male members. Due to smaller percentage of women, presence of women does not result in any significant changes in either the nature of women's functioning or in the party approach to women and women issues[204].

Manipur Muslim women in higher making body of the state is not making an account. In the last term of Manipur state assembly election, 2017, Muslim candidate contest for election. Her name is Najima Bibi, first women candidate from the Muslim women minority community. She is a candidate of PRJA party of Irom Sharmila and is contesting from Wabgai constituency[205]. Though, she was not elected. It is observed that, Muslim women are not seen participating in politics at higher levels of decision-making. It has been shown that there are less Muslim women who belong to political parties. There are a number of reasons why Muslim women in Manipur are not included in the state's decision-making bodies. They have low social and economic status. They are liberated and given some cultural power in certain areas of public life. Their degree of liberty and autonomy does not result in the empowerment of women. They work to provide for their family and are financially independent. Because of the dominant patriarchal structure in society, males do not want to see the advancement of the women's group, which limits their freedom. Even if they are in the same position as them, they feel that women should be kept under their control and treated like inferiors.

However, they do represent since there are seats reserved for women in grassroots politics. The most significant of them is the 1990 adoption of the 73rd and 74th Amendments, which granted

[203] Manuka Khanna, 'Political Participation of Women in India', p. 60
[204] Haobam Indrakumar and L.K Thanmi, "Politics of democracy in Manipur", p. 170.
[205] 'Manipur's First Muslim Women Candidate to work for upliftment of Muslim Women',The Times of India, Feb 22, 2017.

women a 33% reservation in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). These initiatives allowed women in the nation to share political authority in the body that makes decisions with their male counterparts. These contributed to an increase in women voting in elections. Party politics are not allowed to be involved in Manipur's local government, according to the Manipur Panchayat Raj Act of 1994. Political parties in Manipur's PRIs have no function. While this is going on, table number 8 shows that respondents from both Thoubal and Imphal East support political parties in a subordinate capacity. Regional parties don't have as much power as the national parties, Indian National Congress, and BJP. Because Manipur is a state that relies heavily on central government approval in every area, this is the case. Additionally, it was noted that elected women candidates supported the incumbent elected representatives in their constituency. If there is a lack of effective communication between the MLAs representing their respective constituencies, they may encounter challenges working out their duties.

Door to Door Campaigning

This method often leads to an effective in order to get votes from their voters. Mass of women took part in this process. Mahilla Morcha and her groups with the party workers went for house to house campaign. The campaigners distributed candies for voters including children in the house with the party manifesto and take blessings from the elders. While campaigning, candidate itself request to the voters with an appeal to vote in their favour. Informal meeting personally with the candidate and voters in the campaign brings more closeness to the voters, leads more effective to convince the voters and get their vote, than the promises made in social media[206].

The method is same with the panchayat election. Weather the candidate is male or female, door to door campaign is widely practice in local government election. The women candidates with the help of women wings take part with large numbers for the campaign. It is found that Muslim women respondents have done these election activities both in the Thoubal and Imphal East district without any constraints from the family or the society.

Election Meeting

Election meetings are one of the most significant platforms for bringing the electorate together. The meetings are designed to enlighten voters about the party, its programmes, and symbols,

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[206] Ravindra Pratap Singh, Op. Cit., p. 92.

as well as to introduce candidates to voters. Candidates are given the opportunity to display their power and command of support during this meeting. This has an impact on rival candidates seeking voter support[207]. There should be a large number of voters present at a political party meeting, aiming to communicate their concerns to party workers. Women's wings of the party worked hard to ensure that women were represented at the gathering.

In panchayat election, meeting is held through the candidates identity. As, there is no role for political party. It is observed that political meetings are organized and the women wings will tried to collect women voter more and attend in the meeting. While conducting interview with the respondent informally, they gives opinion regarding the relationship with the concerned MLA of their constituency. While contesting election, there is a support candidate of MLA, and contest election to fight with that opposite candidate of the panchayat. It is found that, whether the political party exist or not, criminalization of politics can be seen from the field of grass root politics.

Poster Campaign

In Manipur, as in the rest of India, poster campaigning is a significant and popular type of political campaigning. National parties like the Congress and the BJP consistently rank first in this category. Even in the most remote corners of communities, posters of national parties may be discovered. Regional party posters are less visible in rural areas. The poster campaign was largely carried out at night. People are divided into groups and assigned to plaster posters and paint on the walls at various locations throughout the constituency. While campaigning, campaigners commonly carry a poster with the symbol, party name, and candidate name to exhibit to voters.

The system of poster campaign seems to be less in these recent elections. It's mainly due to the social media. Media takes an important role in shaping election campaign. They formed whatsapp group, face book pages of candidates which support their works and constantly contact with the candidates or through the workers.

Election Feast

Another popular strategy for obtaining votes is holding community feasts. Election season could be referred to as a fasting season. Both voters and candidates acknowledge that this is an

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[207] Ibid. 90.

unavoidable aspect of the election campaign. There are some voters who believe that if they wish to vote, the candidates, campaigners, or families of the candidates should pay for the feast. Their agents or active workers organise these feasts. They would approve certain amounts based on the number of people attending the lunch/dinner. In such a meeting, the candidate's supporters or close allies attempt to sway voters to their side. The size of the community feasts vary depending on the season.

At panchayat level, Muslim women do formed women workers by the candidate in each ward of the village. These women groups manage the feast, regarding the numbers of voters, put up women quarries, issues related with development of the family and village. They make a list and gave to the candidate. It is observed that these women agents is active during the election only. While analysing the structure of the election campaigning, the state assembly election gave more importance than the local panchayat election.

Party Flag Hosting

People see party flags flying on different house tops as the first evidence of an election campaign. On the basis of competitiveness in the flag flying event, one might begin to develop support for a party or a candidate. This approach is widely used in Manipur, both in the valley and in the hill area. The flag flying competition is visually appealing. If a home has a flag of a certain political party or candidate flying from the top of the house or from the top of a bamboo in the house. The voter is clearly a supporter of that specific politician. These types of electoral political compaigning is done only for the state/national election. It is not seen in the local panchayat election, as there is no system of political party in PRIs of Manipur.

Politics and Women Empowerment

The participation of women in Panchayati Raj Institutions is considered essential not only for ensuring political participation in the democratic process but also for realising the developmental goals for women. Reservation of women and elected as politician is to challenge male dominance in the general. However, their quota representation is limited to the Indian local governance not upto the level of state/ parliament election.

To get objective information about the participation and performance of women member in panchayat process in the districts of Manipur. It is important to go through the proceeding of panchayat meeting to identify and comprehend the real process of panchayat such as the nature

of their attendance in the meeting, types of opinion expressed, their preference, note of dissents, their way of empowering in politics. Besides formal works of PR in meeting or participation in the works could not detected as only the decisions of meeting that found as recorded. The study is done on the responses of Muslim women representatives regarding their performance in decision making process of panchayat.

The studies show that majority of the women represented by entering the institution as new member in the field of politics. Table no 7 shows, 98 percent of women contest election due to reservation policy. There is less percentage of women who have consciousness in politics and contest election in unreserved category. Again, in table 5.3, it is found that respondents for the post of Member, 60 percent were from the marginal farming families and daily wage labour However, the post of Pradhan and Zilla parishad women representatives are from the low middle class families. This shows the respondent, economic background and how it affect to the representation of women in politics. In terms of age, table 5.1 shows respondents, women from the age of 25- 35 have high percentage of women panchayat members. They are mainly married women, except one percent of unmarried women. It is observed that, those respondent who are unmarried, society don't want to uplift for election. The main reason is that she will get married and change the place, will not able to continue the panchayat functionaries.

Regarding the idea of implementing 73rd amendment act, shows that the majority of women entering the new PRIs, with the notable exception that, there is reserved seat for women in that particular GP. This idea is also given mainly by representatives spouse/family/ relatives. They never read any official notification for the turn of women reservation in their village. It can be assumed from the fact that their level of participation in politics, their role and functionary of the panchayat will depends to someone that leads for proxy representation.

Further, it has been observed that, women contest election, social constraints may cause problem to the elected women. Societal pressure, character assassination, gender inequality and criminalization in politics are some social elements that affect women while contesting election in most part of states in India. It can't be deny that elected Muslim women doesn't have such obstacle while contesting election. They do face discrimination but in less numbers. This can be commonly assumed that, women in Manipur irrespective of religion have social space in society. Finally they are elected in the reserved category only.

Party-less elections are the most intriguing aspect of the PRIs in Manipur. It falls to an argument-Is Manipur gram panchayat a party-less election? In order to avoid conflicts relating to polls both during and after the election, such party-less elections have been adopted. Elections to gramme panchayats based on political party could cause divisions within the community along party lines, as well as animosity, criminalization, and segregation between the classes because villages are societies where everyone knows each other's faces and lives in harmony and cooperation. The responders to the study take a neutral stance on party politics. However, it is discovered that political parties are eager to participate actively in the GP election in order to strengthen their local support base in the hopes that this will be helpful in the state assembly election. In a similar vein, the candidate believes they will benefit if they are associated with a political party and receive funding for campaign expenses.

Women are slowly but steadily becoming elected to panchayats, asserting themselves in the new process and restoring confidence in local government as a result of the decentralisation of power at the grassroots level. It is observed that, table 5.10 indicates 98.4 percent, which is maximum of the respondents, wants to increase in reservation of women seat in panchayat for the better conditions of women community. They represented and the argument is- Does representation change their status made by the quota system for women in society? The respondent gave different view and opinion, those candidates who are in the post of Pradhan and Zilla parishad, expressed as they seen the evolution of women's representation in Panchayat. Amendment has provided a fresh path for their representation. Since political equality is guaranteed by the constitution, women's participation in politics has continued to be influenced by the same philosophy or tokenism at other levels of politics. By ensuring a crucial base of one-third representation, EWR is granted a status that has not previously been possible in another political organisation. A change in direction could be seen from the study, confidence and aspiration level, their perception of self, status, participation recognition and leadership in panchayat. As an impact of the quota system, representatives create their identity with confidence, attitudinal shift and aspiration. These are the indicator of their empowering process.

It is found that, political empowerment of women starts with the active participation of women in political institutions. The study shows that Muslim women representatives assured that 73rd amendment act of the constitution gives a positive outcomes in terms of women political empowerment. Through participation in these institutions, women have started to understand

not just political opportunities, but also perceived and ultimately patriarchal norms that demand their exclusion and marginalisation in deliberative bodies to which they have been legitimately elected. A more positive self-image and increased knowledge of alternative roles compared to those that were ingrained during a lifetime of patriarchally imposed gender identity are undoubtedly important gains.

<center>**Chapter 6**</center>

<center>**Recognition and Redistribution: Manipuri Muslim Women Effective Political Participation through Reservation Policy**</center>

Introduction

The concept of recognition and redistribution has advanced into a various key concept within the broad field of social, political and moral theory. The two authors upsurge their interest on two themes, "the politics of recognition" discussed by Charles Taylor and "the struggle for recognition" by Axel Honneth. The question of multiculturalism and their claims are raised by different minority groups in the society and their particular cultural identity which is value commitments should be recognized by majority society[208]. The other theme is related with the Honneth's social struggle for recognition that are triggered off by experiences of injury and disrespect in various forms which is morally motivated social conflicts[209].

The concept of representation over the past decades has informed many debates in political theory between the proponent and opponent of the politics of recognition. The politics of recognition can be used as a critical theoretical tool to combat a wide range of contemporary social injustices. The proponent of recognition, Hegel established the theory of recognition. Hegel elaborates the idea that one's identity and self- consciousness needs recognition by another self to develop itself fully. He states that,

> "Self- consciousness exists in and for itself when, and by the fact that, it so exists for another; that is, it exists only in being acknowledged"[210]

Hegel tried to explain "mutual recognition, a confrontation between two consciousness mutually denying recognition to the other and tried to prove their liberty to the opponent by risking their life in a struggle to death. The struggle ends when one of the two consciousness afraid of losing its life, becomes the servant of the other. It leads to an asymmetric relation of recognition where the master is recognized by a consciousness which he himself does not recognized as an equal"[211].

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[208]C. Taylor, 'The Politics of Recognition' in A. Gutman(ed), "Multiculturalism and the politics of Recognition", pp 24- 73.

[209] Carl-Goran Heidegren, 'Recognition and Social Theory', pp- 365- 366.

[210] Hegel, G.W.F and A. V Miller, "Phenomenology of spirit", p. 111.

[211] Ibid.

Two things can be seen from Hegel's passage. First, the type of recognition advocated by him is unmediated recognition between potential equals. The mutual recognition is considered as the only genuine form of recognition. Second, Freedom is treated as the most important which required recognition through a struggle for recognition. Each consciousness takes their endeavor in order to justify or prove their freedom to other. Hegel theory is regarded as self's identity which can be considered as the product of an inter-subjective product. When the other has become the path of a positive image of oneself, it can be the site of negative feelings about one's worth. Here it falls to the idea of Charles Taylor's theory of recognition,

> *"The thesis is that our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others, and so a person or a group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone is a false, distorted and reduced mode of being"[212]

The point is that if the other fails his/her task of recognition adequately someone else's identity, such misrecognition induced social invisibility- it may cause psychological harm to the misrecognized identity. In some cases, it may lead to a strong self-hatred which can be used as powerful tool of domination. The discourse on recognition led to the rise of a politics of identity which contrast with the politics of universalism that emphasis the ideals of equal dignity and equal rights.[213] The politics of universalism saw discrimination and injustices, lack of equality before the law, the politics of difference which relates discrimination and injustices to the policies and deny the group and individual identities. While politics of difference or identity displaces the notion of discrimination. The politics of difference demands differential treatments, the main reason is that, they asked to recognized the unique identity of the groups or individual, their distinctiveness from everyone else.

Fraser underline the reifying tendencies of the theory of recognition. According to her, "identity model of the theory of recognition ironically creates misrecognition by promoting conformism and downplaying the importance of intragroup struggles over the meaning of the given identity. The result of such an approach is that "masks the power of dominant factions and reinforces intragroup domination"[214]. The theory of recognition therefore, reifies identities

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[212] Charles Taylor, Op. Cit., pp- 25.
[213] Ibid., 38.
[214] Nancy Fraser, 'Rethinking Recognition', p. 113.

and tends to encourage "separatism intolerance and chauvinism, patriarchalism and authoritarianism".[215]

Fraser came out with identifying another political issue with the politics of identity i.e displacement. She argues that "theories of recognition not only promote the reification of identities but also tend to reduce current injustices within society to cultural and symbolic matters and forget about structural economic issues and a whole range of social injustices related to the unfair distribution of wealth which results from the current neoliberal system. In the debate of displacement, she argues that there is a tendency to divide political movements into proponent of either cultural recognition or economic redistribution. But in her view, both paradigm answer only one special type of injustice and both should be embraced simultaneously"[216]. She argues that people can suffer harm either because of economic injustice or because of a cultural injustice which takes the form of a depreciation of one's cultural identity. The question for identity and recognition are central to many contemporary debates for freedom and dignity. Feminist takes a turn towards the politics of recognition.

Feminist Politics of Recognition

The questions of identity and recognition are central to many contemporary debates for freedom and dignity. Many of the contemporary debates for freedom and dignity centre on issues of identification and recognition. Theorists such as Irish M. Young, Charles Taylor, and Alex Honneth focused on the idea of recognition not only for individual rights or resources but also as members of social groups who want acknowledgement for their uniqueness. The idea of justice has been there from the time of the classical political philosophy, and it includes 'the just', which is redistribution, which is right, fearful, and rational. According to John Rawls' well-known 'difference principle', social and economic inequalities are justified only when the least advantaged members of society gain from the distribution of core social goods[217]. Institutionally, the welfare state provides the shape of the principle of redistributive justice.

A section of minority like oppressed and excluded communities including women and homosexuals experiences various forms of discrimination, marginalisation, stereotypes etc.

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[215] Ibid., p. 112.
[216] Ibid.
[217] John Rawls, "A Theory of Justice", 1971.

The most modern socio-cultural idea of justice is now focused with the acknowledgement of collective identities. Multiculturalism, emancipation, policy, and extra-parliamentary activities of new social movements are all in the fight for recognition. Philosophers such as Charles Taylor, Axel Honneth and Iris Marion Young extended their weightage role in enhancing the elaborating the concept of socio economic justice in social and political theory. According to Charles Taylor 'recognition or misrecognition can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false distorted reduced mode of being'.[218]

On the other hand Nancy Fraser proposes to conceive recognition as a matter of justice. For this purpose she treats recognition as an issue of social justice. Fraser used two dimensional conception of justice. She argued about 'parity of participation' which is based on two conditions; 1) objective conditions: the distribution of materials resources must be such as to insure participant's independence and "voice" and 2) inter-subjectivity condition: institutionalized pattern of cultural value which ensure equal respect for all participants and ensure equal opportunity for achieving social esteem. Both the conditions are necessary for the participation parity neither alone is sufficient. Therefore social justice through redistribution and recognition tried to include the effected group or individual. It is a policy for the group of social, economic and political exclusion in the society".[219] With this concept of recognition, the argument is quotas for women in Indian local government and the social and political challenges faced by Manipuri Muslim women panchayat representatives who have entered PRIs politics in the delivery of effective outcomes. The chapter tried to seek the perceptions of the elected women panchayat members from bureaucrat, notable resource persons, club organization and civil society organizations. This chapter divided into three sections-

    i)   Effective Muslim women's political representation to the PRIs

    ii) To analyze the perceptions of the resource persons towards Muslim women political empowerment.

    iii) Effective outcomes

In order to get the objectives of the study, the analysis is based upon the respondents of the elected women representatives in Imphal East and Thoubal Districts. Interview were conducted on 13respondents from Kairang Khomidok GP, 14 from Khetrigao GP, 18 from Lilong Turel Ahanbi GP,12 from Irong Chesaba, 24 from Sangaiyumpham Part I and II GP, Moijing GP:

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[218] Nancy Fraser and Alex Honneth, "Redistribution and Recognition : A Political Philosophical Exchange", 2003.
[219] Ibid.

12, Maibam Uchiwa- 10, Hayel Hangoon: 12, Pallel GP: 12. The number of respondents from Thoubal district is 100 and Imphal East district is 27. The total respondent is 127.

Effective Muslim Women Political Participation to the PRIs: Perception of the Elected Panchayat Women Members

The reservation of women in the Panchayat through 73rd amendment, give the way of life towards the decision-making body of the decentralized government of India. The respondents in two districts of Manipur, gave positive response regarding women reservation in panchayat system. The respondents were asked the question regarding reservation of women politics. It is found that 98% of the respondent accept the quota system. They want to increase the 33% of women seats in PRIs to 40-50%. In order to equalize the women representation in politics with male members in their concerned Gram Panchayat. The main reason of increasing women reservation in politics is to get gender equality.

The institution gave them an opportunity to contest election and represent in local government politics. Most of the elected Muslim women in Imphal East district, 40% of present elected representatives want to contest election for the next term, if they got the seat for women in reserved category. While 30% of elected women in Thoubal district have the consciousness of politics to contest election in next term. Here, the respondents are given an option for contesting election. They are depending on quota representation.

In order to analyze the works of Muslim women representatives. Some factors are indicating their level of work towards the development of village, women and child welfare programme.

Table 6.1: Family background who has been in Politics

Sl. No	You /family members in Politics	Imphal East	Thoubal	Total (percentage)
1	Yes	20 (70.0)	92	83.03
2	No	7(25.9)	8	16.97
3	Total	27	100	100

Note: The total result is taking the mean percentage, from the total number of respondents of Imphal East and Thoubal district.

The family background of the elected members plays an important role. From the above table It is found that 83.03 percent, their husband/relatives had successfully elected in last term of panchayat election. Only 16. 97 percent, those EWR, where they don't have political background in the family. This shows that, maximum of the respondent elected members and their family members have been in politics.

This trend is somehow similar with the contest of election in the higher decision- making body. The level of controlling power might be different according to the post. However, the strategy and structure of contesting election by women are same. Despite of reservation, in PRIs, women are indirectly controlled by third party. The institution tried to mobilized women in decision making with the effective participation, the reserved seats are provided to the minority and weaker section of the society, to ensure representation of women in Panchayati Raj Institution.

Views from elected women members on Developing Planning

Table 6.2: Issues mainly deal by Elected Members:

SL. No	Issues deal by elected members	Imphal East	Thoubal	Total
1.	Development of village work	27 (100.00)	100	100
2.	Welfare of women	19 (70.37)	39	54.68
3.	Domestic violence against women	17 (62.96)	83	72.98
4.	Educational Development	0	0	0

Table 6.2, depicts the issues mainly deal by elected members, the respondents were very confidents on the development of village work. 100 percent of the respondent both in the Thoubal and Imphal district, claimed that they did mainly focus for village development. 54.68 percent for welfare of women programmes. However, it is observed that, they did mainly the widow pension scheme and SHG for women. Rather than these there is no other programme taken up for women's development. They are not focusing to the field of education development. Again,72. 98 percent is the issue for domestic violence against women which is the highest issue dealt with. According to respondents opinion, in village, the issue of divorce is very common, that may sometimes leads to family dispute.

Table 6.3: Criteria that the Candidate gets their votes from Voters:

The respondents gave different views on the question, In what criteria, elected candidates gets their votes from voters?

Sl. No	Criteria for getting votes	Imphal East	Thoubal	Total
1	Village development through social works	27	100	100
2	Support from political party	5(18.51)	22(22)	20.25
3	Caste base	0	0	0
4	Class base (clan base)	23(85.15)	87(87)	86.07

There are several bases on which the candidates gets their votes from voters. The respondents are elected Muslim Women of two districts of Manipur. They believed that winning over voters meant doing good deeds for the community. They were given this as their first priority. 100 percent of respondents said they were voted to the village through their effort, trust, and ability to capture the attention of the villagers. It is noted that nothing could be true 100 percent of the time; there are other variables, such as the cost of voting in terms of money or the criminalization of politics. The respondents did not support this strategy for political elections. As is traditional in politics, they are not transparent about this scenario. It is an approach in political election which has not been endorsed by the respondents. They are not open with this situation, practiced in politics.

However, there is no role for caste system in Manipuri Muslim society. It doesn't affect to the candidates while getting votes. Instead, there is 86.07 percent of clan base, it is a very strong phenomenon in election, which is the bases of receiving votes. It is observed that, those candidates who have large in numbers of clan in the village, there is high possibility to get elected.

Table 6.4: Candidates Political Affiliation

Does every elected candidate have political affiliation? If yes, what are the benefits they got from the party? If no, what are the relationship they have with the concerned MLA of their constituency?

SL. No	Political affiliation	Imphal East	Thoubal	Total
1	Better	21(77.77)	73(73)	75.38
2	Normal	25(92.59)	82(82)	87.29
3	Rivalry	1(3.70)	4(4)	7.7
4	Neutral	20(74.07)	95(95)	84.53

It is important to know the status of political affiliation among various groups in villages. Yet, the role of political parties in panchayat election is not exist. However, the political parties and the elected candidates of the concerned MLA, may affect to the election of the panchayat. Table 4, illustrates the relationship between the elected women representatives and the MLA of the constituencies. 87.29 percentage of respondents have normal relationship with MLA. While 84.53 have neutral relationship, they want to stay at safe place. They don't have opinion regarding the issue. 7.7 percentage is the lowest, who had rivalry and 78.38 percent who had better relationship.

It is clear from the above analysis, that maximum of the respondent agrees to the point that, they want to have normal relationship while 7.7 is the lowest, where they faced several problems during their terms by holding the funds derived through concerned concern MLA.

Table 6.5: Level of Women Participation in PRIs:

In terms of elected women participation in politics. What are the levels of women participation in official works of the PRIs?

SL. No	Criteria for women's Participation in PRIs official works	Imphal East	Thoubal	Total
1	Regular	9 (33.33)	20	26.66
2	Absent	18 (66.66)	71	68.83
3	Never attend	5 (18.51)	40	29.25
4	Do not invited	4 (14.81)	11	12.90

Table 6.5, illustrate the level of participation of women in the panchayat works. 26.66 percent of the respondent regularly participate. 68.83 are absent, 29.25 are the respondents who never participate and 12.90 are those who are not invited to do the works collectively by panchas. Table shows that, maximum of the respondents were absent in performing their duties. Those village elected Members were the groups who do not find it necessary to inform for the works by the Pradhan or Zilla parishad.

It seems that, the respondents who are not invited to the works, means there might be no role for members to be participated, that's why the percentage comes out to be the lowest, according to their responds.

Table 6.6: Information of Public Meetings:

Do the elected women representatives get regular information from the office to attend public meetings?

Sl. No	Get regular information for public meetings	Imphal East	Thoubal	Total
1	Yes	6(22.22)	28(28)	25.11
2	No	21(77.77)	72(72)	74.88

Table 6.6, highlights the information from the office to attend meeting of gram panchayat. It shows, 74.88 percent opined for not getting information for public meeting or official works of panchayat. 25.11 is very least respondents who took part in their official works. It is observed

that, women representatives are skeptical regarding the public meeting, and doesn't gave their effort to the works.

As compare to male representatives with the women representatives, regular public meetings are attends by male representatives. While women representatives are negligible. The reasons are given below

Table 6.7: Reasons for Absent in Public Meetings

Sl. No	Reasons for absent	Imphal East	Thoubal	Total
1	Household Activities	18(66.66)	84(84)	75.3
2	Agricultural Works	11(40.7)	68	54.3
3	Intentionally don't want to attend	5(18.51)	8	13.25
4	If attend no benefits (opinion not accepted)	6(22.2)	10	16.11

The table gave the result of representatives, why the respondents are negligible in public meetings. The former table 6.6, shows, they are not given information regarding the meeting. Here, the reasons for not being able to attend the meetings are given in details. 75. 3 percent are involved in household activities which is the highest reason for absent, followed by 54.3 percent in agricultural work. There are others respondent who are absent intentionally and don't want to attend meetings.

It is observed that, their husband did attend the meeting. While 16.11 percent are those respondents, they do attend but their opinion are not accepted by the panchayat sabha, due to these reasons they have the possibility of absent in the meeting. It is clear from the above analysis, that the respondent opinion in table 6.6 and table 6.7 are contradictory, it shows the respondents have uncertainty in their opinion, which is related with their practicing and their negligence in work.

Table 6.8: Position of Elected Women in Meeting

What is the position of elected women in public gram Sabha meeting?

Sl. No	Positions of women in meetings	Imphal East	Thoubal	Total
1	Equal Position with male representatives	11(40.74)	30	35.37
2	Role in the meetings	7 (25.92)	10	17.96
3	Gave new approach/idea to the meeting	6 (22.22)	5	13.61
4	Give opinion to the meeting	4 (14.81)	2	8.4
5	Discussion with the new scheme of the government	2 (7.4)	8	7.7
6	Interest to work at the new scheme of the government	5 (18.51)	15	16.75
7	No role in the meeting	20 (74.07)	83	78.53

Table 6.8, highlights the position of elected women in public gram panchayat meeting. 78.53 is the highest in number, those respondents who doesn't have no role in meeting. Out of 127 respondents both in Imphal East and Thoubal district, 35.37 percent are accepting that they got equal position with male representatives in meeting. Those women who have the post of Pradhan and Zilla parishad, claimed that they got elected through people's vote. They have the same right and position with the male elected from panchayat. 17.96 opined for their role in meeting, 13.61 percent gave new approach, 8. 4 gave opinion, 7.7 percent is the lowest that discussed the new scheme of the government and 16.75 gave interest to the work at the new scheme of the government.

While analyzing elected women representatives have often remarked how they are apparent in the sense of discriminated against in panchayats. How male colleague tried to dominate women, their attitude towards them of the male official. It is also observed that, if the host of meeting is women representative, male member tends to dominate meeting by sending women members for making tea, so that the discussion, opinion, suggestions proposed by women may not concerned.

Functions of the Panchayat System

Table 6.9: Village Development Programmes

Whether the present education system, employment and health facilities are sufficient to the village

Sl. No	Village development programs	Imphal East	Thoubal	Total
1	Developing (all aspects)	12 (44.44)	40	42.22
2	Partial development	18 (66.66)	64	65.33
3	Sufficient	0	2	1
4	Don't Know	3(11.11)	0	5.5
5	No development	0	0	0

Table 6.9, took some areas for development at the village, in the field of education, employment and health facilities. 65.33 claimed for partial development, 42.22 are in the process of developing, 5.5 percent don't know whether there is development or underdeveloped. While, there is no one who opened for no development at all in the village. Each and every term, elected representatives tried to delivered development works through the government schemes.

Table 6.10: Panchayat Accounts Audited by Government

whether the respondent have the idea of panchayat accounts that are audited by the government

Sl. No	Panchayat accounts audited by government	Imphal East	Thoubal	Total
1	Have the idea	2 (7.4)	9	8.2
2.	Don't Know	25 (92.59)	91	91.79

Table 6.10, depicts the idea of holding panchayat accounts that are audited by the government. 91.79 is the respondent response, that they don't know the idea of government audit accounts. They partially, know the idea but not fully. It is indeed a sizable majority which disapproved with these regards to financial procedure at grassroot level.

Most of the respondent don't know the idea of panchayat audit accounts. The main reasons are given below

Table 6.11: Reasons for not having the Knowledge of Panchayat Audit Accounts:

Sl. No.	Reasons	Imphal East	Thoubal	Percentage
1	Illiterate	20 (74.07)	90	82.03
2	Less women empowerment	19(70.37)	56	63.18
3	Gender stratification	20 (74.07)	89	81.53
4	Proxy representation	17 (62.96)	93	77.98

Table 6.11, provides the details of the reasons for not having the knowledge of panchayat audit accounts. 82.03 is the maximum percentage where respondent EWR are illiterate. However, they complete upto primary level, though there is not effective to the villages with functioning, programmes and funds sanction by the government, that leads to less women empowerment. Due to their ignorance in this field, there is high percentage of proxy representation with 77.98 percentage.

Various Groups Interaction: Perception on Muslim Women Elected Panchayat Representatives

The PRIs require collaboration from numerous parties in order to be considered an Institution of Self Government (ISG). The researcher therefore asked the respondents about particular groups that might either help or hinder their (respondents') ability to operate effectively. These groups include the rural populace, civil society, Meira Paibis, Anganwadi workers, Asha Workers, youth club president, politicians, bureaucrats, and local bodies.

Civil Society and Meira Paibi

Women organizations, civil society or NGOs (Meira Paibi)started awareness campaign, educating their voting rights, importance of vote, choosing right candidates and their political party. These organizations encounter and advocates from the grass root levels. As Tocqueville explained civil society isa wider part. It operates in a sphere in which social capital is brought into play. Civil society differ from state, provides a forum where individual can participate, involved and have equal rights. Such participation of the citizenry build trust and co-operative

spirit in the development process. It facilitates check and balance power of the state and promotes democratization[220]. Civil society can linked institutions, business, organizations, families and individuals together so they can interact. In Manipur society, Meira Paibi (women torch Bearer), active organization formed by women's only. It is formed by combination of women groups from two or more villages. Members are mostly middle-aged couples who are married. After dinner, they sit in the Meira sangh (office) in their village. Meira Paibi primarily focuses on the rights of citizens. They oppose arbitrary detention, rape, sexual exploitation, and the execution of innocent persons in detention in the name of a search operation by armed and uniformed personnel. Members of Meira Paibi physically step in at such a situation to prevent arrest by security personnel. Under the AFSPA of 1958, Manipur experienced regular combing operations and arbitrary arrests of village youths and male family members. Whenever a citizen's rights are in danger, whether during the day or at night, the community is alerted and comes together immediately to save the victim. There are state, regional, and local levels of Meira Paibi in the Meitei community. They coordinate with one another and keep the organisation running. They are discovered to be primarily involved with political activism and citizen human rights. They are aware of the rights and responsibilities of the village panchayat and have thoughts about the representation of women in politics.

In comparison, the Muslim community does have Meira Paibi, an organisation with a structure similar to that of the Meitei community. They are not as organized as Meitei women though, it is noted that, Meira Paibi organization is formed and operating in the Imphal East area. Although there are a few women who are affiliated with Meira Paibi in the Thoubal district, ultimately there is no place for Muslim women in this organisation. It appears that members were not very concerned with the system based on an analysis of the connection between the Meira Paibi and panchayat representatives.

Views from Bureaucrats

The bureaucrats were asked the question, How the empowerment plays an important role for women in 21st century? The respondent gave different views, they claimed that empowerment is must for women in 21st century. Society under estimated women in every aspect. In Manipur Muslim community, many decades are under the controlled of Aalim (Muslim scholar). The main reason was that, Aalim and Ulma have no knowledge of modern and scientific education.

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[220] Dr. Nguyen Manh Cuong, "A Theoretical Framework and Principles for the establishment and Management of civil society organizations in Vietnam", p. 27.

In Islam, male and female have the same rights. These are given irrespective of gender. To follow the foot-steps of Prophet Mohammad, gain knowledge means to educate both man and women. No women should be isolated in society. According to the respondent, educate women is more important than man in the house.

To participate of women in politics, gives additional power to women. Women issues are more concerned with women folks. They can communicate each other in every problem.

Their voices should give priority. No voice in home leads to no voice in society. Man should first know women's right. Therefore, roles of women should be known by male itself.

In terms of empowerment, women itself is a part of empowerment. Not only for political empowerment, they themselves have social and economic empowerment. She should proof herself as empowerment. That is more relevant with Muslim society and more applicable.

Views from Academician

According to academics, women in the PRIs still do not have complete political empowerment. However, the majority of Muslim women are represented through proxies. The formal tasks are carried out by their husbands because the EWR are married ladies. The dependant system on their husband needs to be changed, and she must carry out her own duties independently. Women's inability to participate in Panchayat work is primarily due to their illiteracy and lack of knowledge of their responsibilities. One will be there and submits to their husband so that there should be on her behalf. The quota system had two effects on society. First, as a result of the designated seat for women in politics. The administration is making an effort to increase the number of women in politics. Even in the 33 percent of women who are not empowered individually, the argument is -Are they will still work for their community? This was the academician's assessment of EWR.

Muslim women in Manipur, on the other hand, enjoy that space in public. They should take advantage of this and develop their political leadership from the ground up so that they are ready and involved in higher decision-making. There are fewer women who are interested about entering politics. Family and culture are other elements that place restrictions on women who are active in politics. Family members should be supported regardless of their gender.

Politician

From the politician perspective, they opined that quota system gives positive impact to the Muslim women of Manipur. They have seen changes in the perspective of the voters as well. However, they are not empowered politically. The reasons are- they need some support from the institution as well as from the society itself, maximum of the representatives are illiterate, state should gave criteria for contesting election regarding the educational background of the candidate, give proper training to the representatives as they are new to the politics.

The argument falls in this way- How the politics and political party took a shaped in panchayat election? It is observed that, the politician stands in neutral position and tried to give assertion for helping to the panchayat women at any cost for the development programmes.

Manipur is a state with party less democracy in panchayat. There is a debate in the country, the involvement of political parties and participate in the PRIs. At one point, the conceptual debate is the idea of Sarvodaya that was inspired by Mahatma Gandhi as the Panchayat should be non-political[221]. It means political parties should be kept out of elections. The party less democracy are supported by Jayaprakash Narayan by following Gandhi's footsteps. According to Jayaprakash Narayan, there are demerits of political participation in Panchayat election. Some points are given below-

i) Political parties accentuate group outlook and sectional feelings among the villagers and thus affect the cooperative spirit of the people. Consensus is the best way of arriving at decisions.

ii) While Panchayats are expected to spring from below, parties involve taking decisions from above.

iii) Village problems do not involve party solution, but transcend party division. Parties and their programmes are hardly relevant to them.[222]

Some proponents of party less Panchayats argue that it is not practical to dispense with political parties' participation at the state or national levels because these are large units, and some form of organization is needed to articulate the varied interests. However, they say that at the local level, doing away with political parties is a welcome proposition. This is because, the village being an organic community and relatively small in size (where one almost always knows the

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[221] George Methew, "Panchayati Raj: From Legislation to Movement", pp. 140- 149.
[222] Jayaprakash Narayan, 'The Role of Political Parties in Panchayati Raj', p. 602.

other), efficient individuals with a commitment for public service would be elected. In such a situation, there is no need for political parties, since articulation of issues could be done one-to-one with the villagers, by the individual who is contesting the elections. And, if , elected that individual would consider himself/herself a representative of the village and not as a representative of any political party.

However, according to critics, the defect of such a system is that it idealises the village. The villages in India are ridden with conflicts regarding caste, poverty as well as petty differences. Therefore, according to them these villagers should organise themselves on party lines and associate themselves with those parties which they feel represent their interests best. And, if need be, the political parties would help them tone down any extreme views they possess. Thus, at the other pole of the conceptual debate are those who support the entry of political parties in the Panchayats. According to them, there are some merits of political party participation in the PRIs.[223] Some points are as follows:

- Political parties provide a common bond of unity among the people on the basis of some principles. It is better to have differences on the basis of some ideological considerations and definite programmes rather than on caste, creed, religion, language or other primordial loyalties.
- Political parties can act as a bridge between Panchayats and State Legislature and/ or Parliament The three-tier structure of Panchayats has to operate in the bigger structure of parliamentary democracy which operates through the instrumentality of political parties.
- Political parties will act as important media of modernisation in village India. Panchayats provide a base for the progressive and radical parties to operate and fight against the forces of reaction, backwardness and tradition.
- Party participation can help leadership grow at the lower level; these grassroots leaders would subsequently be leaders at the state or national level.

In consonance with the above view, a distinguished expert in democratic decentralisation has stated,

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[223] Prabhat Dutta, 'Panchayats in West Bengal: Politics at the Top', B. Ghosh ed., "Perspective in Political Science", 1997.

"Panchayati Raj elections, held on a party basis will certainly heighten the politicisation of the people...Of course, one can argue that party discipline will necessarily limit the freedom of its members, that real power would tend to drift into the hands of the leading politicians and that party organization, instead of elected Panchayats, may become the real governing body...But, this is not a serious problem because if parties and politicians have to endure, they must be sensitive to public criticism. They have to observe the rules of the game"[224]

Santhanam Committee (1963) was the first to make an official field study on the scope of for unanimity in Panchayat elections. The Asoka Mehta Committee (1978) called for open participation of political parties in Panchayat elections. West Bengal was the first State in India to accept and implement the idea of political Panchayats when elections to Panchayat bodies were held in 1978. The West Bengal experience with Panchayats with the active participation of political parties has been considered a success story. Kerala is another successful State where political parties participate in Panchayats. However, in many states of India where political parties compete for votes in Panchayat elections, those not supporting the party in power have lost out on benefits. Part IX of the Constitution of India is silent on the role of political parties in elections to the Rural Local Bodies.[225] The Report on Panchayati Raj Jurisprudence, submitted to the Centre in 2006, has recommended the non-participation of political parties in the rural local bodies.

The majority of Panchayat members saw themselves as 'people's representatives' rather than 'politicians', who represent political parties and serve in the State Legislature. They claim not to engage in party politics. They claim that these so-called 'politicians' are dishonest and unreliable. Such an opinion is the outcome of the political unrest that successive State governments have experienced. Since independence a government has been able to serve out its entire five-year term, and that too primarily as a result of recent changes made to the Anti-Defection Law in the Xth Schedule of the Indian Constitution by the 91st Constitution Amendment Act, 2003. Floor crossing by MLAs was a common occurrence in Manipur State politics prior to the establishment of that law. Because the MLAs who held crucial posts in the Government were too busy to maintain the status quo, and the 'out of power' MLAs wanted to

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[224] George Mathew, Op. Cit., pp. 150-160.
[225] Government of India, "Report of the Committee on Panchayati Raj Jurisprudence", Ministry of Panchayati Raj New Delhi, 2006.

overthrow the Government, such defections diminished the credibility of the MLAs in the eyes of the people of the State. Thus, there was hardly any time left for either of these groups constituents. People in the State also believe that bribing politicians is necessary for them to act. Thus, there is a rise in corruption. As a result of everything said above, there is discontent with state-level politicians. The majority of GP members believe that state-level politicians interfere with the Panchayat representatives' ability to do their duties, which is another factor contributing to their disdain of them. According to them, the MLAs' opposition is a major factor in the State Government reluctance to transfer the 3 F: Funds, Functions, and Functionaries to the PRIs.

Village Youth Clubs

In Manipur, the Leikai (Local) youth club is crucial for the young people who are involved in local social services and sports. Every leikai club hosts a number of sporting activities as part of its traditional events. Nehru Yuva Kendra has 3279 affiliated, registered, and unregistered youth clubs in Manipur.[226] The Panchayat Yuva Shakti Abhiyan (PYSA) was established in Manipur in 2006. PYSA's guiding philosophy is to promote young engagement in local democracy while working with panchayats to ensure local development at the grassroots level. It is noted that, youth clubs are mainly focus on sports activities and less in political awareness programme. While PMEYSA (Panchayat Mahila Evam Yuva Shakti Abhiyan) was established in 2007. PMEYSA aspires to unite elected women representatives into a network through collective actions so they can better represent themselves and participate in local government issues.

The Panchayat Mahila Evam Yuva Shakti Abhiyan target to build on the substantial representation of women and youth in Panchayats so that they use their collective strength more effectively. It extends their supports and cooperation on the efforts of the many isolated women representatives in the country to cement their unity and create a forum for continued training. PMEYSA contributes women with specific kinds of support which goes beyond the usual training given to PRI representatives. There are different strategies and process to work in the schemes. The strategies are follows[227]

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[226] Ningthoujam Irina, 'Leikai- club' in the contemporary Meitei society', p.2.
[227] 'Annual Report (2011-12)Panchayati Raj ', Ministry of Panchayati Raj Government of India, p.45

1) To have a *Sammelan* spread over 2-3 days in each state to facilitate the sharing of common problems, issues and interactions, and to give them the strength of numbers.

2) lEWRs adopt a state specific charter that shows the roadmap for taking forward the Panchayat Mahila Shakti Abhiyan in the State

3) Identification of State level Core Agency information of State level Resource Cells to keep updated information related to the participation of EWRs and serve as knowledge support institutions.

4) Information of an Association with its own elected office bearers.

5) To organise training and sensitization programs.

Again PMEYSA gas given the following processes[228]

1) Formation of a Core Committee

2) Core committee facilitating the drafting of the state charter

3) First day of the *Sammelan* - to meet, gather and speak in an informal and warm atmosphere.

4) Second day - finalize the draft charter

Under the scheme, states have formed core committee to organized state level Sammelans. The scheme established, 14 State Support Centre in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Punjab, Sikkim, Uttarakhand, West Bengal, Andaman and Nicobar Island, various knowledge and information regarding PRIs are given to the Elected Women Representatives (EPW). In these states training and sensitization programme have been conducted. About 627 batches of this programme have been organized and 81 Divisional Level Sammelans have been conducted so far.[229]

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[228] Ibid, p. 46.
[229] Ibid.

Table 6.12: Respondent on the Idea of PMEYSA:

Sl. No	Idea of PMEYSA by EWRs	Imphal East	Thoubal	Total
1	Yes	5 (18.51)	10	14.25
2	No	23 (85.18)	96	90.59
	Total			

It has been discovered that the majority of elected women representatives do not understand PMEYSA. In addition to patriarchal culture and inadequate education, the main reason people don't participate in training programmes is a lack of knowledge.

Anganwadi Workers

The programs of ICDS is a countrywide, aims at the development of child under the below age of six years. The service programme tried to delivered all basic essential services, mainly in the field of health, nutrition, education, pregnant women supplements, mother, adolescent girls to provide services in their own village or community.

There is a basic relationship between the active panchayat representatives with the programmes of the ICDS. The most significant feature of ICDS is to improve the capabilities of the parents to take care of the child and thus involve the community by encouraging self-help in improving the quality of life and wellbeing of the child and family. ICDS has been envisaged and conceptualized as a community based programme. It calls for community participation in its process of implementation by utilizing local resources. ICDS lays great emphasis for bringing about social change in the community and its objectives are not confined to delivery of services only. This is reflected in heightened awareness, change in attitude, beliefs and practices.[230]

 The Anganwadi workers (AWWs) and their choice as a voluntary worker rather than being paid functionary makes it a scheme of the people. The assumption can be expressed in such a way that the Anganwadi worker as they are being a local woman, would render their delivery of service more effectively due to presence of familiarity with the community. This would open the path to facilitate acceptance of the programme and participation in it. Most of the studies, unviel that beneficiaries have less knowledge of the scheme, its components and

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[230] Department of Women and Child Development, "Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. A guide book of Anganwadi workers", New Delhi: NIPCCD (1986), pp 4- 10.

possible benefits they can derive from it[231]. It results, ICDS operation has not been able to involve over the pass few decades to the desirable level of development. Through the project staff has received training in solicitating community participation, yet Supervisors and Child development project officer (CDPOs), were unable to provide the desired support and guidance in involving the community.

However, the changes could be seen from the last three/ five years. The panchayat members in connection with Anganwadi workers, provide awareness programmes for the child and family development. They give awareness for the services, of supplementary nutrition, health education and nutrition, immunization, non- formal pre- education. The children education under the age of six years, is one of the objective for the ICDS programme and tried to convinced in their community to send their child to the Anganwadi centre.

Table 6.13: Services of Anganwadi Worker

Sl. No	Services through awareness programme with Anganwadi workers	Imphal East (Anganwadi workers)	Thoubal (Anganwadi Workers)	Total
1	Childs nutrition	5	11	100
2	Child's education	4 (80.00)	8 (72.72)	76.36
3	Supplementary nutrition to the child/ lactating mother/ pregnancy women	5	10 (90.90)	95.45
4	Non formal Education	5	11	100
5	Immunization	3 (60.00)	9 (81.81)	70.90

Note: Imphal East district Anganwadi worker respondents=5, Thoubal district Anganwadi worker respondent=11, Total= 16

It is found that, Anganwadi workers did immunization programme with 70.90 percent, child's education with 100 percent, 95. 45 percent for pregnancy, lactating mother and child's supplementary. On the other hand, it is observed that, child's education outcomes is not in

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[231] National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development, " Research on ICDS: An Overview", Volume (2) (1986- 1995)

positive way. The reasons are, children with low income in family where they can't support education for their children in private school tends to send their child in Anganwadi centre and the children were mainly focus on the meals that prepared in centre not in quality of education.

Asha Workers

The National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) was launched on 12th April 2005 with an objective to provide effective health care to the rural population with emphasis on poor women & children. One of the key components of the NRHM is to provide every village in the country with a trained female community health activist i.e. Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA). ASHA is a health activist in the community, who will create awareness on health and its determinants and mobilize the community towards local health planning and increased utilization and accountability of the existing health services. The ASHA is expected to be an interface between the community and the public health system. NRHM is envisaged as a horizontal program with emphasis on initiatives and planning at local level. ASHA being the grass root level worker the success of NRHM depends on how efficiently is ASHA able to perform but the efficiency of ASHA or efficiency of performance of ASHA depends on their awareness & perception about their roles & responsibilities in health care provision.The numbers of ASHA's in "the country increased from 4,04, 451 in the year 2009 to 8, 70, 089 as of July 2013. Over the past few years ASHA has gained in visibility and has been the focus of attention ranging from the romantic to the cynical. In 2010, a large-scale evaluation in eight states demonstrated, that the ASHA represented a significant opportunity for contributing health outcomes and that ASHA is well supported".[232]

ASHA is working with several groups involving- Anganwadi Institutions, the Block Nodal officer, District Nodal office, the village health committee and the Gram Panchayat.[233]

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[232] "Updates on the ASHAs Programme" (2013), National Rural Health Mission, Ministry of Health and Family welfare, Government of India
[233] Ibid, p. 2

Table 6.14: Services of ASHA Workers

SL. No	Services of ASHA Workers	Imphal East	Thoubal	Total
1	Immunization for children	5	14	100
2	Awareness to pregnant women for taking Iron, calcium, vitamins	4 (80.00)	12 (85.71)	82.85
3	Nutrition for child	3 (60.00)	11 (78.57)	69.28
4	Sanitation	2 (40.00)	7 (50.00)	45.00
5	Prevention from sexually transmitted diseases	4 (80.00)	6 (42.85)	61.42
6	ANC (Antenatal Care)	3 (60.00)	9 (64.28)	62.1

Note: Imphal East ASHA Worker respondents=5, Thoubal district ASHA Worker respondents=14, Total=19

It is found that, the immunization programme is the highest in numbers with 100 percent, that ASHA workers received services to the community. Next, distribution of iron, calcium tablet for the pregnant women with 82.85 percent. ANC done in less numbers. It is one of the crucial factors, ensuring healthy outcomes in women and new born babies. The enteral parts of ANC are nutritional education to the pregnant women and recently delivered women that influence child health and maternal outcomes. Delivery was done while the doctors are available. In present scenario, there is no doctors, result in less delivery cases and suffered by village women without functioning state machinery Public Health Centre.

The ASHAs workers did remarkable duties during the high time of pandemic COVID 19. In connection with District Medical Officer, the covid patient who are in the home isolation period of 15 days. The ASHA workers contact with the patient, give health details to DMO, and to maintain protocol of the government to prevents from infection to the other people. At present, the government give more emphasis on the issues of adult health, ASHA's workers are confined at door to door campaign for checking diabetes, hypertension (checking BP) and hearts problems.

The respondent also claimed that, ASHA works on population size of 1000. However, they are handling more than 3000 populations. The population size should be decreased where ASHA can work better under the limits with quality. The state is not responding on their demands for appointing more ASHA's workers to the concerned Gram Panchayat.

Table 6.15: ASHA's Work in Collaboration with Anganwadi Worker:

SL. NO	ASHA's works with Anganwadi	Imphal East	Thoubal	Total
1	Immunization (under the age of five)	6 (60.00)	17 (68.00)	64.00
2	Polio	8 (80.00)	19 (76.00)	78.00
3	Pregnant women counselling	7 (70.00)	21 (84.00)	77.00
4	TV, Malaria check-up	3 (30.00)	7 (28.00)	29.00

Note: Total number of respondents for Anganwadi and ASHA worker of Thoubal district= 25

Total number of respondents for Anganwadi and ASHA worker of Imphal East= 10

It is found that, ASHA's workers in connection with Public Health Centre (PHC), are mainly functioning in the field of health development of child and women. Polio with 78 percent, immunization with 64 percent and counselling to pregnant women with 77 percent is largely done collectively with ASHA and Anganwadi workers. There is irregularity of works in connection with the Gram Panchayat. However, the Gram Panchayat select ASHA's workers from their GP if there is no qualified ANM/GNM nurses for this scheme. Regardless of ASHA's selection process, it is found that in both the Imphal East and Thoubal districts, no role of Gram Panchayat working with ASHA's in the community. Empowering community-based health workers in providing effective nutrition of women and child care of the village, empowered women in society.

Effective Outcomes:

The constitutional mandate in 1992 can witness the impact of women's representation and participation in the new panchayat institutions of local governance. In the frame work of deliberative democratic theory focus on three elements- process, outcomes and context. As an outcome of deliberative democracy focuses on the educative process of deliberation, power generating to the process of public deliberation, fairness of the procedure and the knowledge building outcomes of the deliberation[234]. Deliberative democracy advocates on political equality. Political equality of opportunity and resources required policies that treat individual unequally. In deliberation process the politics of presence can be an important part, the question

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[234] Maeve Cook, 'Five arguments for Deliberative Democracy' in "Democracy as public deliberation", ed. M. D'Entreves, pp. 54- 87.

of exclusion of some section of society from being represented and how they might be included? This question of resources should address not only individuals but needs recognizing the individual social situatedness through group differentiated citizenship as community[235]. Therefore, the policy of gender quota system is important based on the caste, race ethnicity and gender. The chapter tried to finds the problems, obstacles- social and institutional to effective participation by women representatives in the panchayats. How the quota operates across very diverse electoral and socio-economic context. On the basis of field work, tried to evaluate women participation in terms of developmental outcomes as well empowerment outcomes by taking two specific areas.

1) Gender Quota
2) Women representation

The primary goal of quota lies on increasing the number of women elected legislature. It can be seen in three dimensions- first is quota size, the placement cell i.e female candidates place in a winnable constituencies and strength of quota laws i.e the enforcement mechanism. The Manipur Panchayat Act, 1994 established the two-tier system in the state. The gender quota system implemented according to 73rd and 74th amendment act of the Indian constitution. Women elected and place a space in decentralized government. However, size of the gender quota system is not similar for every state in India. According, the constitutional amendment passed in September 2009, there is an increase of PRI quotas for women to 50 percent[236]. The state of Manipur, still continued to the 1992, constitutional amendment with less percentage of quotas. This gives an impact for less development outcomes to Muslim women in politics. It has been found that, 100 percent of the respondent in the selected two districts of Manipur, wants the reservation of women upto 50 percent at local government politics. Moreover, there is no separate gender quota system to the minority Muslim. As Muslim women considered as double disadvantage section of the society, needs states institutional upliftment for empowering them in the field of politics.

Women, Economy and Empowerment

The most striking feature of Manipuri Muslim women's economic role is their direct participation in extra familial activities- care of livestock, marketing and selling of goods etc. As mentioned earlier, women of Manipuri Muslim work outside unrecognised labour force. As

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[235] Will Kymlika, "The Rights of Minority Cultures", 1995.
[236] Bharadwaj, 'Token Representation: Upward Impact of Reservations for Female Candidate', p.1

per the result of the 55th round 1999- 2000 of NSS, the percentage of female in rural areas of Manipur was estimated at 15.3% amongst the person usually employed in principle status, against the All India average of 23.1%. In the sample survey it was found to be 14.2% for Manipur and 11.7% for all India in the urban areas. In the 2001 census, out of the total Muslim workers, 60.29% were male workers, while 39.71% were female workers. The same trend was observed at the state level too, except for the fact that the difference is marginal with the male and female workers recorded at 55.78% and 44.22% respectively in the 2001 census. The male female work participation ratio may also be examined by confining only to the subset of population, usually employed in the principle status.[237]

Table 6.16: Percentage of person employed in Economic activity by sex and districts of Manipur, 2004[238]

District	Male	Female	Person
Imphal East	87.41	12.59	100
Imphal West	82.43	17.57	100
Bishnupur	83.02	16.98	100
Thoubal	85.09	14.91	100
Churachanpur	76.00	24.00	100
Chandel	90.67	9.33	100
Manipur	85.46	14.54	100

 In terms of work participation rate in the principle status, the female participation is found to be highest in Churachandpur district and followed by Imphal West district with 17.57% of the districts usually employed person. However, women are perusing in a number of non-economic activities benefiting economic gains to their household management. Some of the activities are maintenance of kitchen garden, household poultry rearing, free collection of fish, free collection of firewood's, grinding of food grains, cooking, washing, sewing, collection of water etc. If these non-economic activities are converted into economic values and if this counted the work participation ratio for females would be considerably high.[239] Though their income is low and their works as confined to domestic domain, the position of women is determined by class not caste. Upper class enjoyed more privilege and leisure whereas ordinary women posses a

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[237] Report On Socio Economic Survey of Meitei Pangals (Manipuri Muslim), Op. Cit.,pp.34- 35.
[238] Ibid, p. 33
[239] Ibid, p. 35

great deal of mobility, necessitated by the necessity of earning a livelihood. Therefore, those women from the upper class or elite have got the opportunity to enter into politics to the support of her husband and family. The status of women economy might also be a factor for underrepresentation.

Women, Education and Empowerment

In 1907–1908 the Muslims of Manipur established a precedent in the realm of education. The establishment of a madrasah in Lilong offered courses in Arabic, Urdu, and Persian. In 1935–1936, the Faiza M.E. Madrssah was founded. However, Lilong has the greatest literacy rate in primary schools, at 35.57 percent in 1981, with 14.29% of the population being female.[240] Education for girls is restricted to learning how to recite the Holy Quran and how to be a responsible wife and mother. In general, men's education became the top priority and women were not seen as necessary. A Muslim girl attends school for five years on average, however enrollment rates are higher in urban areas.[241] There were minimal in numbers of women in post- graduates, graduates, technical and professional graduates in the 90s.

However, the growing number of male and female students enrolling in schools and universities, both within and outside of the state, indicates a change in attitudes toward education. Male students make up 86.36% of all students who travel beyond the state for their studies, while female students make up 13.64%.[242] The number of literacy rate in Manipur for the Muslim Population and the state as a whole according to the 2001 census-

Table 6.17: Number of literacy rate of Muslim and State Population in Manipur-[243]

Sector	Literacy rates					
	Muslim			state		
	Male	female	person	male	female	person
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Rural	72.1	37.7	55.2	77.3	56.9	67.3
Urban	82.2	51.0	66.8	88.7	70.0	79.3
Total	75.0	41.6	58.8	80.3	60.5	70.5

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[240] Salam Irene, op. cit., p. 21
[241] Ibid- p. 22.
[242] Report on Socio Economic Survey, Op. Cit., p. 41.
[243] Ibid.

According to the statistics, Muslim women have the lowest rate of literacy at 41.6%. Through programmes like free books, midday meals, free schooling, etc., the government is attempting to boost education. The goal of the Sarva Shiksa Abhiyan (SSA), also known as the Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE), is to guarantee that all children between the ages of 6 and 14 are enrolled in school. However, all children are enrolled even though they do not fall within this age range. Parents' lack of interest, their involvement in home finances, and concerns about affordability were the causes. The survey found that 42.23% of people in this age bracket, including dropouts and those who never enrolled, did not go to school.

From the survey, it is possible to identify both positive and negative impacts. The survey's attempt to gauge the growth of the Muslim population is a beneficial trend. However, despite the need for a survey based on the 2011 census, no organisation is currently working to advance this community. In the state, both the public and private sectors have seen numerous changes.

In terms of higher education for Muslim women, Lilong Haoreibi college, in the Thoubal district of Lilong is the only college in a Muslim-dominated area. This contributes to the lower literacy rate among Muslim women. It is significantly impacted by the distance travelled for higher education and falls prey to social conventions that encourage child marriage.[244] The development of minorities is provided in the Indian constitution. From the perspective of minority rights, Article 30 is one of the most significant constitutional articles. It refers about minorities' rights to an education. It grants all minorities the right to choose any established and operated educational institution. The law stipulates further that the state is prohibited from discriminating against educational institutions on the grounds that they are run by members of minorities, regardless of their language or religion, when it comes to the granting of aid. Regarding the growth of the minority group, the state discriminates.

As far as concerned the structural system of government towards the development of Muslim Community, the Manipur State Minority Commission established in 20th February 2004.
Now in the present scenario, educated women and ladies are increases as well as their participation in social activities. Currently, several Pangal women are professors, doctors, engineers, enrolled in higher education, doctorates, council members, etc. Salma Begum won

[244] Dr. K Kunjani Devi, 'Dawn of Muslim Women Education at Lilong (Manipur state India)', p. 35

the state's MBBS entrance test, Mrs. Mumtaz was appointed deputy conservator of forests in the state public service, and several girls won gold medals in sports, education, and other endeavours.[245] As far as concerned the structural system of government towards the development of Muslim Community, the Manipur State Minority Commission established in 20th February 2004.

However, the community had undergone some development. The state's management of the quota system is primarily responsible for the development of the Muslim community, including Pangal women. The Manipuri government provided 4% OBC reservation in 2006.[246] Following a prolonged fight by the Muslim community, the Meitei Pangal (Muslim) OBC group was granted reservation. In every state department, the number of high-level, white jobs has increased. Why do Muslims in Manipur still lack development compared to other communities if this policy of reservation was introduced earlier while taking into account the condition of this minority community?

Muslim women's status is inferior to that of men. Women have had the right to vote in public since 1948, but they have not yet been allowed to run for office. The opposite Muslim male is, nonetheless, currently represented in elections. In the 2017 state election, a Muslim woman candidate finally emerged after many years. Women are currently taking control of their lives through education, yet there remains a gap in politics. According to the aforementioned factors, Muslim women had a low level of political engagement due to social, economic, and educational backwardness, which hampered their ability to make decisions or achieve social or political empowerment.

Famous philosophers Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum created the concept of capacity approach in relation to education and women's emancipation. The "Capabilities Approach" to development was described by Sen. A person's capacity to perform noble deeds or attain noble states of being is referred to as their capability[247].Development under this framework is essentially about expanding people's opportunity to lead lives that they have reason to value.

[245] Henna Taranum Khan, M.S Khan and M. Ahamad (2015), 'Status of Manipuri Meitei Pangal Women and Challenges Ahead', E- Pao, Manipur.
[246] Government of Manipur, Department of Personal and Administrative Reforms (Personal Division), Office Memorandum, Imphal- 24th April 2007.
[247] Amartya Sen, 'Capability and Well- being', in Martha Nussbaum and Amartya Sen (eds.), "The Quality of Life", p. 30.

[248]According to Martha Nussbaum, literacy and education are related to women's capacity for establishing social bonds and respect for themselves. According to Nussbaum, "real" education entails a comprehensive empowerment of women through reading and numeracy as well as the development of the imagination and a command of her political and economic circumstances.[249]

The central question asked by this capability approach is the ability of the individual. In the field of economics, Muslim women have that capacity to earn their living starting from small entrepreneurs. If women's empowerment is regarded as a key objective of development, Sen's concept of human resource will inevitably enter into the conversation at major development institutions. Because of its advantages in the economy and in society, education is no longer given more importance in the development cycle. Instead, it can be viewed as a method to increase the chances for women to lead fulfilling lives. However, educating women might give them more influence.

Women Health And Empowerment

The essential elements to empowering women includes- health, housing and the environment affects a women overall ability to live and rise healthy children. Development analysis in the past examine women's health issues as a vital part of development. Proper nourishment, immunization against deadly diseases, sanitary living conditions- these constitute essential aspects of the development process and contribute empowering women.

From the above table 6.13, 6.14 ana 6.15 (ASHAs and Anganwadi), it is found that, ASHAs workers dealing with health and nutrition of child and women. Majority of ASHA and Anganwadi workers are educated, passed the high school, some are graduate. Mostly, they visited home where they work under the respective GP. The EWR, of the Panchayati Raj Institution hardly comes to the issues regarding health issues. The representatives mainly confined to the constructional and development works of the village. However, in connection of Anganwadi workers and ASHAs workers, work together in some field by providing information regarding health, hygienic practice, nutrition, Anti Natal check-up, Immunization Schedule for new born babies/polio immunization, prevention of sexually transmitted disease,

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[248] Erin Murphy- Graham, "Opening Minds, Improving Lives Education and women's empowerment in Honduras", p. 12
[249] Ibid. p-14

sanitary facility to the women, villagers and child. It is found that, role of PRIs involvement need to increase. Gram panchayat can work for different initiatives launched by the ministry of Health and Family Welfare through IEC material promoted by ASHAs, School Health Ambassadors and Anganwadi workers. It includes the activities- to help families with new born, pregnant women cares, promote immunization and breast feeding, address substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol[250]. Gram panchayats have primary responsibility in three aspects- prevention, promotive and rehabilitative health care and these aspects were not found both in the two districts. It is important to provide support to ASHAs and Anganwadi centres in their routine public health functions. These shows that lack in health services to the women and child healthcare, make the village women gives less contribution to empowering women.

Political Aspect: Decision-Making And Empowerment

The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment in 1992 provided decentralizing power to rural and urban local bodies. The objective of these amendment was to ensure the participation of citizens in the efforts for economic development, social and economic justice and also to witness implementation of these inclusive programs. The amendment also reserved one third of the seats in the panchayat including reservation for SC and STs. The government takes proactive role in the endeavour of empowerment process. Representation in local self-government will leads to gendered perspective on issues and policies.

Women Representation

Women represented through reservation policy. A major shift can be seen at the field of politics to the Manipur Muslim women by establishing the Panchayati Raj system of grassroot governance. It is observed that 98 percent of the respondent are elected through reservation policy. The elected women represented and tried to delivered the government schemes for the development of the village. As, the constitutional amendment envisaged the panchayat institution of local self-governance designed primarily for the planning programmes of economic and social justice and the implementation of development schemes entrusted to them. Table 2, gives the area of social development programmes, where development of works and the issue of domestic violence against women could be seen with high percentage and less in

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[250] Ministry of Health and Family welfare, LSDG PRI, p.1

welfare of the women and educational development. The achievement of the elected panchayat women is considerable, includes- schemes for drinking water, road connectivity, used of common resources like public ponds, public toilet, widow pension. It is observed that, empowerment outcomes have resulted in some aspects. The respondents claimed that they recognized as elected representatives. There is a culture of women involvement in decision making process of the family, that affect to the panchayat too. Empowerment outcomes can be seen from the women representatives at large numbers they get respect and status in family, village and their willingness to contest election again, some express to compete for the position at a higher level.

On the other hand, Muslim women are subject to social restraints that are unique to them, including lack of education, movement restrictions, housework, male dominance, childbearing, etc. Table 6.1 shows that 83.03 percent of female representatives come from a family with political experience. When examining the situation of those women, it is noted that the quota system offered a challenge to men, especially for those who had previously participated in local politics. Because panchayat seats alternate between men and women, those gram panchayats that rotate for women's seats would nominate their spouses, daughters, daughters-in-law, or mothers as candidates. Men would assume the right to manage panchayat operations following elections. However, the women who hold the positions of Zilla Parishad representatives in the two districts of Thoubal and Imphal East as well as some Pradhan women have their own voices. They do take part in some panchayat work and meetings, but not much. These are not significant in terms of the political empowerment of women. Table 6.8 lists the elected women's positions in the gram Sabha meeting. It has been noted that elected women face discrimination, male colleagues frequently predominate meetings, male representatives appear unwilling to listen to thoughts and opinions put forth by women, and male authorities often treat them with contempt. However, several respondents participated without offering any opinions even though they didn't want to attend the meeting. This indicates that the elected women are not participating in the meeting. There are reasons why a sizable percentage of elected women choose not to attend meetings. Why don't they develop the idea of resources, functions, and duties to help local bodies? Table 6.11 shows that illiteracy is the biggest contributing factor, combined with decreasing women's empowerment, gender stratification, and proxy representation. As a result, people are now more aware of the importance of education due to their inability to read agendas or comprehend what is being discussed at panchayat meetings.

Conclusion

Womens's political empowerment is frequently emphasised as being essential to achieving social justice and gender parity. It is challenging to separate women's issues from a country's overall socioeconomic development. Women have been more prominent in politics, and it is thought that this has strengthened the community. PRIs boost women's confidence in the political system, encouraging more women to enter politics. The debate centres on how the quota system affects affirmative action for women since it allows women to enter politics. Does the presence of women in politics promote the recognition and redistribution of justice?

The government provides constitutional protections for minorities and women to engage in inclusive politics. One of the crucial policies enacted in India is affirmative action, which consists of a series of proactive anti-discrimination measures meant to provide access for members of groups who would otherwise be excluded or underrepresented in favoured positions in society. It enhances the representation of minorities and women in fields including employment, education, and decision-making where they have historically been underrepresented. A reservation policy as a form of affirmative action for the underprivileged. From this point forward, it will be almost 30 years. The goal of this amendment was to make it possible for citizens to participate in the creation of plans at the local level, to manage institutions in local governance, to advance economic growth, to promote social and economic fairness, and to increase the representation of women in politics. It guaranteed that women will have a 33 percent representation at all levels of panchayat institution.

In a very diversified, multicultural, multilingual, and multireligious nation like India, social exclusion and efforts to establish an inclusive democracy must be considered. Compared to other minorities, Muslims in this country experience more discrimination and disadvantage. The politics of inclusion are emphasised for two main reasons, according to Zoya Hasaan in her book Politics of Inclusion: Caste Minorities and Affirmative Action: First, more historically excluded groups are present in public institutions, which is a sign of fairness in democratic regimes. Second, more historically excluded groups are present in decision-making

institutions, which gives these bodies access to individuals who can express the interests of these groups. The most compelling case for supporting particular social groups comes from how governmental institutions operate, which frequently fails to address the needs of disadvantaged and marginalised groups in acceptable ways. The clearest basis for what Anne Philips refers to as "politics of presence" comes from this exclusion.

It is clear that interest in inclusion initiatives, such as affirmative action and mandated reservations, is on the rise. With the spread of democracy over the past ten years, there is now widespread agreement that no one social group should hold all of the political or governing power in a democracy. This has raised awareness of the necessity for developing political systems that take into account the concerns of many groups, especially those who are marginalised on the basis of race, religion, and ethnic heritage. The case study of Muslim women representatives in Manipur's PRIs was used in the study to attempt to analyse the politics of women's inclusion and presence in politics.

The study has examined the status of Muslim Women political representatives in PRIs. With the implementation of 73rd and 74th constitutional amendment act, contesting Panchayat election from the year 1997. This made a remarkable event and new strategies for Muslim women in Manipur. It can be pointed out that women's representation, witness a gradual evolution in Manipur Muslim community. The first main chapter attempted to discuss the feminist argument with the idea of liberalism in the twenty-first century, as well as the discourse of women's empowerment. How women's political differences and identities were reinterpreted as a result of their empowerment. Political empowerment grew during the 1980s. Women's rights activist discusses marginalised and oppressed groups. They only favoured a certain segment of society back in the 1970s.

It is noted that, political representation became a focal point in the liberal democratic discourse over the previous few decades, leading to a significant change in the foundational assumptions of liberal democratic thinking and knowledge on representation. Philosophers tried to investigate the concept of more fairly representing women in politics and calls for more representation of women in politics. Liberal feminist, argued for women's identity in politics, by portraying group identity which can be brough by political presence. It is also noted that scholars arguing for qualitative and quantitative representation of women. With these concepts,

it can be assumed that Muslim women as a minority community in the state needs both the quality and quantity of representation.

In second chapter, noted that, international organizations discussed the measure for the welfare and development of women which give influence to the Indian government planning and policy process. The main objective is to actively participate women in mainstream area i.e the socio economic and political affairs in the country. It has shown how international laws like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations Convention on Civil and Political Rights, the United Nations Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and others have a significant impact on the perception of women's power in politics. These accords included both national and international concerns pertaining to women. Decision-making in the administration and politics are included. Women's political rights were determined to be restricted in the setting of India.

It was revealed that women's political rights were constrained in India. Prior to India's independence, it has been noted that women participated in political agendas. Women occupy more political office despite having less voting rights, it has been found. It seems that women have a place in politics.

Following independence, the Indian government set up a variety of committees and commissions for panchayats. Two women ought to be chosen to panchayat positions, according to the 1959 recommendations of the Balwantrai Mehta Committee. The Ashok Mehta Committee suggests more radical changes to the panchayat system by adding reserved seats for the other underprivileged groups. The 73rd Amendment was approved in 1992. Prior to the constitutional amendment, states like Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Kerala allocated a certain proportion of seats in village councils for women. The Andhra Pradesh Panchayat Act, 1964, stipulated a presence of women in local governments of 22-25%, and the Kerala District Council Act, 1984, provided for a 30% reservation to the district councils.

Analyzing Indian women in grassroots democracy demonstrates how actively involved women are in regional politics. This constitutional modification in PRIs has had a significant impact on how women participate in politics at all levels. Even though SC and ST women are given reservations in the rural setting, it is discovered that EWR are unwilling to carry out their duties in a correct manner and are constantly directed by their spouse. Their ineffective political participation is also hampered by a lack of political education, training, and orientation.

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Women's voting autonomy, involvement in election campaigns, and political knowledge are a few of the elements that can be analysed in order to determine how politically conscious women are. Although they engage in plenty of political activity, the Muslim Women Survey reveals that the majority of women in MWS are illiterate. In the political process, they take an active part. This means that their lack of literacy or education does not deter them from seeking out a position of active political participation. Women demonstrate a great understanding of the value of democratic institutions and political engagement, but they have little access to these opportunities and less ability to contribute to them. While democratic rights are intended to be exercised independently. It appears that the value of democratic rights is preserved inside them. But one of India's democratic governance's shortcomings is the underrepresentation of women in this institution, including voting. In order to improve the link between democracy and social development, factors other than elections and voter turnout become crucial.

The third chapter examines Manipur's panchayat system, the period of pre and post implementation of 73rd Amendment Act, 1992. The existence of various accounts of panchayat system can be seen in different phases of the states. The traditional system reveals that the Manipur panchayat system was not just limited to the village. It includes all state projects. They actively contribute to the political, economic, and social growth of the state. Additionally, they provided military services during times of conflict. It has been noted that the panchayat system is decentralized government that function during the British era was primarily judicial rather than administrative.

However, there are certain similarities between the Manipur valley's royal governance and the modern panchayat system. According to the Office of the Choukidar, a panchayat court, there is a rural chowkidar appointed for every 100 homes. To his circle's panchayat, he was required to report daily events. It should be mentioned that the Mohamaddan Panchayat Court was founded for the Muslim community to hear disputes between Muslims and non-Muslims. It has been noted that the king granted the community a particular standing.

Following Independence, Manipur approved the United Provision Act of 1947 and put the modern panchayat system in place in 1960. The state lacks competent administrative legislation. It was found that the Manipur Panchayat Raj Act of 1975 may be seen as the turning point in Manipur's Panchayati Raj. A two-tier panchayat system was put in place. Regular

elections were held and carried out in the state. However, there are arguments for inclusion of women in politics.

The Manipur Panchayat Raj Act, passed in 1975, is recognized as being important in Manipur's history. It has been noted that there have never been any women in the Manipur panchayat system at various phases. This act revealed that one seat in every gram panchayat is reserved for women. It appears that the government tried to include women who came from disadvantaged backgrounds in society. The current two-tier state panchayat structure, with the Zilla Parishad at the district level and the GPs at the village level, was later established by the Manipur Panchayat Raj Act of 1994. 33 percent of the seats in Manipur's PRIs are reserved for women as a result of the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendment acts.

The Panchayat system in Manipur is discussed in detail in the second section of the chapter. Manipur is divided into two primary regions: the valley region and the hill region. The Manipur Hill Area District Council Act, 1971, governs the hills. It falls outside of the 73rd Amendment Act's jurisdiction. While analyzing the power vested over PRIs, the Eleventh Schedule of the Indian Constitution identified 29 functions along with their responsibilities and authority while assessing the authority over PRIs. 16 of the 29 listed departments have been transferred to PRIs in Manipur. It is governed by the Panchayat Raj Act of 1994. It has been noted that 16 departments are relatively few and insufficient for transferring resources, funds and functionaries to ZPs and GPs.

Manipuri women in PRIs are the subject of the fourth chapter. The fourth chapter attempted to articulate the concept of substantive representation in relation to the analysis of women and the Panchayati Raj System in Manipur. The argument is about how female legislators and representatives work for women in the critical review of women's substantive representation. It has been discovered that the community requires distributive representation for women to participate in politics in a democratic nation like India. The proportion to parliamentary or legislative representation is relatively small in an effort to boost the representation of women in politics. There should be more women in leadership positions. However, their representation needs to be held accountable for more than just their growing numbers. The information about Manipur Women representatives in PRIs is outlined and discussed in the second section. Politics involvement among women from various cultures has been observed. There lived a great number of tribes and cultures. The culture and identity of each community are distinctive. Regardless of religion, they do share a certain amount of space in society. When compared to

their counterparts in the rest of India, the women's community in Manipur, from all communities, has empowered itself in the socioeconomic sector. In society, they have a greater level of respect and equality. However, they continued to be underrepresented in politics. Their representation in higher decision-making bodies, such as the autonomous village councils established under the 6th Schedule in the state's hill districts, is low. There were no women holding elected office during the first round of voting, which is known to have occurred between 1964 and 1970. It has been noted that the second round of panchayat elections held in accordance with the Manipur Panchayat Raj Act, 1977, comprises of three elections: those held in 1975, 1985, and 1991. The study concludes that elected representation annually demonstrates improvement in the process of political representation. Muslim women and women from SC/ST groups, however, were not adequately represented.

With the passage of the Manipur Panchayat Raj Act, 1994, women were represented through reservation in the third round of elections, from 1997 onward. It is observed that this election was critical for the community's underprivileged women. Women from Muslim or SC/ST backgrounds are starting to be represented in elections. It demonstrates how gradually women's political participation is increasing. In the 2012 Panchayat elections, more women were represented as compare to former election, than males ran for office and were unanimously elected, demonstrating greater gender representation.

There has been improvement in this area since the 73rd Amendment Act's enactment, as seen by the increased presence of female representatives. Women eventually become more prevalent in both the reserved and unreserved categories. The operation of women through a quota system had a positive impact on the community when taking into account the policies and results of the government. The argument is their presence are making a difference in decision making body? There's a claim that they're influencing the group that makes decisions. The analysis reveals that although women made up a sizable portion of the seats dedicated for them, they did not exceed 33 percent. It is primarily caused by a lack of belief in women's abilities to succeed and lead, as well as a lack of knowledge about the EWR, patriarchal nature of the male-dominated society, the fact that male candidates receive higher priority in the electoral process, gender bias in society, and the lack of belief on the part of both male and female voters.

The panchayat system is evolving into a dynamic self-governing entity that promotes social justice, economic development, and good governance at the local level. The fifth chapter

attempted to discuss the results of the Panchayat Raj system and the involvement of Manipur Muslim women in local politics and governmental decision-making. What effects does the local government quota-based reservation policy have on women's political participation? To examine how the PRIs are working in relation to the socio-economic status of Muslim women in gram panchayats and zilla parishads. To put into context how strongly Manipur's social and ideological variables have affected Muslim women's political representation, disownment. The status of Muslim women is mostly discussed in the first section of the chapter. It has been observed that Muslim women's sociocultural practices align with those of the Meitei majority. However, Muslims adhere to the Islamic law known as shariah, which is practiced in all spheres of society. From the perspective of the Nupi Lal (Women's Wars), a collective women's movement, it is possible to observe the political consciousness among Muslim women. Muslim women's organizations were primarily focused on preventing domestic abuse; they failed to reach Muslim women's political consciousness in society. However, they took part in any social movement for minority rights and state development issues.

It is well known that women have some economic power, but they do not have political or social influence. Because of society's interference in their personal and professional lives. These sociological and religious obstacles are faced by Najima, the first Muslim woman to run for state assembly. According to some academics, Muslim women must be seen working in the public as a source of income if they are to survive. Another aspect is the economic independent with small entrepreneurs. The socioeconomic status of women in society is the foundation of the argument. Muslim women experience a lack of financial, social, and family support. These are the key barriers to the accomplishment of objectives in the field of political representation.

The three main indices employed in procedural democracy are representation, contestation, and political participation. Women are allowed to participate in local government under PRI's reservation policy. Muslim women are starting to run for office and be chosen as representatives by the general public. Does the representative, which was given administrative authority by the 73rd Amendment Act of the Constitution, truly comprehend decentralised governance? In order to get the women's effective representation in PRIs, Imphal East and Thoubal districts are used for the case study, with a total of 127 elected respondents from each, 100 from Thoubal and 27 from Imphal East. Each participant performs their own interview, which is aimed to evaluate the political empowerment of women.

By analyzing the profile of elected women Muslim women representative. Women tend to be younger and in the reproductive age groups below 40 years old in the majority across all social groupings. EWR are primarily married and have a large percentage of illiterate or literate without quality level most people. The study's analysis of their socioeconomic characteristics revealed that many of the women were from low-asset families. The representative at the lower post of GP can observe this circumstance. Perhaps the women who hold the positions of Pradhan or Zilla Parishad have sufficient assets. In that sense, it addresses the concerns about dominant section with assets, continuing their hold and capturing this institution.

Regarding support of social institution, these women representatives appear to have had indirect support or encouragement from political parties and their members. The lack of women and women's organisations as a source of information or support was noted as being particularly noticeable. The fact that informal sources were used to gather information on panchayat elections was noteworthy. Family member or neighbor's information was frequently provided. The panchayat office, the government, or the media are not a source of information for them. One of the basic reasons for lack of information is majority of women are experiencing first time in politics with the political background in family. It again shows that women of the priveledged have chance to enter in panchayat. It has been discovered that the family heritage has a history of political participation. In the field of political activities, Muslim women participated in public. They mostly take part in election rallies, door-to-door canvassing, poster distribution, etc. following the completion of the election nomination form. They intend to raise reservations by up to 50%. They want to learn more, so they request more training programmes from the relevant department and use the PRIs' powers and functions just like the elected male members did. Before the quota system, they were just housewives, but now they have an established identity in politics as representatives who are recognised as elected women. They want to run in the upcoming elections, and the amendment encourages women to leave the house and work in administration.

 Maximum of the respondent claimed that they got status and are being recognized by society. A large section of the women perceive augmentation of their status in society. Some of the respondents stated that they had improved in self-esteem, changed their lifestyles, and become more aware of the vital requirements for village development. Positive changes have been observed by representatives in their personal attitudes as a result of the study, and these improvements have had an impact on the family through changes in numerous social practices.

Assertion, recognition, new identity, respect, status, questioning, mobility, and attitudinal transformation are all indications of their new role's transformative potential.

However, these transformations not be seen wholly to all representatives. By examining the measures of their quantitative coverage of important issues, processes, unskill, and work procedures. They appear to be acting less ambitiously and actively than they should, and they have even been charged with proxy representation.

A hand of support must be extended to women's local organizations, set of alliances created between all different women's collectives and training programmes that encompasses skills, knowledge, issues and concerns specific to women, how to address them, how to organize, cooperate, participate, manage and build alliances. These training programmes also covers requirement of network to be set up with other women's collectives, social practices that adversely impact women and also how to deal with them and how information and knowledge is to be sought, stored and retrieved.

Rural women have demonstrated their ability to utilise the new political space that has been made available to them. Despite the many disadvantages and difficulties they have faced and are still carrying, there are signs of transformation, empowerment, and leadership. They need assistance from the government and civil society in terms of organisation, training, networking with informational resources, and remove the myth from society that question to the capacity and ability of women. They must also present information and experience with objectivity, tenacity, and sensitivity.

With this concept of recognition, the chapter six, tried to seek the perceptions of the elected women panchayat members. It focuses on effective Muslim women's political representation to the PRIs and analyzed the perceptions of the resource persons towards Muslim women political empowerment with their outcomes. Within the vast field of social, political, and moral theory, the idea of recognition and redistribution has developed into numerous essential concepts. Both Charles Taylor and Axel Honneth examine the politics of recognition, and both authors increase their focus on 'the struggle for acknowledgment'.

To evaluate the representational works of Muslim women. Some variables show how much work has been done for village developments, women's, and children's welfare programmes.

While analyzing women's awareness and knowledge about panchayat related matters. The study explored this aspect and look at their knowledge about reservations, panchayat powers and responsibilities, panchayat meetings, attendance of elected representatives and resources of panchayat. They have mere knowledge. It seems that majority of women have less awareness level about panchayat matters. However, those who held the post of zilla parishad or Adhaksa as chairperson have higher level of awareness and knowledge than the Member.

On discussing level of women participation, the percentage of women who reported regular attendance in panchayat meeting is less, majority do not attend panchayat meeting.

It is found that, maximum of the respondent could not attend in Panchayat meetings. The reasons are different for every individual. The mains reason hidden is due to pressing domestic needs and gender disparity. While comparing women representatives of two districts i.e Imphal East and Thoubal of Manipur. Respondent mostly from the Imphal East usually raise their point of view and tried to considered their ideas in the public meeting. Those women actively participated in the discussion and deliberation in the matter relating to the present and the future action to be taken up by the panchayat. Women faces difficulties while conducting works for Panchayat process weather in the office or in the village. They face many hurdles to cross over the lack of antecedent experience in the Panchayat processes which is supposed to be at the forefront of all. These impression and perception are reflected in their statement of representatives. The study also finds that, they are not taking interest in panchayat works and being relied on proxis or nameshake member. It can be conclude that, factors for less participation in meeting is due to their personal disabilities, social and institutional constraints In order to contextualize, the issues arise in village, representative made efforts to express their views. It has been discovered that issues mainly concern domestic violence against women and the wellbeing of women, the growth of children's education are less. The participation of EWR has resulted in developmental works for village, road connectivity, widow pensions, Self Help Groups, drinking water facilities etc as an empowerment outcomes. Regarding funds, functions and functionaries to empowered local bodies for the development of the village and to get the sustainable development goal. It finds that, majority of the women elected don't have the idea of panchayat accounts audited by government.

The opinions of resource persons, elected officials, academics, villagers' youth groups, members of civil society, and Anganwadi/ASHA workers about PRIs women have different views towards EWR. Positive and negative outcomes have been discovered to exist. To the

neutral observer of the happening in Manipur local youth club and Meira Paibis have more influence on the agenda of social, economic and political issues. Unfortunately, demand for empowerment of panchayat in not in their agenda. From the perspective of academician, beurocrates of women effective political representation in PRIs, claimed that elected Muslim women representatives are ignorance that are arising from illiteracy, poor socio economic and gender discrimination factor. While analyzing the welfare of women and children at village level Anganwadi and Asha Workers carried the basic education of the child, health of mother and pregnant women. It is observed that, there is less monitoring to inspect development works and nutrition centers under the Integrated Child Development Scheme.

With the assistance of other Gram Panchayat members who are supportive and local block functionaries like BDOs, teachers, and health professionals, they may administer the Panchayat business. Additionally, they seemed to have strong family support in doing their jobs. While the empowerment gains of women's participation in Panchayats are not as striking, the developmental gains are. Women are now represented due to affirmative action of 33 percent quota, and as a result, they hold executive positions in local organisations. However, their leadership has yet to considerably increase social acceptability as intended in the Constitution's spirit. Despite years of constitutional mandate, a significant gap still exists between the formal recognition of the right to participate and its actualization.

Regarding institutional constraints, it appears that Gram Panchayats, Block Panchayats, and District Panchayats do not have a clear understanding of their respective roles. As a result, states should review the devolution of funds, functions, and functionaries and implement measures like activity mapping, Panchayati Raj law, DPC formation, provisions relating to Gram Sabha/Ward Sabha, and DRDA. There are certain States where there has been a significant improvement, but there are others where this is not the case. Sensitizing society to better support and accept women in leadership positions is necessary.

Institutional barriers prevent effective participation of women leaders in the Panchayats in addition to social constraints. The absence of proper understanding, capacity building, and devolution of necessary powers is at the top of this list. While this issue impacts both men and women equally, it is frequently overlooked when evaluating women's performance. Additionally, there is also a need to start training programmes that are specifically geared toward women.

Women's political, social, and economic empowerment has been a goal of many throughout the years, but the results have never been entirely satisfactory due to a lack of coordination or synergy between these endeavours. Although more women being appointed to Panchayati Raj Institutes (PRIs) should have automatically improved the lives of rural women, this has not occurred as planned. It is due to the fact that the women elected to PRIs had lower levels of education, were illiterate, or were simply ignorant of their rights. In addition, numerous groups of women are more vulnerable than women in the mainstream sector due to tradition, culture, ethnicity, social status, or economic background. These groups need to be given extra attention. Along with the current PRI programmes and schemes, it is essential that an integrated policy and strategy be developed that addresses economic, social, and political empowerment simultaneously and holistically. The women's strategy is limited to three subjects: violence against women, economic empowerment, and women's and child's development. Therefore, much more work needs to be done to empower women in local self-governments so that they can take an active part in decision-making and, simply by virtue of their presence, inspire more and more women to stand up and demand their rights. There are many illustrious instances of the potential of women in leadership roles, and many more could follow in their footsteps if institutional settings are preserved that at the very least allow for their full participation.

Muslim women got their identity as an elected women in village. However, they may have mere knowledge of Panchayat system but they do wants to handle their works, if they got the knowledge through training. It can be seen that, due to the social and economic empowerment, it would be wrong the Manipur Muslim women has totally lack of political empowerment. They do involved in political activities, election campaign, established Mahilla Mandle, do take part in meetings. It is true that PRIs institutions gives positive outcomes. They do recognized as elected representatives. On the other hand, the main reason for women empowerment is due to the historical background of Muslim women involvement in public activities from the time of King Kagengba in 1606 AD. There is a culture of women involvement in decision making process of the family that affects in the decision making process of the panchayat system. Despite the fact that they do have some space, however, it is possible to conclude that Muslim women are at a two fold disadvantage in society, first as a women and second as minority Muslim women, their social and economic empowerment did not translate entirely into political empowerment. The progressive provisions of the 73rd Amendment Acts cannot be implemented until institutional and social support is given to underprivileged groups in society.

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Appendix I

Questioner for Interview Schedule

Social Profile

1) Age:
    i)   21-25
    ii)   35-45
    iii)   45-55
    iv)   55 and above

2) Educational Qualification
    i)   Literate/Under Matric
    ii)   Illiterate
    iii)   High School
    iv)   (iv) Gratuate

3) Occupation
    i)   House Wife
    ii)   Farmer
    iii)   Private/ Govt

4) Income
    i)   Under 1000- 1500
    ii)   1500- 3000
    iii)   (iii)3000-5000
    iv)   (iv) Rs 5000 above

5) The idea of 73rd Amendment Act
    i)   Yes
    ii)   ii) No

6) Problem face by respondent while contesting Election
    i)   Social Pressure ii)
    ii)   Character Assasination iii)
    iii)   Gender Inequality iv)

iv)   Criminalization in Politics

7) Criteria for Contest Election

i)   Reserved Category ii)

ii)   Unreserved Category iii)

iii)   Consciousness in politics iv) Others

8) Political Parties approach to the elected representatives

i)   Congress

ii)   BJP

iii)   No/ Neutral

9) Participation of Political Activities

i)   Election Rally

ii)   Door to Door Campaign

iii)   Distributive Justice

iv)   All of the Above

10) Does increase in reservation will make better conditions for the women community?

i)   Yes ii)

ii)   No

11) Changes made by quota system for women in society

i)   Political Empowerment

ii)   Social Status

iii)   Gender Equality

iv)   Discrimination on works

12) Identity as representatives in PRIs

i)   Yes

ii)   No

13) Is there any 'difference' as an elected women representatives among the community?

i)   Yes

ii)   No

14) Do you think the 73rd Amendment Act of the Constitution gives positive outcomes in terms of women's political empowerment?

i)   Yes

ii)   No

15) Family background in politics

    i)   Yes

    ii)   No

16) Issues mainly deal by elected member

    i)   Development of Village Work

    ii)   Welfare of Women

    iii)   Domestic Violence against women iv)

    iv)   Educational Development

17) In what criteria elected candidates get their vote?

    i)   Village development through social work

    ii)   Support from political Party

    iii)   Caste Base

    iv)   Class base (Clan base)

18) Does every elected candidate have political affiliation? If yes, what are the benefits they got from the party? If no, What are their relationships they have with the concerned MLA of the constituency?

    i)   Better

    ii)   Normal

    iii)   Rivalry

    iv)   Neutral

19) What are the levels of women participation in official works of PRIs?

    i)   Regular

    ii)   Absent

    iii)   Never attend

    iv)   Do not invited

20) Do the elected women representatives get regular information from the office to attend public meeting?

    i)   Yes

    ii)   No

21) What are the reasons for absent in public meetings?

    i)   Household Activities

    ii)   Agricultural works

    iii)   Intentionally don't want to attend

    iv)   If attend no benefits (opinion not accepted)

22) What is the position of elected women in public gram Sabha meeting?

   i)   Equal position with male representatives

   ii)   Role in meeting

   iii)   gave new approach/idea to the meeting

   iv)   give opinion to the meeting

   v)   Discussion with the new scheme of the government

   vi)   interest to work at the new scheme of the government vii) No role in the meeting

23) Whether the present education system, employment and health facilities are sufficient to the village?

   i)   Development (all aspects)

   ii)   Partial Development

   iii)   Sufficient

   iv)   Don't know

   v)   No Development

24) Whether the representatives have the idea of panchayat accounts that are audited by the government?

   i)   Have the idea

   ii)   don't know

25) What are the reasons for not having the knowledge of panchayat audit accounts?

   i)   Illiterate

   ii)   Less women empowerment

   iii)   gender stratification

   iv)   Proxy representation

Interaction with various groups, regarding their perception on elected Muslim women representatives.

   1) How the empowerment plays an important role for women in 21st century?

   2) What is the status of elected Muslim women representative in PRIs?

   3) Do they acquire political empowerment?

   i)   Yes

   ii)   No

   4) Does the quota system give positive or negative impact?

   i)   Yes

ii)   No

5) How the politics and political party took a shaped in panchayat election?

6) What is the relationship between the active panchayat representatives with the programme of the ICDS?

7) Does ASHA and Anganwadi worker gives positive outcomes to the village?

8) What's the role of gram panchayat in connection with ASHA and Anganwadi worker for the child and women welfare programme?

9) Does the local youth club promotes youth for engagement in local democracy at grassroot level?

10) Is there any role of the Pancahayat Mahila Evam Shakti Abhiyan (PMEYSA) for political awareness programme to the elected representatives?

i)   Yes

ii)   No

Appendix II

No.5/SDO(TBL)/GP- Elec/2012: In pursuance of the rules 63(2) of Manipur Panchayat Raj (Election) Rules 1995, the following Candidates have been elected as Zilla Parishad Member in the 4th General Panchayat Election 2012 under RO/SDO, Thoubal.

Sl. No	No.& Name of Gram Panchayat	Name of elected Candidates as Zilla Parishad Member
1	4- Wangkhem Zilla Paishad	Khundrakpam Sobha Singh
2	5- Charangpat Zilla Parishad	Thokchom Santa Singh
3	6- Khangabok Zilla Paishad	Khundrakpham Surnalata Devi
4	7- Heirok Zilla Parishad	Shrimayum Dineshwori Devi
5	8- Sangaiyumpham Zilla Parishad	Shajida
6	9- Tentha Zilla Parishad	Laishram Inaocha Singh
7	10-Langthel Zilla Parishad	Shagolshem Budhi Singh

(Y. Rajen Singh)

Returning Officer,Thoubal.

Copy to

1. The principal Secretary (RD&PR), Govt. of Manipur

2. The Deputy Commissioner, Thoubal.

3. The Secretary, State Election Commission, Manipur

4. The Director, Printing & Stationary, Manipur.

Appendix III

<div align="center">

Government of Manipur

Department of Personal &Administrative Reforms

(Personal Division)

Office Memorandum

Imphal the 24ᵗʰ April, 2007

</div>

Subject: *Reservation in Appointment to Government Posts / Services and*
Admission to Professional Institutes for OBCs.

NO. 9/1/90 (OBC)/ DP: The undersigned is directed to say that the State government has reviewed relating to the reservation for the OBs in the state for appointment in Government's post / services etc. as notified under this Government's Office Memorandum of even number dated 27-12-2006.

2. After careful consideration of the matter, and in suppression of this Government Office Memorandum of even number dated 27-12-2006, it has now been decided by state government to fix the percentage of reservation for the OBCs in the state for the appointment of Government posts / services (including government Societies / public undertaking/ Boards/ Agencies) and also for admission in professional courses in professional Colleges/ Institutes such as Engineers/ Medical/ Polytechnic/ Veterinary & Animal Husbandry / Agricultural Sciences / Nursing/ Para Medical etc as detail below with immediate effect:-

Sl. No.	Name of Community	Percentage of Reservation
1.	Meitei/Meiteis (including Meitei Brahmin, Meitei /Meetei Sanamahi, Meitei Rajkumar).	12.5%
2.	Meitei Pangal	4%
3.	Telis who have been domiciled in Manipur for 10 years and their descendents	
4.	Badi (Nepali), Darnai (Nepali), Gairey (Nepali), Satki (Nepali) and Kami (Nepali) who have been living in Manipur as members of the domiciled	0.5%

community since 09-07-1947 and their descendents.

TOTAL: 17%

(S. Sunderlal Singh)

Secretary (DP),

Government of Manipur