

**Women Empowerment:
A study of Position & Participation of Women in
Politics in the Hill Areas of Darjeeling District**

**Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in Arts (Ph.D.) of the North Bengal University**

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Acknowledgement

The present work is based on 'Empowerment of Women' an attempt has been made to highlight the history of women's struggle, feminist movement in a global, Indian context, and in the present situation of Darjeeling Hills. I have tried to explore, explain, the problems, and the strategies of the political leaders of this region and their failures. Since, regional movement and the development of various regions in India is one of the most important aspects of 'National development and Nation Building', with this broad understanding I have tried to highlight Darjeeling Hills, the history, the background of people, general problems, position and the socio- economic, political role and the struggle of Hill women in their matriarchal society.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

'That country & that nation which did not respect women have never become great nor will ever be in the future.' Swami Vivekananda

Politics is essentially an art of acquiring and exercising power – the power to effectively influence the decision making processes and policies, to reverse the existing situations wherever they are disadvantageous and to bring about the necessary social changes. A participation in this exercise of power is very much a necessity, particularly for the disadvantaged group, for instance, the women. But then politics is also about power relations. Every social arrangement is it in the public, professional sphere or in the private space of domestic sphere, is an instance of power relationship. Thereby, whether it is the family, religion, caste or public institutions, they are all political institutions their mutual interaction thus becomes a political relationship and hence involves a modicum of power.

Women constitute half of the world population, perform nearly two thirds of its work hours, receive one tenth of the world's income, and own less than one hundredth of the world's property. (United Nations Report, 1980)

Throughout the world women have usually fewer rights and a lower status than men. The traditional role of a wife and a mother dominates and most women's life center on their households. Hence, the women, the world over, are still demanding for equality & justice because of the widespread discrimination they face in all walks of life.

It is this aspect which needs to be closely examined because the future of society in terms of its direction and pace is dependent on this question. Accordingly, many programmes and policies have been drafted with some awareness for their marginalized position.

Today gender analysts must pay special attention to the wide-ranging frameworks regarding the perspective, approach and strategies advocated at different forums for understanding & combating women's unfavorable placement in the society if we have to get rid of gender discrimination (Dagar Rainuka, 1998)

In a critical juncture of present human history, the ethnic warfare, nuclear war and the clashes of civilization, Women have become the victim of rape, murder and inequality in all spheres of life. Rather than culture, the concept of women's right is deeply rooted in history but women's history has been deliberately ignored over the centuries to keep women subordinate in patriarchal society. Women share half of the population of every country in the world but still they are not equally represented in politics all over the world. They are just a "blip on the male political landscape."(Reynolds 1999, p.547)

Women are not present to add a range of female experiences to gender “neutral” policies, they are absent from posts to sponsor special concerns legislations effectively, we seldom see them in leading positions and they continue to lack models who challenge our assumptions about gender and leadership. All of these combine into greatly diminished influence, potential and tenuous access to important avenues of social power. In a circular manner, the absences of women as political leaders contribute to the continued absence of women as political leaders. (Durest – Lahti & Vestegen, 1995, pp. 221)

Politically, adult women have not yet achieved the right to vote in all countries. Women are under represented in national decision-making bodies, including legislative & economic bodies & most of the agencies of law & justice. The worldwide average percentage of women in national parliaments is only 16%.

Substantive Equality

Formally equality of Indian women is explicitly in the Constitution of India and within Indian law. However, notwithstanding formal guarantee of equality given by Indian law, women in this country continue to be characterized by ongoing substantive inequality and discrimination and the wide gap between the formal guarantees of gender equality enshrined in the Constitution of India.

The popular term called ‘equality’ started and dominated since the time of western political theorists like, Plato & Aristotle who

defined equality as 'treating likes alike' which was later refined by the American Constitution and subsequently by the Indian as 'those (who are) similarly situated be treated similarly. In other words, equality was equated with sameness or if you are the same, then you should not be treated differently. (Tussman, Joseph & Jacobus Tebrock, 'The Equal Protection of the Laws' 37 Calif. Rev. 341 (1949) Hargopal Reddy, 'Equality doctrine and the Indian Constitution 45 Andhra Law Times 57, 58 (1982) 'All persons are to be treated alike, except where circumstances require different treatment.'

Martha Minnow, while exploring the difference/connection between equality & sameness observed that, 'the problem with this concept of equality is that it makes the recognition of difference a threat to the premise behind equality.

If to be equal, you must be the same, then to be different is to be unequal (Martha Minow, 'Learning to live with the Dilemma of Difference: Bilingual & special Education' 48 law & Contemporary Problems 157, 207, 1985)

The focus of substantive equality approach is only on equal treatment under the law, but on actual impact of the law. (Maureen Maloney, 'An Analysis of Direct Taxes in India: A Feminist Perspective' 30: 4 Journal of the Indian Law Institute 397(1988). Such inequality results from provisions which though seemingly natural in their application in reality results in discrimination of women while conferring the notion of formal equality.

The main objective of substantive equality approach is the elimination of substantive inequality of disadvantaged groups in society. It is directed at eliminating individual, institutional and systemic discrimination against disadvantaged groups which effectively undermines their full and equal social, economic, political and cultural participation in society. (Kathy Lahey, 'Feminist Theories of (In) Equality', in *Equality and Judicial Neutrality* 71 (s. Martin & K Mahoney (eds) 1987

Kathy Lahey in her work, 'Feminist Theories of (In) Equality' argues that courts must adopt an approach which considers the effect of the rule or practice being challenged, to determine whether it contributes to the actual inequality of women and whether changing the rule will actually produce an improvement in the specific material conditions of the women affected.

The political status of women can be measured through the degree of freedom and equality as enjoyed by women in shaping and sharing of power of the society. Throughout the world, it is seen that women continue to face inequality in all spheres of their life.

In politics, women are just a "blip on the male political landscape". The worldwide percentage of women in National parliaments is only 16 percent out of 190 countries of the world. Women as the head of government i.e. either as President or Prime Minister is just in 7 countries. In 2005, Sweden, Norway, Rwanda, and

Argentina women's political representation ranges from up to 40 to 50%.

In 1995 at the 4th UN Conference on Women, the Governments of 189 States participated and recognized that, 'inequalities between men and women have persisted and major obstacles remain.'

It is seen that throughout the world, women continue to face inequality in all spheres of their life. In public life women remain under - represented in international & national decision & policy making bodies, including legislative & economic bodies & all those agencies responsible for making law & justice. Politically, adult women have not achieved the Right to Vote in many countries. Only 24 women have ever been elected as the heads of State, although 10 women head of States, who were in office at the end of 1994 is the highest in history.

Article 8 of the UN Charter provides that no restriction shall be placed on the eligibility of men and women to participate 'under conditions of equality in its principal and subsidiary organs'. Nevertheless, women still does not occupy senior positions in case of 'key' areas of International areas like, international peace and security, peace keeping, and disarmament and in programmes for trade and investment or economic development.

Accurate data in economic, social, and cultural matters is uncertain due to frequent concealment of women within the private spheres of the home and family.

However, the index ranking of 130 countries on gender equality in basic health, education, and income contained in the 1995 Human Development Report prepared by the UNDP shows that in no country, do women fare as well as men.

Women make half the population of every country of the world. They perform nearly two thirds of its work hours, receive one tenth of the world's income and own less than one hundredth of the world's property.

Politically, adult women have not yet achieved the right to vote all parts of the world. Women are under represented in national decision making bodies, including legislative and economic bodies and most of the agencies of law and justice.

Political sociologists G. William Domhoff (1998) have rightly remarked that those who govern are both drawn mainly from a ruling or power elite. Though individual women may have rose to position of independent elected chief executive of the state government in U.S. like Ella Grasso. "Governess Grasso"..... Give examplesthrice elected Margaret Thatcher (Prime Minister) of U.S. who is known as 'Iron Lady'.

Women may have been queens, prime ministers, state governors, mayors, legislators. Whether in case of U.S. India, every U.S. President, every major party candidate for U.S. President and Indian Prime Minister have been man and not women. In few exceptional

cases, women may have rose to the top position but few women's token presence does not mean that governance is not gendered.

In such case, representation of women in politics may check general monopolization of power and position by man in politics in other words, 'gender governance'. Women may have little presence and importance in state politics but more than western democracies under state socialism in Eastern Europe women's representation is much higher. Ironically, the eastern European transition to 'democracy' after 1989 have reduced women's description representation even in populist and revolutionary states. However, few women have made in highest ranks in military and state bureaucracies like, Sharon Wolchick, 1989, Maxine Molyneux in Cuba 2001, Margraret Randall Nicaragua in 1974 and Maxine Molyneux in 1991 (Yemen).

Table 1**WORLD RANKINGS FOR WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT IN
SELECTED COUNTRIES, 2005**

Country	Rank	% of Women in Parliament
Rawanda	1 st	48.8
Sweden	2 nd	45.3
Norway	3 rd	38.2
Finland	4 th	37.5
Denmark	5 th	36.9
Netherlands	6 th	36.7
Cuba	7 th	36.0
Spain	7 th	36.0
Costa Rica	8 th	35.1
Mozambique	9 th	34.8
Belgium	10 th	34.7
Iraq	15 th	31.6
New Zealand	19 th	28.3
Vietnam	20 th	27.3
Namibia	21 st	26.9
Australia	26 th	24.7
Mexico	27 th	24.3
China	41 st	20.2
Poland	41 st	20.2

United kingdom	52 nd	18.1
United Nation	61 st	15.2
Israel	62 nd	13.3
Ireland	66 th	12.2
France	72 nd	11.1
Botswana	79 th	10.7
Zimbabwe	82 nd	9.8
Russian Federation	89 th	8.6
Brazil	95 th	8.3
India	97 th	7.1

The world average of woman membership in national Parliaments was only 12.7 percent. The highest representation was in Rawanda 48.8 percent and the lowest was in Egypt 2.9 percent. In Islamic country like, Kuwait women representation in politics was nil as per Census, 2005

“No government can claim to be democratic until women are guaranteed the right to equal representation”. (4th UN World Conference on women in Beijing, 1995)

Women constitute fifty percent of the population in most countries of the world. More than 98% of countries of the world have guaranteed the voting right in the election. But 20% of women in some countries make the legislative bodies. Women still cannot vote in

countries like, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Lebanon. The main goal of women suffrage and representation is to check the direct and overt discrimination against women in politics.

In December 1869, Wyoming territory became the first modern legislative body to grant suffrage to women. (McCammon 2001, 2003) some argue that, the passage of female suffrage on Wyoming was a joke. Edward M. lee, Secretary of the Territory in 1869, quoted that, 'Once, during the session, amid the greatest hilarity, and after the presentation of various funny amendments and in the full expectation of a guber national veto, an act was passed enfranchising the women of Wyoming. The bill, however, was approved, became law, and the youngest territory placed in the van of progress..... How strange that a movement destined to purify the muddy pool of politics... should have originated in a joke. (printed in Cheyenne's Wyoming Tribune, October 8, 1870; cited in Larson 1965: 58). Two months later, Wyoming passed women suffrage it was Utah but Dakota Territorial legislature failed to pass female suffrage by 1 vote in January of that year (Larson, 1965).

By 1920 most of the western countries became successful to pass bill for women suffrage. However, in US, Michigan, Kansas, Midwestern were offered women to vote only in presidential elections. Among the southern and eastern states of US only Oklahoma & New York granted full female suffrage. Three years after Wyoming, New Zealand became the first country to introduce universal suffrage.

Women Worldwide

1. New Zealand – 1893
2. Australia – 1902
3. Finland – 1906
4. Norway – 1913
5. Denmark, Iceland – 1915
6. Canada – 1917
7. Austria, Estonia, Georgia, Germany, Ireland, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Poland, Russia, United Kingdom – 1918
8. Belgium, Belarus, Kenya, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Sweden, Ukraine - 1919
9. Albania, Czech republic, Slovakia, united states - 1920
10. America, Azerbaijan, Lithuania - 1921
11. Kazakhstan, Mongolia, St. Lucia, Tajikistan – 1924
12. Turkmenistan – 1927
13. Ireland, united kingdom - 1928
14. Ecuador, Romania – 1929
15. south Africa, turkey – 1930

16. Portugal, Spain, Srilanka – 1931
17. Maldives, Thailand, Uruguay – 1932
18. Brazil, Cuba – 1934
19. Myanmar – 1935
20. Philippines – 1937
21. Bolivia, Uzbekistan – 1938
22. El Salvador – 1939
23. Panama – 1941
24. Dominican Republic – 1942
25. Bulgaria, France, Jamaica – 1944
26. Croatia, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Senegal, Slovenia, Togo – 1945
27. Cameron, Djibouti, Guatemala, Liberia, Macedonia, North Korea, Panama, Romania, Trinidad & Tobago, Venezuela, Vietnam, Yugoslavia – 1946
28. Argentina, Malta, Mexico, Pakistan, Singapore – 1947
29. Belgium, Israel, Niger, Seychelles, South Korea, Suriname – 1948
30. Bosnia, & Herzegovina, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Syria – 1949
31. Barbados, Haiti, India – 1950

32. Antigua & Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Nepal, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Vincent & the Grenadines – 1951
33. Bolivia, Cote d'Ivoire, Greece, Lebanon – 1952
34. Bhutan, Guyana, Hungary, Syria - 1953
35. Belize, Colombia, Ghana - 1954
36. Cambodia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru – 1955
37. Benin, Comoros, Egypt, Gabon, Mali, Mauritius, Somalia – 1956
38. Malaysia, Zimbabwe – 1957
39. Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea, Laos, Nigeria – 1958
40. Madagascar, San Marino, Tunisia, United Republic of Tanzania – 1959
41. Canada, Cyprus, Gambia, Tonga – 1960
42. Bahamas, Burundi, Malawi, Mauritania, Paraguay, Rwanda, Sierra Leone – 1961
43. Algeria, Australia, Monaco, Uganda, Zambia
44. Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Fiji, Iran, Kenya, Morocco – 1963
45. Libya, Papua New Guinea, Sudan – 1964
46. Afghanistan, Botswana, Lesotho – 1965

47. democratic People's Republic of Yemen, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kiribati, Tuvalu – 1967
48. Nauru, Swaziland – 1968
49. Andorra, Yemen Arab republic – 1970
50. Switzerland – 1971
51. Bangladesh – 1972
52. Bahrain – 1973
53. Jordan, Solomon, islands – 1974
54. Angola, cape Verde, Mozambique, Sao tome & Principe, Vanuatu - 1975
55. Portugal – 1976
56. guinea-Bissau – 1977
57. republic of Moldova - 1978
58. Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Palau – 1979
59. Iraq – 1980
60. Liechtenstein – 1984
61. central African republic – 1986
62. Namibia – 1989

63.Samoa – 1990

64.south Africa – 1999

65.Kuwait 2005

Denial of political rights and in the male dominated society all over the countries of the world women had almost same position. The position of women in politics both in West and East was not better than any other. Since 1850, the right of women to vote was propagated in America and England. The first state in the world to accept women's franchise was Wyoming (USA) in 1869. The first sovereign state to adopt female suffrage state was New Zealand in 1893. Legal Rights of women like that she could sue her husband was granted in Mississippi (1839), New York (1848) and Massachusetts (1854). Great Britain granted women's Franchise in 1918 of women over 30 years and in 1928 to women over 21 years. In India all provincial legislatures had given voting right in 1929. Switzerland accepted the female Franchise in 1971.

Table 2

**Regional Representation of Women in Parliament
(Census, 2005)**

Region	Single/Lower House	Upper House	Both the Houses Combined
Scandinavia	39.9	-	39.9
America	18.8	19.5	18.9
Europe	16.9	16.9	16.9
Asia	15.2	13.5	15.1
Sub-Saharan Africa	15.0	14.2	14.9
Pacific	11.2	26.5	13.3
Arab States	8.8	5.6	8.1

Table 3

Nordic Countries	America	Europe (Excluding Nordic Countries)	Asia	Sub-Saharan Countries	Pacific	Arab Countries
41.4	21.8	19.1	17.4	17.2	13.4	9.6



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Table 4

REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN SOUTH ASIA

COUNTRY	YEAR WOMEN RECEIVED RIGHTS	YEAR 1ST ELECTED OR APPOINTED IN PARLIAMENT	LOWER HOUSE AS IN 2002
INDIA	1950	1952	8.8%
PAKISTAN	1947	1973	NIL
NEPAL	1951	1952	5.9
BHUTAN	1953	1975	9.3
SRILANKA	1931	1947	4.0
BANGLADESH	1972	1973	9.1
MALDIVES	1932	1979	6.0

SOURCE: UNDP REPORT, 2001

Historical background

Since the ancient period, women were dominated by men and were treated inferior and imprisoned within four walls were totally excluded from politics. Political philosophers of West were also against participation of women in political affairs. Philosophers, political leaders, religious preachers and scientists despite being genius, treated women inferior to men; Men's position was quite different than women. From the beginning in Bible, Eve was blamed for the downfall

of men. Thus women's subordination began to be compared to the status of men.

Aristotle describes "..... the relation of male to female is by nature such that one is superior and the other is dominated with barbarians, of course, the female and the dominated have the same rank. This is because that they do not possess a naturally dominating element." Sex prejudice hampered development and women's sufferings were not noticed and recognized. Home and family became the main source of oppression she became a part of patriarchy of men i.e. First father, second husband and her son at last, she was unable to enjoy the dignity.

Status of women was almost same throughout the country until the beginning of Industrial Revolution in 1868. Women were admired for their motherly quality and grace but regarded as completely inferior to men in the Greek states, Roman Empire describes no better status of women. In Germany, early medieval society followed "mundium ' right i.e. wife under the complete control of her husband. Position of women in Japan was inferior to men since Tokugawa period.

The position of women in India during medieval times had 'closed life' by purdah system and treated as "commodity ". The 18th century was considered as darkest period for the position of women. She remained as supplement to male society. Till the end of 18th

century women were completely and forcefully dominated by male superiority, physically and intellectually.

Evolving Position and Power of Women from Ancient India to Modern Days

In this situation an attempt has been made to glance through some position of women in the writings of great personalities and during different periods, Indus Valley Civilization (2500-1700) from the archeological remains of 2500 to 1700B.C. Archeologists noted that women in Indus Valley Civilization were worshipped as the ideal of female beauty and movement from which started the tradition of Indian classical dance even today in the form of Bharatnatyam School.

The Mauryan Empire (320-185 B.C.), it was during Chandragupta Maurya, the founder of Maurya dynasty the legal rights of women was adopted in the form of 'Stridhan' (the gift of parents during women's marriage and augmented by her husband afterwards). During this period women could remarry but they lost property rights of their deceased husband. Moreover, women of this age were active in public economic activities as wage-labor in state owned textile factories as well as serving as temple dancers, courtesans, and court attendants and nothing has been discussed regarding the lower class women. (Arthasastra 1992).

The Gupta Age (320-540 B.C.), the Gupta age is famous for its literary and artistic accomplishments. The legal rights and the ideal images of women were highly circumscribed. Through the laws of Manu, the period from 200 to 400 B.C. the independence of women was controlled by patriarchal family.

In childhood, women should be under her father's control, in youth under her husband, and when her husband is dead, under her sons. She should not have independence (Chap5 verse 148, Doniger, p.115)

A virtuous wife should constantly serve her husband like a god, even if he behaves badly, freely indulges his lust, and is devoid of any good qualities. (Chap. 5, verse 154, Doniger, p. 115) But a woman who violates her (vow to her dead) husband because she is greedy for progeny is the object of reproach here on earth and loses the world beyond. (Chap. Verse 161, Doniger, p. 116)

A wife, son, and a slave: these three are traditionally and said to have no property; whatever property they acquire belongs to the man to whom they belong. (Chap 8, verse 416, Doniger, p. 196)

The bed and the seat, jewelry, lust, anger, crookedness, a malicious nature, and bad conduct are what Manu assigned to women. (Chap9, verse 17, Doniger, p. 205)

The appointment of widows is never sanctioned in the Vedic verses about marriage, nor is the remarriage, nor is the remarriage of widows mentioned in the marriage rules. (Chap. 9, verse 65, Doniger, p. 205)

A thirty-year-old man can marry a twelve-year-old girl charms his heart, and a man of twenty-four can marry an eight-year-old girl; and if duty is threatened, (he should marry) in haste. (Chap. 9, verse 94, Doniger, p. 28)

During the age of Guptas, the practice of child marriage, the physical seclusion of women, and the system of 'Sati' became popular. Sati system was most prominent in higher-caste Rajputs, especially Kshatriyas, and Brahmans in Bengal including southern part of India. Since widows were held responsible for their husband's death, so through the means of 'Sati' spiritual and social prestige to a woman's family and in-laws as well as economic relief was maintained by killing the widow women.

According to Altekar, during **Vedic Age (2500-1500 B.C.)**, women's position was satisfactory. They were well taken with educational facility and married at the age of sixteen and seventeen years. They got right to select their husbands.

Age of Samhitas, Brahmans and Upanishads (1500 to 500 BC)
Women continued to have satisfactory status. They used to own marriage gift or movable property. Girls from only higher class were

given education mostly by their father or close relatives. Marriage age was usually sixteen. Especially kshtriya girls were given right to choose their life partners. But these are other reasons for women's role in religious, political affairs and widow remarriage. Since, when men used to go in battle fields, women used to do their works in their absence. Sati system was abolished and Niyoga and widow remarriage was encouraged to get heirs to fight in wars.

Age of Shastras and Early Smritis (500 BC to 500 AD)

Child marriage, polygamy, purdah system was started due to foreign invasion in northern India. Due to joint family & for property right, women were forced to perform Sati. Manusmirti laid the social code which legitimized hierarchal caste structure, patriarchal joint family system and low status of women.

Age of Aryans:

“Yatra naryastu puhyante, ramante tatra devta” (the place where women are worshipped, God themselves inhabit that place)

In ancient India, Aryans gave women the status of Goddess. During Aryans era, women represented from assemblies to holy religious rituals. No religious rituals of Hindu Brahmins were completed without the presence of women.

Ancient Indian women had right choose their own life partner through the process called "Swayamvar" in this process, grooms used to assemble in the house of bride and she was supposed to choose one amongst them. Beside all these, ancient Indian women like, Gayatri, Maitreyi, Anusuya were known for renowned religious teachings of Hindu Sastras & Slokas.

Aryan & the Vedic Age (1700-500 B.C.)

Indian historians regarded Vedic period (1500 to 700 B.C.), as the heart of golden age of Indian culture. The position of women in Vedic India was 'fairly satisfactory'. (Altekar 1978:338)

Wendy O'Flaherty regarded earliest collection of Aryan religious hymns of about 1300-1000 B.C. as "a book of men about male concerns in a world dominated by men, and one of the concerns is women".

In the later Vedic period, i.e. from 8 Century B.C. onwards with mixed religion and culture led the women like, Gargi Vacaknavi to represent the tradition of Vedic scholarship among women and question the court of king Janakar at around 600 B.C. But during the last centuries of the pre-Christian era, Brahmans imposed restrictions on women as well as lower social groups (Jamison 1996).

Uma Chakravarti defines "brahmanical patriarchy" as "a set of rules and institutions in which caste and gender are linked, each

shaping the other, and where women are crucial in maintaining the boundaries between castes". (Chakravarti 1996 b: 9)

Women were supposed to maintain Stridharma (the ideal of wifely fidelity) and their life were controlled through laws and customs of the society (including physical punishment). Through the combination consent and coercion the upper caste women were tried to be pleased through simultaneous spiritual & material rewards (Chakravarti 1993a)

Age of later Smiritis, Commentators and Digest Writer (500 A.D. - 1800A.D.)

The status of women continued to be more deteriorated from 8th century onwards. 'Sati' (burning of widows with the husband's dead body at the funeral pyre) system became prevalent and women who did not perform Sati were supposed to tonsure their head and lead ascetic lives. Early marriage and early widowhood became popular. But widows continued to have property rights, caste system became more rigid and greater control over women's freedom and right became prevalent with purdah system.

Neera Desai summed up women's deteriorated position in 8th century in the following sentences: 'ideologically woman was considered a completely inferior species, having no significance, no personality: socially she was kept in a state of utter subjection, denied any right. Suppressed and oppressed, she was further branded as

basically lacking the ethical fibre. The patriarchal joint family, the customs of polygamy and purdah, the property structure, early marriage, sati or a state of permanent widowhood: all of these contributed to the smothering of the free development.

Neera Desai and Maithreyi Krishnaraj in their combined work, 'Women and Society in India' summarized the conditions of women during Manusmriti from 500 BC to 1800 AD in the following ways

'In concluding this vast phase of history in the context of women's position, it may be mentioned that particularly after the establishment of class society and the rise of private property in the post Vedic period, women's position in the society declined. Patriarchal values relating to sexuality and regulation of her movement, thus controlling her purity, get entrenched during this phase. The overwhelming concern for purity and maintenance of honor through a woman resulting in underpinning of her role as wife and mother, exercised through both overt and covert regulations, seem to have been necessitated by the material development of the needs of the society.'

Gradually, after Vedic age, women's position and high status in the society started degrading. They lost their freedom towards religious learning and practices and their status became lower than the status of 'Sudras' (lowest caste of ancient Hindu society). The status of women became more miserable till the time of 'Smirits' (religious scripture of Hindu). By this time, women were not allowed to have free

education though they were given educations which were just related to domestic purposes.

Despite the practice of purdah among Muslims, the Delhi Sultanate of Delhi 1206, the Turkish Muslim women acquired a literary education and even participated in political events.

Role of Women in Politics during the Muslim Rule in India

Razia ruled from 1236 to 1240. She used to appear in public without veil, she was popular for horse riding skills and she led her military troops in the battle.

Women played major imperial politics during the Mughal dynasty. During Babur's reign, his mother, daughter played, advised and assisted monetarily during his entire political life. Among all the muslim women Nur Jahan, a thirty-four year old Persian widow who married the mughal Jahangir was not only politically manipulative and diplomatic in nature but she actively participated in imperial tiger shoots and hunting expeditions. (Findly 1993)

After getting married to Jahangir she appointed her brother and father in the major official positions of Mughal Empire and by there she strengthens the Persian relationship with the Mughals.

The wife of emperor Shah Jahan was another muslim for whom one of the seven wonders of the world, 'Taj Mahal' was built, Beside this, she took major part in all the policies of mughal empire during Shah Jahan's reign which was later on followed by her daughters, Jahanara Begum (1613-1683) the eldest daughter of mumtaz supervised the imperial household, and became political confidante of emperor Shah Jahan and her brother, Dara Shikoh.

Kuppuswamy, Kapadia, Indu Menon disregarded that through muslim invasion Indian women's position was devastated. To them, muslim infact found Hindu society like their own patriarchal muslim brought purdah system among hindu women but muslim influence was detrimental to the status of women. Since, women's position was already low when muslim invaded India.

Muslim women were better off as compared to Indian women since they enjoy right to education, both secular and religious and enjoyed the property rights. They used to paternal property rights. They used to enjoy parental property, the right to seek divorce under certain conditions, right to remarry incase of divorced or widowed. Though muslim conquerors in India resulted in seclusion of Indian women and confined them to the four walls of their houses and made them to practice 'Jauhar' (mass women suicide especially practised by Rajput women when their men used to defeat in the battle).

After the invasion of Muslims in India, they spread their culture in Indian societies. For them women were the sole property of her father, brother, and husband. They brought the system of polygamy and purdah (veil) among hindu society. In order to save the Indian women from muslim rulers women's freedom were restricted and girl child were regarded as burden towards the family. Moreover, among hindu society the social evils like, Child Marriage, Sati, Jauhar and restriction of girl education became popular & mandatory.

In ancient India, women enjoyed considerable freedom, status and prestige in the society. Women were regarded as man's companion and not his attendant. Lawmakers like. Manu degraded women's position to mere "Commodity and Gateway to Hell." Finally, these entire thing lead woman's position settled in typical indoor family life due to the rise of institution like, joint family in India (Rathna Ramchandran, 1995).

It may be noted that the social reformers of 19th & 20th centuries in India originated women's movement. Women from upper middle class with both the western and Indian oriented education infact organized themselves to form women organizations with the help of educated liberal minded Indian men. Ladies Association was in Calcutta was started under the auspices of Brahamo Samaj, Arya Samaj in Northern India and Prathna Samaj in western India. Beside all these, Shayadan Sadan in 1892, Seva Sadan in 1909 and Bhagini Samaj in 1911 were formed in British India.

The social reformers and all these organizations brought awareness among women regarding their status in the society. Though it accepted women as wives, mothers and their primary roles as a woman in the family but the social reformers propagated for women's education and even pressurized British Government to pass legislation to stop and social evils of Indian society like, Sati system, Child Marriage, prohibition of widow remarriage, purdah system of those days.

Gradually with the help of philanthropic men in the late century, prominent women like, Pandit Ramabai Saraawati, Ramabai Ranade, Ms.Serennai, M.Cursetjee etc. started Bharat Mahila Parisad, Arya Mahila Samaj, Stri Zarthosti Mandal for philanthropic and charitable work and at the same time for introducing the uplifting enlightenment of women.

The first autonomous women's organization was started by Sarala Devi Chaudhurani as the Bharat Stree Mahamandal and had its first meeting in 1910 in Allahabad. It became successful to open its branches in other places like, Lahore, Allahabad, Delhi, Karachi, Amritsar, Hyderabad, Kanpur, Bankura, Hazaribagh, Midnapur and Kolkata to organize and unite women from all spheres of life regardless of their caste, culture, creed, class, religion to start moral and material progress of the women in India. Three national women's organizations viz. Women's India Association, National Conference of women in India

and All India Women's Conference were started in 1917, 1925 respectively.

These organizations mainly started for eradication of social problems of the Indian society. Women Indian Association was open to both Indian and Europeans and it was founded by Margaret Cousins, an Irish feminist, with the help of Annie Besant. She became the first President with Margaret Cousins, Dorothy Jinarajadasa, Mrs. Malati Patwardhan, Mrs. Ammu Swaminathan, Mrs. Dadhabhoy and Mrs. Ambujammal as honorary secretaries. This organization flourished in thirty-three branches within five stipulated years. They were having forty-three branches, twenty centers and 2,300 members.

Lady Amerdeen founded the National Council as a branch of the International Council of women. In India, Mehribai Tata started this organization along with three other life Saheb of Baroda and Lady Dorab Tata. Another woman social activist of their time Maniben Karpatri- Dowager, Begum Saheb of Bhopal, Maharani a organized Sewa Mandir to work among poor slum women in India.

All India women's Conference was also started by the efforts of Margaret Cousins and distinguished elite Indian women like, Rani Saheb of Sangli, Maharani Chimnavai Sahib Gaekwad of Baroda. Women like, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Renuka Ray were some of the dedicated workers of this association.

AIWC became successful in passing Sarda Act against Child marriage and the Hindu Code Bill with the help of women like, Muthulakshmi Reddy of the WIA, Mrs. Hamid Ali, and Rani Rajwade and Sarojini Naidu from AIWC supported and voiced for Universal Adult Franchise in India.

Statement of the Problem

In India, the social structure, cultural norms and value systems are important determinants of women's role and their position in society. The constitution not only grants equality to women and laws for women and children but it also forbids any discrimination based on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. It also empowers the state to practice protective discrimination in favor of women, children, socially, educationally backward classes of the society. In spite of all these factors and provisions made by the Constitution of India, they deeply rooted customs, traditions, belief, practices Indian patriarchal society of past and present fully contributed the subordination of women even today on various grounds.

In the ancient times, women were in a better position in the society. The Vedic period was golden days for women when they, like men participated in all the social fields and took active part in each and every sphere of human life. In the society, the men and women stood on the same footing. There was no discrimination between men and women. The women enjoyed full freedom and equality with men

during that period. Great women like, Ghosa, Apala, Viswavara, Lopamudra, Gargi, Indrani and many others are known with great respect. The period between 1500 B.C. to 500 A.D (Post Vedic period), the womenfolk had to suffer a setback as Manu had laid down some restrictions on the rights and privileges of women and as a result, the status of women received setback and they were confined to the four walls of the houses.

In pre – Vedic period, the society in India was matriarchal and women occupied the superior place as compared to men. In Vedic age, women enjoyed equality in education and were not confined to purdah. They were allowed to marry with the man of their choice. They took keen interest in political matters but evidence of male domination cannot be brushed aside. Later on, the condition of Indian women became worse.

Hindu Dharma Shastras and customs had already paved the way for the complete subordination of male dominated society. Women were deprived of property rights, they were supposed to worship their husband as God, and dowry and Sati system misguided the dignity and freedom of the women.

The Mohamedan rule confined upper caste women to their homes and early marriages were preferred. However, the British rule contributed a lot for emancipation and the revival of lost identity of Indian women.

Today, Empowerment of women has become the 'Slogan of the day.' Now, the question arises, Why is women representation necessary? Why women needed to be empowered? Are they less empowered?

States are where the power lies and the power is gendered. "We the people" of each and every country share and shape the decision and the actions of the country. Politics is an art of possible and the individual who holds the official positions in government and is in charge of resources and decision making policies of the nation. In such case, if women are not equal and invisible in political scenario, then decisions are made and legislate in, the male interest. In democratic states, state means "We the people" govern ourselves an important activity of life, an endless source of worthwhile tasks and challenges to human intelligence and creativity, and the potential avenues of justice. State power vests in law making bodies be it social, political, financial, cultural, sexual and familial. State and social policies can mobilize, recognize and rebuff citizens and their claims. State institutions and capacities makes and distribute resources for popular and elite struggles of the nation.

State and social policies establish and maintains from elementary education, healthcare, physical safety of the citizens, environment sustainability, economic viability, checks degree of inequality, infers civil quality of life, the national interest and to the international bounding with other states.

In such case, feminists argue that, most laws of the states are gender neutral but in practice, neutrality towards gender and the maintenance of equality between men and women in government actually hides substantial gender inequality. Since women are invisible in decision making policies of the country.

Women are not equal and open to contest in the election i.e. only men appear in politics and to hold the political positions of authority where politics is authoritative allocation of values and men are supposed to allocate the values of the country according to their individual or collective choices for themselves, for society and the country and for the women of the country. Theorists like, Annie Phillips, Carol Pateman, and Iris Young have noticed that the abstract terms in political theory, such as individual or citizen, though having the appearance of being gender neutral, actually signify- White males (Pateman 1988,1989; Phillips 1991,1995; Young1990). Others forcefully argue that the state was structured from its inception to benefit men having continuing interest in the maintenance of male domination, both in western countries (Lerner1986; MacKinnon 1989) and in non-western countries (Charrad 2001, Do women really need power?) These are some of the fundamental questions which confront the people of the world. India is also no exception to this.

However, in terms of every set of indices of development and socio-economic status, women have fared worse than men in all regions and in all strata of the population. In work, employment,

earnings, education, health status and decision making powers, there is a clear difference between the male and female entitlements. The empowerment of women has become more vital with the wake of globalization.

‘Out of 1 billion people living in abject poverty, women are an overwhelming majority’. (UNDP: 1995)

Moreover, women earn less for comparable work, are often barred from certain forms of (lucrative) employment, and perform much of their work in the unpaid private sector, including the rural sector. They often have no choice but to accept poorly paid, undervalued work in dangerous working conditions sometimes and with no job security. Legal barriers, including those derived from customary law to the ownership of, or access to land, resources, capital, and technology restricts women’s economic advancement. Besides, most of the women are more frequently exposed to violence and sexual exploitation in their workplace

United Nations Organization stated that, ‘any discrimination against women is global, all pervasive, and persistent”.

The realities of women’s lives through the planet indicate that gender equality in all its manifestations remain a long way off. Women are still the group of people who undertake the bulk of the unpaid work which is done in the society, live in greatest poverty, control the

fewest resources, and (most of whom) are hardly educated even to the primary school level" (Dagar Rainuka, 1998)

The United Nations Report (1977) on the status of women worldwide states that, "In south Asia, women's representation in political institutions has declined since from Nairobi Conference. (Second Asian & Pacific Ministerial Conference on Women in Development, Review & Appraisal of Implementation of the Nairobi Forward looking strategies for the advancement of women, June, 1994).

According to global data on women parliamentarians prepared by the Inter-Parliamentary Union shows that women constitute only 10% of the total membership of the Parliament.

Though cases can be found in Nordic countries some socialist countries but within these countries too women do not occupy significant position in decision making positions in political structures.

Beijing Conference, 1995 (Jakarta Declaration) "Empowerment of women is not only an equity consideration, it was also a necessary precondition for sustainable economic & social development. Involvement of women in the political arena & in decision making role is an important tool for empowerment as well as monitoring standards of political performance."

World Summit for Social Development held at Copenhagen in March, 1995 figure out 'empowerment' as a prominent objective. The

Draft Declaration of the Third Preparatory Committee (New York from 16-27 January, 1995) held by the heads of the states and government adopted and asserted that, in both economic social terms, the most productive policies and investments are those which empower people to maximize their capacities, resources and opportunities.

The Declaration and the Programme of Action of World Summit for Social Development, 1995 tried to link empowerment with economic globalization. The statement and the declaration made by the Third Preparatory Committee used the word empowerment not to achieve goals but implemented in the context of production and investment. However, point 23.0 of the Declaration states, "Recognize that empowering people, particularly women, to strengthen their capacities is a main objective of development and its principle resource. Empowerment requires the full participation of people in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of decisions determining the functioning and the well being of our societies.

In the Fourth United Nations Conference on Women in the year 1995 attended by the governments of 189 countries stated that, inequalities between women and men have persisted and major obstacles remaining still. The former Secretary General of the United Nations, Boutros Ghali asserted that, 'few causes promoted by the United Nations have generated more intense and widespread support than the campaign to campaign to promote and protect the equal rights of women.' He further explained that, 'the organization has

helped to create a historic legacy of internationally agreed strategies, standards, programmes and goals to advance the status of women worldwide.'

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)'s Human Development Report (1995) states "investing in women's capabilities & empowering them to exercise their choices is not only valuable in itself but also the surest way to contribute to economic growth & development". The report reaffirms that, 'human development is impossible without gender equality. As long as women are excluded from the development process, social development will remain lopsided. Sustainable human development implies engendering the development paradigm; and here lies the importance of women empowerment'.

The declaration on the Elimination of discrimination against women 1967, The Declaration of Mexico on the equality of women and their contribution of development and peace, 1975 and the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, 1979, Conference on Population and Development in Copenhagen in 1995, the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. Further, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which would guarantee women's human rights was ratified by 166 countries. After 1993, the United Nations instituted Women's Human Right through World Conference on Human Rights to monitor the condition of women and

their status worldwide and to be included in UN reports on countries' human right status.

In 1945, the UN Charter under Article 1(3) included that, 'to achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.....

UN General Assembly in Article 13 authorized that, 'to initiate studies and make recommendations in a number of matters, including 'assisting in the realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion'. Other than Article 8, 55, 56, 60, 62, 68, and 76 articulated the principle of non-discrimination on the grounds of sex in numerous institutional contexts.

In 1946, the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) was set up under articles 55 and 56 of the Charter of the UNO. Under the leadership of Eleanor Roosevelt in 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights declared the concept of non-discrimination on the grounds of sex under articles 1 & 2. The so-called International Bill of Rights was declared legal through the two Human Rights Covenants of the UN in the year 1966. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) under article 2 prohibits discrimination in the exercise of any of the rights enumerated in the Covenant, and article 3 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

(ICESCR) does the same thing. Moreover, ICCPR through free-standing non-discrimination clause affirms equality before the law under article 26 which states that,

‘All persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law. In this respect, the law shall prohibit any discrimination and guarantee to all persons equal and effective protection against discrimination on any ground such as race, color, sex, language, religion or other political opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Similarly, the ILO (International Labor Organization), the UNESCO (United Nations Economic Social Cultural Organization) prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sex at work, employment respectively. Moreover, Article 27 of the Fourth Geneva Convention asserts to protect women in international armed conflict ‘against any attack on their honor, in particular, against rape, enforced prostitution, or any form of indecent assault’.

In 1946, a sub-commission on the status of women under CHR but the original mandate for the Commission on the Status of women (CSW) was prepared by the reports of ECOSOC for the promotion of women’s rights in ‘political, economic, social and educational fields and to make recommendations on urgent problems requiring immediate attention in the field of human rights’.

In 1965, the first specialized Convention on the elimination of discrimination was completed by the CHR (especially Racial Discrimination)

In 1967, drafted by CSW declaration was made for the elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against women in UN.

In 1975, UN's first Conference on women was held in Mexico city. The Conference called for a binding convention on the elimination of discrimination against women. CSW again prepared second convention in 1980 at Copenhagen. The main aim of this convention was to achieve & to maintain equality for women and their recognition in full global development, the welfare of the world, the establishment of a just new international economic order, and for the international peace and security.

Part I of the Preamble to the Women's Convention in article 1 defines discrimination against women as distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex for the purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women irrespective of their marital status, on the basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.

According to the Convention, 'It affirms that it applies only to adverse discrimination and includes direct and indirect discrimination. Intention to discriminate is not required. The definition was noted and

approved by the United Nations Human Rights Committee in its General Comment No. 18 on the ICCPR, which provides consistency and cohesion between the Women's Convention and the more general, mainstream rights treaties.

Parts II, III & IV of the Convention identifies gender based discrimination. Article 7, 8 deals with the participation of women in public life of the country. Article 9 talks about equality in acquisition and Conference of nationality. Article 10 gives women access in all other aspects of education. Article 11 identifies equality of women in matters of payment and Article 12 gives access of women in health services. Article 13, 15, 16 confers equality in economic and social life of women and before the law and within the family respectively. Special provision for rural women can be found in Article 14. Part V of the Convention establishes the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and it comprises 23 independent experts through initial, periodic reports from the states parties 'on the legislative, judicial, administrative or other measures' and implemented under the obligations of the Convention. But unlike, Human Rights Committee CEDAW does not possess power to receive inter-state or individual or group complaints.

Political Profile of Indian Women

India is a land rich not only of ancient heritage but also with an ancient history and civilization as old as china. The Harappan civilization along with great civilizations like, Egyptian and

Mesopotamian civilizations was regarded as advanced civilizations of humankind. The Harappan civilization which existed in the third millennium B.C. (2700-1800 B.C.) has been called the first manifestation of civilization which occurred outside the Western Asia (Mesopotamia) and Egypt in Neolithic period (Fair Servis, 1997:56)

India, the 2nd most populous country after China with 989million population, 120 million women still lives in poverty. Generally, country with active political participation of women makes considerable advances towards women empowerment but reverse trend happened as in case of India.

During the freedom movement of India, Indian women played a crucial role in social, economic, political process of the country mostly under the leadership of Gandhi.

The political status of woman can be measured through the degree of freedom and equality as enjoyed by women in shaping and sharing of power of the society. In India, it started from the foundation of Indian National Congress in 1885. In the early twentieth century, women of Bengal and western India more vocal and actively participated in protest movements like, the Partition of Bengal (1905), Swadeshi, Boycott against the foreign rule. Such movements promoted the use of indigenous goods against foreign goods especially with the help of women activists (Borthwick 1984; Forbes 1988). In the patronage of Gandhi women started spinning yarn to wear 'khadi' (the cloth woven from khadi yarn).

Later, it became the nationalist movement and struggle against British rule in India. The early 20th century saw the birth of women's active participation and organization for political rights.

Through Gandhiji's Non-Cooperation movement (1919), Basanti Devi (1880-1974) and Urmila Devi (1883-1956) the wife and the sister of C.R. Das respectively, were the first Indian women who sold 'khadi' & were arrested by the colonial authority. For the demand of enfranchisement of women on the basis of equality with men, Smt. Sarojini Naidu for the first time represented the British Parliament on behalf of Indian women in 1917. Gandhi barred women's participation in Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930 but still women openly challenged the British authority by picketing and burning foreign shops. Beside all these factors, young women like, Bina Das, Shanti Ghosh, Suniti Choudhary, Pritilata Das were also known for terrorist activities like, making bombs, attacking District Magistrate, forming groups in order to bring political freedom, social change of Indian society and women itself.

As a result, in 1930, through the meeting of women's organizations, women demanded immediate acceptance of adult franchise without the discrimination of sex. It was accepted in the Karachi session of the Indian National Congress in 1931 and committed itself to women's political equality regardless of women's status and qualification. This promise was redeemed after the independence in

the form of fundamental rights and the Directive Principle of State Policy in the Constitution of India.

During 1920s, narrow franchise was granted to Indian women Kamala Devi Chattopadhyaya (1903-1990) and Hannah Angelo contested for Madras Legislative Council in 1926 but neither of them won. Muthulakshmi Reddi (1889-1968), a physician by profession was nominated as the first woman and she was also selected as Deputy Speaker of the Madras Council.

She is even famous for proposing legislation to end the institution of 'Devadasis' (M.Reddy, 1930) (Devadasis are young women dedicated in their youth to save Hindu temples through their dance before the temple deity and had to perform sexual relationship with temple priests & patrons in states like, Madras (later Tamil Nadu), Mysore, (later Karnataka, & Orissa (Keresenboom-story 1987; Marglin 1985; Nair 1994a; M. Reddy 1930; Srinivasan 1983, 1985). In Madras, the legal abolition of Devadasis came in 1947. However, Devadasis lost their material basis & they mostly moved to larger urban centers like, Bombay to become 'Sex Workers'. (Nair, 1994a)

The Government of India Act of 1935 extended the franchise rights of women but the British offered such rights to few married women (to the wives of certain property classes and military personnel) as in case of Great Britain. But very soon Indian women largely demanded universal franchise and not the partial steps which were based on women's relationships and identification through their

husbands. As a result, in 1936-37 Election, women won 56 out of approximately 1,500 seats in the provincial legislature. Among which Vijaylakshmi Pandit, sister of Jawaharlal Nehru, was selected as the Minister of Local Government and Public Health in the United Provinces (Pandit, 1979). Beside this, three women Deputy Speakers and two became Parliamentary Secretaries (Forbes, 1996).

As in case of India, theoretically, the principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Constitution of the country in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights and Duties and Directive Principles of State Policy. Recently, the empowerment of women has been recognized as the central and positive issue in determining the status of women. The National Commission of Women in India was set up in the year 1990 by an Act of Parliament to safeguard the rights and legal entitlements of women. Further, the 73rd and 74th Constitution Amendments of 1993 have provided seats for women in local bodies of Panchayats and Municipalities.

However, the demand for 33% reservation of women in India, itself shows a clear demarcation of restriction on women's independent, equal participation with men. Moreover, political parties with no single interest for women empowerment, emancipation and without any kind of commitment towards women's bill regarding women's rights make both the concept baseless.

The terms like, 'Empowerment' and 'Reservation' of women in politics is just an attempt to limit women's scope it clearly indicates

that they are unable to challenge the dominant structures and all the processes of patriarchal society of India.

Their struggle for political participation against unequal power relations with men in their families, in the state and in politics in actual sense has been replaced and defined in terms of what we popularly call 'Women Empowerment' as in case of India.

Feminist political scientists argue that, 'women have been largely absent from images of political leaders as well as from the set of practices involved with leadership and governance. (Representations of women in politics) inevitably have to deal with the complexity of inventing a way for women to be understood both as women and as (potential) political leaders, something imbued with masculine gender..... image of symbols have much to do with attributes of leadership of governance. (Durest –Lahti & Versteegen 1995, p. 214)

The term 'Empowerment' of women has become the slogan of contemporary world. Empowerment gained its popularity from the year 1976 which was actually started by the Third World feminists, including India. They mainly raised their voice for social justice and equality of women.

Power can be defined as control over resources and control over ideology that can be exercised through decision making process. The term empowerment is often used to describe a process whereby

powerless or disempowered can gain greater share of control of resources and decision making. Thus, empowerment is about power and changing the balance of power.

As in case of India, theoretically, the principle of gender equality is enshrined in the 'Women Friendly' Constitution of India in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights, and Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles of State Policy. Recently, the empowerment of women has been recognized as the Central and Positive issue in determining the status of women.

The National Commission for women in India was set up in the year 1990 by an Act of Parliament to safeguard the rights and legal entitlements of women. Further, the 73rd & 74th Amendments (1993) to the Constitution of India have provided reservation of seats for women only in local bodies of Panchayats and Municipalities in India. However, the argument for 33 percent reservation for women in grassroots level,

Parliament, and Legislative Assembly in India in itself shows a clear demarcation of restriction on women's independent, equal participation with men. Moreover, political parties with no single interest for women's empowerment, emancipation and any kind of commitment towards women's bill regarding their rights make both the concepts baseless. Infact, the terms like, 'Empowerment' and 'Reservation' of women in Indian politics is just an attempt to limit women's scope and it clearly indicates that they are unable to

challenge the dominant structures and all the processes of the patriarchal psyche of India.

Their struggle for political participation against unequal power relations with men in their families, in the state & politics has been replaced & defined in best possible terms of what we popularly call 'Women Empowerment' as in case of India.

According to February 1998, Times of India report, 'Domestic responsibilities, lack of financial clout, raising criminalization of politics and the threat of character assassination' are making it difficult for Indian women to participate in Politics. Moreover, women politicians point out that even within the political parties, women are having problem to maintain leadership positions. In fact, 'women candidates are usually fielded from 'losing' constituencies where the party does not want to 'waste' a male candidate.'

Profile of Women in the Indian Parliament

In India, from 1991–1996, 39 women representatives were mostly from middle class, professional women with little or no links to the Indian Parliament and with the women's movement. Most of them accessed politics through their families, few of them through students and civil rights movement and some as a result of and increasing representation from the lower castes. The majority of women in the Indian Parliament are elite women while their public role challenges some stereotypes, their class position often allows them a far greater

range of options than are available to poorer women. Quotas for women as a strategy for accessing to the political arena have growing support among MPs of India despite the fact that very few have accessed the system through this route; most women are still firm believers in the meritocratic argument. Most women MPs have supported the 81st Amendment ensuring 33% reservation of women in Parliament, even though several parties objected this bill in favor of women empowerment.

In 1995, the question of quotas was raised again which was mainly focused on women in Parliament. Initially, most parties agreed to this proposition. But when the bill addressing the 33% reservation of women was introduced in the 11th Parliament in 1997, several parties and groups raised objections. Like, overlapping quotas for women in general and women of lower castes and the issue of elite women created rift in women's involvement in politics.

Most women's groups felt that the caste issue would create division among women. Many felt uneasy about giving special privileges to elite women by ensuring seats for women in parliament. However, Hindu Nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has supported and committed itself to introduce another women's quota bill in Parliament.

Consequently 3.1 Percent of the total contestants in 1996 election occupied less than 6 to 10 % of the total seats in the Legislative Assemblies and Parliament of India.

Status of Women in India

It is pertinent to quote Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, who said, "You can tell the condition of a nation by looking at the status of its women."

The year 1975 was declared by the United Nations as the International Year of women, and later, the entire decade from 1975 onwards was devoted to it.

'Status' is a sociological concept when we talk about status it represents an individual, as a member of a society and occupies a number of statuses. Infact, it is the totality of these statuses that gives an individual a 'station' in the social system. Some statuses are common whereas some are ranked in different strata of the society. Statuses for instance, mother wife, and sister are common in all kinds of society. However, statuses like, student, teacher, principal are ranked statuses of the same society but status of principal is higher than the status of teacher and student at the same time. Similarly, the common statuses of father, husband, and sister are higher than the statuses of mother, wife and brother respectively in India.

When we talk about status of women we are referring to the position of a woman by the virtue of her being a woman in general which differs from particularly status of women as compare to men women has been regarded as the weaker section of the society.

Today, women may be educated, self employed, or may be in higher positions but still they are categorized as 'backward' and does not constitute a 'class' by themselves like men of the same society.

Most of the societies in India is patriarchal in its nature and is characterized mostly by male dominance. Despite the very name Hindustan and the fact that Hindu religion dominates in population and of the territories of India and the other fact that Hindu religion even though believes and worship goddess and regard them as embodiment of 'shakti' the Goddess of power, force and courage. On the one hand, it is proclaimed that, "the gods live where women are worshipped" but in practice women are regarded as inferior to men and there is gender biasness in Indian society.

In India, the status of women was an issue of great concern especially during the 19th century reformers in India. Their main efforts were directed against social evils, customs of those days like, sati, female infanticide and prohibitions against Widow Remarriage which was seen as detrimental to the status of women. For this they were criticized by non other than women themselves. Saraladevi Choudhurani, the founder of Bharat Stree Maha Mandal in her work, 'A Women's Movement' wrote that, "They are the so-called social reformers. They advertise themselves as champions of the weaker sex; equal opportunities for women, female education and female emancipation are some of their pet subjects of oratory at the annual show. They even make honest efforts at object lessons in the above

subjects by persuading educated ladies to come up on their platform and speak for themselves but woe to the women if they venture to act for themselves”.

It is a million dollar question in our society that when any mother may love both her child (girl or boy) equally but when mother herself is poor, oppressed, illiterate, ignorant, unhealthy and regarded as Second Sex in home and the society, then what kind of future she can provide for her child?

Parmita Shastri in Outlook India, 1998, commented that, “I was told Indian women don’t think like that about society. But I would like to argue that if they don’t think like that they should be given a real opportunity to think like that”.

Women Empowerment: Meaning and the Issues of Gender in India

“Man’s capacity for justice makes democracy possible but man’s inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary.”

Jakarta Declaration pointed out that, “empowerment of women is not only an equity consideration it was also a necessary precondition for sustainable economic and social development. Involvement of women in the political arena and in decision making roles is an important tool for empowerment as well as monitoring standards of political performance.”

“At the dawn of the twenty-first century, states and international community can no longer refute the fact that humanity is made up of two sexes, not just one.” (Oliveria 26)

Women do not hold important roles in government and participate in making important decisions in our country. People in India do not just bother to hear or read about women in politics as often as they do about men.

The status of women in modern India is paradoxical in its nature, some are on top & have taken positions of Prime minister, President of the country and doing quite well in multinational companies but many are suffering and killed in domestic violence, torture by non other than their own family members and also sacrificed in the name of ‘Honor Killing’,

The sex ratio of India shows that Indian society is still prejudiced against women & girl child against boy child which was recorded 933 females per thousand males in India in 2001 Census which is much below the world average of 990 females. Despite various legislations & guarantees of equal rights & status to men & women through the Constitution of India there is a wide gap between their de jure & de facto position.

Due to paternalistic family set up and male-dominated society in India, women do not have any role in decision making process. Moreover, due to growing money and muscle power,

communalization, and criminalization of politics, women are forced to leave the politics and participate in politics beyond voting. In a country like India, with negative cultural attitude which considers politics as a 'man's job' makes women's participation of politics insignificant and pose problems to researches to draw the general conclusions.

Ignorance of women regarding their own rights and legislations for their benefits makes women's participation impossible. In fact, Indian society in the later half of the twentieth century, does not look upon women's participation with sympathy and understanding.

Sapiro observed that the public and private spheres approach defines in two end points regarding men and women's participation in politics. Man's political concern revolves around competition, power, and authority, supremacy which have been labeled as natural and 'public'.

In contrast, women's political concern revolves around themes of welfare and domestic values and has been labeled as 'private'. In such case, empowerment of women has been widely acknowledge and regarded as important goal; in an international development.

A source book by World Bank on Empowerment and Poverty Reduction declared empowerment as "expansion of freedom of choice and action" (Narayan 2002, XVIII). Applicable to both women as well as to other disadvantaged or socially excluded groups, it is important to acknowledge that women's empowerment encompasses some unique

additional elements. Since, women are not just one group among various disempowered subsets of society, (the poor, ethnic minorities etc).

Other than this, household problems are a central focus of women's disempowerment which is not applicable to other disadvantaged groups. For other factors, empowerment needs institutional transformation, women's empowerment requires systematic transformation in institutions but support and revision in patriarchal structures of the societies. But again, without women as an agent of change and their interference, empowerment is impossible. Moreover, without women's individual or collective ability, recognition and utilization of resources like, economic, political and social cannot bring women's empowerment.

In early 1981, Acharya and Bennett argued that 'status' is a function of the power attached to a given role but women since fill a number of roles, it may be misleading to speak of 'the status of women'. To Mason (1986), phenomenon of gender inequality is inherently complex and spread among different dimensions: socio-political, psychological and others. She regarded that both men and women can be unequal in different ways and through different dimensions in various social set up of the various societies. Women may be empowered in one area of life while not in others. (Malhotra and Mathur 1997. Kishore 1995, 2000b; Hashemi, Schuler, and Riley 1996, Beegle, Frankenberg, and Thomas 1998).

Empowerment process is poorly captured by proxy measures and largely depends on women's decision making power. As in case of India, the Constitution made a deliberate and radical departure from the inherited social system by giving Indian women equal social and political status through various provisions. The political empowerment of women in India has made considerable strides from first General Election of the country starting from 4.4% in the First Parliament of 1952-1957 to 7.4 % in the election of 1996.

Women Representation in Rajya Sabha however has shown greater improvement which started from 7.7% in 1952 to 15.5 in 1991. Moreover, the 73rd and 74th Constitution Amendment Act have ways to many women in decision making process of urban and rural elected bodies through 33% women's reservation of seats in the Panchyati Raj institutions. However, Document on Women's Development (1985) showed that women's role in political structures virtually remained unchanged despite the rapid growth of informal political activity by them.

Gender as a political ideology, view woman as basically different from man - psychologically and often intellectually women's perception of life is a web. Man's is that of a ladder. Women's life is connected to that of stress, attachment, affiliation, empathy and dependence. Men emphasizes on competition, independence, separation and formal rights. (Shanti, K., 1998)

The political status of women can be defined as the degree of equality and freedom enjoyed by women in shaping and sharing of the power and the value given by the society to enjoy those powers conferred to them as their role. Women should enter into the political decision-making structures in order to change their subordinate social and economic status and change the political structures in the interest and well-being of the poor, the children and for women to make the structures of the society more humane and to check criminalization and communalization of politics of the country.

Despite various legislations to implement equal participation and empowerment of women in India, a majority of illiterate rural and even urban women are mobilized in the political process by the political parties who come to approach women candidature during elections for party issues and gaining sympathy for mass public for short term election winning goals and not for long term goals for bringing social and political changes and the issues of women empowerment and gender equality in decision making bodies. Since gender based subordination is deeply ingrained in the psyche of both men and women, female subordination to male ego has always been perceived as natural corollary to their biological differences (Biological School of Thought) (Beneria, L; and Sen, G; 1984) which is further interfered by religious beliefs, cultural practices and educational systems (Cultural School of Thought)

In such cases, women's empowerment is not only necessary for development but also creates the right environment and circumstances through which people can use their faculties and abilities to utilize their potential.

Empowerment in such context arises from cultural, ethnic, historical, economical, geographical, political and social, out of an individual, groups of people and various life cycle and helps to gain opportunity and strength to voice. Women empowerment and empowerment in general means access to power and control over resources and services. It aims at achieving goals, maintaining equality and justice, decision making power, challenging existing power.

To Shrilatha Batliwala (1995), power is "control over resources, the ideology and self, exercised in a socio-economic and political context among individuals and groups." To Jo Rowlands (1997), Empowerment can be identified with four different forms of power –

1. Power over – control or influence over others, instrumentation of domination,
2. Power to – generative or productive power which creates new possibilities and actions without domination.
3. Power with – a sense of the whole being greater than the sum of the individuals, especially when a group tackles problems together; and

4. Power from within – the spiritual strength and uniqueness that resides in each one of us and makes us truly human.

The term empowerment is often used to describe a process whereby the powerless or disempowered gain a greater share of control over resources and decision making and control over resources and decision making and control over ideology. Empowerment is of two types:

1. Empowerment in general is basically related to the poor or powerless people.
2. Empowerment of women is essential to emancipate women from the social evils like, traditional, cultural, customs. Women are marginalized over years together at various stages, and also they are branded as weaker and are kept outside from reaching the front stage. In this context, empowerment is required to increase awareness and capacity building for their greater participation in the decision making and transformation action (Saguna B, 2001)

To Chandra (1997), "Empowerment of women as the redistribution of power that enable thus to challenge patriarchal ideology and the male dominance. It is both a process and the result of the process. In the process, it not only increase their capacity, but also enable them to face new challenges in the overall development of the

household and also to contribute to the local community development.”

Empowerment enhances confidence, awareness, mobility, choices, control over resources and decision making power. Hence, empowerment is a process and not a product; it aims to change the nature and direction of systemic forces which marginalize women and other disadvantaged sections.

But in countries like India, caste and religion, class, race, ethnicity determines women’s position, condition and their empowerment. Empowerment is widely entered the gender equality arena in India through feminists’ activists challenging patriarchal gender relations, of progressive government policies. By 1990s, women’s issues and gender equality were more popularized by state, actors, aid agencies, and development professionals and by various feminists’ activists and advocates. Finally, in 1993, empowerment as a process of transforming the relations of power between individuals and social groups, shifting power in three critical ways:

1. by challenging the ideologies that justify social inequality (such as gender or caste)
2. by challenging prevailing patterns of access to and control over economic, natural and intellectual resources

3. by transforming the institutions and structures that reinforce and sustain existing power structures (such as the family, state, market, education, and media). The document argued that ideological and institutional changes were critical to sustaining empowerment and real social transformation. And it emphasized that transformatory empowerment could not be achieved by tackling any one of these elements of social power – even at that early stage, its architects were clear that there was no “one – shot” magic bullet route to women’s empowerment, such as providing women access to credit, enhanced incomes, or land – titles. (Batliwala 1993).

The Parameters for Women Empowerment are

- Building a positive self- image and self-confidence ;
- Developing ability to think critically;
- Building up group cohesion and fostering decision-making and action;
- Ensuring equal participation in the process of bringing about social change;
- Encouraging group action in order to bring about change in the society; and
- Providing the wherewithal for economic independence.

LEVELS OF EMPOWERMENT

The levels of women empowerment according to Longwe (1990) could be classified into five namely, welfare, access, awareness or conscientization, participation or performance and control and the need to move from the level of welfare to control, is a useful one. "Welfare" is nothing but to improve the living conditions of women. "Access" is the possibility to obtain services, products or commodities, and it is one of the indicators of progress of women's development. "Awareness" or "Conscientization" stands for the process of exposing people to the problems, which affect men and women because of discrimination and other societal problems. In women's development conscientization involves the process by which women analyze and understand the prevalence of gender discrimination. It is a crucial step towards enabling environment.

"Participation" or "Performance" involves ensuring equitable participation of women in the socio-political and economic processes and structures. In other words, it ensures equal participation of women in development planning, development processes and development programmes. "Control" means the ability to direct, or to influence events, recognizes women's right to control her destiny, have an equal share in the resources and benefits and expanding the role of women as decision makers in public and private domains, so that they are better able to control their lives.

“The empowerment idea manifests itself at all levels of societal interaction. It is found in giving a voice to the disenfranchised, in allowing the weak & the marginalized to have access to the tools & the materials they need to forge their own destinies.”

Empowerment of women in the small region of every state of India is necessary because the benefits will be felt not only by the women themselves, but by the society & the nation as a whole. Since there can be no true democracy, no true people’s participation in governance & development without the equal participation of women with men in all spheres of life & levels of decision making. Whether in case of households, workplace, in communities, in government & in the international arena, women participation will make society more responsive to the development of the country.

Empowerment is not merely a mind set, but a visible demonstration of that change which the world around is forced to acknowledge, respond to, & accommodate as best as possible. As a result, women’s empowerment will lead to a world where women & men ensure that resources are utilized not just equitably, but justifiably.

“Participation” can be of different types, as defined by different people. Anthony M. Orum defines political participation as the variety of ways in which people try to influence the political process.

Participation is not a single, undifferentiated entity. There are alternative modes of participation that differ significantly in the ways in which they relate the citizen to his Government. Besides voting is accepted almost without exception as the standard political act. They mention three other modes: campaign activity, co-operative activity, & citizen initiated contacts. (Verba, Ahemed, Bhatt)

Participation in politics and public debate helps to build a better & nobler character in the people.... People would be better human beings if they so participated". (Milbrath & Goel)

Participation gives some sort of satisfaction to the citizens – satisfaction with the government & satisfaction with one's own role. (Nie & Verba)

Participation benefits the participants as well as the larger community. It enables men by giving them a sense of their own dignity & value, alerts both rulers & the ruled to their duties & responsibilities, & broadens political understanding. (McClosky)

Participation helps the individual to be effective & it associates him or her with the political system. The higher the rate & the levels, the more varied the forms of participation, the healthier is the democratic system. (N.D. Palmer)

Hence, Political participation is a process of growth of citizenship. The main thrust in women's participation is how far they

have assumed the role & citizens beyond their traditional roles & to what extent such a role has been legitimized to the political structure.

The Political Participation of women means democratization of various political process & groups in society & it can be linked with the various struggles for women's empowerment. In India, political participation came within the national freedom movements of India. Political representations of women lead the women's empowerment in India. Whereas some authors argue that 'general' empowerment through political representations has limited the political empowerment of women was done in the name of reservation policy as in case of India. Furthermore, neither the concept of political representation nor the concept of political empowerment has been verified in most of the given studies, & the link between the two remains ambiguous. As compare to other constitutions of the world particularly in western democracies issues like quotas be it for women, ethnic, racial & religious minorities is still politically a highly contested issue whereas many constitutions are framed in such a way which makes the introduction of quota for marginalized groups are extremely difficult.

The bill which has already been in use through 73rd & 74th Constitution Amendment Act in India for reservations of seats for women in India & was passed smoothly as a women's Bill for the introduction of a women's quota in PRI (Panchyati Raj Institutions) but the same bill is still heatedly debating & has been variously delayed &

rejected many political parties when it comes to the introduction of women's quota in the National Parliament & Legislative Assemblies. The question here lies is why? Why such duplicity? Why discrimination on women's reservation of seats in higher political bodies?

Though Anne Phillips in her 'Politics of Presence (1995) one can draw a conclusion that like, in Germany & Nordic countries reservations of quota is election agenda & due to competition among different political parties, where no party introduces quota & if any party introduces no other parties can reject it is because of the fear of punishment ballot box nor can they criticize. The same thing can happen when it comes to Indian politics. However, in India the quota was not introduced at the level of party like, in most of the democracies in the west. In India it was started on the basis of the reservation of single- member constituencies.

Status & participation of women in politics in general has been measured on the basis of women suffrage in most of the democratic country of the world. Indian women's participation as an equal citizen of the country started with the grant of Universal Adult Franchise which started from the first General Election of India (1950) through the various provisions that has been discussed in the Fundamental Rights in the Indian Constitution. Judiciously Indian women may have exercised their equal rights & right to franchise along with the men but inequality, gender biasness is deeply rooted in India communities. Which make women dependent voters due to illiteracy, ignorance,

patriarchal set up of the society. Majority of women make their choice on the basis of suggestions from male members of the family. Like, from husband, father, & sons. Moreover, most of the women lack information, political awareness they are not aware of their own strength & rights.

Like men, women are not politically conscious. However, in the First General Elections three women became prominent parliamentarians' viz. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur was the first woman cabinet minister for health, & the Deputy Minister was Margatham Chandrasekher. Lakshmi Menon, however, was made a Parliament's life & continued to remain as Deputy Minister for External Affairs under Jawaharlal Nehru Prime Ministership & served as Foreign Minister till the year 1967.

In the year 1962 six Indian women became the members in the centre as Ministers of state or Deputy Ministers in the Centre as Ministers or Deputy Ministers twenty one Ministers or Deputy Ministers in State Governments, 34 were elected to the Lok Sabha & 12 women were returned through the voting process in the state Legislative Assemblies by the normal process of returning members to the Upper House in Delhi.

A publication brought out by the Indian National Congress in 1967 showed that 230 Congress women candidates were put for the 1962 elections out of which 152 were elected to the State Assemblies. This was reduced to 85 out of 175 in the year 1967.

Indian women like, Vijaylakshmi Pandit was the first woman to serve as a Minister in Provincial Government & the first ever Indian woman to be elected as the President of UN General Assembly. Later on she became the Ambassador of the USSR, the United States & High Commissioner in London.

INDICATORS FOR WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

The indicators for women's empowerment are as follows:

- Women become vocal, articulate and fearlessly self-expressive through their assembly in small groups and start making discussions about the self, within the family and in the group where she belongs.
- Women's knowledge and awareness of their situation, and access to, new kinds of information, knowledge, attitudes and skills.
- Women's ability to speak out and act on oppressive practices and violence against women within the family and outside it, for asserting their views and rightful share.
- Women gain significant confidence because of their role as decision makers, accounts keepers, planners of action programmes, trainers, etc.

- Women's physical mobility increases due to their attendance in meetings, trainings, cultural programmes, study tours, conferences and field action programmes.
- Women often along with their men begin to collectively address the forms of exploitation such as right to minimum wages, right to ownership of land and other family assets in their own names. Thereby women's economic status improves, leading to higher say and status in family matters.
- Women develop capacities and skills to understand and perceive situations, reflect upon it, critically analyze the situation further and explore possible solutions, for the problems posed before them.
- Women put together courage to do the chores taken care of and performed by men so far and learn relevant scientific and mathematical skills (like constructing bunds, handling technical instruments, calculating one's wages, etc.)
- Women's formation of formal and informal groups, for unitedly engage in struggles and action on common concerns and issues.
- Women's groups can access resources/schemes/services to meet their needs such as health, nutrition and child care and set up and manage their own services if necessary, e.g., crèches and non-formal schools for children, credit and saving schemes.

- Levels of violence, atrocities and oppressive social customs begin to decrease due to her social and economic empowerment.
- Altogether the image of women as a respectable source of strength improves significantly within and outside the family because of the change in women's self-image from one of subordination and subjugation to one of self-esteem, confidence and equality.

Chapter 2

Methodology

Data for the study were collected from both the secondary sources. The primary sources of data have been collected from Questionnaire, face to face interview methods. The Questionnaire method includes –

- Structured and unstructured questions
- Open ended and close ended questions

The secondary sources of data have been collected from books, journals, census of India 1999 and 2001, published materials, various local and national news papers, periodicals etc.

Research Questions

The present study seeks to answer the following research questions –

1. What is the role of women in social affairs of the Hills?
2. What are the political affairs of the Hills?
3. How far 33% reservation of seats for women will lead to their empowerment in Hill areas of Darjeeling?

4. Whether 73rd & 74th amendment is real or mere proxies of women's political participation in Hilly areas of Darjeeling?
5. Is empowerment merely a synonym for the democratization of politics in grassroots level?
6. What are the future prospects of women empowerment?
7. What is the level of actual empowerment of the women?
8. What are the major hurdles on the way of empowerment?
9. What is the level of participation of the women in political affairs?
10. What is the extent of participation of the women from upper & lower strata of the society?
11. What is the exact no. of women's political participation in the weaker sections of the society?
12. What are the factors that can contribute towards real empowerment of women?

Objective of the study

Unlike, the intellectual community like Bengali and the communities like, Marwaris Gujaritis, Sindhis, Beharis and the Upians (people of Uttar Pradesh) the merchant communities whose business skills and network are in their blood. The original Nepali people of Hills are neither gifted with business skills nor intelligent in

their nature and character. These people live their lives literally by 'the sweat of their brow'. They do not own any farm lands except from the people of kalimpong subdivision and to larger extent Mirik, people have their own land and in the other parts of Darjeeling Hills all the agricultural land belongs to Tea Gardens. Beside this, Darjeeling Hills does not have any commercial enterprises and scope of building any industries and factories through which career opportunities of the youths of hills can be fulfilled and the economic and political condition of this area can be resolved.

The agitation in hills and the demand for separate land for Indian Gorkhas started on the basis of separate identity of Indian Gorkhas are bonafide Indian citizens of Indian origin from several generations they are born and brought up in India. Their identity as Indian citizen is always confused with the identity of a Nepalis of Nepal (p. 227, The Story of Darjeling, Basant B. Lama)

When the first batch of Indian Nepalese, or Gorkhas as they like to be called, settled in what is now Darjeeling, there was nobody to record their history. But Darjeeling was already having a resident population when the British, after a ravaging war with the fierce warriors, brought them down with guile to annex the hill tracts in 1814. That was almost 200 years ago. A decade after that General Lloyd and J W Grant of the East India Company began the first British settlements in Darjeeling, finding this place suitable for both as a getaway and sanatorium for the British administration.

The region was formally adopted by the British in 1837 and a road from Pankhabari to Ghoom, and then up to Darjeeling, leapt up almost immediately as a hotel was established in Kurseong for European travellers. By 1866, Darjeeling district as we know today was complete. But the people in hills were marginalized and dispossessed through centuries and they were fighting for poverty, unemployment, water scarcity, lack of quality higher education, roads, and mass unemployment problem which was rising day by day.

Moreover, the people of Darjeeling are very much sensitive about their historical greatness and think that their contribution is not given due recognition and all these years their economic, political, ethnic, and cultural interests have been neglected. The demand for a separate state by the Gorkhas is not a new one it was both during pre-independence and post-independence period, this demand left its impact deeply on the life Hill people as well as plain people. During the British rule in India, a separate administration set up was demanded by the Hill people's Association during 1907 and 1919 for geographical, racial, historical, religious, linguistic, economic and political issues by the leaders like, Bahadur Rai, Hari Prasad Pradhan and Ladenla of Hillmen's Association.

After the independence of India, it was Gorkha League, the first political party in Darjeeling Hills in the early forties demanded a separate land for Gorkhas or Nepalese.

The demand for separate state for the people of Darjeeling Hills became more vocal and came into limelight by the fresh agitation which was started by the newly formed political party, Gorkha National Liberation Front and its supremo Subash Ghising. But the agitation of 1980s in Darjeeling Hills for the separate state ended in bitter way and by the violent killing of Hill people by the military force. The wounds thus are centuries old and needs sensitive and diplomatic handling of this region.

More importantly, Subash Ghising sold his Gorkhaland dream 20 years ago and left Darjeeling hills more disrupted. It is generally said that, the socio, economic and political development in Darjeeling hills has gone 20 years back after the unsuccessful agitation of 1980s.

Socio-economic indicators of the Hills show that a staggering 75% of the populace, according to Laden Tenzing of Tenzing Wine Store in Kurseong, are Alcoholics. Though culturally a wine-drinking people, he says neither he nor his father remembers so many people hitting the bottle. This time around, the agitators need to be brought to the table and efforts made to address immediate issues, ensuring that the escape hatch of all the piled up despondence and hopelessness is not violence. Not again. (Indian Gorkhas are not rebels without a cause: The Times of India)

People in Darjeeling Hills live by daily earnings and it would be really hard time for them to face these Strikes. Darjeeling totally depends on tourism and telling the tourist to leave Darjeeling for

upcoming indefinite strikes would sound some more difficult. Subash Ghising never wanted intellectuals nor women to be a part of his movement. Bimal Gurung has initiated the second Phase for Gorkhaland from the year 2007. However, Bimal Gurung is opposite. He wants all the intellectuals to be part of his movement and the main vanguards of the revived movement in hills this time are '**Women Wing**' popularly known as **Nari Morcha**.

Chapter Three

Review of Literatures

A.K. Gupta in *Empowering Women* deals with facilities, rights and opportunities as given by the Constitution of India. This consciousness has awakened the sense of urgency in experiencing equality and social justice among Indian women.

A. K. Singh on 'Empowerment of women in India' attempts to analyze various organizations which are helping to create favorable environment to help women to achieve a better status since independence of India.

Andrea M. Singh & Neera Burra on 'Women & Wasteland Development in India' gives overall views on policy, law & administration & tries to give women a sustainable livelihood.

Deepa Narayan in *Measuring Empowerment*, said that, poverty reduction on a large scale depends on empowering those who are most motivated to move out of poverty are poor themselves. But if empowerment cannot be measured development will take seriously. Through all these factors this book also tries to outline a conceptual framework of the women in Indian society.

Dr. Vinita Kaul - 'Women and Wind and Change' tries to highlight socio politico economics facets such as gender equality, empowerment

of women, social legislation, custodial justice, and social justice. He gives the accounts of women's emancipation and their empowerment.

Evelin Hust in *Women's Political Representation and Empowerment in India*, tried to find out the quotas and local politics will not fully empower the women in the country side, they will still open up an important space for them to become politically interested and active which will, in turn, will lead to further empowerment in the long run.

F. Jahan's '*Women in India*' presents comprehensive study on various facets of Women in India. It covers all aspects of emancipation and empowerment of women in India.

G.S. Mehata in *Participation of Women in the Panchayati Rj System*, while keeping in view of status of women in past and present regarding their socio-economic condition and their empowerment the author has attempted to examine various of rural women in India. It has also discussed about socio-eco, political background, personal character of women in PRI regarding their mobility, freedom, and their status in such institutions and finally regarding gender issues and various role played by NGOs.

G. S. Pande - '*Political Participation of Women*' describes women active role in political affairs of the country. Author emphasize that the progress of nation depends on the awareness and active participation of women and the role played by women in political arena.

G. Shah in *Social Movements and the State* examines none or extra institutional collective action as agents of political and social change, and social Movements as a defining force in the political process.

Harriet B. Presser in his book, *Women's Empowerment and Demographic Process* combines conceptual empirical research with policy directions and considers relevance of economic, social and cultural contexts for the health and well being of women, adolescents, and the children. It links women's empowerment with demographic process.

H. C. Upreti and Nandini Ureti - 'Women and Problems of Gender Discrimination' highlight the struggle of women against unequal status in life, family and polity.

Jaysri Ghosh - 'Political Participation of Women in West Bengal' summed up the political life of women in West Bengal in a comparative manner.

Jorg Fisch in *Immolating Women*, the system of Sati is studied for the first time in global context. It is considered as one among many manifestations of following into death which entails the death of one or more persons within a virtualized and public act.

J. K. Chopra - 'Women and Politics' traced out women's right and policies granted by constitution of India , Their struggle for political power and status. The book describes to recognize women's autonomy

and their capacity to act as full citizen. Equality and the special treatment to women form an important part of this book.

Kathleen Staudt in *Women, Politics and Power*, it provides, clear, detailed and current introduction to women's political representation through using broad statistics and detailed case study method. According to Kathleen Staudt, University of Texas at El Paso, "This book could be the best, most comprehensive, global comparison of elected and appointed women in high level political institutions: chief executives, legislatures, parliaments and cabinet positions."

Kiran Saxena – In her book 'Women and politics' explores women's struggle for political power that is women could achieve their rightful place in society. The concern emanates from theoretical understandings of cross national empirical evidences and gender questions in general as these questions encompass women from all over the world and are also culture specific as the social milieu intervenes and create particular ness in struggle.

Leela D'Souza, *Cultural History of Ancient India*, this book is a search for and a classification of the various strands of diverse cultures that have contributed to the emergence of Indian culture.

Marjorie Agosin- *Women Gender and Human Rights'* traced out wide range of women's issues including political, education, and other rights of women. Women's right to be human rights and bring gender issues into global arena is the main aim of the book.

M. Mazumdar's on 'Encyclopedia of Gender Equality through Women Empowerment' mainly presents an objective critique of the contradiction and consequences of the development and disparities of women.

M. Razia Parvin's 'Empowerment of Women' traces Women Empowerment in India. It tries to show position, historical perspective; reviews subordination of women & analyses for the development of Indian Women through economy, NGO's & suggests some possible strategies for the real empowerment for women in society.

M.S.A. Rao in Social Movements in India, has divided his book in two parts, part I includes of movements like, peasants, backward classes, sectarian, tribal, and women movement. A theoretical paper provides the conceptual framework for analyzing diverse social movements.

M. S. Gill – 'Great Women in the World' brings dedication of great women to the movement of women's rights of equality; with absorbing style he recounts great achievement and heroic deeds of legendary women and make every female proud of being a woman.

Nivedita Menon- 'Gender and Politics in India' highlights the impact of new impacts technology on women. It emphasis on structural adjustment policies and various issues of women. It focuses on the different strands of feminism.

N. R. Reddy's 'Women & Development Challenges & Achievements' mainly focuses on five important issues of Women Empowerment & Development, Participation & Development, Employment & Development, Health, Education & Development and Legal Rights & Development.

Partha Chatterjee & Pradeep Jaganathan Pradeep in Community, Gender & Violence, wrote about the whole range of new issues raised by the relations between community, gender, and politics of violence. It contains different essays on women and nation and the issues of minorities.

Puran Chanda - 'Political Dynamics' describes women lagged behind in all spheres of life. It brings information on women leadership and women developments.

Rajkumar Pruthi, Rameshwari Devi, Romila Pruthi – 'Indian Women' describes the role and position of Indian women in society. It provides the ideology and moral basis for women's notion about their rights and duties. Book attempts to understand the present status of women through the ages from reforms and programmes for women's welfare and development. It describes the equal status and opportunity and freedom from oppression to Indian women.

Reghna Ghadially on 'Women in Indian society' divides her book into five sections which & gives contextual, analytical, theoretical, empirical views of women in different parts Indian society.

Rita Manchanda in *Women, War, and Peace in South Asia*, focuses on women's experiences as representing and alternative and non-violent ways of negotiating the construction of conflictual identities, and on women's highlights on women's perspectives which privilege the notion of 'just' society and peace.

R. Ray and Mary Fainsod in *Social Movement*, focus on poverty and class in their analysis of social movements, a group of leading Indian scholars shows how they had to change because poverty reduction no longer serves its earlier role as a political template as in case of India.

Sakuntala Narshima on 'Empowering Women' tries to empower women through various organizations, NGOs mostly in rural areas.

Sangamitra Sen Chadhari –'Women and Politics' presents political rights of women and empowerment of women.

Sanjay Biswas the former journalist and Sameer Roka the grandson of famous Nepali short story writer late Parshuram Roka have thrown some light in the history of Darjeeling regarding its socio-economic background in their combined book, *Darjeeling: Truth & Beyond*

Sonia Bathla on 'Women Democracy & the Media' highlights significance of media in a democratic society & reviews media's role on women's issues & problems.

Sumitra Kumari in her book, *Dynamics of Women Empowerment*, dealt mainly with women empowerment in a comprehensive manner, shaping, sharing of power, decision making process and its accountability. It contains 14 essays regarding various issues of women.

S. Murthy & K. D. Gaur on 'Women Work Participation & Empowerment' is a joint collaboration of twenty-seven papers on different aspects of women. It relates & covers almost 50 percent of women population of any country.

Stephanie Tawa Lama in *Electoral Reservations, Political Representation & Social Change in India (A Comparative Perspective)*, relates the Indian debate on reservations for this it offers a collective though partial, stock taking exercise, and adds to our understanding of reservation as a policy, their limitations of their principal and secondary effects.

Suruchi Thapar - 'Role of women in Indian national movement' describes about participation of women in the streets without compromising on their domestic values. Author lights on politicization of the domestic spheres and women's political consciousness. She presents domestic lives of women caught in the swirling vortex of political emotions.

Taisha Abraham on 'Women & the politics of Violence' undertakes & gives interdisciplinary perspective to the politics of

women's struggle against religious fundamentalism & the terrain of law.

Yogesh Atal, *Changing Indian Society*, offers a good introduction to Indian society for a variety of readers regarding the Indian culture and society and the changes that are occurring in the Indian society.

Zainab Rehaman - 'Women and Society' discusses the status of women all over the world in general, in India in particular in all important areas of human life, like health education, employment, politics, family and development. It explains the theory of feminism, women's studies and reason for subordination of women. It outlines efforts of women to achieve equality.

Chapter Four

Origin and Development of Darjeeling: An Overview

Among the spectacular snow covered mountains at an altitude of 2134 m the Darjeeling hill station was founded by the British in 1835 with a military cantonment and a health sanitarium. Tea plantation was started around 1850s and the British also introduced various flowers and fruits to the area. It had grown in stature which is incomparable in the world and the grand name of Darjeeling tea is now well established all over the world. The word Darjeeling comes from the Tibetan words "Dorje" meaning the thunderbolt of Indra, the king of Gods and "Ling" meaning a place or land. Thus "Dorje-Long" means the land of thunderbolts

According to some old records, Tibetan monks from 1757 to 1763 completed building of a Buddhist Monastery on the flat land atop the observatory Hill as a branch of the Pemiongchi Monastery in Sikkim. The chief abode of this newly built monastery was named after Rinzing Dorji Legden La, (Nicholas and Deki Rhodes: A Man of the Frontier, S.W. Laden La 1876-1936, His Life and Times in Darjeeling and Tibet, 2006) so the Tibetans called it "Dorji-Ling (Ling-house or abode or monastery) meaning "the place where Dorji lives".

However, some say that the observatory Hill was the highest point on the Darjeeling Ridge and attracted an awful thunder and lightning during the monsoon storms so the name Dorji-Thunderbolt and Ling-house or abode or the place of the thunderbolt became the meaning of the name Darjeeling.

Darjeeling was under the domain of Raja of Sikkim, a petty ruler who had been struggling against the growing power of Gurkhas of Nepal. They intruded into Sikkim in the year 1780 after over running the hills & valleys of Nepal.

Finally, they annexed the eastern part of Sikkim near river Tista, Tarai belt lying near river Mechi, which is now covered with valuable tea-garden areas of the Darjeeling planters. However, the extension of Darjeeling was included only in the beginning of 19th century by the East India Company.

It was in the year 1814, the war broke out between the Nepalese and the British army and they again reinstated the raja of Sikkim who had been driven out of his throne through the treaty of Titalyain 1817.

By this treaty, the Raja's sovereignty was guaranteed by the Company and the area from river Mechi to river Tista covering an area of 4,000 sq. miles was restored under him, thus the intervention of the British was successful in preventing the Gurkhas from intruding Sikkim, and the hill areas of west and southern part of river Tista. Thus Sikkim,

and the present district of Darjeeling was retained as a buffer state between Nepal and Bhutan.

The people of Darjeeling hills came into contact with the British and with Bengal subsequently through the Anglo-Nepal war or of 1814-1816 and through the signing of Treaty of Titaliya with Sikkim in 1817

Till the year 1816, the hills of Darjeeling and Tarai areas up to Phansidewa and Naxalbari was under the kingdom of Sikkim, and no king and no Nawab of Bengal ever ruled and exercised any kind of power over the Darjeeling Hills and surrounding plain areas in history. Infact, Darjeeling by default, through the lapse of British paramountcy, became the part of Bengal only after the independence of India from British Raj in the year 1947.

East India Company assumed the paramount power in Sikkim through the treaty and any disputes between Sikkim and Nepal and any other neighboring countries had to be referred to British Government. But ten years after the treaty was signed the dispute broke out between Sikkim & Nepal frontier. The first British General, Captain Lloyd visited Darjeeling for six days and through his report on 18th June, 1829, "the old Gorkha station was called Dorjeling" and "was immediately struck with its being well adapted for the purpose of the sanitarium". Governor General, Lord William Bentinck sent Captain Herbert, then Deputy Surveyor-General, to examine the country with Mr. Grant. Soon after their visit, the Court of Directors of the Company decided to make Darjeeling a valuable depot for the

temporary reception of European recruits, and a permanent cantonment for a European regiment.

By 1840 a road had been constructed by the Company from Pankhabari and the Company made their bungalow there and in Mahaldiram; a hotel was started in Kurseong and in Darjeeling and some 30 private houses and more houses were constructed in Lebong.

Geographical Location

"Flowers are everywhere. The days are cold and the sun almost seems to play hide and seek with us". – Great poet Rabindranath Tagore on Darjeeling.

Darjeeling district lies between 26 degrees 31 minutes and 27 degree 13 minutes north latitude, and between 87 degrees 59 minutes and 88 degrees 53 minutes east longitude. It has total area of 1,164 sq. miles. the main town and the administrative head-quarters of this district is situated in the lower Himalayas of 27 degree 3 minutes and 88 degree 16 minutes east longitude. It is a frontier district which runs between Nepal, Bhutan and the plain areas of West Bengal in the south and Sikkim on its north. It ranges at an altitude of 300 to 12,000 feet above sea-level.

Darjeeling is situated in the northern hill districts of West Bengal which is subdivided in two parts, Terai and hill areas. The Hilly region of Darjeeling comprises three subdivisions, Darjeeling Sadar, Kurseong, Kalimopng and the Terai consists of Siliguri subdivision.

• Kalimpong, a small town which in Lepcha language means 'Ridges where we play' is a hill station and sub - division of Darjeeling district. It covers an area of 1056.5 sq kms (approx.) and the main town spreads over an area of 4 to 5 kms (app) is situated at an altitude of 1250mts. Kalimpong Till 1864, was under the domain of Bhutan, but after the Anglo-Bhutanese war of 1864-65, the Siniolchu Treaty was signed after which kalimpong was taken over by the East India Company. Earlier Kalimpong was the 'Gateway to Tibet' but with the Chinese aggression in Tibet in 1962, the trades through the Jelep La pass ceased. Eventually, Kalimpong's economy is depended on Flower Nurseries private schools, schools started by Christian Missionaries since from British Raj.

Kurseong is situated at an altitude of 1458 mts (4860ft.); Kurseong is 51 km from Siliguri and 30 km from Darjeeling. The word Kurseong means the place of White Orchid. Because of its lower elevation, Kurseong enjoys milder and very healthy climate throughout the year.

It is the beauty, peace, serenity and the pleasant climate that attracted many great persons to visit this place. Infact, some of the famous poems and songs of great poet Rabindranath Tagore were composed in Kurseong. Abanindranath, the magic painter, Tagore and great composer Atul Prasad Sen got inspiration for some of their famous works in beautiful hills of Kurseong. The great disciple of Swami Vivekananda Sister Nivedita, made Kurseong her home. Mark

Twain spent some time in Kurseong in 1885, Fazlul Haque the Prime Minister of undivided Bengal also stayed here. Netaji Subash Chandra Bose was interned by the colonial government for a couple of months in 1936 in a house at Giddapahar near Kurseong.

Economy of Darjeeling

In order to overcome the dreaded heat and nagging monsoon it was Britishers in India, who discovered and found their shelter in Darjeeling hills as the only source of beating the hot weather entirely was to avoid it by taking refuge in the Hills. As a result, several hill stations like, Darjeeling, Shimla, Mussorie, Dalhousie, Ooty, Naintal, Shilong, Cherrapunji were discovered by Europeans in the Indian subcontinent for holidays, tourism, tea and timber purposes. Darjeeling Hills were incorporated by Britishers in the eastern Himalayas into the Company's territory was mainly for Tourism, Tea, Timber. Darjeeling in the post modern era comprises of six T's - **Tea, Teak, Tourism, Toy Train, Tiger Hill and Trekkers' Paradise.**

Eventually, Darjeeling popularly came to be known as a land of three Ts: Tea, Timber, and Tourism but economically three subdivisions of Darjeeling hill is deprived as compared to Terai region, Siliguri. Most of the Tea industries which were the backbone of this region have collapsed, and due to raise of population, forest areas in this region are vanishing day by day. Tourism, floriculture is the only means of livelihood and employment for the hill people of Darjeeling district.

The people of Darjeeling

In modern times, the term "Gorkha" has been used to differentiate a "Nepali" from Nepal and a "Nepali" from India and therefore the term "Indian Gorkha " is preferred by Indians of Nepali origin. (Through the Mists of Time: The Story of Darjeeling; The Land of Indian Gorkha, Basant B. Lama, pp.33)

When the British first acquired Darjeeling Hill in 1835, it was entirely under the forest with just 138 sq. miles and with the population of nearly 100. By 1850 Dr. Campbell, the Superintendent of Darjeeling Hill reported 10,000 inhabitants in Darjeeling hills which had risen to 22,000 in 1869.

It was recorded 94,712 persons in 1871-72 and the average density of population was 81 per sq. mile. In the 1881 Census it was increased by 63% and the population was recorded 1, 55,179. In 1891, it was raised by 43.4% and was amounted to 223,314. In 1901, the population was increased by 11.5% amounting to 249,117 in number.

But it is doubted that the large population increase just from 100 could be inaccuracy of the first census. (Bengal District Gazetteers: Darjeeling, L.S.S O'Malley, pp. 35, 36.

The rapid development of population since 1872 was mainly due to the development of tea industry and the influx of settlers to exploit the waste lands of the district. In 1872, the number of tea estates in Darjeeling was only 74 covering an area of 14,000 acres with the

plantation of tea. In 1881, the number of tea estates rose to almost double and was recorded 153 and covered an area of 30,000 acres. After 10 years there were 177 gardens with 45,000 acres which needed large number of manual laborers. During the year 1891, not less than 88,000 people were emigrated from Nepal and started settling in Darjeeling Hill. In 1901, more than two-third of the total population were amongst the tea garden coolies and their children.

The original inhabitants of the Darjeeling Hills are Lepchas or Rongpa (the ravine folks). Though their origin is obscure, they are decidedly Mongolian in feature. The greater numbers of people in Darjeeling Hills are Gorkhas. The short Mongolian type Nepalese, the Gorkhas, renowned for their military power world over, and the first to be decorated with the coveted Victoria Cross, finds jobs and security both in the British and Indian armies. They carry the traditional weapon, the Khukri- a curved ornamental knife. Among the other population are the Newars or best known as Pradhans with business skills in Nepali community, the hard working tribe are Sherpas. They are well known for their courage, stamina and for their immeasurable contributions to Mountaineering. Also much in evidence in the Hills are the Bhutias; they have migrated from Tibet, Bhutan, Sikkim and a greater bulk of Bengalee from Siliguri

subdivision and few from capital city Kolkata are mostly government employees. The hills of Darjeeling district has been described as a "Babel of Tribes and Nation" The population of

Darjeeling is mostly heterogeneous. Most of the people are Mongolian origin, chiefly belonging to Nepalese castes. The hill areas of Darjeeling district is inhabited by indigenous tribe, the Lepchas, Bhutias, with the ascendancy of the Gurkhas, the Rais and Limboos also settled in Darjeeling.

Other than native tribe Lepchas, Tibetians and Nepalese constitute the hill areas of Darjeeling district. At present is inhabited by Madhesias (people settled from the other plain areas of West Bengal and other States of India, mostly for business purposes). They are Rajathanese Marwarese, merchants from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Chinese shoe makers & Beauticians, Bengali Government employees, Muslim tailors, Hindustani mechanics, Punjabi Hotel and Restaurants owner, merchant Nepalese of Nepal. The dominant race in Darjeeling hills are Nepalese. Who are mainly known as virile race who are also known for their cheerful, honest and hard working nature. They are born cultivators, resourceful and remarkably law abiding people.

Colonel Waddell described the Nepalese race in following way: "though small in stature, the Nepalese have big hearts; and in many ways resemble the bright, joyous temperament of Japanese, though lacking refinement of the latter. Naturally, vigorous, excitable and aggressive, they are very law-abiding, driven as they have been to obedience by the draconic punishments of their Gurkha rulers. In appearance, the various tribes vary considerably; in proportion to the extent of their admixture with Aryan blood. Scratch a Russian it is said,

and you will find the tartar; but the Nepalese, even with their thin veneer of Hinduism, do not require this operation to reveal their Tartar character. The features of the great majority are markedly Mongolian, with oblique eyes, and with little and no moustache. They are generally undersized, but tough and wiry as whip-chord, and so full of energy that it is quite common to see old people scampering nimbly up and down hill in preference to walking”.

Status of Women in Darjeeling Hills

“To what extent, do women, compared with men, have access to knowledge, to economic resources and to political power, and to what degree of personal autonomy do these resources permit in the process of decision-making and choice at crucial points in the lifecycle?” (UN, 1975).

Women’s role as wives, mothers, and organizers and as basic foundation of other dimensions of social life is of extreme importance in both urban, rural areas when men are out for pastoral, other duties, the socialization of children automatically becomes mother’s business.

Our country is sharply characterized by gender disparities, although women’s status varies considerably from region to region and in all frontiers of human societal pursuits, economic, educational, scientific, legal, political, official, political and religious spheres. It is mainly socio-cultural factor, which influence the status of women in a

particular set of society. It is always culture (a set of collective experiences of ideas, norms, values and beliefs associated with a people) with its gender role inequalities and socialization (the intricate process in which culture is transmitted from one generation to another) determines the position of women in a society.

Gender roles are socially constructed. The family structure in India is mostly patriarchal in its nature. Patriarchy denotes a culture of power relationship that promotes man's supremacy and women subjugation. It encompasses institutional endorsement of man's ascendancy within the family and other social structures.

It justifies the normative process pertaining to the recognition and sustainability of his dominance in society.

Consequently a boy is looked upon as the perpetuator of the family line, and a girl 'a bird of passage'. The Indian family organization makes discrimination between the sexes. It promotes a hierarchy of classification in which man is the centre figure where as women derive their personalities from their fathers', husbands', brothers' and sons. With a secondary status, women play but a submissive role in social life. Despite several economic, political and social changes, women, are still far behind.

One of the most unflattering statistics concerning India's girl child shows that the preference for a son runs across rich as well as poor households, educated as well as illiterate families. Widespread

use of modern technology, a joint failure of medical ethics and failure to shed concept of a male heir has pushed female foeticide to high proportions. Female foeticide is just one side of the vast anti-women behavioural range in India.

The tragedy is that even women, who have the choice, opt for a male child. They feel that only with a birth of a son, they will achieve higher status and their married life will be secured. The status of any social group is determined by its levels of health-nutrition, literacy education and standard of living. However, the health of women Hill areas is more important because women of these region work harder and family economy and management depends on them. In rural areas women, as women in all social groups, are more illiterate than men. The low educational status is often reflected in their lower literacy rate, lower enrolment rate and their presence in the school. Like others social groups, the rural women share problems related to reproductive health.

There are various hypotheses about why women have relatively high or low status. The common premise is that women status is high when they contribute substantially to primary subsistence activities.

Women position is low in the societies where food getting is entirely men's job like hunting, herding or intensive agriculture. In the historical times when warfare was essential, men were more esteemed than women. Likewise in the centralised political systems men had high status. Men in most societies contribute more to primary

subsistence activities, as women have infant and child care responsibilities.

However, women contribute substantially to primary subsistence activities that depend heavily on gathering and horticulture and in which men are away on labour or pastoral duties while subsistence work has to be done. When primary and secondary subsistence activities are counted, women work more than men. Additionally, lots of myths like their childbearing state, emotions, monthly ups and downs, inability to carry heavy weights, lack of self-confidence, paucity of imagination and real creativity are used to validate women's subordination in the society. Male and female and other genders are culturally constructed categories, associated with culturally defined expected patterns of thought and behaviour that are subjected to hierarchical distinctions, advantages and disabilities.

In India the low status of women derives from a lack of control over material or social resources and from a lack of choice in the unfolding of one's destiny. This started with men maintaining their monopoly over the use of ox-drawn plough used for breaking the dry, hard packed soils. Men achieved this monopoly for essentially the same reasons that they achieved over the weapons of hunting and warfare. Their greater bodily strengths enabled them to be more efficient than women. However a single measure cannot be used to assess the status of women; rather a multi-dimensional cluster of variables is required to indicate the status.

Status is not a fixed rigid concept it changes over the time. Women occupy different positions in the social structure as they pass through the life cycle, and the very basis upon which the community ascribes power, privilege and prestige also changes.

Tribal societies have been by and large characterised as egalitarian societies especially in relation to the hierarchical character of caste society. However, it cannot be said of women status. Status of women varies in different societies. All societies offer its children the presence of two genders and related roles, according to kinship, sexuality, work, marriage and age. It also supplies the broad guidelines for undertaking these roles through a body of attitudes, specifications, metaphors and myths.

Girl Child

Before starting any further discussion or any generalization of the status of women in these areas, it is important to know the factors which help in interpreting the status of a girl child and the rights that they enjoy with in their own family.

Hill people too have son preference but do not discriminate against girls by female infanticide or sex determination tests. Boys and girls do not have similar inheritance laws. Girls may not inherit land, except in matrilineal societies or under special circumstances. Nonetheless they are not abused, hated, or subjected to strict social norms. Girls are free to participate in social events, dancing, singing

and other recreational programmes, and can marry according to their own choice. There is no dowry system in hills. Girls care for younger siblings, perform household jobs and work in the fields along with their brothers. This leaves no time for education of girls; consequently there is a gender gap in education in rural hill areas. Both boys and girls are equally exposed to hazards, infections and undernourishments. Due to poverty both boys and girls in rural hills suffer malnutrition.

However, all household members are all together involved in agriculture and subsistence tasks, and that all family members contribute long hours each day for the household economy. There is no hard and fast division of labour between the sexes, although the heavier works are done mostly by men. There is practically no such distinction as men's work and women's work. Both men and women run small businesses and shops. Farming, herding, collecting fuel and fodder, trading, the people of Darjeeling hills are a mixture of Mongolian and Aryan races. The rural people's main occupation is agriculture and they grow mainly rice, maize, ginger or work in tea gardens. A few of them grow vegetables and fruits as well.

Education is the fundamental right that provides opportunities for socio-economic uplift. The girls study up to primary or middle level and get married. Sometimes girls are withdrawn from school after three years (when they have learned to write their names) to work, with preference for education given to boys or elder sister stay in the house to take care of younger siblings and to do household work. There is

major gender disparity, in terms of more limited educational opportunities available for girls.

Women in Hills contribute most to the local economy and participate along with men in subsistence activities. In reality, women do more work than men. They participate in all agricultural activities (except ploughing) and other sectors of indigenous cottage industries. They share major responsibilities in the production process. In addition, they have to manage household chores; child rearing is also the responsibility of the women. Married women in the study area carry out all types of work at home as well as outside that are demand of mixed agro-pastoral economy. Apart from looking after the house, children and cattle major portion of the agriculture is done by women who do weeding, hoeing, harvesting and threshing. They also work at construction sites or as field or forest labour.

In the study area monogamous, polygamous and polyandrous marriages are prevalent in this region. There may be a premature death, marital discord or infertility that threatens family and especially women. There is no custom, which might be termed reversed dowry system by the parents of bride. Some ornaments are give, household things are given as security from the bride's parents, and these are retained until the parents of the girl are satisfied that the girl is being treated well and has settled down properly. However, the man has to bear the cost of the marriage much more heavily than the women in Nepali culture. A girl's father has little responsibility for making a

monetary outlay for his daughter by compulsion although he often does give a substantial gift to his daughter at the time of marriage. If a father wants to avoid that too, he can permit his daughter to elope. Most of the young boys and girls in hills get eloped and get married with or without parents consent.

Among Nepalese community a woman can leaves one man for another without obtaining a divorce. Under such circumstances the caste council or village Panchyat is likely to support the claim of the first man but public sentiment usually is that nothing can be done to force the girl to return to him .The divorcee or widow women among these communities have similar rights and duties as other married women have. In Hills there are no fixed rules for barren women. However one thing is sure that a new wife is brought to the family. Barren women are generally not abandoned, as their labour is valued even now.

Women's role in Economic Sphere

In all tasks concerned with life in the village, such as crafts, house building, watermills and work on boundary walls, construction of roads there is division between men's work and women's work. Major portion of agriculture is done by women who do weeding, hoeing, planting, harvesting and thrashing except ploughing (which are done by men) in the fields adjacent to houses or far off fields.

The other activities of women include looking after the house, children and cattle. Food processing and cooking is women's job. It is the women who with the assistance of children are largely responsible for the cattle, water fuel and fodder, and the collection of firewood. Hill women are very strong and courageous in the handling of environmental imperatives several studies dealing with pastoral societies indicate that the position of women in such societies is not very high because the actual care of the livestock and handling of economic affairs is entirely a male domain. They cook for them, rear children and carry extra burden of both mental and physical labour as compare to women of other region.

Women's Role in Political Sphere

The actual role and the empowerment of women was first highlighted in the Beijing Conference (1995). They are not ignored at household level but are not given due credit and importance at official level. Women supremacy is restricted within the family domain and does not extend to social or political spheres. It is interesting to note that although by convention every village Panchayat has a female member, the lady never bothers to attend the meeting or to take any active interest in the proceedings of Panchayat. This shows that women have a secondary importance in public affairs and community decision-making process. Women are generally bypassed and marginalized either they lack the requisite skills, or because women's heavy and unending domestic responsibilities makes attending

meetings and participating in decision making difficult. It always happens that men take over the more profitable activities.

Women in the study area has been recognized with the fact that they have been discriminated against in education, income, consumption, status and access to power; they have a worse health record than men; they suffer from social, cultural and legal discrimination and often from violence.

They are discriminated on grounds of equity (which refers to equality of opportunities and choices) and efficiency. There is need for both quantitative and qualitative measurement, for a complete set of cultural and rights indicators to assess women's rights under the Constitution of India.

When it comes to voting right, women in hills take pleasure in campaigning for their candidates and their voting rights. About 85 per cent of women in the study area exercised their right. Most of them follow the advice of their husbands or some of them are under pressure to accept the wishes of their husbands.

Violence against Women

Violence often becomes a tool to socialize family members according to prescribed norms of behaviour with an overall perspective of male dominance and control. Kelkar (1991) situates violence against women 'in the socioeconomic and political context of power relations' and it should include 'exploitation, discrimination, upholding of

unequal economic and social structures, the creation of an atmosphere of terror, threat or reprisal and forms of religio-cultural and political violence (Kelkar, 1991). However, the violence in the form of female foeticide and infanticide suffered by women of other castes and communities is not prevalent in Nepalese community but wife beating; threatening of their lives for monetary purpose by drunken husband is very popular.

Feminism

Throughout the history women have struggled to find a recognized place in society. Feminism in such case is a transformative perspective which highlighted that women are in disadvantageous position as compared to men. The difference between men and women is not in biological way but feminism focuses on equality of sexes.

Feminism is social, cultural and political movements, theories and moral philosophies which try to justify women's equality with men. It asserts that women are rational beings like men and they should have enjoyed the same legal, political rights, status and opportunity equally with men.

Although the term feminism first came to be in use in England during 1890s but the feminism history can be traced back to 17th century during the early capitalism deteriorated the life of many women

and liberal challenges were started by women themselves to challenge the political authority of such system.

According to Concise Oxford Dictionary of politics, "Feminism is a way of looking at the world which women occupy from the perspective of women. It has at its central focus, the concept of patriarchy which can be described as a system of male authority which oppresses women through its social, political and economic institutions. Feminism is therefore, a critique of patriarchy on the one hand and an ideology committed to women's emancipation on the other".

Until the dawn of the industrial Revolution in 1868, the status of women was almost the same throughout the world. In Greek states women were a subject of admiration of her grace and motherly glory, she was completely subordinate to men.

The position of women was no better in the Roman Empire. In Germany, during early medieval society, husbands fully controlled their wives as his right, known as right to "mundium" (Indira Kulshreshtha, 1992)

Women's inferior position dates back from the twelfth century of military society and found greater support from Confucianist orthodoxy of the Tokugawa period. Conventional and traditional values were practiced by many Asian countries to discriminate women at various levels (Manisha Behal, 1992)

In the beginning, women's unequal position was challenged to change by literary writings of Mary Wollstonecraft's, 'a vindication of Rights of women (1792), Simon DeBeauvoir's 'Second Sex' & others like Marie Curie in the field of science, Marie Stopes in Medicine brought forward the issue of women's right in people's awareness.

Many social movements and the Suffrage movements of different countries of the world brought women's participation in politics. Even various inventions like typewriter, gave women a new skill & a job opportunity outside their houses. During the First World War, women started working in factories.

In United States women's Suffrage rights was first started by women themselves. The enfranchisement of women was the result of first wave of Feminism of late 19th century by prominent women like, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. In United Kingdom, Ann Knight, a Quaker in the year 1847, produced the first recognizable women's suffrage pamphlet which was preceded by the first British Suffrage organization in 1851. Similarly, in Germany and France, it began during 1860s and in Nordic countries it started in 1870s and 1880s.

Women movement in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Middle East countries started only in 20th century. Even though heavily male populated country like New Zealand was first to introduce Universal Suffrage in 1893, the women suffrage movement in New Zealand was carried by Katherine Sheppard.

She was also one of the founding members of WCTU, an organization which tried to spread women's movement in other parts of the world with slogans like, "All that separates, whether of race, class, creed, or sex, is inhuman, and must be overcome."

Women suffrage means the right of women to vote on the same terms as men. The main aim of suffrage is giving women's voting right. The first country to give enfranchisement to women in national elections was Tavolara in 1886 which was followed by New Zealand in 1893 & the first country in the world to give opportunity to women to contest election as well as to cast their vote in Finland in the year 1905.

The main slogan of first wave feminism in Europe was:

1. Personal is political

and

2. Sisterhood is powerful

3. The main theme of 'personal is political' asserted that, women's lives are not the result of their individual choice (their ideas, behavior) but it is shaped and characterized by the particular structure of the society. Women were discriminated, treated unequally not by governing the rule of nature but the very existing man made structures of the society deprived women from their natural rights and opportunities. Thus, the first wave

feminists gave clamor to unite women from all over the world to claim and fight for their equal rights with fellow men by asserting slogans like, 'sisterhood is powerful.'

Liberal Feminists' movement started during French Revolution and by the writings of Marry Wollstonecraft in 1792. During those days, women were barred from enfranchisement, they were treated unfit for education, many occupations; married women had no property rights, legal rights, and right to divorce even the abusive husbands.

Wollstonecraft (1759-97) stated that, like men women are rational individuals and they should have equal rights with men. She also started women's right to education, employment, property, and voting rights. Her efforts found a concrete expression in United Kingdom, United States of America by protagonists of women's suffrage in these countries. In 1848, the first ever women's rights convention was held at Seneca falls in United States. In England, women's movement started by the writings of eminent English philosopher John Stuart Mill (1806-73) who also introduced the question of women's suffrage to the House of Commons in 1867 & though his literary work 'The Subjection of Women' which was published in 1869 through which women's legal, political equality with men was identified and it provided full scale analysis of women's situation to fight against their rights.

In Germany it was Karl Marx (1818-83) and his close associate Engels from United Kingdom (1820-95) argued that the family, sexual relationships are other forms of social organization and the product of a particular stage of economic development. So, it can not be changed at will but only through class struggle and revolution the socio-economic conditions of the society can be changed. It was further developed by his friend Engel in his work, 'The Origin of Family, Private Property and the State' in 1884. He argued that, women's oppression has not always existed but it began with private property and class society from which men's desire to pass property to motivate them to control women. Such motivation of men can be over thrown only by overthrowing capitalists system.

Marx & Engel's ideas were appreciated and followed by August Babel (1840-1930) & Clara Zetkin (1857-1933) in Germany. They provided and started the analysis of women's oppression by Marxists in Russia. In America, Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860-1935) started a highly popular woman-centered theory of history and stated that society is evolving towards the 'womanly values'. In Great Britain, socialism owed little to Marxists ideology and compatible with the feminism ideas of social justice and a better life for all. However, when it came to campaign for women's suffrage rights, the issues of gender and class seemed to be conflicting and unacceptable factor.

In Britain, more than giving equal rights, suffrage to women started on the basis of women's difference from men specific on

women's sex virtues like, pacifism and temperance that should be allowed to political condition of the country and not to challenge women's' existing deplorable social conditions and their roles as wives, mothers and the trauma of women's sexual oppression by men. Modern radical feminists argued that sexual oppression of men was tried to cover by giving voting rights to women. Since it gave women the power to resist men's sexual hunger and demands (along with the dangers of dreaded sexual transmissible disease and pregnancy) which was popularly coined by Christable Pankhurst's famous slogan like, 'Votes for Women: Chastity for Men.'

Despite challenges, imprisonment, forced feedings women won the vote in New Zealand, United States, Sweden, Spain, Chile, & Myanmar. After the end of World War II, countries like, France, Italy, Romania, Yugoslavia, and China all these countries gave voting rights to the women. The same trend was followed in Third World countries after their independence from colonial rules during the Cold War era.

Surprisingly, countries with longer histories of democratic principles keep denying voting rights to women. Country like, Switzerland, for instance, denied vote in the federal elections till 1971 and finally gave the enfranchisement to women only in the year 1990. Even Middle East countries started voting rights to women quite lately. Quarter gave voting rights to women in 1999, Bahrain in 2001, and Oman 2003, Kuwait in May 2005. In Saudi Arabia, women are still restricted and denied from their voting rights till 2005.

In Lebanon, unlike men, educational proof is required for women to vote and women's votes are optional & men's votes are legal. In Bhutan, only one vote is allowed from a family at the village level (where male member of the family either father, husband, brother will cast their single vote) Unlike, western feminism movement, the Third World feminism is the product of colonialism and fight against social evils of the patriarchal society. Western women were fighting for maintaining Equality, Legal, Political Rights of women, the Third World feminists emphasized mostly on liberty from poverty and the educational rights of women.

Today, feminism is challenged by the **'Problem of Representation'** (who speaks from whom and on what basis?) such privilege is widely based on race, class, sexual privileges and the experiences.

Feminist Movement was an important stepping-stone in the demands for women's Equal Rights and their redefined role in society. The ideas that women are disadvantaged in comparison with the men and that disadvantage is not natural and inevitable biological differences but some thing that should be changed or challenged gave birth to Feminism.

The term feminism first came to use in England (1890s) though the term was already used in 17th century when the situation of women was worse in the legal and economic situation and the question of arbitrary power of men was raising. From Feminism,

women have learned the capability of their potential as women, the strength of women having common self interest with other women and common oppression.

Feminism encouraged fighting for liberation. Feminism focused on women's love and hate- love for other women bound by the same conditions, hate for the oppression that binds them together. A great strength in Feminism is the reaffirmation of human values, ideals of sisterhood and development potential, taking care of people and being sensitive to people's need. Women's situation and the inequalities between men and women were the central political issues of feminism.

The First women's Rights convention held in 1848 in America dealing with women's right to education, property, education and the franchise saw the equal growth of feminism in the industrialized world. The feminism emerged in 19th century in Europe was based on two principles of –

1. Personal is political and
2. Sisterhood is powerful.

Discrimination of women should analyze from the existing social and ideological structures of society, and second principle states that women hood should be formed on the basis of all united women. Later on feminism comprised of a number of social, cultural and political movements, theories and moral philosophies concerned with gender

inequalities and discrimination against women. It focused on equality of sexes. Opinions of feminists differ over the sources of inequality, how to attain equality and gender based questions and criticism.

It may be pointed out that, on the basis of three waves each dealing with different aspects, feminism was divided by different opinion of different feminist scholars.

1. Feminist movement of 19th and 20th century mainly dealt with the voting rights in the UK and USA. It focused on the right of women's suffrage.
2. Feminist movement of 1960s –1980s dealt with the inequality of laws as well as cultural inequality faced by women.
3. Feminist movement of 1990s- currently dealt with continuations and a response to the perceived failures of the second –wave.

Sufficient scope for understanding women's movement in India was provided by the theoretical maturity and sophistication in the contemporary feminist intellectuals. Women's movement in India was an issue, ideological trends, intensity and form of struggle, public visibility and their impact to others. Citizen claim to participate for equals in the political and development process for women. The complexities and pluralities of Indian women are placed due to the idea of difference of sex. The real definition of women's movement was organized efforts of groups of women to change their system of economic, cultural and political inequality. In order to serve the needs

of women's new urgencies and priorities in which their effort was to correct the existing social, economic and political institutions.

Gandhi on Women

From 1920s onwards women movement and activists found their new direction under the leadership of Gandhiji to fight against social mal practices against women and at the same time to fight the battle against colonial rule by participating in public life for national freedom movement regardless of class, creed, religion & caste.

Mahatma Gandhi's legacy to the world and to India is immeasurable. His life and work have left an impact on every aspects of Indian life. Nobody in modern times has done more than Gandhiji for the upliftment, betterment of the conditions of Indian women. Gandhiji said, "To call woman the weaker sex is a libel; it is man's injustice to woman. If, by strength is meant brute strength, then indeed the woman are less brute than man. If by strength is meant moral power, then women is immeasurably man's superior" and "If women would forget that they belong to the weaker sex, then no doubt they can do infinitely more than men against war."

Gandhiji never advocated blindly the ancient Indian tradition. He firmly believed that its strong current may help us swim far, or sink us; to him the deciding question of every human being is whether the same tradition would be able to take us closer to God or Truth, and to the selfless service and love of all human beings. He once declared

that, he do not subscribe to the superstition that everything is good because it is ancient and never believed either that anything is good because it is Indian... Any tradition, however ancient, if consistent with morality, is fit to be banished from the land. Untouchability may be considered an ancient tradition, the institution of child widowhood and child marriage may be considered to be an ancient tradition. He would rather sweep those traditions out of existence if he had power do so. He disregarded ancient belief that, women should be protected by her father in her childhood, she should be protected by her husband in her youth, and protected by her sons in her old age. Gandhiji found that; such Indian tradition was harmful to all, and unjust to women.

He spoke strongly against child marriages, the isolation and subjugation of widows, unequal treatment of women, and women's own subservient mentality. To him, ethical religion is where "True morality consists, and not in following the beaten track, but in finding out the true path for ourselves and in fearlessly following it".

When Gandhiji took the leadership of national movements of India, the average life span of Indian women was only twenty seven years. Since, pregnant women with their babies had high risk of dying young due to child marriage and the vast gap between the ages of wives and their spouses. Only 2% of women used to get any kind of education. In northern part of India, women used to practice purdah (veil) system and they were not supposed to go outside the house

without men's company. Those who used to go to schools, they used to travel in tangas. (Covered Carts).

From 1920s onwards, women movement and activists found their new direction under Gandhiji's social leadership to fight against social mal practices and at the same time to fight the battle against colonial rule by participating in public life for national freedom movement regardless of class, creed, religion, and caste. In early 1927, he emphasized that humanity will remain diminished as long as women are "caged and confined in their houses and little courtyards." Gandhiji's utter purity of character and his sincere dedication towards the cause of humanity made women from all walks of life to march in processions, defy laws, resist police atrocities, go to jail unescorted by men.

He did not consider man's wrong to be woman's right in her pursuit of equality. He was against blind adherence of tradition, superstitious beliefs. He always believed and advocated selfless service, non-violence and love towards all kind of human being. Even in his literary works, like **The Stories of My Experiments with Truth, Women and Social Injustice, Young India, Harijan**, he mostly wrote about the women, Ahimsa (Non-Violence), and equality among people.

In Gandhiji's complete reform movement, the mass mobilization of women not only weakened the bondage of Indian tradition but it also helped in developing wide socio, economic and political

perspectives and consequently the position of Indian women were being identified above the family and the domestic life.

In 1936, while raising a very pertinent issue which is relevant even today, Gandhiji questioned the value of higher education among the younger generations of India and its failure to defy a custom of compulsory marriage with dowry paid and received. He declared that there was something radically lacking in the Indian system of education that made the educated so insensitive to some evil Indian customs and ready to yield to them. While challenging the dowry system in India, he even challenged the girls to remain spinsters if needed.

In 1940 while reviewing his twenty-five years of work in India and concerning on women's role in Indian society, he said, "My contribution to the great problem lies in my presenting for acceptance truth and ahimsa (non-violence) in every walks of life, whether for individuals and for nations. I have hugged the hope that in this woman will be the unquestioned leader and, having thus found her place in human evolution, will shed her inferiority complex... Woman is the incarnation of ahimsa. Ahimsa means infinite love, which again means infinite capacity for suffering. And who but woman, the mother of man, shows this capacity in the largest measure... Let her translate that love to the whole of humanity... And she will occupy her proud position by the side of man... She can become the leader in Satyagraha..."

To him, men and women are one in essence. The soul in both is the same. They both lead the same life and share the same feelings.

Each is compliment to the other and one cannot live without other's active help. But still somehow men have dominated women from the ages.

Gandhiji held that women's grace lay on in her modesty, and character. He disregarded woman as man's plaything, a competitor and an inferior sex. He said by imparting education to women which is their birth right women can gain new confidence and awareness of their strength. Through Gandhiji's contributinal work towards women and social reform movement brought favorable atmosphere to improve the status of degraded Indian women. While his nationalist movement gave impetus and opportunities to women to take part in public life and made them experience and realize their new found freedom and their new sense of capacity and strength. Since, Gandhiji strongly believed that, "womanhood is restricted to kitchen" and "only when the woman is liberated from the slavery of the kitchen, that the true spirit may be discovered". But that does not meant that women should stop doing household work but he meant that the work should be shared with men, women, and children. He even criticized India's craze for progeny. He said when girl children are not treated equally and as natural as the boy children, our nation will be in dark eclipse.

Mahatma never had any specific program for women but he was always accompanied by women in his movements like, Civil Disobedience, Non-Cooperation due to his generous and equal treatment towards women and his open comments towards ancient

Indian traditions and institutions of Child Widowhood, Child Marriage, Untouchability and the age old bonded status of women as a daughter, wife and as a mother.

He firmly believed that, "intellectually, mentally, spiritually, woman is equivalent to a male and she can participate in every activity." Even in his message, while addressing the All India Women's Conference on 23rd December 1936, he said, "when we call women abala becomes sabla, all those who are helpless will become powerful." For such Empowering Speech and his loyal, true contribution towards women made Indian women to set aside their traditional roles; they came out of their seclusion and cast their purdah and entered into public activities along with men to offer Satyagraha.

With the help of Gandhiji and other national leaders and social reformers Indian women made great strides in emancipating themselves and took active roles in national movements at the same time. Veena Mazumdar wrote, 'As early as 1931, Indian National Congress postulated freedom, justice, dignity and equality for women as essential for nation building. Kuppuswamy wrote that in 1932, Indian women leaders demanded Universal Adult Franchise. Their close association and active parts in national movement and political affairs of the country encouraged them to bring radical changes in their existing status through their organized groups and with the help of protagonist, enlightened Indian men who also supported their case. Moreover, the liberal nature of Indian feminism gave conducive

environment to give equal rights to women along with reform movement and national movements of the country.

After the independence of the country and when the Constitution was drafted in the year of 1950, Indian women with men got their right of equality, right to education, right to vote, right to enter into profession, public services and political offices. But after independence, the active Indian women, both in politics and social welfare, lost their dynamism and strength after independence and when the Constitution granted equality and rights to women theoretically. Even veteran women leaders like, Kamaladevi, who once regarded women's movement was the great part of social upsurge for deep rooted changes to bring nation into independence and towards development, lamented the declining role of women after the independence. She commented that, "the vast concourse of women who had poured into the freedom arena, had slipped back into their grooves.... The women leaders too settled in, though in new social grooves of power and position that independence had thrown up. They forged no link with the wide mass of women who are only approached briefly at voting time to secure their ballot papers."

Whereas, Veena Mazumdar had other reason for women's declining role after independence. In her opinion, 'in post independence era, women were not able to synchronise new rights with age-old traditions and various disabilities as well as gradual

isolation from various politico-ideological struggles led to fragmentations of the women's movement.

Krishna Raj and Desai have other reasons for downfall of women's organization after independence. They said that after independence in India there started different kind of social organizations to establish social equity within the country. Moreover, in 1953, a Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) was started to improve and explore the various welfare programmes for which even financial assistance and professional advisors came forward to made those organizations more workable. As a result of all these factors, the women's organizations lost their activism and dynamism towards women's issues. Though Mahila Mandals, under Government's assistance was started in different villages of India but even this women organization remained only theoretical and organizations of paper in its nature. However, Suma Chitnis remarked that, in the countries of Europe and North America, equality was the central concept of their political philosophies, but in practice they refused to accept women as equal to men due to which western feminists had to organize themselves radically to fight a forceful battle against the political philosophy and managed to give suffrage rights to women. But when it comes to India, the scenario is totally different. Indian women never had to fight for equal voting rights with men.

Moreover, our society has always been hierarchical in its nature and is based on caste, age sex, kinship relationship, and in ordinal

positions etc. and from ages such system has been maintained through families and Indian communities by the means of customs, traditions and religious beliefs. Such a traditional system of our societies made obligation and obedience towards higher caste, class, superiors and naturally towards men. Treating women unequally due to their inferior and subdued characters was as natural as the physical difference between men and women. Women themselves accepted the Second Class Citizen of the country. Unlike, western countries, there were no gap between political philosophy and in real practice women never retaliated for the equal status and rights. Since, they always regarded themselves to be protected by father at an early age, by husband when they get married, and under the protection of their sons at the old age.

Moreover, during freedom movement, Indian elite men came forward to work for women's emancipation from social evils like Sati system, Child marriage, and to start widow remarriage in Indian society and for women's education. Western women adopted anti-men approach and attitude of confrontation to get their rights while the Indian women preferred the path of understanding, compromise, and humble submission. Beside all these factors were conscious and ignorant about all the facilities, rights provided to them by the Constitution of the country. Indian feminism flourished and reached its peak level during the reform movements and freedom movements of 19th & 20th centuries. But after independence, they lost either earlier enthusiasm and aggressiveness soon after independence.

The Indian feminist movement remained inactive and subdued till the late 1960s. Even the Indian Planning Commission, till late 1960s, did not do much and focus on women's issues. Indian women after 1960 though participated in various social reforms of the country.

Although, the National Federation of Indian women was formed in 1954 by active Leftwing members of the AIWC, but more than elite women, the women from rural poor background and tribal women, working class women of India, mobilized themselves with men to fight against degrading situation of the sovereign country. Vibhuti Patel wrote that the radicalization process of masses during mid and late sixties was mainly struggle of working class people against capitalism. Women played active role in Tebhaga movement in Bengal and Andhra Pradesh for obtaining equal distribution of land. In such movements women even formed 'women brigades' to protect villages, homes, and children and to resist police atrocities. They started self defense, guerrilla training for such purposes. The Tebhaga movements of Bengal and Andhra Pradesh led the passing of Zamindari abolition acts in many other states of India. In early years of 1950s also granted some rights to the tillers of the land. Indian women actively participated in the Naxalbari Movement and fought a forceful battle for which seven women had to lose their lives while retaliating against CRP atrocities in states like, West Bengal, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh & Kerala.

The rural women and tribal women in India, showed bold steps to tackle exploitative landlords and corrupt officials in Maharashtra in

Dulia district in 1972. Moreover, the issues like, alcoholism and wife beating and agitations against rape victims, drew many women to take the law in their hands.

When elite women were busy in attending seminars, workshops and busy with cultural programmes women from grass root level and middle class women with various party background came forward to fight against anti-price rise movement of early seventies. The whole nation appreciated & praised women's brave role in "Chipko Movement" of Garhwal in Himachal Pradesh. In March 1974, when forest officials and contractors came to cut down the trees for commercial purposes, women of that forest literally came forward and hugged the trees in order to maintain ecological balance and save environment from pollution and destruction by saving each tree from falling down from the hands of forests authorities and they became successful in such a generous purpose.

The women's movement in India during 1970s and 80s was diverse, autonomous in their natures which co-existed with other numerous movements and were highly decentralized by various organizations from both associated cities and rural areas. The activists and participants were also from different backgrounds, classes and communities and with various political parties background (Socialist, Communist) or were either elite, urban, feminists or rural and tribal women.

Their motive was not just to pass resolutions and send women delegations to various authorities but they seriously fought and agitated to uproot some of the social evils from the society like, domestic violence, rape, dowry system, bride burning, and other social, environmental issues.

Since, 1970s India constituted a watershed landmark in the history of women's movement various events like unrest within the country due to failure of government, rampant poverty, tardy land reforms, caste-based tensions, heavy industrialization, commercial forestry, capital intensive agriculture benefited few at the expense of large section of the people, rising questions about the structures of power, unequal distribution of power and resources. All these factors lead the issues of women within family, their violence exploitation within family, work distribution and unequal payment unequal distribution of resources between men and women, various other issues of women and men their relationships & women's and women's sexuality. The decade of seventy saw an intensified negative trend of development especially towards women which led autonomous women's movement and brought mass Indian women to organize themselves to fight for their equality, right and against matters relating to violence of women.

Moreover, the term empowerment which became popular and started from third world feminists including India in 1976 for women's struggle for social justice and equality. It brought new kind of flow in

women's movement for striving power and for changing the balance of power to gain control over resources, ideology through decision making process. Empowerment is not to be used as a mode of domination but as a strength and ability to influence social, political processes to redistribute the power among various classes, castes, races, ethnic groups and genders. Thus, with the flow of funds and the international cognizance towards women's issues for a new trend in India to fight against issues like, violence, poverty, work, unemployment, property, health, dowry deaths, illiteracy, law's bias against women, rape, harassment, assault in workplace, foeticide and other gender issues.

Women's Movement in India has roughly gone through the following stages –

1. The first was from 1927-1940s'. This stage is generally known as Elite women's stage.
2. Second stage was from 1950-1970 which witnessed the downfall of women's movement and their active roles.
3. Third stage was from 1971-1985. The stage of Empowerment of women with the rise of feminism in India for the purpose of the socio-economic, political environmental issues. This stage was the emergence of ecofeminism in India.

4. The fourth stage started from 1985 to till date started with modest and collective women's effort to fight for political, gender issues and gender crimes.

The Third stage of women's movement in India saw crucial development after a long set back. During 1975, the CSWL Report "Towards Equality" was published which highlighted the deprived condition of women and at the same time when International women's day was celebrated for the first time on 8th March & the year and the decade was declared as International women's year, decade respectively. But due to emergency in India during Mrs. Indira Gandhi's Government, women's development was restricted. From 1977, various autonomous feminist groups came up with their new ideas and issues they were different from the mainstream women's organizations. Unlike, earlier feminists, the new feminists started having close contacts with women victimized from various social issues, and women from grassroots level. They prove to be radical in their ideas and work to fight for women's rights & for their cause.

Veena Mazumdar noted the activities of Indian feminists' movement from 1970s in following words, 'Events like initiating of International Women's Decade and UN Conference in Mexico influenced feminism movement in India also.

At national level various factors like, the declaration of emergency, post emergency, upsurge in favor of civil rights, the mushrooming of women's organizations in the early 1980s and the

arrival of the women's issues on national agenda led to resurgence of the women's movement.'

Since, 1980s the reproductive role of women was only regarded as natural but was hurdling in their way of receiving even the existing rights. Secondly, due to rise of free market capitalism and globalization, Indian women found their new found freedom by getting involved in private sectors and workplace by overthrowing tradition, cultures of ongoing Indian society.

Mazumdar again noted and commented that the period from 1970s and 1990s as a period of transition in women's movement in India. The factors like, dubious contribution of 'development' of nation and welfare towards women in all grounds were recognized in India due to a wide gap between men and women, falling women's sex ratio, issues of Girl Child, greater gap in life expectancy, mortality & economic rates, both societal and domestic violence, pre natal test, female foeticide, marital rape, killing of girl children, and honor killings, incident like, Mathura rape case made nation wide campaign during 1979-80 and made women activists successful in amending certain Indian laws regarding rape of women. Similarly in 1982, anti-dowry agitation was started by women's organizations in Delhi and other parts of India.

They brought many issues and evidences against dowry related murders being treated as 'suicide & accident' by various in-laws of women. In the name of 'Dahej Virodhi' women from almost every part

of the country campaigned and raised their voice against bride burning and their tortures 'Chetna Manch' an organization of women, finally became successful in pressurizing government to act against Dahej system in India. Law Commission of India as well as a Joint Committee of both the Houses of Parliament sat together to discuss the matter dowry of Indian society and Dowry Prohibition act was amended in the Constitution of India. In spite of Prohibition Act and legal measures towards dowry, it continues to be social taboo of our society.

In 1980s women organizations made explicit demand for the imperative development for women in Sixth Plan of India. The mounting pressure coming from various women activists and MPs, the Sixth Plan included a chapter on Women and Development. It provides the joint titles for both men and women in matters of assets distribution. In 1985, Rajiv Gandhi government gave women greater priority than before and hailed the 2nd NAM (Non-Aligned Movement) Conference on women and development. The two documents released in 1988 however showed widening gap between the perspectives of Government and Movement of women based on gender issues, roles and participation. However, in 1994 through 73rd & 74th Amendment Act of the Indian Constitution, 33% reservation of seats for women at grassroots level was passed in India.

Chapter – Five

Empirical Findings of the Study

Table 1.

Awareness towards Women Empowerment and its Content: Female Respondents

Age	Low In %	Medium	High	No. of Women aware of Women Empowerment	Total No. of Women Interviewed
15-20	23.80			15	63
21-30	76.92			10	13
31-40		50		03	06
41-50	-	-	-	-	02
51-60	-	-	-	-	01
61 & Above	-	-	-	-	01
Total No.				28	86

While doing survey of 86 women from the hills of Darjeeling, it was found that, only 28 women out of 86 were familiar with the term 'Empowerment' in town areas of Darjeeling hills. In Rural areas most of the women does not know anything about 33% reservation of quotas

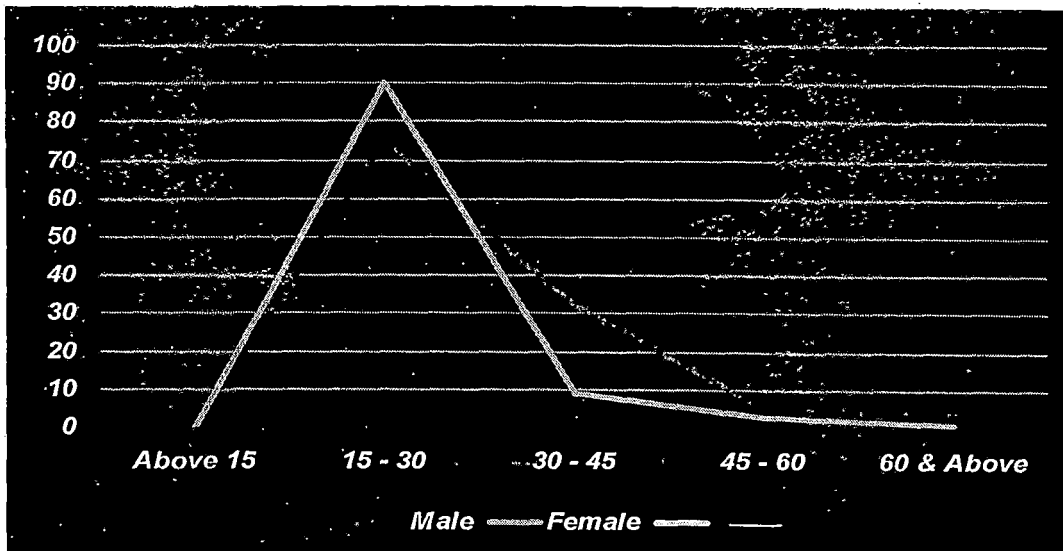
for women at Grass root Level and they have never heard the term 'Empowerment of Women.' Only 32.5% Urban Women in Darjeeling Hills are aware of their own Rights and Legislation passed by the Constitution of India towards the upliftment of the Indian women.

Table 2.

Awareness Towards Women Empowerment and its Content: Male Respondents

Age	Low In %	Medium	High	No. of Men aware of Women Empowerment	Total No. Men Interviewed
15-20	25			20	80
21-30		45.45		05	11
31-40	29.16			07	24
41-50	-	-	-	-	13
51-60	-	-	-	-	03
61 & Above				02	03
Total				34	134

In case of men respondents regarding Women Empowerment, it was found that, out of 134 men only 34 are aware of it. Only 25.3% of men are conscious and interested in 'Women Empowerment.' 75% of the men in Urban area of Hills are found either not interested and they have nothing to do with the term 'Empowerment'.



The graph shows that in Darjeeling Hills the men and women of 15 to 30 years of age group said that family related decision and budget of the house should be run by mother.

But when the further surveys were done and asked open ended questions to men and women of both rural and urban areas most of the urban women themselves are not aware of 33% reservation quotas for women in grassroots level. Socially and even economically women are found to be better in their status and position and the reason is matriarchal society of Hills both in nature and in majority but politically women themselves are ignorant regarding their own rights.

Table 3.

**Marital status & attitude towards women's participation in politics:
Female Respondents**

Marital status	Low in %	Medium	High		Total No. Women Interviewed
Married		54.54		12	22
Unmarried		21.42		15	70
Total				27	92

While surveying 22 married women in Darjeeling Hills, it was found that, only 54% of Women are aware of their rights and legislation passed by the Indian Constitution towards women. The percentage of unmarried women as compared to married women is significantly less regarding the meaning and the content of 'Women Empowerment'

Table 4.

**Martial status and attitude towards women's participation in politics:
Male Respondents**

Marital status	Low	Medium	High		Total No. Men Interviewed
Married	46.6			14	30
Unmarried	30.6			30	98
Total				44	128

When married men from the urban areas of Darjeeling Hills were surveyed and asked questions, it was noticed that, married men are more interested and aware of the term 'Women Empowerment.' Nearly 50% out of 30 married men who were interviewed believes in empowering women and for their better condition in the society.

Table 5.

Family income and attitude towards women's participation in politics: Male: Female Respondents

Family Income in Rupees per month	Low	Medium	High	Total No. of Men and Women
Upto 1000	√			10
1001-5000		√		40
5001-10,000			√	80
10,001-15,000		√		20
15,001-20,000				25
20,001-25,000	√			15
25,000 & Above	√			30

Table 5. shows family income on monthly basis and the attitude of men, women towards women's participation in politics.

Family whose income is upto 1000 rupees per month are those who are kullis(labor), cultivators, small vendors. Most of them are illiterate and they are unaware and cannot comment anything regarding participation of women in politics. Family, whose income is between five to fifteen thousand a month are from Middle class

background in Hills. They are educated, mostly working either in Schools or Office. But most of them are working in a temporary basis and in so called ad-hoc basis under Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC) and they are not State Government employees on regular basis. So, these group of people whose family income is between five to ten thousand a month, said that they like political power and interested in Women Empowerment and the social, political, economic development of Darjeeling Hills. Those who earn more than twenty thousand and above a month, are mostly Outsiders or who have migrated to hills for business purpose, government service from other states or from plains of West Bengal are businessmen, doctors, professors, civil servants, bankers etc. are not interested in commenting on political development and the participation of women in Politics.

Table 6.

**Various Categories and their attitude towards women's participation
in politics: Female Respondents**

Categories	Low	Medium	High	No. of Women
General	✓			46
Schedule Tribe			✓	36
Schedule Caste		✓		05
Other Backward Class		✓		14
Total No.				101

From the Tables 6, categories like, General, Schedule Tribe, Schedule Caste, Other Backward Class were surveyed and compared, the attitude of both male, female regarding women's participation in political field,

Surprisingly out of 101 female respondents who were interviewed through questionnaire, 36 tribal women of all the three subdivisions of Darjeeling district said that they like to have political power for the development of the country, Hills of Darjeeling. Women from backward classes seemed to be more interested in retaining political power as compared to higher Castes Women.

Table 7.

**Various Categories and their attitude towards women's participation
in politics: Male Respondents**

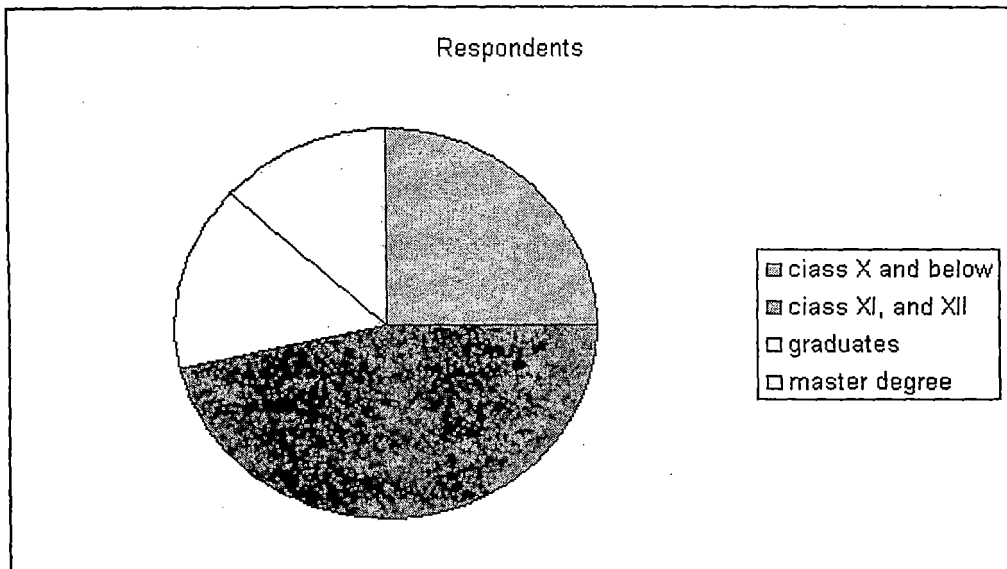
Categories	Low	Medium	High	No. of Men
General	✓			40
Schedule Tribe		✓		47
Schedule Caste		✓		08
Other Backward Class		✓		24
Total No.				99

Like, female respondents from backward classes, male respondents from the same category seem to be more interested in giving political power to women as compared to Higher Castes Men.

Table 8.

Education and their attitude towards women's participation in politics: Male:Female Respondents

Qualification	Low	Medium	High	Male	Female	M/F Total
Class (Up to Class X)		✓		25	30	55
Class XI, XII			✓	50	52	102
Graduate Degree			✓	14	20	34
Post Graduate			✓	09	20	29
Total				98	122	220



In course of field work, it was found that out of total 220 persons, who were interviewed and asked open ended questions to the various categories of hill people like, students, teachers, petty businessmen/businesswomen, government servants, housewives, retired personals, the students of class XI, and XII, showed more interest in giving house hold decision making power and maintaining family budget to mother of the house.

Table 9.

Various occupations and its attitude towards women's participation in politics: Female Respondents

Occupations	Low	Medium	High	No. of Women	Percent
Student		✓		63	71.5
Teacher			✓	15	17
Business	✓			02	2.2
Housewives	✓			06	6.8
Retired	✓			02	2.2
Total				88	100

In Table 9, except from people those who are from education field (Teacher, Student) showed more interest and believed in women empowerment. Out of 100 percent, more than 70 percent of women associated with education department of Hills, were found to be

interested in politics, empowering women on various social, political and economical areas of their society.

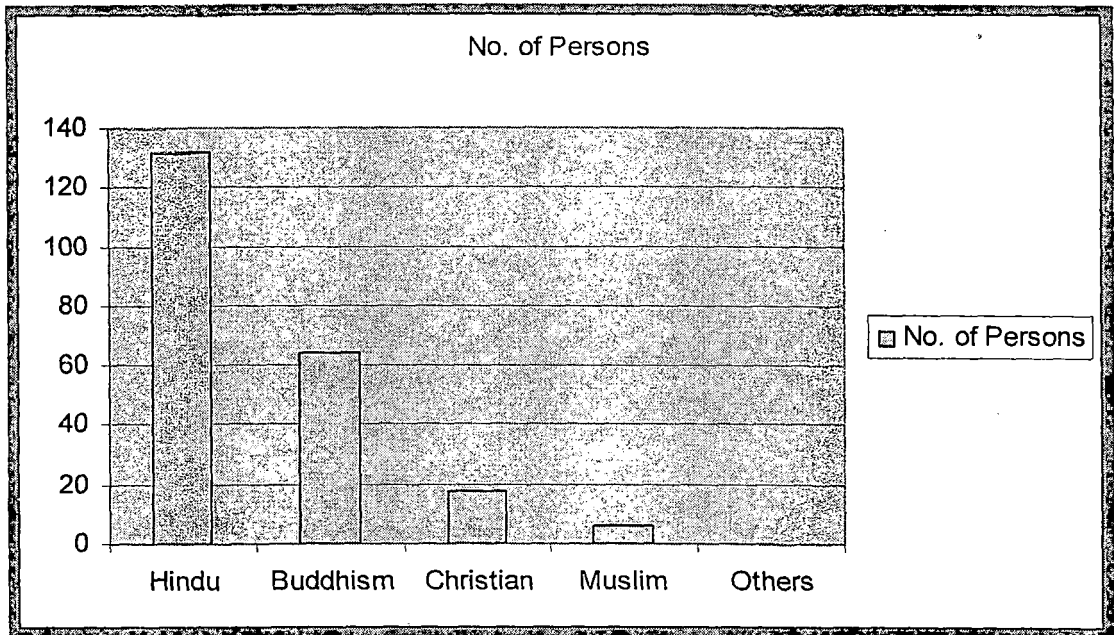
Table10.

Various occupations and its attitude towards women’s participation in politics: Male Respondents

Occupations	Low	Medium	High	No. of Men	Percent
Student		✓		80	60.6
Teacher			✓	30	22.7
Business		✓		12	9
Govt. Employees		✓		07	5.3
Unemployed		✓		01	0.7
Retired		✓		02	1.5
Total				132	100

In table 10, as compared to women from various fields of work, men seemed to be more interested in political power, and the development of women and their participation in politics. Like, women from education department, men from the same are highly interested in women in politics as compare to men having other occupations.

Table 11

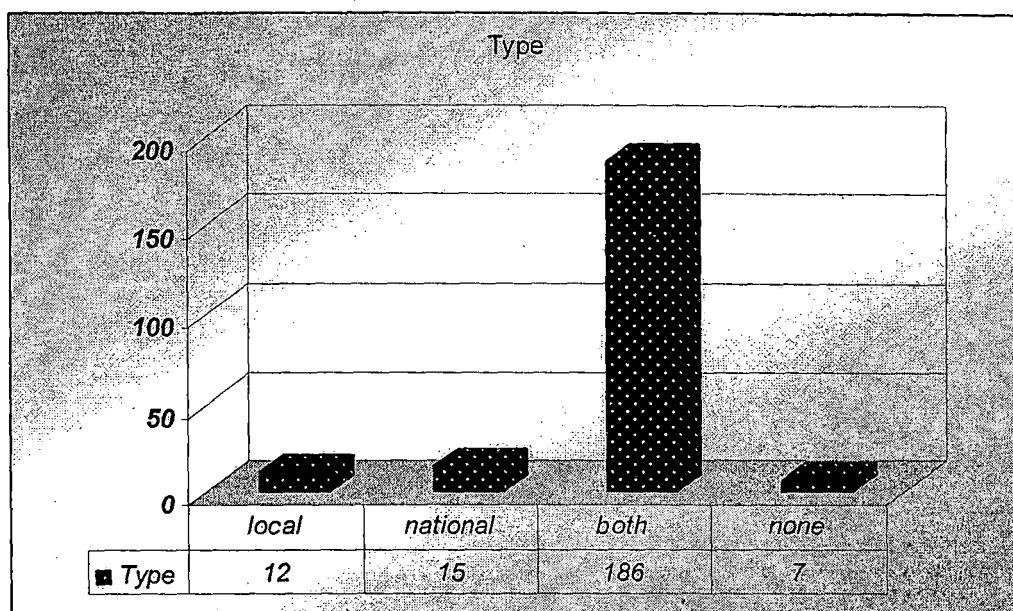


The majority of population in Darjeeling Hills are Nepali hindus, Marwaris, who are mostly into Garment Business and Gold Smiths are migrated from Rajasthan, Beharis and Upianians are from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, they are mostly Grossers, Hawkers, owns Ration Shops, Vegetable, Fruit Vendors, owns Sweet Parlors etc. Native tribe like, Lepchas are either Buddhist or Christians, the small portion of Muslim who are mostly Tailors, Butchers were migrated from neighborhood state like, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and from the plain areas of West Bengal. Others are Punjabis, are into Hotel Business are Hindus, Chinese either Beauticians and Cobblers are Christians or Buddhists have migrated and settled mostly in Darjeeling Sadar, kalimpong subdivision of Darjeeling district.

Three subdivisions of hill areas of Darjeeling district represents significant place for various linguistic, religious, ethnic, or cultural groups of people from various part of the country and the political ideologies among the citizen of this region are carried mostly by small regional parties like, GNLF, GJMM, Gorkha League, Pranta Parisad etc.

Table 12.

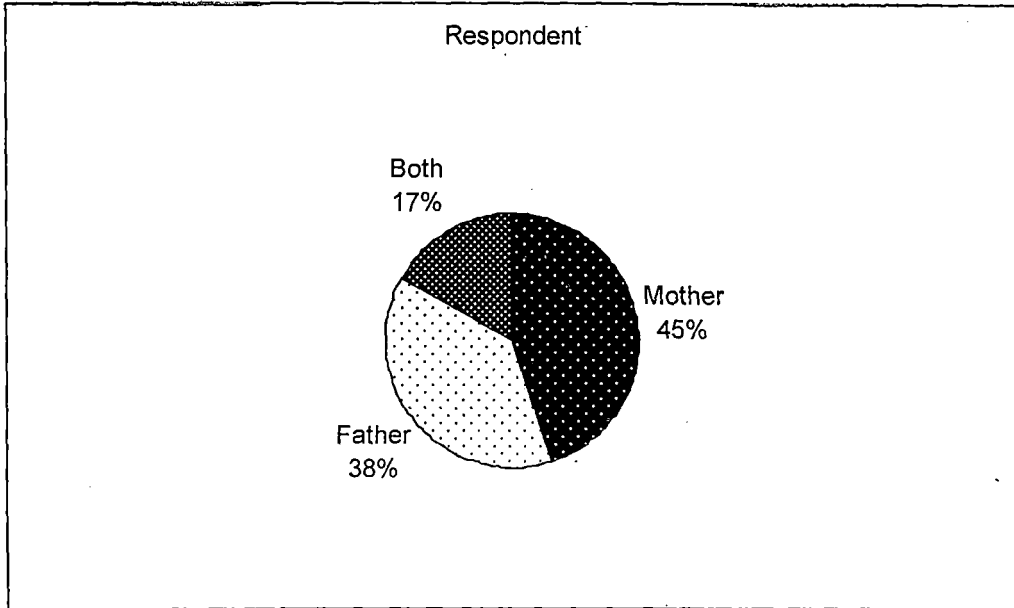
Data for News read and watched



Out of 220 men and women of Darjeeling hills who I surveyed only 7 people said they do not like to read neither watch news in television.

Table 13.

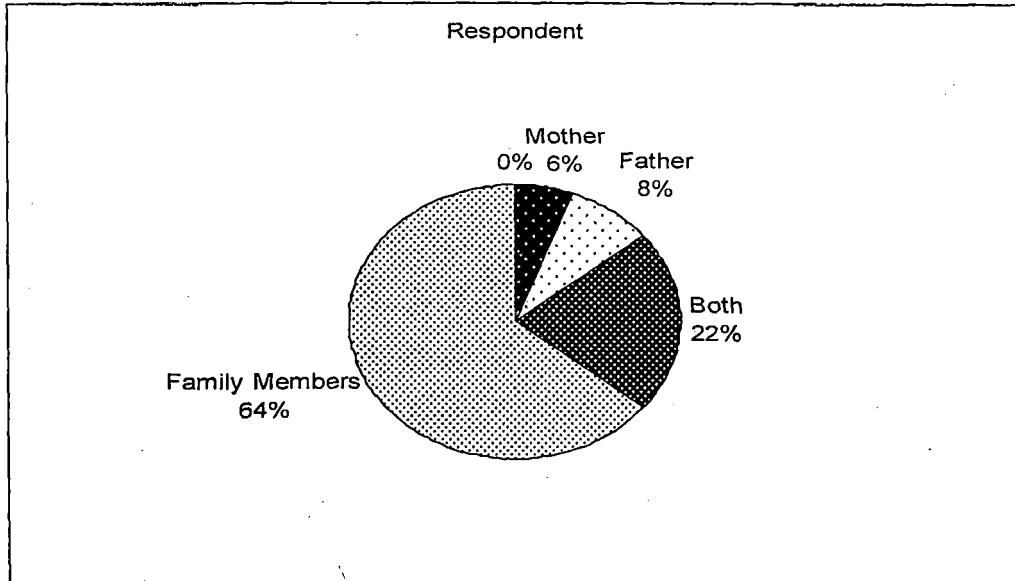
Data for Family Budget



Almost 50% people in Darjeeling hills said, women runs the family budget. 17% of hill people prefer family budget should be run by both mother and the father and 37% said they prefer father to run the house & family budget.

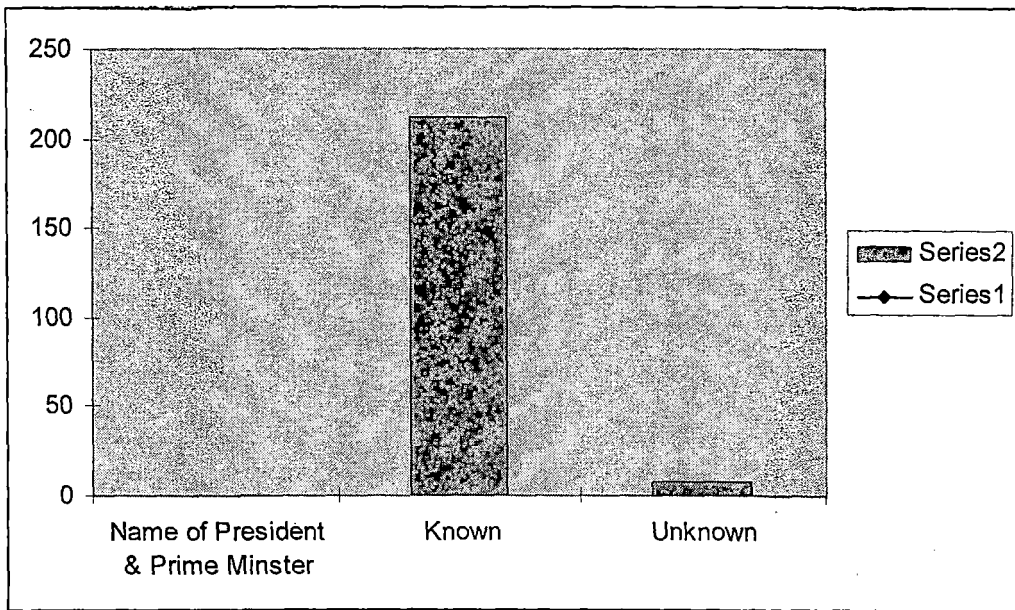
Table 14.

Data for family related decision



64% people in hills said family related decision should be take by all the family members which proves that, in hills people are liberal in their nature and there is less sign of patriarchy in their society.

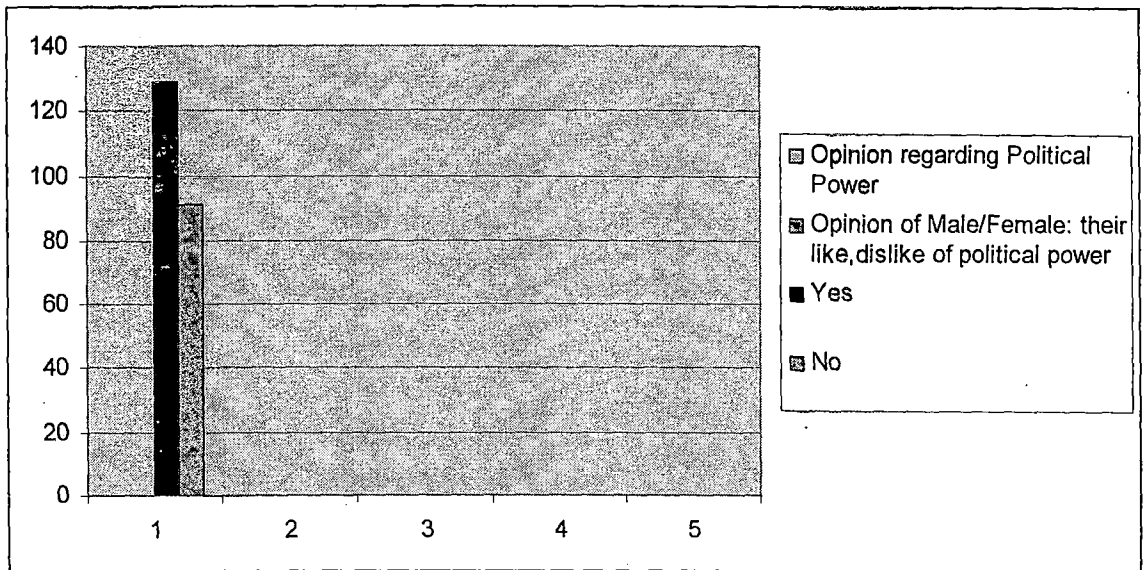
Table 15.



Out of 220 male, female respondents only eight said, they do not have any idea about the name of India's president and prime minister.

Table 16.

Data for opinion regarding political power



58 % of people in hills prefer political power whereas 41% disagree. If they are given political power, most of them would like to utilize it for the development in Darjeeling Hills for example, roads, water, health, poverty, education, sanitation, and they would also like to resolve the unemployment crisis.

Census of India 2001
Final Population Totals, West Bengal
Table - 1

Population, Decadal Growth Rate, Density and General Sex Ratio by
Residence and Sex, India / West Bengal / District / Sub District, 1991-2001

T	R	Area in Km ²	Population						Decadal Growth Rate 1991- 2001	Density 2001 (Persons per km ²)	Sex Ratio No. of Females per 1000 Males	
			1991 \$			2001					1991	2001
			Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
		India										
T		3065027.00	838583988	435216358	403367630	1028610328	532156772	496453556	22.66	336	927	933
R		2910161.61	622812376	321279405	301532971	742490639	381602674	360887965	19.22	255	939	946
U		64026.39	215771612	113936953	101834659	286119689	150554098	135565591	32.60	4469	894	900
		West Bengal										
T		88752.00	68077965	35510633	32567332	80176197	41465985	38710212	17.77	903	917	934
R		85427.26	49370364	25442210	23928154	57748946	29616009	28132937	16.97	676	940	950
U		3324.74	18707601	10068423	8639178	22427251	11849976	10577275	19.88	6746	858	893
		Darjeeling District										
T		3149.00	1299919	679323	620596	1609172	830644	778528	23.79	511	914	937
R		3073.77	903859	467324	436535	1088740 151	556633	532107	20.45	354	934	956
U		75.23	396060	211899	184061	520432	274011	246421	31.40	6918	868	899

Table 2
Kalimpong I and II
Town

Kpg I	Area in Km ²	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Decadal Growth Rate 1991-2001	Density 2001 (Persons per km ²)	Sex Ratio No.of Females per 1000 Males 1991	Sex Ratio No.of Females per 1000 Males 2001
Town	360.46	53641	27445	26196	67680	34382	33298	26.17	188	954	968
Kpg II											
Town	241.26	51411	26905	24506	60263	31309	28954	17.22	250	911	925

Table 3
Kurseong
Town/ Rural

Area in Km ²	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Decadal Growth Rate 1991-2001	Density 2001 (Persons per km ²)	Sex Ratio No.of Females per 1000 Males 1991	Sex Ratio No.of Females per 1000 Males 2001
Town 372.30	80489	41372	39117	85867	43330	42537	6.68	231	945	982
Rural 354.31	66917	34344	32573	72204	36425	35779	7.90	204	948	982

Table 4

URBAN UNITS

	Area in Km ²	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Decadal Growth Rate 1991-2001	Density 2001 (Persons per km ²)	Sex Ratio No.of Females per 1000 Males 1991	Sex Ratio No.of Females per 1000 Males 2001
1.	2.20	-	-	-	1633	-	-	-	742	-	1026
2.	10.57	73062	37763	35299	107197	55963	51234	46.72	10142	935	915
3.	8.68	38832	19973	18859	42998	22296	20702	10.73	4954	944	929
4.	6.50	7022	3585	3437	9141	4619	4522	30.18	1406	959	979
5.	5.05	26758	13989	12769	40019	20410	19609	49.56	7925	913	961
6.	17.99	13572	7028	6544	13663	6905	6758	0.67	759	931	979
7.	1.63	12064	6432	5632	15774	8236	7538	30.75	9677	876	915
8.	2.51	4703	2619	2084	5405	2881	2524	14.93	2153	796	876
9.	20.10	216950	118938	98012	284602	151895	132707	31.18	14159	824	874

- 1. Pattabong Tea Garden (CT)**
- 2. Darjeeling (M)**
- 3. Kalimpong (M)**
- 4. Mirik (NA)**
- 5. Kurseong (M)**
- 6. Cart road (CT)**
- 7. Upper Bagdorra (CT)**
- 8. Bairatsal (CT)**
- 9. Siliguri (Municipal Corporation)**

CT – Census Town

M – Municipality

NA – Notified Area

CT – Census Town

In census it is very important to have clear demarcation of administrative boundaries so that the data can be tabulated and presented in line with existing administrative units. It is also crucial to have detailed segregation of rural and urban units down to the lowest level. Census data is universally presented in separate rural urban frames for comparisons as well as gauging development patterns.

In West Bengal rural units comprise of villages as the lowest unit which are coming under a Community Development Block or, simply, Block. Total number of Blocks in a district make up the total rural frame of the district. There are 341 Blocks in W. Bengal under the rural frame as in Census of India, 2001. The largest number of Blocks are in Medinipur district with 54 while Dakshin Dinajpur has the lowest number of 7 Blocks. The urban units consist of statutory towns like Municipal Corporations, Municipalities, Notified Areas and Cantonment Boards. In West Bengal there are 6 Municipal Corporations, 113 Municipalities, 3 Notified Areas and 1 Cantonment Board. Apart from statutory towns there are also non statutory urban areas which are basically census creations according to certain geographic and economic parameters. Such urban areas are called Census Towns (CT). As per the urban frame of West Bengal for 2001 there are 252 Census Towns with highest number of 55 in Bardhaman district. There is another urban concept in Indian census called an urban Outgrowth (OG) which is basically extension of the urban facilities beyond the statutory limits of a Municipal Corporation or Municipality. In West Bengal there are 30 such urban outgrowths attached to equal number of statutory towns with the highest, 9, in Nadia district. Finally the urban frame in Indian census also has the concept of Urban Agglomeration (UA) which is a continuous and unbroken urban spread cutting across municipal or other urban limits and can be a combination of more than one statutory towns / census towns / outgrowths. There are 21 Urban Agglomerations in West Bengal with the highest number of 5 again in

Nadia district. But it is the biggest and largest Kolkata UA that cuts across the district boundaries of North 24 Parganas, Nadia, Haora, Hugli and South 24 Parganas while other UAs are restricted to within the district boundaries.

Major Findings of the Study

From Census 2001, there is a small gap between male and female education population in Darjeeling. In urban Units of Darjeeling it was 48929 male, and 41080 female. The ratio between male and female literates in Darjeeling in 2001 was 54.36 % to 45.63 respectively. In kalimpong urban units the literacy ratio of male and female was 55.12 and 44.87%. In Kurseong urban unit it was 53.31 and 46.68 respectively.

In Siliguri Municipal Corporation area which was noted 56.38 % to 43.61% in the same year. As in case of India, the ratio of male and female literacy rate in urban areas was found 56.82% and 43.17% respectively. So, when it comes to education of men and women in India, the state of West Bengal and Darjeeling Hills women are still backward and lagging behind as compare to male population of the country.

Through the Census of india, 1999, 2001 it was found that, out of 537 Health Centers of rural West Bengal, Darjeeling Sadar have 24, Darjeeling Pulbazar 1, kalimpong-I 1, kalimpong-II 4, Mirik- 2, Kurseong- 2 and out of 708 villages in 2001, Only 385 have paved

roads. 11 such villages in Darjeeling hills enjoy small kind of profit because they are connected to rail lines. In case of Kurseong 2 villages out of 71 have their rail connectivity within their villages. Kalimpong does not have any such facilities.

When it comes to Bus connectivity in rural hills, again out of 708 villages, 55 of Darjeeling I are in 10 kms of distance from the nearest Bus Stand, 5 villages out of 55 are in the same distance of rural Kalimpong II. Out of 71, 9 villages in Kurseong have their nearest 10kms connectivity to bus stand. In Mirik 1 out of 21 villages have its connectivity to bus stand which is 10kms in distance and in Kalimpong I, 51 village people have to face chronic transport problems for attending schools, college, health centers and for other purposes.

The main problem of Hills, drinking water, in 2001, it has been recorded 249 taps, 260 tube wells, and 333 wells, other sources were recorded 54 in 1991 and 18 in 2001 in Darjeeling I. Kurseong have 54 taps, 4 tube wells, 15 wells, and other sources of water were found. In Kalimpong I, and II have 36 taps, and 29 taps respectively and not a single tube wells, wells and other sources of water was found in both this regions.

There are 472 primary schools, 153 middle schools 69 secondary schools and 5 colleges in Darjeeling I. 31 primary schools, 81 middle schools 5 secondary schools and 1 college in Kalimpong I. 53 primary schools, 13 middle schools 7 secondary schools and 1 college in Kurseong as per Census 2001. The numbers of schools, colleges have

substantively increased in Darjeeling. Only in the field of education Darjeeling Hills shows positive progress.

When it comes to hotel business, like education the number of hotels have increased from 785 in 1991 to 1271 in 2001 but with the closing of Tea gardens in this region the number of factory, workshop and work shed have decreased from 3950 in 1991 to 2382 in 2001 in urban Darjeeling and from 1735 in 1991 to 1255 in 2001 in rural Darjeeling causing huge number of unemployment in this region.

Female illiterate percentage is 58.5% and male was 41.5 in Darjeeling in 2001, in municipal area of Darjeeling out of 33214 labours the male labour percentage was 75.6 and the female labour percentage was comparatively low and which is 24.3% but when it comes to male and women cultivator and men, women agriculture labour they share 50 to 49% and 60 to 40 percent respectively.

From the various data taken from census 2001, it is clear that when it comes to physical labour women in hills beside rearing children, cooking, doing other household work, they work equally and in almost 50:40 ratios with men of this region.

So, as compare to women of plain areas the burden of hill women is more. Their social status may be high due to the fact of the nature of existing matriarchal society among Nepalese but when it comes to enjoying education right, economic and political rights women are still deprived in this region. The women of this region are

so much into social obligations both inside and outside the family they themselves do not know anything about the rights which has been given to them by the Constitution of india. So far, only two women have become the MLAs(Member of Legislative Assembly) from kalimpong and kurseong. Girl child may be treated equally and the sign of dowry, killing of girl children are absent in Neplese community but women in Darjeeling Hills however work harder than men yet! They barely enjoy political and to some extent economic power of their society. Its not that men are suppressing them from enjoying their power and rights which has been given to them but women herself have to come out of her shell and redefine her existence not only in social aspect but also in economic, and political level of their society and her country ultimately.

Table 1.

Sex ratios by district per 1000 males

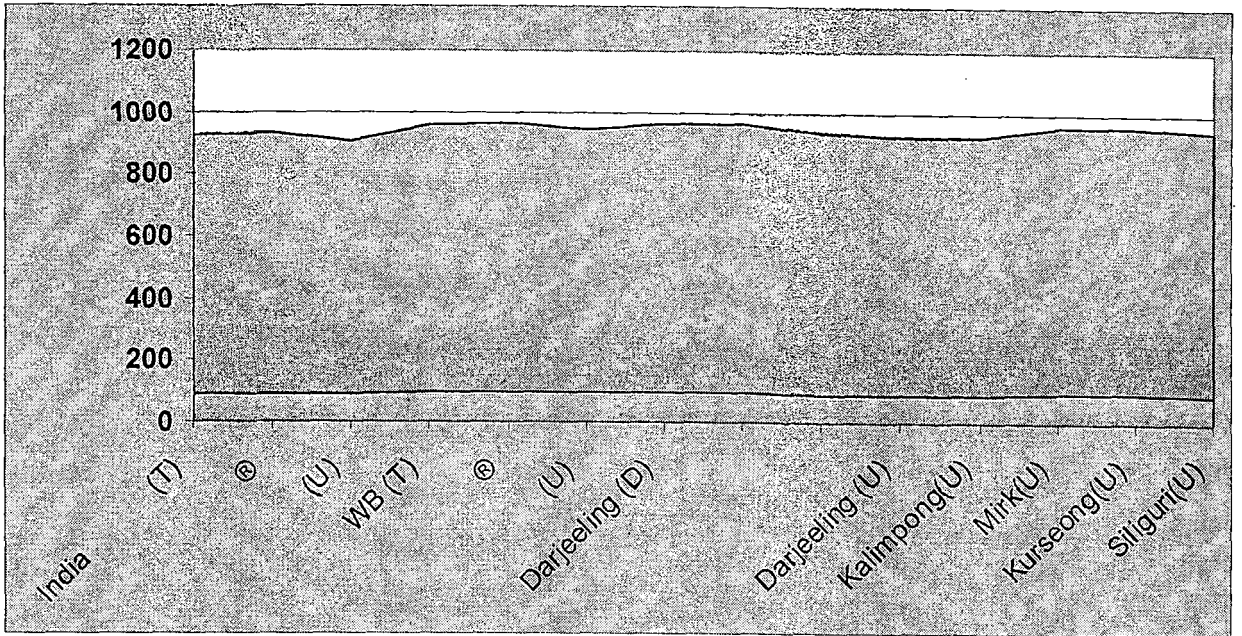
	1991	2001	%
Darjeeling	914	943	3.2
Jalpaiiguri	927	941	1.5
Cooch behar	935	949	1.5
Uttar Dinajpur	921	937	1.7
Dakshin Dinajpur	944	950	0.6

Malda	938	948	1.1
Murshidabad	943	952	0.9
Birbhum	946	949	0.3
Bardhaman	899	921	1.4
Nadia	936	947	1.2
Kolkata	799	828	3.6
North 24 Parganas	907	927	2.2
Hoogli	917	947	3.3
Bankura	951	953	0.2
Purulia	947	953	0.2
Medinapur	944	955	1.2
Howra	881	906	2.8
South 24 parganas	929	938	1
West Bengal	917	934	1.8
India	927	933	0.6

Census, 2001

Child Sex ratio (% of Females as per 1000 Males)

2001 Census



of Darjeeling Hills.

Table 2.

Life Expectancy at birth (estimated at 2001)

Source: Guha Roy (2003)

Districts	Female	Male
Darjeeing	71	67
Jalpaiguri	63	61
Kooch Behar	57	53
Dinajpur	63	61
Malda	55	54
Murshidabad	60	58
Birbhum	58	56
Burdawan	71	68
Nadia	65	63
Kolkata	75	74
North 24 Pargana	71	66
Hoogli	73	69
Bankura	68	62
Purulia	63	60
Medinapur	67	65
Howarah	73	70
South Pargana	70	65

West Bengal- 69/65(F/M)

India- 65/64(F/M)

Table 3.

WOMEN MLAs FROM WEST BENGAL, 1971-96

YEAR	TOTAL NO. OF SEATS	TOTAL NO. OF WOMEN MLAs	% of women MLAs in state legislative assembly
1971	280	6	2.14
1973	280	5	1.74
1977	294	4	1.36
1982	294	7	2.38
1987	294	12	4.08
1991	294	23	7.82
1996	294	22	7.40

SOURCE: COMPILED FROM THE DATA AVAILABLE WITH THE WEST BENGAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Table 4.

WOMEN MINISTERS IN WEST BENGAL GOVERNMENT

YEAR	CABINET MINISTER	MINISTER OF STATE	DEPUTY MINISTER	TOTAL NO. OF WOMEN	TOTAL NO. OF MINISTERS	% OF WOMEN MINISTERS IN THE STATE GOVT.
1952	1	-	1	2	30	6.66
1957	-	1	1	2	30	6.66
1962	2	-	3	5	37	13.51
1967	-	-	-	-	19	0
1967	-	-	-	-	3	0
1968	-	-	-	-	17	0
1969	1	1	-	2	31	6.45
1971	-	-	-	-	26	0
1972	-	-	1	1	28	3.57
1977	-	1	-	1	30	3.33
1982	-	2	-	2	45	4.44
1987	1	-	-	1	32	3.12
1991	1	3	-	4	44	9.09
1996	1	3	-	4	48	8.33

SOURCE: COMPILED FROM THE DATA PROVIDED BY THE GOVT. OF WEST BENGAL.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

“Women carry a disproportionately greater burden of work than men & since women are responsible for a greater share of non – SNA (System of National Accounts) work in case of economy, they enter labour market already over burdened with work.”

Women constitute half of the world's population, two-third of the world's labour force but get 1% of the world's wealth. Women make up only 6% of India's workforce and the numbers get skewed as you go up the corporate ladder. Only 4% women are at the senior management level and only few in a leadership role. Status of women is generally measured using three indicators: education, employment status and intra-household decision-making power.

In general women with higher education tend to have a better position (WHO, 1989). In some cases, however, education alone may not be sufficient to enhance status unless it engages employment as well. In addition women's ability to communicate with and convince their spouses or other members of the family indicates their decision making autonomy. Women with great decision-making power are supposed to have a higher status in the household. In India women are discriminated due to several historical, religious and other reasons. A girl child is suppressed from the movement she is born in terms of personal development. She is made to undergo the feelings of being

inferior and feeble. She is denied the prospects for personal expression. It was reported during women's workshop (1987) that women's "sexuality is suppressed, their labour exploited, their property and other basic human rights denied to them and their humanity demolished".

The so called 'national movement' has further "displaced and marginalized women while at the same time, it has turned them into commodities, not just in terms of being used as machines for producing children, doing household work and even doing jobs outside but always controlled by men to whom they belong".

The age old grievances of Darjeeling hills and the problems of her simple, hardworking and hospitable people and the ever increasing sense of Alienation among the hill people which requires rapid implementation of programmes and policies that will put an end of long political unrest of this region and bring the economy of Hills back on the rails are the Leaders of this region and the state government. Though government is taking measures to overcome the increasing gap between the hills and the plains of West Bengal but at the same time, if the pro active and newly organized women wing from common women of this region are vested more power the Queen of hills, Darjeeling can be saved from becoming 'Kashmir' of West Bengal and from becoming the Queen hills to the land of goons, and rowdies.

Generally derived from Mongolian & Aryan race hill people of Darjeeling have stigma of Matriarchy. Due to which there is less

gender biasness, absence of infanticide that we generally see in other parts of India. Even though literary rate is fairly good in hill areas of Darjeeling district, politically women's position is backward in the sense; women do not come under the purview of 33% quota systems introduced by "women's Bill" by the Parliament of India through 73rd & 74th amendment in 1992. (33% reservation of seats for women in all elected offices of Panchayat, Municipality).

So far only two women from this region have ever reached and become the member of Legislative Assembly are Reenu Leena Subba from 1977 to 1984 and Shanta Chettri in 1996, 1999 from Kalimong and Kurseong Constituencies. Beside these two women nobody has reached the position of Member of Parliament. If more women participates in politics and becomes MALs and MPs of Legislative Assembly and Parliament Hills can be developed and saved from ongoing ethnic problems of this region. 2

Hills of Darjeeling mostly have matriarchal society, from the surveys and the analysis of the data which are collected from the three subdivisions of hills viz. Darjeeling sadar, kalimpong, Kurseong and Mirik, it is evident that, as compare to plain areas of West Bengal and rest of India, women in Darjeeling are in better social and economic condition. In Darjeeling hills there is no gender biasness, female foeticide, dowry system, honor killing. A girl child is treated equally with the boy child. 2

In most of the houses, women runs the family budget and equally participates in the decision making process of the family along with the men.

Even though women are in better social position, politically they are less active and they do not know, enjoy the rights of their own. When women in other parts of West Bengal, and India are busy fighting for their political reservation and raising questions for equal participation in politics, women of Hills are happy in taking care of their family, running family budget. They are not bothered about what is happening around it is mainly because this region is going through critical ethnic problems, identity crisis which has made men and women of this region to join hands together for not the women issues but for basic amenities of life like, water, health, road communication, transport etc.

In case of India, as according to 2001 census, out of the total population of 1,027,015,247, the female population was 495,732,169 accounting for 48.2 % of the total population. But, their participation in economically productive activities is often underestimated. For last two decades, women's work participation rate increased from 22.73% in 1991 to 28.6% during 2001.

In the wake of globalization & the notion of world as a 'global village' the economic changes are altering structures & cultures. Most of the developing world is now in the process of restructuring in the direction of free market & liberalization & privatization.

Today, Information Technology is sweeping the whole world day by day. In fact, it is a vehicle for future development, opportunities, challenges & competition among the Nation States. In recent years, IT has become the focal area of India's major development & prosperity aiming to give the country a status of super power in the world. The government of India has also formed IT Ministry at the Central level to play a lead role in making India an IT super power. Thus, Globalization has brought a range of new technologies, which have potential for making the Indian women, endangered species. As per 1991 census, India had 439 million men & 407 million women workers.

The constitution of India is one of the most right based Constitution of the world, India drafted herself around the same time as the universal declaration of human rights 1948; the Indian constitution captures the essence of human rights in its Preamble and in the sections of Fundamental Rights and the Directive Principles of the State Policy.

"Women have been waiting for this since the last fourteen years. We have heard many assurances but we hope that this time the government is going to deliver on the assurance. As far as my party is concerned, 100 percent support is assured the day they bring the bill into parliament for passage," Communist Party of India politburo member, Brinda Karat on passing of women reservation bill in Upper House of Indian Parliament, March 2010. Karat also said that the 50

percent reservation for women in village governing bodies, Panchayats should be implemented at national level.

Congress party leader Girja Vyas said the women's reservation bill is on top of the Congress led government's agenda. Vyas said. "The manifestos of many political parties talk about women empowerment. Especially the Congress Party has it in their manifesto. It is in the 100 days agenda of the party so it has to be fulfilled."

The general level of frustration which creates a sense of alienation among a particular group of people from rest of the citizen of a country are mainly identity crisis of particular group of people, inequality, the issues of social injustice, socio, political and economic development and the capabilities of the government and the political system of any region of India. In such case, if women are empowered and properly trained and ensured 100% education to the entire children and women, men of the country, then only a common woman could be benefited. If the mother of the family is unhealthy, deprived of her rights, and uneducated then how can we say that, India is shining...!

APPENDIX

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Amar Ujjala – Delhi

Questionnaires used for Data Collection

1. Collection of data from Personal Backgrounds like, Name, Age, Gender, Educational Qualification, Marital Status, Residential Address, Tenancy Status, Category: Schedule Caste/Schedule Tribe/General/Other Backward Class
2. News channel read and watched: Local/National
3. Patriarchy is the main cause of Gender inequalities in our society: Yes/ No
4. Who should run the family budget? Mother/Father/Both
5. Who should look after family matters? Mother/Father/Both
6. Family related decision should be taken by Mother/Father/Both/Family Members
7. Do you like political power? Yes/No
8. If women stood in election. Do they get supports and popular votes? Give Reasons
9. Are women able to talk and demand their women related issues in public? Give Reasons
10. What will you do if you acquire socio-economic power? Give reasons
11. What will you do if you acquire political power? Give reasons

12.Opinion regarding Women Empowerment

13.Why women should be empowered?

14.Name of the President, Prime Minister of India:

Known/Unknown

15.Do male member of the family influence the voting behavior of women? Yes/No

Statistical profile of Indian Women

Table 1

CENSUS YEAR	SEX RATIO (FEMALES PER 1,000 MALES)
1901	972
1911	964
1921	955
1931	950
1941	945
1951	941
1961	930
1971	934
1981	934
1991	927
2001	933

The female sex ratio has been found steadily declining over the years.

Table 2

SOCIAL INDICATOR	INDIA	WORLD	DEVELOPING COUNTRIES	KERALA	SRILANKA
INFANT MORTALITY RATE, PER 1000 LIVE BIRTH	73	60	66	16	17
MATERNAL/MORTALITY RATE, PER 100000 LIVE BIRTH	570	430	470	-	140
FEMALE LITERACY, %	58	77.6	70.4	86.93	90.2
FEMALE SCHOOL ENROLLMENT	47	62	57	63	67
EARNED INCOME BY FEMALES %	26	58.0	53.0	49.8	35.5
UNDERWEIGHT CHILDREN, %	53	30	30	-	38
TOTAL FERTILITY RATE	3.2	2.9	3.2	1.9	2.1
WOMEN IN GOVT., %	6	7	5	-	9
CONTRACEPTION USAGE, %	44	56	54	56	66
LOW BIRTH WEIGHT BABIES, %	33	17	7	-	25

[KERALA SRILANKA ARE ADDED FOR COMPARISON AS THEY ARE RECOGNIZED AS HAVING MADE EXCEPTIONAL EFFORTS IN THE FIELD OF FEMALE EDUCATION]

Table 3

**OUTPUT OF 1923 GENERAL ELECTION
PROVINCIAL COUNCIL INDIAN ASSEMBLY**

PROVINCES	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
BOMBAY	49.5%	18%	38.6%	7.2%
UNITED PROVINCE	43.5%	2.5%	45.2%	-
MADRAS	38%	10%	42.7%	10.4%

SOURCE: ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA, 1998

Table 4

PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN AS VOTERS & CANDIDATES IN ELECTION

PROVICES	PROVICIAL COUNCIL TOTAL %	FEMALE %
MADRAS	43.1	18.1
PUNJAB	38.5	5.6
CENTRAL PROVINCE	33.3	8.8
BIHAR & ORISSA	33.2	5.4
ASSAM	28.3	6.5
UNITED PROVINCE	24.6	3.9
BOMBAY	16.5	6.5

Table 5

OUTPUT OF 1930 GENERAL ELECTION

PROVINCES	INDIAN ASSEMBLY TOTAL %	FEMALE %
PUNJAB	55.4	7.5
CENTRAL PROVINCE	33.3	-
MADRAS	31	11.5
BIHAR & ORISSA	21.4	3
UNITED PROVINCE	14.2	3.3
BOMBAY	7.4	3.2
ASSAM	-	-

Table 6

**OUTPUT OF 1937 PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY
ELECTION**

PROVINCES	TOTAL NO. OF VOTERS	MALE %	NO. OF WOMEN ENROLLED	% OF WOMEN PARTICIPATION
BENGAL	6,695,483	40.5	9,70,033	5.4
MADRAS	6,436,760	51.6	1,584,784	31.5
UNITED PROVINCE	5,335,309	58.3	520,380	19.3
PUNJAB	2,686,094	63.7	189,105	33.6
BOMBAY	2,609,457	51.7	335,890	42.2
BIHAR	2,412,229	59.2	229,044	7.9
CENTRAL PROVINCE	1,741,364	54.8	263,331	24.5
ASSAM	815,314	71.4	45,366	29.2
SIND	6,39,043	54.2	32,668	34.7
ORISSA	520,225	58.9	79,205	6.6
NWFP	246,609	72.8	4,895	71.4

IN PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE ELETION OF 1937 43% ADULT MALE & 9% ADULT FEMALE WERE ENFRANCHISED. AS A CONSEQUENCE IN 1937, 56 WOMEN BECAME THE LEGISLATORS OF PROVINCIAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLIES. (41 SEATS WERE RESERVED, 10 WOMEN WON UNRESERVED SEATS & 5 WERE NOMINATED AS PROVINCIAL COUNCIL)

Table 7

INCREASE IN THE SHARE OF WOMEN MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

YEAR	TOTAL CONSTITUENCIES	TOTAL NO. OF WOMEN CANDIDATES	TOTAL NO. OF WOMEN WINNERS	WOMEN VOTERS
1996	543	491	40	15,10,28,30
1998	543	271	43	16,68,21679

INCREASE IN WOMEN VOTERS AGAINST 1996 BY 5%

SOURCE: ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA, 1998

Table 8

PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN NATIONAL ELECTION

YEAR	VOTING % OF MEN	VOTING % OF WOMEN	TOTAL SEATS CONTESTED BY WOMEN	SEATS WON BY WOMEN	% OF SEATS WON OF CONTESTED SEATS	TOTAL SEATS
1952	53	37.10	51	23	45.09	499
1957	56	38.77	70	27	38.57	500
1962	62.10	46.63	68	35	51.47	503
1967	66.70	55.48	66	31	48.43	523
1971	69.70	49.15	86	22	27.50	521
1977	65.62	54.96	70	19	25.70	544

1980	57.69	51.22	142	28	19.70	544
1984	63.61	68.17	421	159	28.3	544
1989	70.90	43.90	189	28	14.80	528
1991	52.56	47.42	307	33	10.75	531

SOURCE: PIB, GOVT. OF INDIA, 1998

Except for the year 1991, women have won 33% of seats in national Parliament.

Table 9

**NO. OF ELECTORS & VOTERS TO THE LOK SABHA
(SEX-WISE) FROM 1952-1984**

YEAR	MALE	FEMALE	%	MALE	FEMALE	%
1952	95267500	77946135	31	50975832	29733270	58.3
1957	102205638	91446431	89	55924441	35405424	63.3
1962	113944234	102427981	89	70703050	47764170	67.5
1967	130423737	102173708	78	86460463	66264048	76.6
1971	143474831	130619662	91	87382907	64153895	73.4
1977	167019151	154155176	92.3	109609940	84653975	77.3
1980	185210315	170380385	91.9	115133649	87271764	75.8
1984	196730499	182810109	92.9	134122952	107123935	79.8

SOURCE: Women in India: A Statistical Profile (1988), of India.

Table 10

**NO. OF CONTESTANTS & THOSE ELECTED TO THE
LOK SABHA (SEX-WISE) FROM 1952-1984**

YEAR	MALE	FEMALE	% OF FEMALE TO MALE	M	F	% OF FEMALE TO MALE
1952	1831	43	23	475	14	2.94
1957	1474	45	5.05	457	27	5.78
1962	1915	70	3.6	459	35	7.62
1967	2300	69	3.0	489	31	6.4
1971	2693	86	3.2	497	21	4.2
1977	2369	70	2.95	523	19	3.6
1980	4478	142	3.17	514	28	5.5
1984	5149	164	3.2	486	42	8.64
1987	-	-	-	491	46	9.4

SOURCE: Women in India: A Statistical Profile (1988), of India.

MEMBERS OF THE RAJYA SABHA (SEX-WISE)

YEAR	MALE	FEMALE	%
1952	201	15	7.5
1957	212	20	9.4
1962	218	18	8.2
1967	215	24	11.1
1972	225	18	8
1976	212	24	11.3
1980	213	29	13.6
1982	213	23	10.8
1984	209	24	11.5
1986	215	28	13

SOURCE: Women in India: A Statistical Profile (1988), of India.

Table 12
WOMEN MEMBERS IN LOK SABHA

LOK SABHA	YEAR	TOTAL SEATS	SEATS CONTESTED BY WOMEN	% OF WOMEN CONTESTANTS	SEATS WON BY WOMEN	% OF WOMEN MEMBER
1ST	1952	499	51	13	22	4.4
2ND	1957	500	70	14	27	5.4
3RD	1962	503	68	13	34	6.7
4TH	1967	523	66	13	31	5.9
5TH	1971	521	86	17	22	4.2
6TH	1977	544	70	13	19	3.4
7TH	1980	544	142	26	28	5.1
8TH	1984	544	159	29	44	8.1
9TH	1989	528	89	17	28	5.3
10TH	1991	531	55	10	39	7.9

SOURCE: PIB, GOVT. OF INDIA, 1998

Table 13

**PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN LOK
SABHA**

YEAR	TOTAL	VOTING % OF MALE	VOTING % OF FEMALE	WOMEN CONTESTANTS	ELECTED TO LOK SABHA
1952	60.5	53	37.1	2.3	4.4
1957	63.7	56	39.6	2.9	5.46
1962	55	62.1	46.6	3.5	7.08
1967	61	66.7	55.5	12.9	5.96
1971	55.1	69.7	49.15	3	4.05
1977	60	65.62	54.91	2.8	3.50
1980	75.9	57.69	51.29	3	7.9
1984	62.4	63.61	68.17	3	8.1
1989	62	70.9	43.9	3	3
1991	53.5	52.56	47.43	3.7	7.16
1996	57.94	62.47	53.41	6.5	7.18
1998	62.04	66.06	58.02	16	8

Table 14

LOK SABHA	TOTAL SEATS	NO. OF WOMEN CONTESTED (ALL INDIA)	NO. OF WOMEN ELECTED (ALL INDIA)	% OF WOMEN (ALL INDIA)	NO. OF WOMEN ELECTED FROM WEST BENGAL
1ST 1952-57	499	NOT KNOWN	22	4.4	1
2ND 1957- 62	500	45	27	5.4	2
3RD 1962-67	503	70	34	6.7	2
4TH 1967-71	523	67	31	5.9	2
5TH 1971-76	521	86	22	4.2	2
6TH 1977-80	544	70	19	3.4	2
7TH 1980-84	544	142	28	5.1	2
8TH 1985-90	544	164	44	8.1	5
9TH 1990-91	517	198	27	5.2	2
10TH 1991-96	544	325	39	7.18	3
11TH 1996	544	599	40	7.18	4
12TH 1998	544	271	44	8.8	5
13TH 1999	542	284	49	8.36	5
14TH 2004	543	355	45		
15TH 2009	556		59		

SOURCE: PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU, GOVT. OF INDIA

The highest number of women elected in the Parliament has been recorded in the recent General Election of India, 2009

Table 15

WOMEN REPRESENTATION IN THE RAJYA SABHA

YEAR	TOTAL	NO. OF WOMEN	PERCENTAGE
1952	219	16	7.3
1957	237	18	7.6
1962	238	18	7.6
1967	240	20	8.3
1971	243	17	7.0
1977	244	25	10.2
1980	244	24	9.8
1985	244	28	11.4
1990	245	24	9.7
1991	245	38	15.5
1992	245	17	6.9
1994	245	20	8.1
1996	245	18	7.3
1997	245	18	7.3
1998	245	18	7.3

SOURCE: STATISTICAL ABSTRACTS, 1998

Table 16

WOMEN IN GOVERNMENT

AT ALL LEVELS (%)	AT MINISTERIAL LEVELS (%)	AT SUB MINISTERIAL LEVELS (%)
5.8	3.2	6.2

SOURCE: ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA, 1998

Table 17

INCREASE IN THE SHARE OF WOMEN MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Total Constituencies	1996	1998
Total No. of women candidates	543	543
Total No. of women winners	491	271
Women voters	40	43
Increase in women voters	15,10,28,30	16,68,2179

Source: Election Commission of India, 1998.

Table 18

**STATE WISE NO. OF WOMEN CANDIATES FIELDDED
IN ELECTIONS IN 1998.**

STATE/UNIION TERRITORY	NO. OF WOMEN CANDIDATES	NO. OF WOMEN WHO WIN
U. PRADESH	56	9
M. PRADESH	28	4
W. BENGAL	21	5
BIHAR	21	4
RAJASTHAN	20	3
MAHASTRA	20	2
A. PRADESH	18	2
TAMIL NADU	13	1
DELHI	10	0
ORISSA	10	1
KERALA	10	4
KARNATAKA	10	1
PUNJAB	9	1
GUJARAT	7	0
HARYANA	6	0
ASSAM	3	0
MEGHLAYA	2	0
CHANDIGARH	2	0
TRIPURA	1	1
GOA	1	0
JAMMU & KASHMIR	1	0
MANIPUR	1	0

DAMAN & DIU	1	0
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	0	0
MIZORAM	0	0
NAGALAND	0	0
SIKKIM	0	0
A & N ISLANDS	0	0
DADRA & NAGAR HAVELI	0	0
LAKSHDEEP	0	0
PONDICHERRY	0	0
HIMACHAL PRADESH	0	0

SOURCE: ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA, 1998

The highest number of women candidates who contested election of 1998 has been recorded in Uttar Pradesh, many states and Union Territories of in India does not have any women candidates to contest Election.

Table 19

**WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN SELECTED STATE
LEGISLATURE**

STATE	YEAR	TOTAL	WOMEN
ASSAM	1996	122	6
HARYANA	1999	90	4
JAMMU & KASHMIR	1996	87	2
H.PRADESH	1998	68	6
GUJARAT	1998	182	4
KERALA	1996	140	13
MEGHALAYA	1998	60	3
PUNJAB	1997	117	7
PONDICHERRY	1996	30	1
NCT DELHI	1998	70	9
NAGALAND	1998	60	0
M. PRADESH	1998	320	26
TAMIL NADU	1996	234	9
TRIPURA	1998	60	2
UTTAR PRADESH	1996	424	20
WEST BENGAL	1996	294	20
BIHAR	1999	324	19
MAHARAstra	1995	288	11
A. PRADESH	1995	60	1
MANIPUR	1999	60	1
ORISSA	1999	147	13
RAJASTHAN	1998	200	14

SOURCE: ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Table 20

**EDUCATIONAL COMPOSITION OF WOMEN BY
NUMBER OF YEARS OF SCHOOLING IN 1991**

NO. OF YEARS OF SCHOLING	TOTAL POPULATION	FEMALE
3-6 YEARS	56.7	68.4
7-11 YEARS	23.7	19.3
12-14 YEARS	11.0	7.1
15-17 YEARS	6.8	4.2
18+ YEARS	1.8	1.0

Table 21

ENROLMENT OF GIRLS BY STAGES OF EDUCATION

STAGE

FIGURES IN THOUSAND

GENERAL EDUCATION	1961	1971	1981	1991	1997
PRE PRIMARY	82	168	523	745	1,115
PRIMARY	10,994	21,306	24,488	40,420	47,892
MIDDLE	1,941	3,889	6,790	12,439	16,359
HIGH/HIGH SECONDARY	687	1,708	2,650	4,749	6,628
POST MATRIC BUT BELOW DEGREE LEVEL	94	228	834	2032	3164
DEGREE & ABOVE	354	396	689	1,264	1,997

Table 22

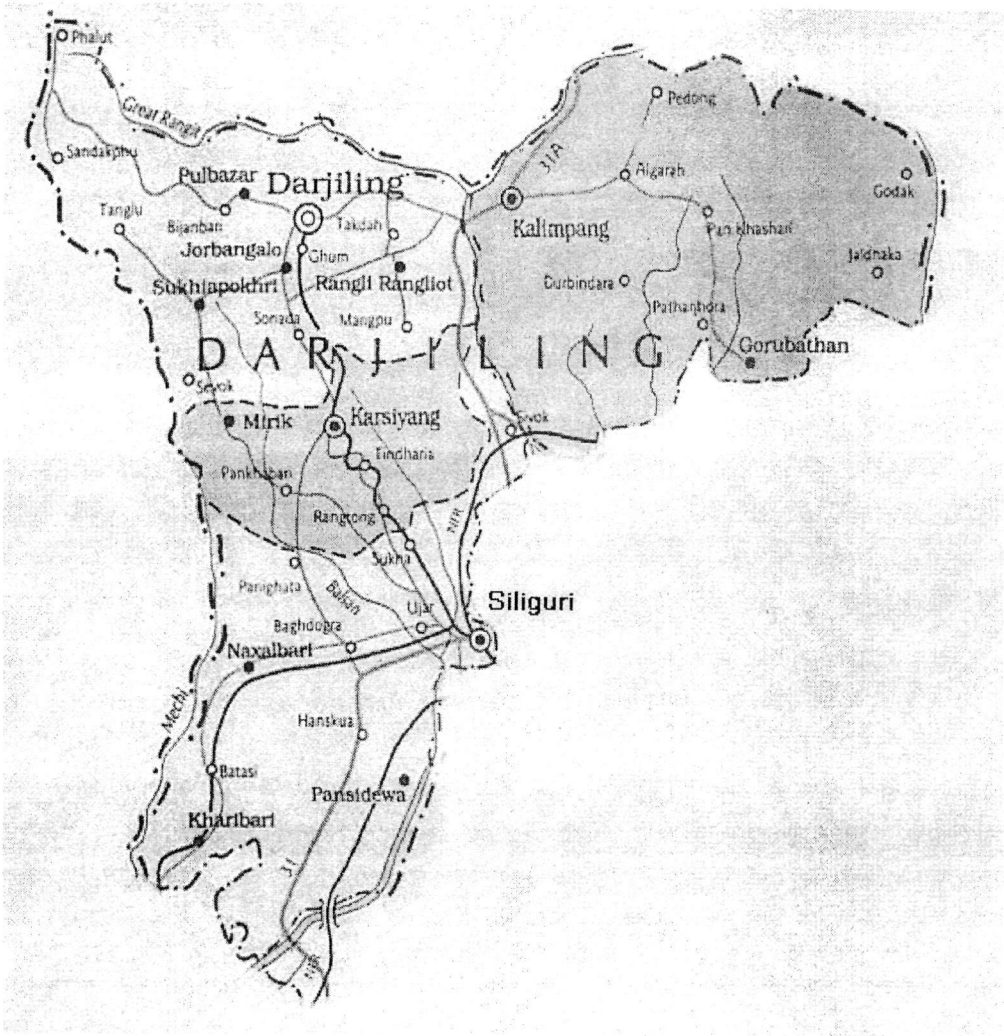
STAGE

FIGURES IN THOUSAND

SCHOOL LEVEL	101	109	155	NA	NA
POST MATRIC BUT BELOW DEGREE LEVEL	-	81	111	NA	NA
DEGREE & ABOVE	33	51	110	173	NA

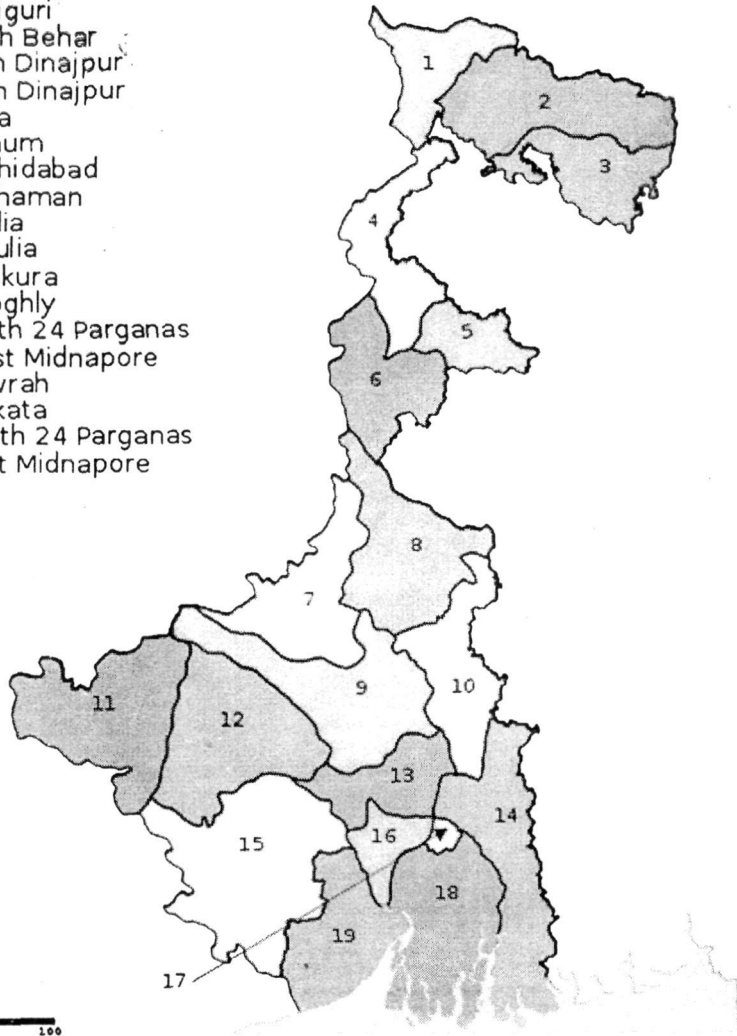
ADOPTED FROM IAMR YEARBOOK 1998, TABLE 2.1.7, PAGE 85

Geographical Map of Darjeeling



Districts of West Bengal

1. Darjeeling
2. Jalpaiguri
3. Cooch Behar
4. North Dinajpur
5. South Dinajpur
6. Malda
7. Birbhum
8. Murshidabad
9. Bardhaman
10. Nadia
11. Purulia
12. Bankura
13. Hooghly
14. North 24 Parganas
15. West Midnapore
16. Howrah
17. Kolkata
18. South 24 Parganas
19. East Midnapore



Addendum Clarification

Reference to suggestion no. 2

Since the present work is primarily based on empirical data, which are varied and heterogeneous in character, the findings of the study was based on the real empirical data taking into account the broad research problem.

Hence, there is less scope for confusion.

Reference to suggestion no. 3

The conclusion of the study is drawn on the basis of the entire work and is related to the research problem in *toto*.

The clarification
with regard
to the suggestions
are perfect.
Per wanted for
revising action

Yang Khamu Bhutia.

Manu Chugh 11-7-11

Dr. Manas Chakrabarty
Professor of Political Science
University of North Bengal

