

CHAPTER: 5

WOMEN LEADERS: A REVIEW OF LEADERSHIP STYLES

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5.1.INTRODUCTION

Empowerment has been generally understood as a process through which existing power relation can be challenged or as a way of gaining and controlling informational resources. At times, empowerment is confused with being in a formal position of power. Being in a formal position of power is not always equivalent to being a leader. Sometimes people born with innate qualities to lead or they may become leader by their physical and personal qualities or may by their behavioural pattern or motives etc. So, formal position of power is not closely connected to leader while political leadership is closely connected with formal power and authority. Political leadership is an agent-centred view of politics and government. However, leadership implies empowerment. Political leadership can be seen to play an important role in empowerment of women. Women through their political leadership are able to create the space for women's empowerment. Women leaders in politics are seen as an effective tool for mobilizing women and also as an effective pressure group to push a women's agenda.

In the study of political leadership the styles of leadership is consider an important part of discussion. Generally leadership exercised in a numerous different ways. The styles of leadership reflect the behavioural pattern of leaders, particularly what leaders do (behavior) and how they act (process). The style is understood as relatively stable patterns of behavior and the strategies. Based on different characteristics of leaders a particular leadership style emerges. Leadership characteristic means behavior, knowledge, skill or emotional attribute of the leader. Presently, West Bengal is only an Indian state governing by a woman leader and the number of women increasing in the state politics. As the growing participation of women in politics of West Bengal, it becomes important to analyze the styles of functioning of women leaders within the State. In our study a total of 25 women political leaders were selected for interviews in order to know the leadership style of women leadership in West Bengal which is based on their characteristics as leaders.

The concept of political leadership denotes that women differ from men on scales of political activity. The political behavioural pattern is different of men and women. In the aspects of education and employment female participation is less than the male participation, so we find very few women leaders in politics as well. Women leaders are often neglected in the discussions of leadership or treated differently than their male

leaders. In the study of female leaders their personal lives receive substantially more attention than their political activity. It is also noticed that women's leadership capacity is questioned for the same decision that a male leader makes. Leadership theories or approaches were made in the consideration of masculine character of leaders where women characteristics had been massively neglected. Leadership is not only sex-specific but also gender specific. There is a bias against women in political leadership even when women have the same traits as male leaders (Sjoberg, 2009). Most importantly, with the presence of women leaders in the political structures the questions of concern issues become important. Being elected as women representatives how well the opinions or preferences of the electorates have/will be reflected by them become an issue. The existing studies that have discussed women leadership have often done so within the constraints of the traditional interpretations of both femininity and leadership. Generally, it is assumed that women have lack of skills, experience and language which generate political knowledge and a sense of political efficacy and it is very rarely accept that women are expertise in many areas including politics. But in practice, it is found frequently more women act like men that is, register, vote, contribute to campaigns, attend political meetings and work for parties-the more they demonstrate their involvement in politics and their sense of political efficacy. For women to become fully visible in politics, an epistemology is needed which shifts from male-oriented to female-oriented modes of political behaviour, communication and decision making styles derived from the actual experiences and interests of women, while at the same time remaining suspicious of the universality and self definition of any experience (Grant, 1978, p.110 & 112).

In the context of politics, with the inclusion of women we hope that may lead to the inclusion of several positive values for society and democracy as well, for instance less corrupted administration, less aggressive behaviour, concern for common good, care about the environment, more co-operation, tolerance will be promoted in the political affairs. So, based on primary data, this chapter would concentrate, in respect of West Bengal, on the political culture and women's culture in politics, the style of functioning based on the characteristics of women leaders, the concern issues of women elected leaders and what kind of values promoted by women legislators in general.

5.2. SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND AND PROMINENCE OF WOMEN LEGISLATORS IN WEST BENGAL: AN ANALYSIS

Women's interest cannot be isolated from the social, economic, and political interests of groups, strata, and classes in the society. The socio-economic and also political background influences the extent of political participation. In this study, total number of 25 women parliamentarians and legislators of West Bengal have been selected because they are the most important part in the decision-making process of the government. Actually, they formulate the policies and laws which actually govern the state. But, unfortunately their percentage in the formal political structure is very deplorable. So, this section is an attempt to comprehend the socio-economic characteristics of women legislators of West Bengal Legislative Assembly and parliamentarians from West Bengal. Here, also it is require finding out what is the relation between socio-economic-political background and women leaders in politics. Through analyzing their background this section will illustrate the questions who are the women leaders in West Bengal and how they have emerged as leaders.

5.2.1. SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND:

In this study, women leaders mean elected women legislators to West Bengal Legislative Assembly and parliamentarians from West Bengal. The background variables- Age of women at the time of entry to formal political structures (Assembly & Parliament); Place of birth; Marital status; Religion; Education; Nature of family; Occupation/Profession; and Family income per month; have been selected in order to have in-depth knowledge about women leaders in West Bengal. The findings on these variables as follows-

TABLE: 5.1

AGE AT THE ENTRY INTO FORMAL POLITICAL STRUCTURES (Assembly & Parliament):

Sl. No.	Age Groups of Enter in Politics	Numbers of Women	Percentage
1	15-24	17	68
2	25-34	4	16
3	35-44	2	8
4.	45-54	2	8
	Total	25	100

Age profile of women legislators reveals the fact that the maximum women, that is 68%, entered into the assembly and parliament at the age of 15-24 years. This indicates that

comparatively more young women have been entering into politics. There were only two women legislators the age between 45-54 years. Women of the age groups 25-34 (16%) and 35-44 (8%) are not fairly free from the domestic and family responsibility; especially the age groups 25-34, women are engaged in child bearing and rearing. Due to all such responsibilities, women legislators of this age group are in lesser number enter into politics.

TABLE: 5.2

PLACE OF BIRTH OF WOMEN LEGISLATORS:

Sl. No.	Place of birth	Numbers of Women	Percentage
1	Rural	8	32
2	Semi-rural	2	8
3	Urban	15	60
	Total	25	100

The birth place is an important parameter in respect of political participation. So far as the birth place is concerned, it is observed from the table that in the maximum women leaders (60%) born in the urban area and the 32% in rural area and the remaining 8% in the semi-rural area.

TABLE: 5.3

MARITAL STATUS OF WOMEN LEGISLATORS:

Sl. No.	Marital Status	Numbers of Women	Percentage
1	Married	16	64
2	Unmarried	1	4
3	Widow	8	32
	Total	25	100

It is often believed that woman's single status is more helpful to enter in politic actively. The facts about marital status are presented in the above table 5.3. Marital status is another important factor to influence women's participation in politics. In the present sample of 25 women legislators, it has been observed that only 1 woman unmarried and the rest 24 were married. Therefore, this study reveals that majority women legislators (64%) were married and out of 24 married women 8 (32%) were widow.

TABLE: 5.4

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF WOMEN LEGISLATORS:

Sl. No.	Educational Level	Numbers of Women	Percentage
1	Secondary Education (V-X)	2	8
2	Undergraduate (X- B.A)	5	20
3	Graduate (B.A etc)	12	48
4.	Post-graduate (M.A/ LLB/Ph.D. etc)	6	24
Total		25	100

The above table 5.4 shows that only 8 per cent of the women legislators were under matriculates. The numbers of graduates are the highest, nearly half (48%). In the case of under-graduates, the position was far better than non-matriculates (20%). The fact is that high educational level of the women members is found in the case of women leaders.

The following table 5.5 shows that teachers are more involved in politics than other professional women. While from various professions women are entering in politics. The fact is that in the West Bengal Legislative Assembly and Parliament there is a better representation of women having higher level of education. Among the women legislators 36 per cent are teachers and rest 64 per cent come from different occupations.

TABLE: 5.5

OCCUPATION OF WOMEN LEGISLATORS:

Sl. No	Occupation	Numbers of Women	Percentage
1	Service	3	12
2	Teacher	9	36
3	Doctor	1	4
4	Advocate	1	4
5	House Wife	3	12
6	Others	8	32
Total		25	100

The following table 5.6 showing the religion of women leaders. Religion as one of the variables seems to be insignificant in the present study because only two women legislators are Muslims and rest 22 are Hindus and 1 is Atheist.

TABLE: 5.6

RELIGION OF WOMEN LEGISLATORS:

Sl. No.	Religion	Numbers of Women	Percentage
1	Hindu	22	88
2	Islam	2	8
3	Atheist	1	4
Total		25	100

In addition, some other interesting observations are that women living in the nuclear family highly interested to join politics and living in the joint family women are less interested towards participation in politics. So, maximum number of women legislators (76%) in West Bengal become from nuclear family. In this case study we have found that the family income of women leaders is also another important parameter to module one's involvement into politics. It has found that the family income of all respondents is above 10,000 rupees. So, such a high average family income may be expected to have some impact on the political participation of women. The study also found that larger no of women legislators do not have land. So, it can be said that the ownership of land may not be an important factor for political participation of women.

TABLE: 5.7

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EDUCATION AND NO. OF TIMES ELECTED WOMEN LEGISLATORS:

No. of Times Elected	Secondary Education (V-X)	Undergraduate (X- B.A)	Graduate & above (M.A/ LLB/Ph.D. etc)	Total
One Time	-	2	1	3
2-3 Times	2	2	12	16
4 Times & above	-	1	5	6
Total	2	4	18	25

In examining the relation between education and number of times elected, it is seen that the consecutively repeated representation of women legislators from their assembly does not seem to be related to their level of education. It may be observed from table that there is 1 woman legislator who are under-graduate but represented her constituency more than four times. Similarly, 2 under-matriculate women have represented their constituencies 2-3 times.

Presently, a new trend is emerging in West Bengal, wherein without prior experience more women legislators elected, so the number of new entrants (without prior experience) has increased in West Bengal mostly since 2011.

From the analysis, it may be said that some relationship does exist between the variables such as age, education, family income, occupational status, and family backgrounds and the participation of women in the formal structure of politics. Though, it is risky to draw a general conclusion from this limited number of samples, it can be still observed that on the whole, in other political spheres women lag behind men but if they have the same socio-economic environment then they behave in the same way as their counterparts. It is not only the environment which makes women politically more backward than men, there are many factors.

5.2.2. PROMINENCE OF WOMEN LEGISLATORS:

The question is in West Bengal how did women rise to political power or how they have emerged as leaders. The contributing factors and other circumstances of becoming leaders are described here on the basis of some general observations and the specific interviews conducted with them.

Most of the women leaders in the present study belong to the national political parties like the Communist Party of India (Marxist), Indian National Congress, and All India Trinamool Congress (AITC). These parties have been in power more than one time in the state of West Bengal. Thus the broader understanding and linkages are in the tune with the ideals of the senior party leaders and the emergence of women leadership, therefore entirely depended upon the party high command. The high command often made the choice of women candidates for nominating them to contest the elections. Therefore, the emergence of state level leadership is also show of loyalty either to the past or the present leadership of the party high command.

A question related to the immediate incident or event which motivated them to enter politics brought out the following information. Twelve women leaders attributed it to factors of the need to welfare works for people and social development as well. In addition, few of those who joined in response to the inspiration from contemporary political leader's activities and also for personal feelings that Indian politics moving towards democracy in true sense. The 11 leaders said that they were aware that through

political power they could only strengthen their efforts to fulfil their goal to equality. But from the answers such as husband's death or involvement is the motivating factor or the reason for entering politics, it is found that the close dependence of a woman on her husband and the lack of any other political motive.

To examine, how women have become leaders, the variables- family linkages, dynastic succession (Widow of leaders) and personal interest have been studied.

TABLE: 5.8

FACTORS IN EMERGENCE OF WOMEN LEGISLATORS IN WEST BENGAL:

Sl. No	Factors	Numbers of Women	Percentage
1	Family Linkages	15	60
2	Dynastic Succession(Widow of leader)	4	16
3	Personal Interest	6	24
	Total	25	100

The ideological belief, favourable inspiration, and desire for social work have been considered as personal interest, which indicates those women who become leaders by virtue of own talent and without having any family political connection.

In examination of the pattern of the paths to rise in power of women legislators it is found that 15 women (60%) out of 25 women legislators inherited power from family, father, mother, or husband, which is visible in the above table 5.8. They were having family linkages, which helped them to become leaders. There are few of the women (24%) who rose to power on their own without aid of family may be powerful family connections. Such women leaders have been either social workers or favourable inspiration or any particular ideological belief. Apart from these, widow of leaders has been also a factor in the West Bengal politics. There are 4 widow women (16%) who had been given tickets after the death of their husbands to fill in void. The widow of leaders has been without any other considerations than the husband's death and therefore, no relationship does exist between their education, family background and their emergence as leaders. In this context it is necessary to mention here that women leaders who have occupied positions of power but act as an agent on behalf of male leaders of the concerned political party and exercise power in their interests, this is called proxy representation. Also, there are instances that the women leaders who become from politicized families where both husband and wife are together active in politics of the area then there is maximum chance

to emerge proxy phenomena and women legislators exercise power under the influence of their male relations.

5.3.POLITICAL CULTURE AND WOMEN'S POLITICAL REPRESENTATION IN WEST BENGAL:

After the Second World War the concept of political culture become popular in the study of Political Science. The term culture actually defines a way of life and when culture transmitted into political action is known as political culture. In order to understand the political system of any particular country or state it is important to understand the political culture of that particular state or country. Political culture of any country determines by the attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviour of people towards the political system. Also, it has been observed that the political culture fundamentally differs from country to country. According to Almond, political culture is a set of attitudes, beliefs, notion, faith and understanding of political system, political issues, political ideology and political characters. History, geographical position, socio-economic factors, ethnic factors and religion of the state influence the political culture. Almond and Verba (1989) in their famous book '*The Civic Culture*' (1963) have listed three basic types of political culture, through which it can be explained why people do or do not participate in political processes. These are:

(a) *Parochial Political Culture*, where citizens are mostly uninformed and unaware of their government and do not possess any tendency to participate or take little interest in the political process, like Mexico.

(b) In *Subject political culture*, citizens are somewhat informed and aware of their government and occasionally participate in the political process, like Germany and Italy. Such a type of political culture sometimes people find it difficult how to influence the working of the political system.

(c) *Participant political culture*, where citizens are informed and actively participate in the political process and influence it's working, like United Kingdom and the United States.

Also, in 1966 in order to measure the political cultures of United States Daniel Elazar (1972) in his book '*American Federalism: A View from the States*' first identifies three

distinct political cultures of United States, which combine to form the American political culture. These are:

(a) *Traditionalistic political culture*, the Government wants to maintain status-quo of social and economic hierarchy and it only promotes elites to the political system. In such culture citizens are not expected to participate in politics or even to vote.

(b) *Individualistic political culture*, Government's role is limited, primarily to keep the market place functioning. Such culture neither promotes nor lessens the citizen's participation in the political process and corruption is tolerated.

(c) *Moralistic political culture* promotes people's participation in the political process and the Government works for the public interest, general welfare and corruption is not tolerated here.

Perhaps more importantly, the similarity is found in the types of political culture of Daniel Elazar with Almond and Verba's typology, as traditionalistic political culture similar to parochial political culture; individualistic political culture similar to subject political culture and moralistic political culture similar to participant political culture. In this respect, the individualistic as well as subject political culture is not adequate to understand the political culture related to women's political representation in the legislature due to the presence of apathy of people's political participation in such kind of political culture.

Therefore, in order to understand the connection between the political culture and women political representation in the context of West Bengal we may correlate women's representation in politics with traditionalistic or parochial political culture and with moralistic or participant political culture. The statistical data shown (in the chapter 4) that political life of West Bengal generally dominated by male leadership, which leads us to assume that people of the state are socialized to believe that politics is men's work and not an appropriate pursuit for women that limited women's personal development, social choices, opportunity to share fully in the dominant values of the society and even to participate in the political system and structures as well. As a consequence in the earlier political history of the state women leaders were missing or rarely found in the political structures till 1987 (see the statistical data of chapter 4). So we can relate such kind

political culture of the state to the type of traditionalistic or parochial political culture. In traditionalistic cultures female participation in legislative politics is discouraged by male leaders who seek to maintain a male prevalence and status-quo in politics. Hence, in the traditionalistic political culture the state had fewer women representatives.

Since 1990s, male dominated political culture of the state has been started to change though at very slow pace. The number of women increased in the political structures since 1991 as statistical data shown (see the chapter 4). The percentage of women legislators in 1987 (4.08%) is compared with that in 2021 it is found that the percentage of women representatives has increased more slowly, at 13.60 percent (see the chapter 4). This difference in growth explains some of the increase in the negative correlation with traditionalistic culture, and positive correlation with moralistic or participant political culture although other factors may also have contributed to the difference. Hence, the changed political culture of West Bengal is related to moralistic or participant political culture. The moralistic political culture associated with values and styles that have been associated with women-put the interests of the people above their own, and commit to improving the condition represented and so forth. Hence, in the moralistic culture the state seemed to encourage women representation in the politics.

It is important to mention here that a significant shift in the political culture of West Bengal from traditionalistic to moralistic or participant political culture is occurred due to several factors such as education, positive perceptions of society, changing behaviour of political parties and attitudes of male leaders, government's policies and schemes, e.g. quota reservation, emergence of many regional political parties in the state politics etc (detail discussed in the chapter 3 & 4) helped to increase the number of women leaders in politics. However, from the perspective of democratic theory, the political culture provides a gratifying explanation of women's political representation. Also, it seems to indicate that the traditions and cultures of some states may cause women representation to lag behind popular support for women's full participation in political affairs.

5.4.WOMEN'S CULTURE IN POLITICS

At the end of the 18th century the women of France demanded that the goals of the Revolution should apply also to them. During the 19th century feminist marched through the streets of many countries demonstrating for women's suffrage. And in the 1960s enraged young women formulated the slogan 'the personal is political'. These events

indicate different phases in women's history when women have organised and acted as a gender based interest group. Regardless of the position one may talk about the appropriateness of using interest theory in the analysis of women's conditions, it is an unquestionable fact that during recent centuries women have acted politically on the basis of their gender.

Partly following Kraditor (1965), Helga Hernes (1982, p.91) formulates three different lines of reasoning found in discussions concerning women's political participation. The essential point in the *justice reasoning* is women's right to political participation; the contents of political decisions are of less concern. In the *resource reasoning* the claim is made that if women do not participate in politics society is deprived of some particular knowledge and skills that women possess. According to the *interest reasoning* women's interests are different from men's and often in conflict. Throughout history, women's demands for political rights have been motivated by different aspects of these three types of reasoning. The justice reasoning, based on the ideology of natural law, was used primarily during the earlier phases of the first wave of women's movement to justify women's suffrage.

When their demands for suffrage encountered a strong and forceful opposition women gradually move to the resource reasoning, often emphasizing women's 'feminine' nature. In addition to their particular skills and knowledge, women would bring others special qualities to political decision making; unique feminine and mothering qualities would contribute to a more peaceful world (Evans, 1979; Kraditor, 1965). During the same period reasoning in terms of advantage and interest started to develop. Kraditor (1965, p. 43-45) mentions the presence of different forms of reasoning while she calls expediency, 'women needed the ballot for self protection'. Thus, until the 1920s women organised on the basis of their gender although the reasoning they used to justify women's political rights changed.

After women became politically eligible and attained the right to vote it seemed less and less necessary to assert their right to political representation as women. Instead, women's political participation was defended by claiming that women as individuals should hold the same political right as men (Shapiro, 1981, p.701-02). The demands for the right to political influence raised by the second wave of women's movement during the 1960s and 1970s may, from an interest perspective, seem like a step backwards to the representation

by Estate. In fact it was a totally new evidence of the existence of social conflicts based on gender (Jones, Kathleen and Jonasdottir, 1988, p. 79-80).

The concept 'women's culture' in politics presents two aspects, firstly, *suppressed culture* and on the other hand *women's culture carries a potential for change and liberation that affects the entire society* (Jonasdottir 1984, p. 96-97). The suppressed culture includes elements such as passivity, dependence on men, and lack of self confidence. On the other side women culture presents independent qualities, positive values and activities borne by women in connection with their care for others' well being (Halsaa, 1977, p.110-13). Jonasdottir (1984) argues that an important difference between the women's culture perspective and earlier theories of patriarchy is that women lives are not viewed as being entirely controlled by men, nor are women considered to be totally powerless. By using the theoretical approach of a specific women's culture we can discover those values and contents in women's lives which are independent of the male world and not nearly compensatory in relation to it (Jones and Jonasdottir, 1988, p.82).

To assess the women's culture and women's characteristics (discussed in the next section) of West Bengal in the context of politics, a total of 25 women political leaders, who are/were members of Parliament and State Assembly, were selected for interviews from the State of West Bengal. In the interviews these women leaders shared their understandings and observation in respect of the suppressed women culture in West Bengal politics. They expressed that generally women are not allowed to participate in political activities like men; interruption comes first within the family. To participate in political process women need support which may be a means to boost self-confidence in them but the fact is different. Also, women bear a disproportionate part of household responsibilities and they face discrimination inside political formations like parties and trade unions. Economic dependency and sometimes security crisis due to some uncomfortable people inside the parties and outside the parties make suppressed culture for women. Criminalization of politics is also a deterrent for women. In contrast to that, there is another culture exists within the State that women have potentialities to change the perception of society. Women legislators can also represent women's culture through their actions to end the discrimination and inequities that women face within the society. Women can be considered to have shared interests in alleviating inequities and oppression resulting from their gender position, which can lead to public welfare, common values, perspectives that can be inculcated in politics. In addition, large proportion of women leaders can be

considered to act as advocates on behalf of weaker sections as well as women than the men in the legislature.

5.5.CHARACTERISTICS OF WOMEN LEADERS

In general, there are some characteristics of women political leaders which are following:

- Women leaders have the ability to respond positively to hardship;
- They have empathy with others;
- Willingness to speak out;
- Honesty;
- Women leaders are moralistic;
- Ability to get support from family and spouse;
- Strong belief in the power of collective decision making;
- Collaborative nature of women leaders;
- Attentive in works;
- Above all capacity to build relation with others.

It is need to note here that all the above mentioned characteristics recognised as the characteristics of feminist leadership which cherishes our hope that women could bring different qualities to leadership. The present study has been found some qualities or characteristics of women leaders, by analysing the opinions and experiences of elected women leaders in West Bengal (interviewed), which are discussed in below.

- Women are friendly in nature;
- Politeness and flexibility;
- Women leaders have more patience;
- Sincere in works;
- Affectionate and careful;
- More sensitive towards social problems;
- Abide by ethical values;
- Ability to convince others;
- Honest and hard worker;
- Dedicative towards responsibilities;
- Good management skill;
- Co-operative and collaborative.

In the process of interviewing when the question asked to women legislators that as a woman leader what qualities do you think that makes you different from a male leader? They replied that these specific characteristics (above mentioned) which generate their diverse qualities to lead and also make them different from their male colleagues. Though there were four women leaders those who did not believe in gendered categorization of characteristics of leaders. Rather they replied as an individual everyone is possessing unique and different characteristics, qualities and skills. Therefore, every individual is different from others and also leaders are different to each other in qualities, in styles of functioning etc. From the *individual-as-difference approach* (for details see chapter 6) the thought of gender distinctions is not be our concern. Also, they believed that leader should be gender-neutral and suggested that we must be concerned about the qualities or characteristics of good leader rather than so much focused on gender of the leaders. Thus, the women's culture and characteristics of West Bengal makes it very clear that barriers and efforts both are important aspects of politics of West Bengal especially in the context of women's political leadership.

5.6. STYLES OF LEADERSHIP

A style of leadership refers to the strategies and behavioural patterns through which a leader seeks to achieve his or her goals. Leadership can be exercised in a number of different ways (Heywood). The style approach focuses exclusively on what leaders do (behavior) and how they act (process), where style is understood as relatively stable patterns of behavior. Northouse (2004) defines leadership as a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal, emphasizing process or a transactional event over the traits or characteristics residing in the leader. Leadership is composed of task behaviours that focus on goal accomplishment or relationship behaviours that help subordinates or followers feel comfortable with themselves, the situation, and each other (Chin, 2007, p.6). In the study of leadership, there are various styles of leadership, is detailed below:

TABLE NO: 5.9
STYLES OF LEADERSHIP

Sl. No	STYLES	CORE THEME
1.	Expressive Leadership	The expressive leaders are those who show solidarity and believe in seeking suggestions from other members of the group. This type can suit to behavioural approach which lays stress on the leader-follower relationship and where leader is considered as an integral part of the group. These leaders act in consultation with others for the accomplishment of objectives of their group.
2.	Instrumental Leadership	Instrumental leaders are those who don't have any belief in asking for suggestions or advice from others but in turn gives their own suggestions every time without caring for the views of their group men. Corresponding to the 'showing solidarity' characteristics of the expressive leaders, these leaders emphasize on showing disagreement with all those acts or suggestions put forth by the group men.
3.	Autocratic Leadership	It is closely associated with the classical approach to management. Not seeking subordinates opinions, the autocratic leaders hold conflict and creativity to a minimum. In this style, the entire authority is concentrated in the hands of the leader. He/she decides all policies, gives orders to subordinates and demands complete obedience from them. He/she withholds rewards or gives punishment. This type of leader usually supervises closely and motivates through incentive and fear. The autocratic leader is task-oriented and places little value on showing consideration to subordinates as a leadership technique.
4.	Democratic Leadership	Democratic style is based on the basic principle of

		participation of subordinates in decision making process. It is also known as participative style of leadership, in this style, the leader allows the subordinates to participate in the decision making process. All policies and decisions are arrived at through such group discussions. The communication flows freely and is multi-directional.
5.	Laissez Faire or Free-Rein or Freehold Leadership	In this style, the leader gives complete independence to the subordinates in their operations. He/she allows them to set their own goals and achieve them. In other words, this style involves complete freedom for group or individual decision with no or minimum participation of the leader. Leader's only job is to supply various materials and information asked by the subordinates.
6.	Rational-Legal Leadership	This style based on the stability of leader - follower relationship. This is, most likely, acts undertaken by these leaders may not mean criticism of the sources of legitimacy. If the followers would view with disfavour leadership acts of the rational-legal leader, the leaders may be replaced, but the sources of legitimacy would remain intact without incurring any distaste of the followers.
7.	Paternalistic or Orientation Styles	Under this category, there are two types of styles, which are discussed as below:
a.	Employee Oriented or Nurturing Task Leaders	The nurturing task leader helps his subordinates to grow up and assume greater responsibility as much as his subordinates can handle, openly shows affection for those who work hard; if subordinates need help he/she helps as much as he/she can; has affection for his/her subordinates and listens to their personal problems and family matters. Leader helps his subordinates in their career planning and believes that

		subordinates acquire a sense of responsibility under the care and guidance of a good leader.
b.	Production or Task-Oriented Leaders	In this style, leaders believe that their main concern is only to get the work done and for this purpose, they keep the subordinates busy all the time, in their zeal to produce more, they ignore the human aspect of the subordinates. They are of the opinion that they can attain results by better planning, engaging better methods and machines, and keeping the employees busy all the time.
8.	Charismatic Leadership	The Charismatic leaders attract followers on the basis of qualities of persuasiveness they possess. The category of charismatic leadership was developed by Weber. The Charismatic leaders, he describes attract authority because of "devotion to the specific and exceptional sanctity, heroism or the exemplary character of an individual person and of the normative patterns or order revealed or ordained by him."
9.	Shared Leadership	This type of leadership also known as distributive leadership. The major role of shared leadership is to enhance the capability and motivation.
10.	Dominant Leadership	This is the man who maintains his authority by virtue of his own personality and his innate force of character. This kind of leadership can never be attained by mere assertiveness and imitative. This type of man is confident in action and prepared himself to do anything that he expects his followers to do. He is not afraid of making mistakes because he knows that his power resides in his own innate strength of character. The dominant leader is far more ready than the institutional leader to initiate new ideas and to take risks. It is in general true that all great captains of war have been of this type.

11.	Responsible Leadership	Responsible leadership is a blend of commitment, understanding and determination. Most of the characteristics of the responsible leader can be summarized under two headings: the avoidance of opportunistic and the avoidance of utopianism. Leadership is irresponsible when it fails to set goals.
12.	Organizational Leadership or Institutional Executive	Leadership as such is synonymous with holding office or some position of prestige and responsibility in some institution or organization. Such leaders have not created the conditions of leadership but have been invested with authority to get the work executed or carried by followers. They have no persuasive influence over their followers. Since they are responsible for their work, to their employees, their interests, it is natural, are focused more upon the welfare of the institution than on the need of the employees and less on the question of establishing a relationship with them. The executive leader's major interest is to control their actions in promoting the interests of institution.
13.	Formal Leadership	A formal leader is one who possesses organizational authority to direct and control the activities of his subordinates. He can issue orders and instructions to his subordinates by virtue of his formal authority in the organization.
14.	Informal Leadership	Informal leaders who do not hold any managerial post in the organization. An informal leader is not appointed by the management as in the case of a formal leader. Sometimes, informal leaders become more acceptable to the workers are compared to the formal leaders. They are able to achieve the voluntary co-operation of the workers in all matters.
15.	Transactional Leadership	This theory emphasises the importance of the

		relationship between leader and followers, focusing on the mutual benefits derived from a form of 'contract' through which the leader delivers such things as rewards or recognition in return for the commitment or loyalty of the followers.
16.	Transformational Leadership	Transformational leaders are usually associated with informal structures of power and they are seems more capable in voicing people's concerns rather than formal position holders of power.
17.	Participative Leadership	Involvement of the people in the planning and controlling, as well as the doing of their work and this involvement benefits both the organization and its members. Benefits of participation are not limited to the employees; management gets the benefits of their contribution as well as their enthusiastic work. Participative leadership does not appear to be effective in all situations or for all groups. Personality differences, for instance, may make followers more or less interested in participation.
18.	Consultative Leadership	Leaders solicit opinions from the group before making a decision but they do not feel obliged to accept the groups thinking; these leaders make it clear that they alone have final authority to make final decisions.
19.	Some Other types of Leadership	There are some other leadership styles, are discussed in below:
a.	Bureaucratic Leaders	The leader who has a bureaucratic style believes in hierarchical disposition; maintains fair rules and regulations; believes in clear cut democratization of responsibility and work; tries to confine himself to his own jurisdiction; and believes that if people follow everything in writing then there will be probability of less conflicts in the organization.

b.	Creative/ Innovative Leaders	Creative leaders are accepted leaders on the basis of the contribution made by them in their branch of knowledge. Their contribution is generally of great relevance to human upliftment.
c.	Consensual Leaders	Consensual leaders encourage group discussion on an issue and then make a decision that reflects the general agreement (consensus) of group members. Consensual leaders delegate more authority to the group. This style leads to considerable delay in decision-making because every member has to give his/her consent.

In Indian politics we have seen in the early years of independence women became members of legislatures or they had been able to reach top political positions mainly because they were either the daughters, or wives, of well-known political leaders. Women leaders those who having succeeded their fathers/ husbands, for instance Indira Gandhi or Sonia Gandhi, but in recent years, this picture is undergoing a gradual change. While dynasty and family connections remain important variables determining entry and functioning of the large majority of women leaders in politics, a handful of women leaders have been able to enter politics on their own interest, hard work and emerge as independent and strong leaders in their own right (Pai, p.108). Mamata Banerjee, Uma Bharati, Jayalalithaa, Mayawati, Sheila Dikshit are such kind of leaders who have/had climbed the ladder of top positions in politics due to their own hard work. As this study based on the context of West Bengal which is leading by Mamata Banerjee and where more and more women begin occupying the positions of leadership compare to earlier. Very recently it has been observed, particularly from the second decade of 21st century, in West Bengal women leaders are elected from non-political background (without family linkages), even without any hard work, and they get elected as women leaders only through their face value or popularity in the glamour world. Presently in West Bengal, basically women leaders elected from three different backgrounds, namely, political or family linkages, personal interest or hard work and face value or popularity (film actors, singers, sports person etc). While, a handful number of women reached at top political position by their hard work but a majority number of women elected from political and popularity grounds in the state (detail discussed in the chapter 4). Naturally, in this

context a core question arises as what style of functioning or leadership women leaders follow generally and particularly in West Bengal.

In order to understand the style of functioning or leadership of women leaders here we have followed the pattern of characteristics of leaders that shape the perceived leadership style of the leaders. Based on their characteristics, women political leaders exercised numerous styles of leadership. Expressive, democratic, employee oriented or nurturing task, shared, responsible, transactional, transformational, participative, consultative, creative/innovative and consensual leadership styles are inextricably connected to the characteristics of women political leaders as the ability to build and maintain relationships, self-awareness of the leader, flexibility, delegation, freedom, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, motivated by emotional reward, the ability to collaboration and an awareness of social need as well as the ability to understand social need.

Feminist principles dictate that all will be involved in planning and decision making, and consensus building is valued. The feminist literature has shown that women tend to use nurturance to engage, communicate, and lead. The use of a collaborative process is viewed as leveling the playing field between leader and follower, and to create more egalitarian environments; these collaborative and egalitarian processes have been described as "shared leadership" (Chin, 2007, p. 10). Feminist women have noted that women emphasize planning and organizing work using an empathic approach, while placing less emphasis on the "need to win at all costs" compared to men ("Women May", 1997). Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt & van Engen, (2003) found from a meta-analysis of transformational and transactional leadership styles among women that female leaders were more transformational than male leaders and also engaged in more of the contingent reward behaviours that are a component of transactional leadership which identifies areas of strength in the leadership styles of women. A transformational style is also consistent with feminist principles of inclusion, collaboration, and social advocacy (Chin, 2007, p.7).

However, the leadership of women emphasizes reciprocity, mutuality and responsibility towards others; is collective and participatory; focuses on relationships and empowerment and highlights outcomes as a central goal of leadership. In contrast to men's style, they

deemphasize hierarchical relationships, individualism and one-way power relationships (Pai, 2012, p.320).

As the number of women increases in politics and in leadership roles in West Bengal, it is important to analyze the styles of functioning which are exercised by women leaders of the State. West Bengal is presently only an Indian state which is governing by a woman leader, Mamata Banerjee's leadership increases the number of women who enter politics and reach the pinnacle of politics. Semi-structured interviews were used to get the insights of 25 interviewees in the West Bengal. The analysis was developed using a series of templates which provided the flexibility to interpret and categorize the findings in order to answer the research question and accomplish the objective, combining both deductive and inductive reasoning. Among interviewed 25 women leaders 4 leaders did not mention any different characteristics of women leaders, in fact they stated they did not believe in any such categorization of characteristics between men and women leaders. Hence, the analysis is based on 21 women leaders.

The styles are defined by a composition of different characteristics of women leaders. Similarly, here we used a set of qualities of women leaders to describe the leadership styles. Leadership characteristic which is defined as a behavior, knowledge, skill or emotional attribute of the leader; and, that in combination give birth to a person's particular leadership style. We have formulated a model framework for understanding the styles of leadership based on some parameters.

TABLE NO: 5.10
MODEL OF WOMEN'S STYLES OF LEADERSHIP IN WEST BENGAL

Sl. No.	Characteristics/ Qualities	Functions	Styles of Leadership
1.	Affectionate and careful	Acted as vigorous advocacy on behalf of disadvantaged groups, for instance, promoted the interest of marginalised groups.	Nurturing Task Leaders/ Employee Oriented Leadership
2.	Co-operative and collaborative	Reached at the decisions or policy formulation after discussion with other members.	Democratic Leadership
3.	Friendly, Polite and flexible	Interacted with all sections of society and easily build relationship with them which make good rapport.	Informal Leadership
4.	Sensitive towards social problems	Raised people's concern, for instance, health issues, educational and cultural policies etc.	Transformational Leadership
5.	Sincerity and dedication	All the women leaders saw their role as essentially serving the needs of others. Do all allotted works and responsibilities, such as various committees' works.	Responsible Leadership
6.	Ability to convince others	Motivate and inspire women to enter into politics as they get involved in planning and decision making process.	Participative leadership

Our analysis shows that above mentioned six styles of leadership which are exercised by women leaders in West Bengal. Some women leaders have proved highly capable in political mobilisation, establishing their own strong political image with the results evidence five to six times elected by the people and hold the position of ministers as well, good example being Smt. Anju Kar, Smt. Shanta Chhetri, Smt. Chandrima Bhattacharya and Smt. Sabitri Mitra also proved adept at shifting support from changing one party allegiance to another. The styles of functioning of them make a good rapport with the people and achieved their reliability. Through which they maintaining a strong control over them and reaching at the power-position repeatedly. All the women leaders studied, including those who rose through dynastic succession, faced many obstacles and hardships and it took time and effort on their part to gain recognition as national leaders (Pai, 2013, p. 118).

5.7. WOMEN LEADERS: THE ISSUES OF CONCERN

Representative democracy implies that not all citizens share the power of decision making directly, but via representatives, who chosen through election by all the citizens. Representation is considered to be more or less adequate depending on how well

it reflects the opinions or preferences of the electorates by their representatives. Thus, the main role of the elected representatives is to promote the citizen's interests and execute the policies which consist their interests.

Feminist argued that women occupy a distinct position in society. In India, women are generally confined to the home to caring for the young and needy, to unpaid family work or lower paid outside work and even rural women more busy to gathering fuel and drawing water for the home. Phillips argues that from these particular experiences of women, specific needs, preferences, or concerns do arise that are not adequately addressed in male-dominated politics. Apparently, the equal right to vote is not strong enough to deal with this problem-there should also be equality among those elected to office (Phillips, 1995, p. 66). However, there is a serious challenge from those that wonder whether women do indeed have distinct and specific interests. Lele (2000) claims that there are a range of concerns that are common to all women by virtue of their being women because of that they do indeed form a constituency.

"Thus the first argument for reservation concerns their needs on account of their gender linked priorities, for instance the enormous violence perpetrated against women- both sexual and physical-and therefore the need for legislation to provide safety and ensuring the execution of that legislation. The second issue concerns women's needs and demands on account of the economic/social/political status they occupy in the Indian society, for instance property laws, right to divorce, right to positive discrimination in areas of education and health and other areas of development" (Lele, 2000).

All this might not be enough to establish a set of interests shared by all women-in fact, there are individual differences based on class, caste, religion or location. If interests are understood as the way in which express their priorities, there is definitely considerable disagreement among women, as has been established by recent feminist theory (Hust, 2004, p.37).

An analysis of what women political leaders, who were interviewed, are doing in addition to being members of the legislative bodies is necessary in order to assess their role in politics. In addition, their actions by way of participation in the legislature and opinions expressed there often reflect their activities and interests outside. How far do their roles as politicians reflect their concerns for society or the interests of their constituencies? Are there any issues which interest them specifically because they are women? Are women in

power more likely to bring other women into power or promote a feminist political agenda? To begin with -how did women political leaders view their role in society and politics? - for a large majority (19) the goal was to serve the people and society. Particularly, it reflected on their assessment of politics as a necessary means for any meaningful work. It is difficult to judge from their answers whether viewed politics as goals in them or only as instruments to achieve something higher. Another question related to discover the immediate incident or event which motivated them to enter politics. Twelve women leaders attributed it to factors of the need to welfare works for people and social development as well. In addition, few of those who joined in response to the inspiration from contemporary political leader's activities and other eleven leaders said that they were aware that through political power they could strengthen their efforts to fulfil their goals.

For the purpose of analysis, we engender a model that employs two different perspectives describing the specific interests that women political leaders are represented. The first perspective addresses itself to general or human interests and the second to the women specific interests.

5.7.1. GENERAL OR HUMAN INTEREST PERSPECTIVE:

Women politicians and leaders are seen as representatives of human interest in general and also of the interest of certain deprived groups, regardless of gender. This perspective also reflects the complementary viewpoint that women's particular experiences and knowledge are seen as a political resource. The concern for general issues likewise has varied from leader to leader. A majority of women leaders (21) claimed to be currently interested and involved in more than one issue or activity. These varied from state to local or constituency-level like the provision of education, health, budget, rule-regulation, cultural policy, safety in railways-metrorailways, preservation of forest, and infrastructure like electricity, housing, irrigation, the constructions of roads etc. Their specific target groups were, by and large, the weaker sections of the community-the poor, deprived sections like the Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes, women children and minorities. These are very general categories and constitute more than half of the India's population. Women leaders belonging to radical political parties mentioned the working class as their specific target group. In addition, it is important to mention here that party loyalty is an important issue in West Bengal. Elections are held on a party basis, the candidates are

assumed to represent a party's interests. In that sense, a question arises—can the women elected through this process carry the additional responsibility to represent women? Another few (4) women politicians mentioned child development as their issues of priority. And the 15 women political leaders mentioned that issues of economic development like promotion of agriculture and general employment creating activities are their area of concerns and they wanted to implement various government schemes and identify beneficiaries etc.

All the 25 women leaders pronounced themselves in favour of the issue of people's participation in politics. On the value of voting elections, nearly all agreed. They believed that it was possible to change the government, particularly by voting it out of power. So this is a reflection of an understanding and commitment to democratic values and institutions and of a keenness to see people participating equally and fully.

The issues with which women leaders were seen to be concerned were related to human interest perspective while there exists a contradictory viewpoint that the women can only represent care of environment and human beings, for instance children, the elderly and the different deprived groups. However, women leaders raised all the issues were deeply related to social, political and economic development of the society and state as well. In addition, it is important to mention that women strive toward the same goals and use the same means as those considered appropriate for men in the case of human interest perspective.

5.7.2. WOMEN-SPECIFIC INTEREST PERSPECTIVE:

In general, the research on women who hold political office reveals a tendency for women to be slightly more concerned than men. In looking at the women's issues on which the women political leaders claimed to be involved were immensely varied and that bringing out the importance of context in any study of women's leadership. Early women politicians tended to avoid identification with women's issues (Reingold, 2000, p.3). Contemporary female politicians are more likely to see themselves as representing women, but the limited consensus on what representation entails (Reingold, 2000, p.219). Women do not speak with a single voice, and what constitute "women's interest" is not always self-evident. It is often possible to find common ground around issues central to women's well-being concerning work, family, violence, reproduction, and economic security. The question remaining is whether putting more women in office

is a reliable way to advancing that agenda. A large body of scholarship suggests that women's representation matters in getting women's issues onto the agenda (Rhode, 2014, p.154). Some studies suggest that increased women's representation leads to more women-friendly policies in state-by-state comparisons (Caiazza, 2004, p.35). While other research finds no relationship between greater gender equality in political representation and greater gender equality in social policies or outcomes (Reingold, 2006, p.9). Sometimes, party affiliation and ideology become more important than to be concern with women's issues. As politics has grown more polarized in recent years, it has become increasingly difficult to get women to cross party lines in support of women's issues (Rhode, 2014, p.154). However, it is generally understood that women legislators can do more work for the welfare of women than male legislator, but it is found in this study that this generalisation is not accepted by all these leaders. To a large number of women leaders a maximum number of issues of concern were in social work and developmental like educating girls and women and income generating activities for instance to form self-help groups. It appears that the preferences voiced are also guided by the state-sponsored schemes or programmes available, since finances are normally tied to them. Another reason might be that women do not have the ability and autonomy yet to formulate and defend their preferences. However, the fact is found that among interviewed elected women leaders, only three (Smt. Minati Sen, Smt. Shanta Chhetri & Smt. Kumkum Chakraborty) had been fighting atrocities against women like dowry, oppression and women trafficking. Four leaders (Smt. Bilasi Bala Sahis, Smt. Seuli Saha, Smt. Manju Basu & Smt. Anju Kar) mentioned that as various kinds of violence, both physical and mental, occur against women, therefore, they feel the need to ensure women's safety and 'women security' became their prime concern issue. This means that effective leadership appears to build upwards from the felt need of women, rather than implementing a programme or scheme devised externally. Only one leader (Smt. Minati Sen) answered that reservation of seats for women in the legislature is a special measure for promoting women's right in representation and political power and they likely to promote this issue. And the major number women leaders (14) had not participated in such activity. On the issue of women's participation in politics all the women legislators agreed to strengthen their efforts to increase the level.

The above discussion does not augur well for the supposition that women legislators indeed introduce new issues on women in the legislature. Yet, the picture is not that clear.

Preferences for doing something for women are not very different between the genders. However, we find among the women leaders it is much less concern for the women issues. Concerning a special preference for bettering the situation of women, there is less attention and efforts given to that matter since the beginning. While since 2011, Mamata Banerjee's leading government had taken some measures, mainly introduced few government schemes like Kanyasree (a conditional cash transfer scheme with the aim of improving the status and well being of the girl child in West Bengal by incentivizing schooling of all teenage girls and delaying their marriages until the age of 18), SabujSaathi (a scheme giving free bicycles to girl students), Rupasree(a one-time financial grant of Rs. 25,000 for economically stressed families at the time of their adult daughters' marriages), Sabala (a scheme for adolescent girls aims to improve the nutritional and health status of girls between 11 to 18 years of age), etc, for the welfare and upliftment of women and girl, which are not adequate for the substantive and sustainable development of women. Recently, West Bengal TMC Government of Mamata Banerjee has launched a new scheme called "West Bengal Lakshmi Bhandar Scheme 2021" to provide financial support to the women head of the families living in both urban and rural areas of the state. Also, this scheme starts with the aim to ensure women empowerment and provide a sense of security to women. While this scheme in West Bengal is now in its infancy so its effectiveness cannot be ascertained.

However, all leaders face obstacles and disadvantages that must be overcome if they are to achieve policy and political success. It is not unreasonable to assume that one of the reasons women leaders have not been more demonstrably profeminist is because such a policy agenda might be considered radically anti-status quo and pushing these issues would be too politically risky. Still, this will depend a lot on developments, political positions, power and authority that give women a higher capability to develop and defend their decisions and priorities. One thing, from interviews with individual women leaders, became clear that effective women leaders have a sense of their space at both the private sphere and also the public sphere. The motivation for emergence of women leaders is the effort to advance both strategic and practical gender needs.

5.8. THE VALUES ESPOUSED BY WOMEN LEADERS IN POLITICS

For women leaders and feminist leaders, the objectives of leadership include empowering others through (a) one's stewardship of an organization's resources; (b) creating the

vision; (c) social advocacy and change; (d) promoting feminist policy and a feminist agenda (e.g. family-oriented work environments, wage gap between men and women); and (e) changing organizational cultures to create gender-equitable environments (Chin, 2007, p.15). Similarly, in the political context, electing and appointing more women to public office (i.e. descriptive representation) may lead to the inclusion of several positive values for society as well as democracy.

Many theorists as well as activists cherish the hope that the inclusion of women into the political process would change the way in which politics is done. They expect women leaders to introduce a different set of values and concerns. Certain changes can be directly attributed to the increase in women's political representation. Among these are- a change in the perception of stereotyping of women, a change in some social conventions, the creation of new role models of women in public life, to reduce criminalization of politics, corruption might be lessened in politics etc.

- With the descriptive representation, women would bring different values in politics, and that may change the way of politics, this view has a long-standing tradition in feminist thought, and is also seen in recent developments. In the West, this is captured by, for example, the concept of a 'politics of care' (Elshtain, 1990 & 1993). This belief is grounded in assumptions that the traditional role of women and the socialization of girls as caretaker of the family, as nurturer and guardian of dependants, be it children or the elderly, leads to a different way of dealing with politics.
- Some feminists demand to change the socio-cultural conditions that repressed women in public and in the home. Women directly and indirectly challenged the traditional perception that women did not belong in politics because they have the qualities of purity, motherhood, and self-sacrifice and were too pure and weak, too uneducated and passive. As a result of their efforts, women have gained access to formal political positions. So now women's presence and actions in politics affected conventional perceptions of women in India. Through the inclusion of women in political processes a politics of difference to insist on the expansion and consolidation of democracy. Women have effectively utilized the politics of difference to change the way the public views women in positions of power.

- An argument discounted by Phillips that the elected women can serve as role models. When more women become present in politics they could serve as role models and motivate, inspire other women to come forward as well. The empirical evidence is West Bengal where under a woman leadership the number of women contestants had been become more than double since the assembly election 2011 (see chapter 4 for details). Mamata Banerjee, she made her way to power through hard work, honesty, engaging with the population and playing smart politics. She remains an exceptional figure in the history of West Bengal, and this work illustrates that many obstacles still impede women's access to politics, but her leadership has shown that women can do the job and will open doors for women in the future.
- Women are supposed to be more concerned about the common good; their style of doing politics would be less aggressive. Some believe that women are more cooperative, tolerant and thoughtful of others. They also believe that women are more concerned about the environment for the sustaining the community. In India, Vandana Shiva most notably put forward this view in her notion of 'ecofeminism' (e.g. Shiva, 1993).
- It is also voiced in India that women possess moral power renders them not, or less, corrupt because corruption is apparently believed to be a male 'quality' and women would thus introduce cleaner politics. Now look to women to change politics in a way that will minimize corruption and better represent the people. While, Phillips is unconvinced with the argument that women's superiority in terms of morality and they do not connected with corruption.
- Paxton and Hughes present two central types of arguments for women's political representation (2007). Justice arguments for women's inclusion in politics focus on women's equality to men, while utility arguments emphasize the ways that the practice of politics can be improved by the inclusion of women. The representation of all members of society can help to ease social tensions and stabilize democracy (Paxton and Hughes 2007; Htun 2005). The presence of women can increase the overall diversity of ideas, values, and political styles represented within political process, thus strengthening democracy and representing a wider range of societal interests and options for policy solutions. Research has also shown that women tend to be more cooperative and peaceful and therefore have a different way of

doing things that might improve the ways that men have used to govern societies throughout history (Hunt and Posa 2001; Skjelsbaek 2001).

- Furthermore, it is expected an increase in the number of women elected seems likely to increase the attention given to matters of women's issues. Women legislators do represent women's interests more than their male colleagues it is tested by Lena Wangnerud (2000) in an empirical study of Swedish Riksdag. While there is no warranty, women leaders would always promote feminist policy and represent feminist agendas. Women's presence in politics does appear to be associated with a greater respect for women, even if it is because of their perceived differences rather than a notion of equality. This change in attitude toward gender has allowed for women to engage in politics and achieve substantive change in women's interests, such as greater access to reproductive healthcare and measures to prevent violence against women. Women's equal access to the full decision-making process, giving them the opportunity to enact policies that can create substantive change for issues important to women and begin work toward changing public perceptions of women and their roles in society (Steinmetz, 2013, p.52).

However, as gender is a socially constructed category, there are stereotypical images about women and men in public life, their leadership characteristics, their relative strengths and weaknesses. Many feminists point to the 'moral capital' argument which suggests that women are less corrupt (Dollar, Fisman and Gatti, 1999) than their male counterparts; less likely to act opportunistically from self-interest; more likely to exhibit softer behaviour on social issues; score more highly on 'integrity tests'; take stronger stances on ethical issues with resulting benefits to the democratic governance of society (Spary, 2007). Celebrating this difference they hold that women need not, and must not, change when they enter public life, a strategy that gives them an initial advantage. In spite of rigorous efforts and numerous possibilities of women leaders toward political process still their number in state politics remains abysmally low which indicates we have to walk a long way for the equality in terms of gendered leadership concept.

5.9. CONCLUSION

This study provides an understanding of the characteristics, styles of functioning of women in political position in West Bengal. This study provides evidence that all these

characteristics and the styles of functioning of women leaders make different from the male leadership. Being involved in political activities women would be politically educated and become conscious socially, politically and economically which will make the vantage point for change the societal perceptions towards women and will ultimately contribute towards complete development of the state in true sense. These aspects encouraged common women to be an active part of politics.

With women attaining prestigious positions of political power there should be erosion in paternalistic attitudes in society, attitudes that relegate women to child care and domestic functions. The number of increased female leaders had/has the effect of increasing the amount of female adolescents that aspired to political leadership positions. It is found in very recently ended state assembly election of West Bengal the number of young MLAs in the 25-40 age group has raised to 14% (Ramakrishnan, Akhil, Kanadje&Raghavan,2021).The connection between what people see in society and what people believe is the proper place is very dependent on each other. If people see women being successful in public positions such as elected positions and positions of influence in both government and non-government this will change the way that society view women's proper role (Wemlinger, 2009, p. 12).

The brief perusal of the functioning of some women leaders shows that there is no one model which fits all women leaders. Women leaders in West Bengal are as honest, affectionate, careful, co-operative, collaborative, sincere, dedicative, friendly, polite and able to convince others. Mamata Banerjee viewed as honest; her followers compare her to the goddess Durga and a tigress for the twin qualities of female courage and intolerance for injustice, which voters find rare in politicians (Banerjee, 2004). She became the role model to common women and inspires them to get involved in politics. As a result inspirational path leads some women to the top political position, Chandrima Bhattacharya, Sonali Guha (Bose) for example. While Mamata Banerjee does not conform to public standards of feminine behaviour; she does not only have a reputation for unpredictability, ruthlessness, and a volatile temper. In contrast, her public image is clean; she is viewed as honest and supported by the poorer sections, especially women, although she has used both 'assertive and paternalist populism' to build her constituency and gain power. Unmarried and from a modest, lower middle-class family, she still dresses in inexpensive khadi sarees and slippers and lives frugally in her old house in a congested

south Kolkata area (Banerjee, 2004, p. 302). Her living style motivates the women of lower class for political participation. She is a 'street fighter' ready to *gherao* (ambush) political leaders, join marches and sit-ins on the streets, even as chief minister, for social and political causes (Banerjee, 2004, p. 303). Hence, all these provide the inspiration, motivation and courage to ordinary women to be a part of political activities and they reflect the feminine characteristics in leadership roles.

All the women leaders studied, including those who rose through dynastic succession, faced many obstacles and hardships and it took time and effort on their part to gain recognition as political leaders. Hindu imagery and stereotypes are invoked; they are seen as *mother-figures*, or *didi*. There are different expectations from men and women, which put the latter at a distinct disadvantage making it necessary for them to work harder and prove themselves as efficient and capable in politics, even more so when in power. Failure in the case of women leads to fingers pointed at gender, but not in the case of men (Pai, 2013, p. 118).

All this suggests that it is difficult for women to enter and build a career in politics. At the same time, in recent decades, significant changes have taken place in the state—rise in women's literacy, social movements, economic growth, and reservation of seats for women in panchayats—which have provided a more fertile ground for women leaders in politics. In this situation, a small number of women leaders have emerged and, through sheer hard work and determination, achieved status, respect and recognition on their own. Nevertheless, this trend remains exceptional and difficult for other women to emulate. Clearly, change is required at two levels. First, attitudes toward women must change together with improvement in their economic position so that they acquire the potential to compete with men. Second, internal reforms of parties must take place so that they do not remain family concerns in which women are expected to be subordinate members with little voice of their own (Pai, 2013, p. 118).

The presence of women in politics is not a sufficient condition for the development of gender equality. Reforms of the institutional structures is not the solution, rather it limits women's access to and constrain their ability to use political office, which are necessary to enhance the descriptive and substantive representation of women in politics. The acceptance of women politicians is based in the conception of a politics of difference which says that women are not the same as men, but different in a positive way. When

women will have equal access to the full decision-making process and would have the opportunity to enact policies that can create substantive change for issues important to women and begin work toward changing public perceptions of women and their roles in society (Steinmetz, 2013). Furthermore, gender affects authority and women leaders and commands less legitimacy, authority and respect from the electorate. In the next chapter we shall have a look exactly at this issue, namely whether a significant difference exists between the men and women leaders or not.

➤ **SUMMARY:**

- The socio-economic characteristics of women legislators of West Bengal reveal the fact that the relationship exists between socio-economic background and the participation of women in the formal structure of politics. The family linkages, dynastic succession and personal interest are the contributing factors for women emerged as leaders in West Bengal.
- Political culture of West Bengal in regards to women representation is related to traditionalistic culture and the moralistic culture. In traditionalistic cultures female participation in legislative politics is discouraged by male leaders who seek to maintain a male prevalence and status-quo in politics whereas in the moralistic culture the state seemed to encourage women representation in the politics. A significant shift in the political culture of West Bengal from traditionalistic to moralistic or participant political culture is occurred due to several factors.
- The concept 'women's culture' in politics presents two aspects, firstly, *suppressed culture* and on the other hand *women culture carries a potential for change and liberation that affects the entire society* (Jonasdottir 1984, p. 96-97). In the concept of political leadership women include some different characteristics, for instance co-operation, collaboration, sincerity etc.
- Mainly, the six styles of leadership-Employee Oriented Leadership/ Nurturing Task Leaders, Democratic Leadership, Informal Leadership, Transformational Leadership, Responsible Leadership, Participative leadership exercised by Women leaders in West Bengal.
- The issues with which women leaders were seen to be concerned were related to human interest perspective as well as women specific interest perspective. Women leaders raised all the issues were deeply related to social, political and economic development of the society and state as well. And most importantly women strive

toward the same goals and use the same means as those considered appropriate for men in the case of human interest perspective. The emergence of women leaders is the effort to advance both strategic and practical gender needs.

- In the political context, electing and appointing more women to public office (i.e. descriptive representation) may lead to the inclusion of several positive values for society as well as democracy, for instance the concept of a 'politics of care'; the qualities of purity, motherhood and honesty; with the presence of women politics would be less aggressive; women leaders may minimize corruption in politics; elected women leaders seems likely to increase the attention given to matters of women's issues. The presence of women can increase the overall diversity of ideas, values, and political styles represented within political process, thus strengthening democracy and representing a wider range of societal interests and options for policy solutions. Research has also shown that women tend to be more cooperative and peaceful and therefore have a different way of doing things that might improve the ways that men have used to govern societies throughout history (Hunt & Posa 2001; Skjelsbaek 2001).
