

**Decentralisation and Women's Participation: A Study of Darjeeling
Municipality, 1994-2015**

A Dissertation Submitted

To

Sikkim University



On Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the
Degree of Master of Philosophy

By

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Declaration

I, Linda Thami, do hereby declare that the subject matter of this dissertation is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this dissertation did not form basis for the award of any previous degree to me or to the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the dissertation has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other university.

The dissertation has been checked using URKUND and found within limits as per plagiarism policy and instructions issued from time to time.

This is being submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Philosophy in the Department of Political Science, School of Social Sciences, Sikkim University.

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Certificate

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled “**Decentralisation and Women’s Participation: A Study of Darjeeling Municipality, 1994-2015**” submitted to Sikkim University in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the degree for the Master of Philosophy in Political Science is the result of bonafide research work carried out by Ms. Linda Thami under my guidance and supervision. No parts of dissertation have been submitted for any other degree, diploma, associateship and fellowship.

All the assistance and help received during the course of the investigation have been duly acknowledged by her.

Date: 07.02.2017

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Place: Gangtok

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Abstract

Decentralisation is a vital component of democratic system, by which the local citizens are provided with the opportunities for full participation in administrative, political and financial procedure of the government. It facilitates participation and representation of all the sections of the people including women and marginalised group in democratic system. There is a mutual relationship between decentralisation and participation. On one hand, successful decentralisation requires full extent of local participation; on the other hand a successful participation by the common citizens requires indigenously well-structured and well planned decentralised system. Therefore, in absolute sense, decentralisation and participation are inseparable and the extent of participation by local citizens can be determined by the decentralisation reforms. In the context of urban decentralisation in India, many resolutions and acts were passed during pre and post independence period. But they came up with some drawbacks and deficiencies. The final settlement of this issue was made only with the enactment of 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992. The Act was followed by all states of India and in West Bengal, it was adopted with the embodiment of West Bengal Municipal Act, 1993 including some required modifications. The Act has provided for the constitution and functions of different types of urban local bodies, the devolution of power and financial authority and conduction of elections in urban governance, representation of marginalised section and women in municipal governance. Despite all the these stipulated provisions, especially the participation of women in municipal affairs is still poor and many of them are still outside the margins of political power and excluded in major functions such as decision making, policy formulation and implementation. This lack of women participation has resulted from the psychological, socio-cultural, economic and political environment of the patriarchal society where women were believed to be confined to the private sphere rather than public sphere. This dissertation examines the decentralization and status of women participation in Darjeeling Municipality from 1994 to 2015. The objectives of the present study were to understand the conceptual meaning of decentralisation and participation and their implications, to ensure the functional status of decentralisation reforms with regard to women's participation in Darjeeling Municipality. The study used both primary and secondary data in analysing the linkage between decentralisation and participation of women in Darjeeling

municipality. Primary data was collected through interview schedule while secondary data was gather through a literature survey of the relevant books, article in journals and reports.

The findings of the study established that if decentralisation is properly implemented it can make a meaningful contribution to the participation of women in decision-making processes. The study recommended more devolution of powers and increase in the reservation of seats for women which is helpful for creating an enabling environment for effective participation of women in public sphere.

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List of Acronyms

| | |
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| BOC | Board of Councillor |
| CNC | Chairman in Council |
| DGHC | Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council |
| GJMM | Gorkha Jan Mukti Morcha |
| GNLF | Gorkha National Liberation Front |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| NGOs | Non-Governmental Organisation |
| SDO | Sub-Divisional Officer |
| TERI | The Energy and Resources Institute |
| U.K. | United Kingdom |
| ULBs | Urban Local Bodies |
| UNDP | United Nation Development Programme |
| UNESCO | United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation |
| WB | World Bank |

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

After the second world war the concept of decentralisation has evolved breaking the almost two decades i.e. 1940's-1950's centralisation of government power and authority in both developed and developing countries and government around the world begin during 1960's to 1970's adopted decentralisation replacing their centralised historical structure in an effort to make public service delivery more efficient and to extend service coverage by giving local administrative unite more responsibility and encouraging wider public participation (Cheema et al, 2007).Democratic decentralisation entails a system of governance in which citizen possess the right to hold local public officials to account through the use of election, grievance meetings and other democratic means. Decentralisation can be usefully understood as a political process whereby administrative authority, public resource and responsibilities are transferred from central government agencies to lower-level organs of government or to non-governmental bodies. Thus, decentralisation became the key aspect of good governance effort and international development aid package in 1980's although some countries attempted decentralisation much earlier (Patterson, 2002). The municipal administration in India provides an institutional frame to the concept of decentralisation in urban areas. Municipal administration in India has a fairly long history. Some form of municipal authority appears to have been in existence during the period of Indus Valley Civilisation and the more comprehensive initiative towards this end was adopted during the British period. The Charter of James II in 1687 empowered the establishment of Municipal Cooperation by East India Company. The decentralisation initiative- devolving power, functional responsibilities and authorities to urban local bodies in India virtually started with the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992 (Mahala, 2011).

The 74th Amendment Act to the Constitution of India constitutes a milestone in the process of establishing decentralised democratic administration through local bodies and taking the administration to the door step of the people to ensure economic and social justice. The act set up a new trend in the process of decentralisation and urban governance in India and with its enactment; urban bodies have acquired a statutory status. The amending laws of the existing

municipal legislature have provided for regularity of election, representation and reservation. The municipal administration in Darjeeling has started during the British rule in July 1st, 1850 and it was governed by West Bengal Municipal Act of 1932, till the passing of West Bengal Municipal Act 1993. With the enactment of West Bengal Act in 1994, the Darjeeling Municipality was also constituted in consonance with new Act.

Decentralisation and Participation: Conceptual Framework

Decentralisation is believed as a core of the linkage between local governance and citizen participation. The conceptual relationship between decentralisation and participation is in the connection that the decentralisation has the potential to foster the democracy by enhancing participation in the local levels, by continuing to promote participation in local level by helping the citizens to educate and develop the art of discipline and responsible local government by maximizing greater number of citizen participation in political and democratic process. Decentralisation helps the citizen by increasing participation in the institution by enhancing civic consciousness and political maturity making them learn more quickly when they have to take the responsibility of the decisions of the local officials. Through their experience in local governments, people learn to choose between priorities and leader. Participation also generates positive effects on local citizens by making them politically more conscious for bringing positive change by increasing their experience, skills, the knowledge they gained through local government institution for improving their performance in decision making and management. Thus, improving the quality of peoples participation in decisions and processes affecting them (Kulipossa, 2004). Decentralisation also facilitates participation and representation of different groups (ethnic, religious, political, economic and social) at the local level and thereby, reduces the risk of social conflicts and additionally, it provides opportunities for political participation of women, enabling more gender-sensitive approach to policy formulation and implementation at local level. Therefore, decentralisation and participation shared mutually reinforced relationship, on one hand, the process of decentralisation can create opportunities for citizen participation and the other hand the successful decentralisation requires some degree of local citizen participation as its preconditions (Gravingholt et. al, 2006).

Decentralisation has been widely accepted strategy in the area of development administration accompanied by the expansion of democratisation process at the lower levels of government. As a development strategy its popularity has risen so far and has been given more recognition and it

has been seen as emerging issue reflecting an attempt towards more democratic and participatory approach towards the development of liberal democracy (Fernando, 2002). The representation of people from all section in decision making bodies is very essential to attain the goal of democracy (Chhetri, 2015). Decentralisation has been defined by various authors in different ways. Decentralisation is usually referred to as the transfer of power from central government to lower levels in a political-administrative and territorial hierarchy (Cook and Manor, 1998).

Rondinelli and Cheema (1983) has provided with more explanatory definition. According to them decentralisation implies “transferring of a delegation of authority to plan, make decisions and manage public functions from the central government and its agencies to field organizations of those agencies, subordinate units of government semi-autonomous public cooperation area wide development authorities, functional authorities, autonomous local government or non government organizations” (Mayo and Ncube, 2014). And they had identified four types of decentralisation namely, deconcentration, delegation, devolution and privatisation.

Deconcentration is regarded as a less extensive form of decentralisation. This involves the shifting of workload from central government ministry headquarters to staff located in offices at outside of the national capital and the staff may not be given decide how those functions are to be performed.

Delegation involves transfers or creation of board authority to plan and implement decision concerning specific activities or a variety of activities within specific special boundaries to an organisation.

Devolution is the most extensive form of decentralisation may involve by creating of independent levels and units of government that would be called as devolution of political decentralisation. Hence, devolution could be regarded as inter-organisational pattern of power relationship and it is regarded as the best form of decentralisation.

Privatisation means diversifying governmental responsibilities for functions or either transformed them to voluntary organisation or allowed them to perform by private enterprise with the involvement of parallel organisation such as trade associations, or professional groups, cooperation, non-governmental organisation etc. for performing the function like licensing, regulation, supervision and managing etc. which is previously headed by the central government. It is believed that decentralisation has served as the platform for the wider participation and representation by including the excluded and the marginalised citizens and promoting the goals

of democratic government by representing their interest and involvement in decision-making process. The Liberal Theory has also sought for decentralisation considering benefits and the development which can achieve through the transformation of power from the national to the lower level. The Development Theory of Decentralisation has also advocated about the positive aspect of the decentralisation in social, political and administrative spheres while observing the evolution of decentralised institutions in the developing country replacing their structured centralised system by transferring power to the local bodies and enhancing their capabilities through increased participation and proper implementation of development programs (Chhetri, 2012). The neoliberal approach has also supported the development brought by the decentralisation relying on the its idea of the minimal state and active civil society backed by the broad concept like good governance widening the rational objectives and forms of decentralisation which did not only encompasses the transfer of power, authority and responsibility among government but also sharing of authority and resources for shaping public policy within society in four different forms viz, administrative decentralisation, political decentralisation, fiscal decentralisation and economic decentralisation (Cheema et. al, 2007).

As for political participation, political power is considered as the most important ingredient, which is monopolised by the elites. It cannot be denied that the rules invariably try to involve the people in the affairs of the state and thereby try to legitimate their political power. The traditional democratic theory also considered political participation by the individual in political activity as a civil duty as well as a sign of political health even in dictatorial regime political participation has great importance (Pramanick and Manna, 2010).The concept of political participation has been defined variously by various scholars. According to Huntington and Nelson, political participation means simply an activity by private citizen designed to influence governmental decision making(Huntington and Nelson, 1970).For McCloski, participation is the principle means by which consent is granted or withdrawal in a democracy and rulers are made accountable to the world (cited by Ghatak, 2010). Hence decentralisation can create more inclusive participation by representing and empowering the under-represented segment of the society and also regionally concentrated minority groups. These result to open new avenues in local politics by influencing the more voter turnout in the distant sections of the community. In this way decentralisation enhances citizen participation by making the institutional structure

more accessible to the ordinary citizen by improved representation and integrating local minority in politics.

Statement of the Research Problem

The institutional reforms brought through decentralisation have contributed to facilitate democracy by increasing the diversity of representation i.e. incorporating historically excluded groups, minority and poor within the nation-state to participate in the decision-making process because equitable participation in politics and government is essential to the building and sustaining democracy. Therefore, similar to most of the countries, decentralisation in India had focus in social policies, with the idea of reducing social inequalities and corrective allocative distortion (Chhetri, 2014). As the result of decentralisation the municipal administration reforms aimed at enhancing efficiency and effectiveness of local administration in public service provision by bringing decision-making process and responsibilities as close to the people as possible through facilitating the inclusive participation of women providing them 33 percent of seat reservation. Despite the above provision for enhancing their participation as power is concerned women have always been outside the margins of political power (Rai, 2011). Theoretically, decentralisation and the provisions of reservation at tandem have paved the novel way for the political participation by the women. But, regardless of such opportunities the majority of women belonging to privileged status in the society still lack the prospect to participate in meaningful and effective way due to lack of awareness of their expected roles. This lag of women participation has resulted from the psychological, socio-cultural, economic and political environment of the patriarchal society where women were believed to be confined to the private sphere rather than public sphere. Therefore, till now the women are in striving stage to bring the transformation in the mode of participation and decision making process to address related issues in their favour. Proceeding with the reciprocal concept of decentralisation and participation, the setting of women's participation in accordance with decentralisation reforms in Darjeeling Municipality is not much different. Darjeeling municipality being one of the oldest urban governance initiated since British period obliged the researchers and policy makers to investigate the status of implementation of provisions of decentralisation reforms and women's participation. Although the institutional frame to Darjeeling Municipal was granted from the very beginning the notion of women participation in decision making was recognised after the enactment of provisions of 74th Constitutional Amendment Act (1992). The general survey has

highlighted that though the women in Darjeeling are taking part in the political affairs their decision making role in necessary sphere and issues is not adequate and satisfactory. Hence, it is important to study whether a decentralisation reform has increased the participation of women in the decision-making process and policy formulation or not. This can be proved by a critical assessment of the dynamics and the interplay between decentralised governance and participation.

Review of Literature

In its simplest form decentralisation is key elements of good governance, which increase people's opportunities for participations in economic, social and political decisions and also assists to develop people's capacities and enhance government approach and transparency and accountability (UNDP, 1997). In more political sense the decentralisation bridges the gap between politicians and citizens by which the political process becomes more open and transparent and political engagement will be enhanced (Hadenius, 2003). It was only since 1980s the decentralisation along with the globalisation has become the vital theme of the politics in most European countries and developing countries (World Bank, 2001; Oxhorn et al., 2004).

Rondinelli et al (1983) in their book *Decentralisation in Developing Countries* have highlighted the emergence of decentralisation and its rapid growth leading to the demand for change in social, political and economic practices of the centralised system of government in the third world countries. The authors have explored the impact of decentralisation in changing decades and its benefits and various developments as well as the hindrance in its way for achieving its goal due to some anomalies in implementation policies.

Rondinelli (1983) in his article *Implementing Decentralisation Programmes in Asia Comparative Analysis*, has focused on how eight developing countries of Asia has experimented with the decentralisation and its impact on them in spite their programs had not constitute the whole of any country experience with decentralisation but for the improvement of administration, generating economic growth with greater social equality.

Even in the countries or state with similar form of government, the implementation and realisation of decentralisation reforms are mainly influenced by political system. Crook and Manor (1998) have compared the democracy and decentralisation in South Asia and West Africa with highlighting the performance of decentralised institutions and political participation. The

four countries included in this study differ with each other in relation between working of decentralised institution and participation. According to them Karnataka an Indian state was found to be competent in sustaining more participation of common citizens in local governance through decentralisation reforms. That was mainly because of the proper implementation of decentralised administration.

Ramanathan (2007) in his article Federal, Urban Decentralisation and Citizen Participation, has focused on making urban participation more direct and highlighted the problems such as how urban decentralisation has received less attention in the country due to lack of participatory involvement of citizen and the absence of accountability of local self-government in urban areas. Mahala (2011) in Urban Governance in India has focused on the impact of the decentralisation on local governance arrangement and citizen participation in urban development in general and how decentralisation after 74th Amendment Act came to be the watershed development in urban policy initiative in India. He also brings attention to the concept of autonomy both with respect to expenditure, responsibility and revenue generation of local government is crucial to decentralisation. In this book Mahala has focused on the development of Metropolitan cities and challenges face by the local government in to govern them in the changing liberalised world and the good urban governance providing participation of both men and women in decision-making process and effort towards urban sustainability.

Meenakshisundaram (1999) in her work Decentralisation in Developing Countries has highlighted on the decentralisation that emerges in the developing country after 1980 and has focused on the devolution of power from the center to the local government in a form of decentralisation. For creating a cooperate sense of responsibility in local decision making agencies with more or less independent existence and power despite multiple frictions between the centre and the local bodies.

Kothari (1999) in his article Issue of Decentralised Governance has stressed on the idea that decentralisation should be viewed in the context of an emerging need to reconnect two contrasting tendencies that is globalization and the local self government to understand the importance of decentralised governance. To ensure the distribution of power to the local government for restructuring the nature of the centralised state, so that people themselves come to the centre of power to participate in decision-making processes and issues affecting them.

Ghatak (2010) in his article Political Participation and Women in West Bengal: Its nature and Extent has highlighted the importance of political participation and pointed out the fact, to understand the nature of any political system it is important to analyse the nature of participation among its people, because political power is considered most important ingredient which according to him is monopolised by the elites. As participation has been regarded as a civil duty, as well as a sign of political health, he explained individual participates in a different degree which depends on different variables. Gender is said to be one of the variables resulting unequal position between man and women. As he has focused on West Bengal, the participation of women in local self-government is not satisfactory. Despite little improvement has been made by the reservation after 1993, there is still a lack of women participation in top decision-making process.

Singh (2014) in her article Urban Governance in Contemporary India, has explained the evolution of urban governance since 1990's driven by three interlinked forces like liberalisation of the economy, the decentralisation accompanied by the good governance discourse under 74th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1993 and urban reform initiatives in 2000, Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission 2005, growth of NGO's and Community based organisation focusing on middle class activism in Mumbai.

Datta (1999) in his article Institutional Aspect of Urban Governance in India has done the comparative study of different states of India regarding the function and processes, improvement and drawbacks of decentralised institution while tracing the evolution of municipal intuitions of India from the period of the British rule and how after post independence it has still inherited some of the colonial legacies regarding the governing pattern of municipal administration. Further facing the issues like depoliticisation of urban development and extension of the state functional domain and how the municipal authorities were dominated by sovereign trap and problem related to decentralising the big cities.

Mukarji (1999) in his work The Third Stratum, focused on the need for creation of the third stratum of the government by decentralising the power of union government which is still strongly centralised towards the state government. So that the state government can work upon its own without fully depending on the union government to exercise its power and authority on the local self government which was given constitutional status by 73rd and 74th Amendment Act. But has not been able to fully achieve its goal as the local self government and has

recommended for the creation of real and meaningful third stratum of government by combining municipal and panchayatraj institutions as a single continuum for meeting the aims or goal of decentralisation.

In many Indian states women representation in urban governance has been increase satisfactorily but their expected participation and empowerment has not absolutely been materialised (Sethi and Mittal, 2015). The obstacles for the efficient participation by women councillors are lack of required knowledge and orientation about municipal act and rules and attitude for change.

Chakraborty et al. (2004) in their article Participation of Marginal in Decision Making Process: A Study of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Women in Darjeeling Municipality have focused only on the position of the marginalized section of the women i.e. SC and ST women and their participation in the decision-making process in the urban governance. They have only focused on the marginal women of urban areas but not the participation of women in general. This study came out with findings that women's influence in decision making is still insignificant. According to this study the vital reasons for insignificant participation of marginalised women are - dominance of male counterparts, lack of exposure to education and administrative competence, women's work load at home and compulsion to act like as proxy members.

Andrews and Vries (2007) have observed that though in the past 20 years many countries have adopted the decentralisation strategy, to enhance the public participation with the help of the funds provided by the organisations like the World Bank to provide civic empowerment, diminish corruption and to increase efficiency and improve public service delivery. But despite of all this, public participation has only partially corroborated. They argue that sometimes decentralisation works but it has the reversed effect on civic empowerment and participation.

Bergh (2004) has tried to explore the linkage between decentralisation, democracy and participation.

He reviews on "Democratic Decentralisation and Local Participation" and has made an assessment of the potentiality of the civil society in each region or district, and how organised groups would respond to specific incentives or disincentives as well as new power structure created by decentralisation reforms, determining the level of participation in local politics which often tends to undermine political process inherited by democratic decentralisation reforms.

Baron (2013) has focused on the impact of decentralisation for enhancing the participation of women in the rural parties of two state of India i.e. Rajasthan and Karnataka. The author has tried to explain how decentralisation leads to the women empowerment. That decentralisation is a development process or approach that has positive impact on women's empowerment which also helps to achieve the feminist goal that is equality between man and women by producing emancipatory knowledge.

Bari (2005) has attempted to investigate the conceptual and material bases of women's historical exclusion from formal political arena and has tried to analyse and the strategies which was adopted around the world for the promotions of political participation and representation of woman as well as the identifying the internal and external factors and conditions that hinder and facilitates the enabling environment for their political participation. As women's enhanced participation in the government structure is viewed as the key to redress gender inequalities in societies.

Akerka (2001) highlights the concept of participation and gender as an emancipatory approach and how the representation of magnified groups has been justified as the emancipation of women as the most gender sensitive approach. Further, it has focused on how it has been used to influence the policy and to what extent the measures has been institutionalised.

Kyander (2014) observed that decentralisation and fiscal decentralisation of the non western world and its impact on the quality of democracy and citizen participation. The author has found that there is a correlation between decentralisation and citizen participation but doubts the argument that decentralisation as a measure to achieve democratisation.

Decentralisation has been envisaged to improve local democracy and enhancement of allocative efficiency, which is further supposed to be fortified in urban governance after resolving the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act (1992). However, a very few authors have highlighted the women's participation in urban governance of Darjeeling in the view of their expected role, accountability and performance but the approach of study with respect to decentralisation reforms is still lacking. The same study with the aspects of decentralisation reforms can provide a new avenue for the policy makers and stakeholders for enhancing the women's participation in the current prevailing situation. Therefore, still there is huge scope for the research to understand the impact of decentralisation on the women's participation in urban settings of Darjeeling.

Scope of the Study

The study has focused on the impact of decentralisation on women participation in municipality of Darjeeling. The women in Darjeeling almost have been side lined when it comes to proactive decision making process and development and they are facing discriminatory behaviour in various sectors and have been marginalised. This study seeks to understand how far the decentralised institution has helped to encourage the participation of the women in the decision-making, policy formulation and representing the interest of women. Besides, this study also seeks to understand the problems faced by women of Darjeeling when it comes to their qualitative participation in the decision-making process. The study has however covered only Darjeeling municipality and the period from 1994 to 2015, which is the limitation of this study.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To understand conceptual meaning of decentralisation and participation.
2. To evaluate whether decentralisation is ensuring women's participation in Darjeeling Municipality.
3. To find out the constraints / barriers if any faced by the women regarding their participation and representation in Darjeeling Municipality.

Research Questions

Based on the problem statement and objectives, this research sought to find answers to the following key questions:

1. What is the conceptual relationship between decentralisation and participation?
2. How decentralisation is ensuring the participation of women in Darjeeling Municipality?
3. What are the constraints if any the women are facing in their participation and decision making processes?

Methodology

The present study aims to study the scenario of implementation of decentralisation process and the women's participation in decision making and other administrative affairs of Darjeeling Municipality. To achieve the goals of the study, the investigator has followed a mixed method of research design, in which historical investigation and survey and analytical strategies was

adopted. As per the mixed-method approach, the researcher has followed specific sequence of methodology to obtain the proposed aims and objective. Firstly, the historical background of Darjeeling Municipality such as origin, evolution, administrative reforms, trend of population growth, election held, and reservation of women representation and implementation of related Constitutional Amendment Act etc were analysed. Secondly, comprehensive survey was conducted to collect the information related with present status of Darjeeling Municipality administration, number of male and female representatives. In addition, second approach encompasses the strategies to know the awareness of the common people regarding the aims and functioning of Urban Local Body i.e. Municipality; implementation of decentralisation process; benefits and assistance provided to them by the department; relation between decentralisation and participation; opportunity by the decentralisation process specifically to women to participate in decision making and administration and the problems related with the participation by women etc. The second approach being the essential tool to reach the aims of this study is executed through the interview schedule devised by the researcher (Appendix I). To obtain the responses of these aspects the questions were asked to the common citizen and elected members of municipality separately. Thirdly, the collected qualitative data through survey and interview schedule were arranged tabulated and processed to convert them into quantitative forms and further analyses were made as per the requirement.

Population of the study

The women members of Darjeeling Municipality are the focus group of this study. To know the status of their participation, awareness regarding the concept of decentralisation among them, its implementation to provide opportunities for participation in decision making and administrative affairs, all the elected members of Darjeeling Municipality (both male and female) were interviewed purposively. Besides, common citizens (both male and female) were also interviewed randomly. There are 32 members representing 32 wards in Darjeeling Municipality. Therefore, 32 members and the common citizens constitute the population for this study.

Sample of the study

The 32 members were purposively selected as the part of the population for this study so they are easily considered as the sample of the study. But out of 32 members 5 members could not be reached. So, 27 members were accessible sample among the municipality representatives. Due to

time constraints, expenses and accessibility factors and other physical and psychosomatic barriers it is almost impossible to reach up to the entire common citizen of Darjeeling town for obtaining information. So only 68 common citizens were interviewed randomly and the final number of interviewee became 100. Therefore, 100 people including 32 municipality members and 68 common citizens constitute the sample of this study.

Tools and Techniques

The interview schedule was the only tool used in this study. Two different interview schedules were used for common citizens and municipality members. Each interview schedule has two parts. The first part (Part I) consists of interviewee's general information or demographic profile such as name, age, gender, marital status, educational qualification, occupation and income. The second part (Part II) consists of open-ended questions. There were 20 and 27 questions pertaining to Decentralisation, participation, municipality, 74th Constitutional Amendment Act and reservation etc. for common citizens and municipality members respectively. The questions for common citizens were framed to reveal the information about knowledge of historical background of Darjeeling Municipality, decentralisation reforms, 74th Constitutional Amendment Act (1992) and Women's Participation. Similarly, the questions for municipality members were framed to disclose the understanding and perception of decentralisation reforms, 74th Constitutional Amendment Act (1992) and women's participation and its problems.

Procedure of data analysis

Firstly, with the use of primary and secondary data, the general scenario of women's participation in Darjeeling Municipality was highlighted. On the basis of general information obtained from common citizens and municipality members, their demographic profiles were prepared, in which respondents have been divided into different categories according to their age, gender, marital status, educational qualification, occupation and income. Each of these categories will be presented in percentage. Then, the responses obtained from the interviewees were used to investigate the level of awareness of decentralisation reforms, provisions of 74th Constitutional Amendment Act (1992) and women's participation. The awareness levels of the respondent were shown in percentage, mean and comparative diagrams i.e. pie charts and bar diagrams. Finally, the results obtained from the data analysis were further interpreted to obtain the findings.

Plan of the Dissertation

Chapter 1: Introduction- This chapter deals with a statement of research problem, a conceptual framework, review of literature, scope of the study, objectives, research questions and the methodology.

Chapter 2: Decentralisation and Participation: The Conceptual Framework- This chapter deals with the conceptual and theoretical meaning of decentralisation and participation and the inter-relationship.

Chapter 3: Decentralisation in West Bengal with special reference to Darjeeling Municipality- This chapter devotes on the historical overview of urban decentralisation in West Bengal in general and Darjeeling in particular.

Chapter 4: Decentralisation and Women Participation in Darjeeling Municipality- This chapter deals with decentralisation in Darjeeling and its impact on women representation and participation in decision-making process.

Chapter 5: Conclusion – This chapter delves with a summary of findings, conclusion and recommendation.

CHAPTER 2

DECENTRALISATION AND PARTICIPATION: THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

In recent years the idea of decentralisation has become an important governance principle and had considered a high popular means for a number of issues, related to democracy, governance, administration, development, conflict resolution, peace building and so on (Yusoff et al. 2016). Decentralisation now has become a “fluid and fixable discourse that can be utilised by different ideological interest groups (John, 2007). According to Faguet (2013) decentralisation now has become one of the most imitated theme and one of the most influential policy trends of the present generation. It has become a process through which centre state power is transferred in varying degrees into sub-national governance units for broadening access to political and administrative decision making and localising provision for delivering public goods and services, and also strengthening development initiatives (Yusoff et al. 2016). According to Ryan and Woods Alexis de Tocqueville has also advocated for decentralisation for keeping administration decentralised while expressing his concern for democracy for engendering the relationship on liberty and equality (Ryan and Woods, 2015). Further, J.S. Mill has also opined that administrative decentralisation was essential for the efficient government as he observed that by promoting local democracy it will not only provide greater opportunity for political participation but act as an institution of social inclusion by facilitating to acquire political skills and practice. With the wide-ranging notion of subsidiarity, decentralisation has come to be a champion of anarchist, social ecologist, feminist, theorists of new social movement and more recently even the international donor agencies like World Bank (John, 2007). Decentralisation has assumed an important role in the matter of governance in the developing world in the last few years. In their effort to democratise the governing structure and involve people in the process of governance and decision making, most of the developing country’s decentralisation now reflects a broader process of political and economic reforms (World Development a report 2007). Cheema and Rondinelli (1983), on the review of decentralisation in the 1970s had stated that popularity of decentralisation efforts worldwide became clear because during the second half of the 20th century particularly every country has experimented with some form of decentralisation of local

government reforms with varying aims and outcomes. It was also pointed out that those 75 developing transnational countries worldwide with population greater than 5 million, all but claims to be embarked on some form of transfer of political power to local units of government (Dillinger, 1994). But in recent years decentralisation has assumed a new incarnation and has acquired the main thrust for developing planning with the increased support from international donor agencies. There have been several recent developments which distinguish the present wave of decentralisation from its earlier attempts. Firstly, there has been an institutionalisation of the recent endeavour to decentralisation. The countries around the world in their effort to decentralise have established democratic institutions and have extended their role in several aspects. Secondly, most countries pursuing decentralised strategies recognised the importance of devolving financial resources in an effective manner. Thirdly, decentralisation has enlarged its scope by incorporating several types of institutions within its domain in the present day (Parker, 1995). In recent years now with the support of NGOs, private agencies, as well as community-based organisations has also increased a significant role to play in improving service delivery within a decentralised framework.

Genesis of Decentralisation

Decentralisation was a well thought and executed style of governance. There have been many sophisticated debates on decentralisation in political literature of the 18th and 19th centuries. With the rise of modern liberal individualism and the scientific view of the world as devoid of inherent ends and normative laws, the self rule became an issue in moral theory. The issue was not only how one could be free and subjected to political authority but more fundamentally how one could be free and subjected to moral obligations. Therefore decentralisation emerged as the concept of devolution of power to the people when there was no adult franchise in the western world. Decentralisation is conceptualised as deconcentrated administrative organ for relieving administrative institution, since over centralised governance did not have any way to find out what needed to be done for different places and what needs and desires of the people are to be met. Decentralisation of government increased the effectiveness of the administration at all levels by relieving the members of the legislature and of the national executive from their involvement in purely local issues. Thus decentralisation is especially become important in the developing countries where expression of public service greatly increased the number of

governmental transactions and consequently the hindrance and wasted efforts resulting from over centralisation (Joseph, 2007).

Later on for addressing different issues the scholars of classical public administration sought for the reform through the new thinking that is New Public Administration. In brief first improving the planning and implementation of national development in general and local development in particular and secondly facilitating effective popular participation in the process of development. Thus this as a decentralisation dust up implies giving every citizen an opportunity to actively participate in productive public work beside the franchise in a democracy. Therefore, they acted as a guided post for the strenuous development of the idea of decentralised governance. They were:

- a) Shift from top down to bottom up approach;
- b) Encouraging and ensuring stakeholder's participation in development process; and
- c) Institutionalising self-reliance's and development strategies.

As many writers have felt the concern over the problem of responsiveness of the administrative state to the norm of democratic procedure for safeguarding individual liberties against bureaucracy and arbitrary abuse, believed that increased of people's vigilance and participation is necessary. Thus decentralisation became a mechanism through which public goods and services can be distributed effectively and efficiently. In this regard decentralisation has also observed as an instrument that could reduce the disparities in income and wealth between urban and rural areas by increasing productivity and income through allowing peoples involvement in administration and development programs. Decentralisation remains significant for the realisation of people centered development; therefore, it has become an important strategy because of its ability to build the capacity for economic development and also for enjoying equal rights within the majority population. Decentralisation has also been seen as a way of reducing power and size of magnified state bureaucracies and developing planning and spending at a more local level (Joseph, 2007). Decentralisation has become one of the most embraced reform, both in terms of the number of countries affected for potentially deepening the implication for nature and quality of governance. It was estimated that 80 percent of the countries around the world had effectively experimented decentralisation (Manor, 1999). Since then the countries like Bolivia, Cambodia, Ethiopia, France, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, South Africa, Uganda, U.K. and many others have further announced the reforms including the countries in the entire world and

nations rich or poor, large or small with different colonial histories. In brief, decentralisation is implemented everywhere and the importance of decentralisation goes well beyond the shared number of experience. Regarding the intensions of decentralisation, many forms of decentralisation aimed at reconstituting governments from hierarchal, bureaucratic mechanism to top-down management, to a system of nested self-government characterised by participation and cooperation where transparency is high and accountability to the governed is established which acts as binding constraints on the behaviour of the public servants (Faguet,2011). Decentralisation governance has also conceived as an instrument of local self-government for promoting development in sectors of health, education, infrastructure and also facilitating effective people's participation, enhancing the degree of transparency and greater accountability (Oslen, 2007).Being closer to the people decentralisation governance is assume to provide more effective and competitive delivery of service. In the developing world, by involving a large number of local citizenry decentralisation has been seen as a magical elixir for bringing development (Islam, 2007).

Definition of Decentralisation

The Encyclopedia of Social Science (1968) defines decentralisation as “the transfer of authority, legislative, judicial or administrative, from the higher level of government to lower level”. Smith (1985) defines decentralisation as a political process which moves around the territorial distribution of power and concerned with the extent to which power and authority are dispersed through the geographical hierarchy of the state and institutions through which diffusion accrues. According to Crook and Manor decentralisation is a general term for transfer of powers and resources from higher to lower level in a political system. Adamolekum (1919) views decentralisation as the organisation of government activities outside the headquarters of the central government, either as an administrative measure involving the devolution of specific power, function and resource by the central government units. Decentralisation, both as a concept and in practice, is a complex issue. Rondinelli and Nellis (1986) define decentralisation as transfer of responsibility for planning, management and the raising allocation of resource from the central government and its agencies to field units of government agencies, subordinate units or level of government, semi-government, semi-autonomous public authorities, cooperation, area wide, regional and functional authorities, or non-governmental private or voluntary

organisations. Decentralisation has also been defined as a situation in which public goods and services are provided primarily through the relevance preferences of individual by a market mechanism (Rondinelli et al. 1989). According to Fesler (1965) decentralisation can be approached from four different perspectives. First, decentralisation as a doctrine; second, as a political setting; third, as an administrative problem; finally, as an administrative process involving forced choices and changes in the functional and area based administration and between the regulatory and development functions of appointed and elected officials. Thus decentralisation not only includes institutional and normative aspect, but other complex issues, such as the change of the behaviour of individual, political leaders, officials, citizens and political culture in general. Hence, it inevitably implies a new way of making policies which require a process of socialisation of new values and social pedagogy (Alfonso, 1997).

Dimension of Decentralisation

It is impossible to arrive at a single definition of decentralisation with a massive meaning of the term. As democratic decentralisation manifests itself into several forms and several dimensions when put into practice. At times it entails the transfer of power and responsibility from a higher level to the lower level of the government, necessary involving a hierarchal division, while at other times decentralisation takes from simple horizontal divisions of the functions of government. To put it in a wider framework decentralisation involves two broad dimensions i.e. vertical and horizontal. For vertical decentralisation whether through deconcentration, delegation and devolution by relinquishing control over public resources and decision-making from central government to the lower level and also entails privatisation as last dubious step (Rondinelli et al. 1989). While horizontal decentralisation deals with the shift of decision-making from finance ministry of executive branch towards line ministry, human development-orientated field such as health and education as well as shift of the executive branch of the government towards the legislative and judicial branches. According to Smith (1985), there are two dimensions of decentralisation which correspond with the distinction of decentralisation in terms of territorial and functional dimensions. Territorial decentralisation according to him involves in deconcentration and devolving government authority from central to the local level whereas functional decentralisation includes delegation and privatisation (Chhetri, 2012). In a territorial decentralisation, a specific territory such as municipality, region or nation is granted a greater number of responsibilities and control through the transfer of power from the central level of

government. This forms of decentralisation help in accomplishing democratisation and the solution to basic needs. Functional decentralisation, on the other hand, refers to the transfer of function from the central agencies to other intermediate level in a specific sector of administration. For it linked with achieving complex issues like democracy building and social control. Decentralisation may take place in many types or forms but there is always a close relationship it used to share between its objectives and dimension which it takes (Yusoff et al. 2016). There are three more fundamental types of decentralisation which have many objectives, degree, power namely political decentralisation, administrative decentralisation and fiscal decentralisation (Crook and Manor, 2000).

Political Decentralisation

Political or democratic decentralisation refers to the transfer of the structure of centre government to the lower level of the government institution. Political decentralisation focused on way in which political activities are conducted at local as opposed to the national level. In political decentralisation accountability plays a key role since it is assumed that a strong decentralisation system can make government can make government more responsible in terms of the speed and quality of their response to citizens as well as for having an impact on the quantity of response (Ryan and Woods, 2015). Further it also focuses on mobilising, organising, articulation, participation, contestation and aggregation of interest, where political actors and are at least partially independent from those of national level (Schneider, 2003). It is also placed with the power sharing through the recognition of federal principle, autonomous regions and a like. The political decentralisation is identify as a mechanism which increases the participation of citizen as well as civil society for selecting government representatives and for political decision making, therefore, the lower level government administration become more accountable to the public(Cheema and Rondinelli, 2007). It also tends to change the way policy and responsibility shared between the governments. The most noticeable sign of political decentralisation are the elected and empowered sub-governmental bodies ranging from village council bodies to state level institutions. Most of the theorist suggested devolution as the best form of political decentralisation. In political perception decentralisation did not only possessed administration value but also has a civic dimension as it focuses on increasing opportunities for a citizen to take interest in public affair and make them accustomed to freedom. The adoption and implementation of political decentralisation also help to develop the local participatory process

to identify and addressing the priority objective such as poverty reduction, employment creation, gender equality, environment regeneration (Yusoff et al. 2016).

Administrative Decentralisation

Administrative decentralisation sometimes refers as institutional decentralisation which focuses on granting the responsibility for planning, financing and ordering of specific public function to the sub-central government, in brief, granting local jurisdictions and autonomy from central control. If the level of administrative decentralisation is high, a greater independent decision making is possible in sub-national government (Ryan and Woods, 2015). Administrative decentralisation also focuses on how modern bureaucracies are achieved, which have been defined as efficient, effective and rational (Schneider, 2003). It also involves all the full and partial transfer of any range of functional responsibilities to local level institutions such as the management of service personal, the buildings and maintenance of roads and garbage collection, the operation of school etc. Administrative decentralisation also involves in sharing of responsibilities between headquarters and field office. It enables citizens to manage and evaluate acts of the local government and constrains the ability of sub-national government to connect in decretory politics. Administrative decentralisation also includes deconcentration of central government authority and responsibility to semi-autonomous agents of the state and decentralised cooperation of government agencies performing a similar task through identical arrangements across national borders. The administrative decentralisation also focuses on hierarchical and functional resources among non-central government units, field level governmental agencies, subordinate government units to semi-autonomous institutions, cooperative or area wide, regional and functional authorities for the promotion of public policy for giving better services and goods (Yusoff et al. 2016).

Fiscal Decentralisation

Fiscal decentralisation is the most observable decentralisation which is directly related to the budgetary practice. It focuses on maximising social welfare, which is portrayed as a combination of economic stability, allocative efficiency and also distributive equity. It can be understood as the transfer of financial power from the central government to lower level administrative and political institutions. The key attribute of fiscal decentralisation is the fiscal impact of subordinate governments relative to the overall impact of government (Schneider, 2003). The

inter-governmental financial transfer plays a vital role in closing the financial space as well as in alleviating inter- regional resource disparities (Yusoff et al 2016). The fiscal decentralisation has been further categorised into five forms by the World Bank Thematic study namely, self financing or cost recovery through user charge, co-financing or co-production arrangement, labour contributions, expansion of local revenues through loan revenues through property or sale taxes collected by the central government to local government for general or specific use (Yusoff et al 2016).

Forms of Decentralisation

Rondinelli and Cheema (1983) has identified four types of decentralisation namely, deconcentration, delegation, devolution and privatisation. Further Richard Scott Herridge (2002) and Parker (1995) also acknowledged the three forms of decentralisation namely, deconcentration, delegation and devolution among which Herridge opined that deconcentration is the weakest form of decentralisation whereas devolution is the best form of decentralisation (Chhetri, 2012). They are as follows:

Deconcentration: It refers to handing over some amount of administrative authority to lower level within the central government, ministries and agencies. In other words, deconcentration denotes delegation of responsibility to a subordinate officer to act in the name of superior, with the transfer of actual authority. Delegation occurs when the central government disperses responsibilities of certain services to its regional branch officers. Further deconcentration does not involve in the transfer of the authority to lower levels of government, and for that reason, it is doubtful to lead to potential benefits of decentralisation (Livack et al. 1998).

Delegation: It can be referred to the situation in which the Central government transfers responsibility and decision making and administration of public function to local government or semi-autonomous organisation that are not entirely controlled by the central government, but ultimately accountable for it. Delegation is therefore, defined as the transfer of marginal responsibility for specifically defined functions to organisations that are outside the regular bureaucratic structure and that are indirectly controlled by the central government. It also implies that sovereign authority remains with the sovereign authority (Rondinelli et al. 1983). Delegation is also identified as the principle-agent relationship, where the central government acts as the principle and local government acts as an agent (Livack et al. 1998).

Devolution: It is known as the most extensive form of decentralisation through which central government transfers authority in decision making, finance as well as management to quasi autonomous form of local government. The local government units functions independently and autonomously under devolution, and their legal status makes them separate or distinct from central government (Rondinelli et al. 1998). Devolution is also refers to transfer of responsibilities for services to municipalities or local government for electing their own officials and collecting revenue, having independent authority to make an investment decision. In real devolution refers to the process of legal conferring power to discharge residual or sometime specific functions upon properly constituted local authority (Maddick, 1966).

Privatisation: It refers to passing of responsibilities and functions to the non-governmental organisation or private enterprise independent of government. Privatisation also refers to an issue relating to deregulation and privatisation thus move beyond government to the involvement of non-government sectors (Ryan and Woods, 2015). As a form of economic decentralisation, privatisation carried out the functions and responsibilities of the central government through the agencies like business groups, community groups, private voluntary associations and non-governmental organisation, trade associations, professional groups, political parties and cooperatives (Rondinelli et al. 1998). This shift in responsibility between different tiers of government through the above forms of decentralisation, i.e. deconcentration, delegation, devolution and privatisation is underpinned by several fiscal, political and administrative instruments (Fernando, 2002).

Participation

During the last few years of 1960s, the word participation became the part of the popular political vocabulary. The wide spread term in the mass media has tended to mean that any precise, meaningful content has almost disappeared; participation is used to refer to a wide verity of situations by different people (Pateman, 1970). The concept of participation is a contested subject and very often term participation is modified with adjectives, resulting in terms such as community participation, citizen participation, people's participation, public participation and popular participation (Chhetri, 2013). Participation has been defined in both narrow and board sense. On the narrow term participation has been defined as the active engagement of citizens with public institutions, as an activity that falls on the three defined modes such as voting, election campaigns and contacting or pressuring either individually or through group's activity

also including non-violent protest (Verba et al, 1978). The UNESCO (1979) on the other hand defined the participation in a broad sense, as a collective sustained activity for the purpose of achieving some common objectives especially a more equitable distribution of the benefits of development. The World Bank (1996) defines participation as “a process through which stakeholders influence and shares control over development initiatives, and the decision and resources which affect them”. According to UNDP (1993), participation can be understood by the people’s involvement in economic, social cultural and political process that affects their lives.

Meaning and Definition of Political Participation

Political participation in last fifty years is the study of continuously expanding number of specific forms of political participation. In early 1960s political participation was broadly understood as on activities concerned with the traditional meaning of politics such as campaigning by political parties as well as accepted contacts between citizens and public officials (Lane, 1959). In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the concept of political shows a noteworthy change into two directions, i.e. the conventional and unconventional mode of political participation. The conventional mode participation is restricted to voting and campaigning while on the other hand in an unconventional mode of participation rest on protest and rejection because they were out of social norms in the 1970s. Political participation is considered a basic element for every political system as it helps individual to be effective and associate himself with the political system. The International Encyclopedia of Social Science defines political participation as the principle means by which consent is granted or withdrawn in democracy and the rules are made accountable to the ruled. It indicates the proceedings like voting, seeking information, discussing, converting, attending meetings and contributing financially. The high level of political participation is usually associated with democracy which is considered beneficial both to the individual and society. Political participation has been characterised as a civic duty; a sign of political health and the best method of ensuring that one’s private interest are not neglected. Thus, involving the many matters of the state, political participation fosters stability and order by reinforcing the legitimacy of political authority (Deth, 2000)

The term political participation has many meanings and is applied to activities of the people from all levels of the political system. But sometimes the term is applied more as political

orientation than to activities. Political participation is defined in such a way as to include the exercise of power in non-governmental as well as a governmental field. In fact, sometimes there will be a great deal of confusion with regard to what is meant by that term, political participation may be viewed from two angles again- intensity and with. It may be defined as the as those action of private citizens by which they seek to influence or support government and politics. This definition is broader than most others, as it includes not only active roles that people pursue in order to influence political outcomes but also ceremonial and support activities. According to Almond and Powell (1966) “political participation is the involvement of the numbers of the society in the decision making process of the system”. Mc Closky (1968) defines, political participation implies those voluntary activities by which members of society shares in the selection of rules and directly or indirectly, in the formulation of public policy”. For Verba and Pye (1962), political participation is “those activities by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and the actions they takes”. In an ultimate analysis, political participation means a process of influencing the authoritative allocation of values for a society (Deth, 2001).

Forms of Political Participation

Participation is not an end in itself; one can participate in elections, social activity or many more other things. Political participation is not only a democratic activity as it is possible to participate in non democratic activities or events. It has been further distinguished between direct and indirect participation. The former is referred as voting in election or referendum that is, will of the majority is directly translated into law, on the other hand latter refers to engagement in various interest groups like NGOs influencing the political decisions indirectly (Pausch, 2012). Therefore, the concept of participation carries with it, different methods for strengthening or increasing participation. Thus, participation has included realms of knowledge and direct action and not only the realm of representation and accountability (Gaventa and Valderrama, 1999).

Direct Participation

Direct political participation is defined by the expression of political interests and apolitical aim. A citizen who participates directly is politically aggravated, either with the aim of making his or her favourite political party or personality win the elections, or with the aim of promoting his or her own political convictions or interests within a certain field. Such direct political participation

is usually categorised into conventional and unconventional participation. Voting in elections or referendum, party memberships, trade union affinities or activities in other political organisation as well as interest groups and non-governmental organisation present conventional forms of participations, while demonstrating and striking representative activities which are usually considered as unconventional, although they could as well be qualified as convention, if they are organized by conventional interest group (Pauach, 2012). Some scholars criticise the vague distinction of conventional and unconventional as too simplistic and dependent to the conventions of the respective political communities, cultures and traditions. An alternative categorisation could be useful, e.g. regular and non-regular participation, to distinguish elections from other forms of political action. Furthermore, it is important to underline that direct political participation is not the same as direct democracy, but the latter is part of the former (Pauach, 2012).

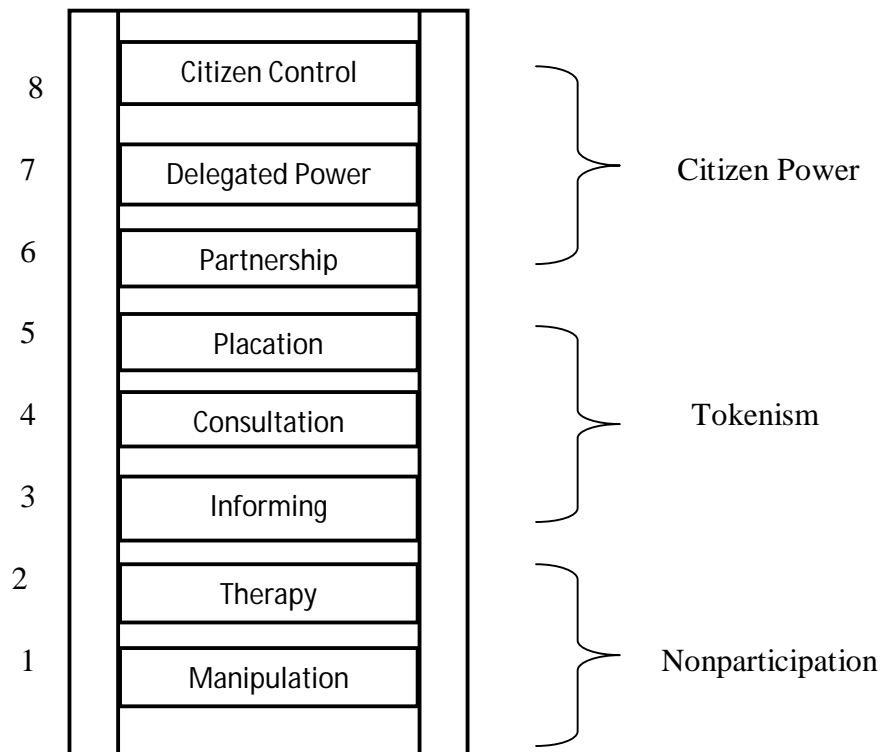
Indirect Participation

Indirect political participation is a voluntary engagement in social activities or networks with political implications without clearly defined political interests or political aims. The main intentions for participation are thus not political. The motivation in such instances can be solidarity with others or the wish for self-fulfillment. It can take place in informal networks like the neighborhood or in formal associations. Examples are again charity clubs, neighborhood associations, social initiatives, sports or cultural projects, etc. Indirect political participation is a very wide field and is difficult to grasp in a clear definition. There are some fields of participation in social contexts that have fewer political implications than others. In some cases, even sports club can have strong political implications as was the case in the Nazi Regime and other totalitarian systems. In general, indirect political participation is, in most cases, implicitly political through its influence on society and societal values, thereby either affirming the status quo or triggering political reactions and changes in the structure of a state (Putnam, 1993). The term “social capital” can be used to describe this kind of participation. In Putnam’s definition, “social capital” is essential and unique for democracies. According to this concept, general moral resources can be divided into trust (positive values), social norms and obligations, as well as social networks of citizens which mostly comprise voluntary associations (Pauach, 2012)

Typology of Citizen Participation

Arnstine (1969) has also focused on the concept of active participation and non-participation of citizens through bottom-up approach. Explaining through eight rungs of Ladder as to how citizens (the have-nots) participate in decision making process, including their involvement in different plan and programmes in each level of the ladder. Through this Arnstine, highlights the most signification barrier in achieving a genuine level of participation. They are as follows:

Figure 2.1: Ladder of citizen participation



Source: Arnstine 1969

Manipulation: It explains that in the name of citizen participation, people are placed on rubberstamp advisory community's or board by educating and pursuing them to gain their supports by the powerholders, which may be called as deceptive form of citizen participation ultimately resulting in distortion of participation.

Therapy: it explains the form of citizen participation in which the citizen have to adjust their value, interest and attitudes while decision-making to the powerholders in name of the greater good of society. For Arnstine, these two are the forms of non-participation.

Informing: it is said that informing citizen about their and responsibility was a most important step towards increasing legitimate citizen participation. But the lack of proper information or one-way information from the officials for example news, media, pamphlets, and posters limits their decision making ability and influencing powerholders for giving feedbacks and demanding negotiations regarding plan or programmes because of knowledge they received in late stage.

Consultation: Inviting citizen opinions also is an important step to increase legitimate participation. But consultation cannot be combined as the mode of participation because powerholders do not offer any assurance regarding people's concerns and ideas whether it will be taken into account or not. The most frequent method of this type of participation is attitude survey, neighborhood meetings and public hearing. If powerholders do not consider the input of citizen their participation will just become the window dressing ritual.

Placation: This level of ladder of participation is considered as the highest state of tokenism. Though the citizen was allowed to plan and decide he or she was not allowed to judge the legitimacy and practicability of the decision but only the powerholders held the sole power to decide.

Partnership: At six level of the ladder the power is redistributed between citizen and powerholders through negotiation. They agree to share planning and decision-making responsibilities through structures like joint policy board, planning committees and mechanism for resolving the impasse. This partnership is possible when there is organised power based in the community to which the citizen's leaders (representative) are accountable.

Delegation: In this level the citizen participate through negotiation with public officials leading to achieve dominant decision-making authorities on particular plan or programme. The powerholders starts bargaining their interest rather than pressuring from other end.

Citizen control: In this final level of ladder though no one in the nation has absolute control, but it is very important that expression not to be confused with intent. People are simply demanding that degree of power which guarantees that participants or resident to

graven a programme or institution, be in full charge of policy and be able to negotiate the condition under which outsiders may change them (Report 7th Global Forum, 2007). Citizen participation has been distinguished from public involvement so whereas the former gives importance to power sharing and exercises influence over major decisions in the community i.e. through partnership, delegation of power and citizen control the latter i.e. public involvement is narrower in scope than citizen participation and in it the key methods for participation are public communication, public consultation and public participation. But when the citizen participation is imposed through the state it was implemented through the bureaucratic ideology which according to Gauvin and Abelson (cited by Andre, et al. 2012) is described as corresponds to true public involvement. The concept of citizen participation has become a tool both locally and internationally. It has played a central and ever growing role in development agendas of International Monetary Fund (IMF). Thus citizen participation tends to go further than simply taking part in decision-making within the formal participatory mechanisms. Arnstine herself pointed out that the eight rungs is not enough to accurately differentiate between the level of participation because are various other ways through which peoples tends to participate in policy and programmes (Andre, et al. 2012).

MODES OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

The conceptualisation of political participation has been undergoing a huge change, which used to have a direct contact upon different modes of political participation. It is believed that political participation creates and determines politics for this purpose it is of outmost important both for individual and nation. Schonfold (1975) has categorised ten main types of modes of political participation as citizens used to participate in various and alternative ways to influence the government and political system (Pattaniak and Swain, 2007). They are as follows:

- a) Running for or holding public or party office;
- b) Belonging to party or other political organisation;
- c) Working in an election;
- d) Attending political meetings or rallies;
- e) Making financial contribution to party or a candidate;
- f) Contacting a public official;

- g) Publicly expressing a political opinion to convince others;
- h) Partaking in political discussion;
- i) Voting and
- j) Exposing one-self to political stimuli.

Decentralisation and Participation: Interface

The main argument for decentralisation is to make government more accessible by bringing it closer to citizens. Decentralisation has the potential for creating a stimulus for popular political engagement by opening up new ways for exercising political influences. It bridges the gap between politicians and citizens by making a political process more open and transparent and it has been one way of reaching this target by creating a more inclusive representation (Kyander 2014). Decentralisation tends to represent and empower the underrepresented segment of the society because nonconventional political actors find it easy to run the office at a lower level. Therefore, regionally concentrated minority groups are better represented at the local level of government (Diamond and Talik, 1999). Decentralisation also has a tendency for increasing voters turn out, which benefits the ordinary citizens by enhancing their participation by making it more reachable and easier for influencing the government. Decentralisation has the potential for bringing about improved representation by integrating minority group in politics (Kyander, 2014).

It is believed that for a successful decentralisation it requires some degree of local citizen participation as one of its preconditions. At the same time, however, the process of decentralisation is also supposed to create new and sustainable opportunities for more participation. Hence, the relationship between decentralisation and participation is a mutually reinforcing one. Decentralisation increased the opportunities for more population participation in decision-making process. Decentralisation also consolidates local democratic processes through enlarged opportunities for citizen participation and can promote democracy nationwide. Decentralisation also facilitates participation and representation of different interest groups, for example ethnic, religious, political, economic and social at local level and thereby reduces the risk of social conflict. It also tends to provide more opportunities for political participation of women enabling a more gender sensitive approach for policy formation and implementation (Gravinghott et al., 2006). Arthur Campbell (2003) makes a connection between decentralisation and participation by assuring that, the more power one has the more one would like to share.

Participation and decentralisation also shares a symbolic relationship. On the one hand successful decentralisation requires some degree of local participation; on the other hand the process of decentralisation can itself enhance the opportunities for participation by placing more power and resources at a closer, more familiar, more easily influenced level of government. Decentralisation and participation are also seen as the means for enhancing the efficiency of public services and more responsible to local preferences and it is also been related to the need to manage conflict within a political community. In an environment of the poor practice of citizen's participation decentralisation acts as an important step in creating regular and predictable opportunities for citizen's interaction (Neven, 2001).

Conclusion

Decentralisation has been widely recognised as the key component for the reforms of political, administrative and economic aspects in many parts of the world. Since 1980s decentralisation has been launched and implemented for boosting the governance, administrative, development, service delivery and as well as empowerment process. Decentralisation has been often seen as the mechanism for strengthening democracy, empowering autonomy, increasing participation at the local level providing many positive outcomes in the governance and administrative process, further ensuring the protection of different groups, minorities through more inclusive participation in decision-making and as well as in development process. Decentralisation can improve the efficiency of the public sector by making government more accessible to the citizens and has positively correlates political participation and increased in voter turnout. Decentralisation has been seen as a key element for an inclusive participation which brings relevant decision closer to people through strengthening downward accountability of local decision makers and encouraging policies that reflect the needs of the local population.

CHAPTER 3

DECENTRALISATION IN WEST BENGAL WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO DARJEELING

Introduction

In a simple form, decentralisation is the transfer of authority and responsibility from central government to intermediate and local government or quasi-independent organisation and or the private sector. It gives an advantage to the local players in local government, non-governmental organisation, local communities and organisation for the attainment of accountability and responsibility. It helps to enhance the participation at local level, which is advantageous and helpful for the establishment and operation of good governance. But as per the variation in administrative functions, the typology of decentralisation has been ascertained as administrative, political, fiscal and private decentralisation. In addition, the implementation and outcome of decentralisation varies according to the context and situation. With the same regard, this chapter mainly focuses on the decentralisation of urban administration in India since its inception with their origin and evolution. More importantly, urban decentralisation before and after implementation of the 74th Amendment Act particularly in West Bengal with special emphasis in Darjeeling Municipality will be discussed in the following sections.

A Brief History of Urban Decentralisation in India

The municipal governance and urban governance are synonymous. So to discuss the origin and evolution of urban governance of any Indian state, it is imperative to analyse the scenario of urban development of India as whole. The urban government in India was the outcome of centralised system of governance (Vaidya and Jha, 2012). The origin of urban administration of India can be traced back to Indus Valley Civilisation (2300 – 1750 BC) which was well-known for its distinguished features with urban culture, characterised with wide streets, market places, community bath and drainage. During Post-Mauryan period, the chief executive on behalf of the king was appointed to perform the town administrative functions, maintenance of sanitation etc. Likewise, during the Gupta period (320 – 540 BC) the primitive towns were managed by ‘Purpal’, an authorised person, who was assisted by non-official committee and town committee (Nanda, 2014). During Medieval period (1526 – 1707 AD), the manager or mediator between the ruler and the common public was ‘Kotwal’, who used to look after every local affair including

maintenance of law and order and public security in urban areas (Nanda, 2014 and Altekar, 1949). Later, during the British rule, centralised governance started under the regulation of East India Company. Their major interests were trade and commerce, sanitary service for British people, tax collection for the maintenance of police and maintaining law and order in the area (Nanda, 2014). However, with furtherance of British Imperial Rule, to cope up with heaving administrative circumstances a feeble initiation was made to start the decentralised pattern of governance (Aijaf, 2007). In the year 1688, with the motive of tax generation and collection (Verma, 1998), as well as to cope up with the political aspiration of erudite section of Indians they for the first time set up Municipal Corporation in the city of Madras. But the primitive urban body i.e. Municipal Corporation was not provided with legitimate power, accountability and financial resources. Later, in 1720, Municipal Corporation was transformed into Mayor's Court, accountable to judicial functions (Awan and Uzma, 2014). In 1793, according to Charter Act (1793), municipal administration was given the statutory eminence. According to Charter Act, three municipality bodies were formed in Presidency towns of Madras, Calcutta and Bombay with extreme excise powers (Aijaf, 2007 and Pattabhiram, 1969). In 1840, the election was held for the first time with the aim of proper management of public affairs. The public accountability was transferred to a Board of Conservancy consisting of seven members of whom five were elected. Up to 1863, the advancement of local administration related with urbanisation was slow and confined to about twenty towns. The people were not provided with opportunities for participations. In 1863, the Royal Army Sanitation Commission was set up to deal with unhealthy and deteriorating conditions of the Indian towns. Consequently, in between 1862-1864, with government's authorisation 49 municipal committees were formed under the guidance of the provincial governors. The formation of Lahore Municipality was prominent move. In 1864, Resolution of Lord Lawrence further provided the local communities including urban and rural in financial basis by encouraging policies related to trade and business. Then according to the Resolution of Lord Mayo the local institutions were provided with financial relief and local citizens got the opportunity of maximum involvement. Through Municipal Act the resolution authorised the municipalities to hold elections. However, the actual elements of election were not included and the practice of nominating the members was continued. Besides, the system of local finance was also introduced. The municipalities were established in every major town, but they were completely under the control of district magistrate. The municipal

people were allowed to engage in fund raising for maintenance of police, road repairs and conservancy (Aijaz, 2006). Till 1982, the municipalities were completely under the control of government. In the same year Lord Ripon's Resolution was passed which mainly advocated measures related to financial decentralisation and adoption of election in the formation of local bodies. However, the resolution was based upon the idea of extreme radical could not get much success. In 1888, the Presidency towns achieve the system of responsible government. Before 1900, many acts related to municipal governance were passed. The Punjab Municipal Act (1884), Bombay Municipal Act (1884) and Bengal Act were important. All these resolved the provisions for the formation of municipal boards, their financial issues and procedure of election of members including chairman. However, all the Acts could not bring administrative uniformity throughout the Indian towns. In 1907, the Royal Commission provided for the amendment of Municipal Acts of different provincial towns but could bring real progress. Most importantly, amidst the increasing impetus of National Movements, in 1919 Government India Act was enacted. It provided for the transfer of responsibility from district officers to local authority under department controlled by a popular minister and widening of franchise for election. Even in some towns, the municipalities were made accountable to control the rate of taxes within statutory limit. Although many of the laws and amendment passed until the period of independence i.e. 1947 were not successful to bring effective system for the proper management of municipal affairs. The administrative deficiency, shortcomings in transfer of powers, supersession of municipalities due to corruption and inefficiency were the major issues.

After independence, though the Constitution of India included Article 40 in the Directive Principles with the provision of organisation of panchayat in rural areas, but did not provide for the equivalent authority to the states for the creation of urban bodies. The only mentions to the organisation of urban government are found in Entry 5 of state list of 7th Schedule. It mentions the constitution and powers of Municipal Corporations, Improvement trusts, District Boards, mining settlement authorities and other local authorities for the purpose of local self government or village administration. In addition, the entry 20 in the concurrent list implies the Urban Planning. With regard to such constitutional provisions, numerous committees and commissions were assigned by both Central and State governments to look after the issues of urban local governance for their enhancement. The administrative liability of Urban Local Bodies were interchanged among different ministry such as Ministry of Health, Ministry of Works, Housing

and Urban Development (1996), Ministry of Health, Family Planning, Works Housing and Urban Development (1967), Ministry of Works and Housing (1973). But ineffectiveness in formulation and implementation laws related to administration of urban governance, ill-experienced workforce, poor finance, and rigid approach of local control restrained further progress. However, in 1985 for the first time, the Ministry of Urban Development was established and even National Commission on Urbanisation was created to deal with the problems related to urbanisation. Later in 1989, with the view to fortify the urban local governance, an effort was made to put forward Nagarpalika or Municipality Bill as per the 63rd Amendment. But bill was defeated due to lack of adequate votes. Again, in 1991, the Central Government introduced a Constitutional Amendment Bill but again rejected on being considering it as the encroachment of right of State Government. But in 1992, 74th Amendment Bill was accepted and enacted. The 74th Amendment Act provides for uniformity in the composition of urban local bodies, composition of municipalities, constitution and composition of ward committees, election and reservation of seats, terms of municipalities, power and functions of municipalities, constitution of state finance commissions, district and metropolitan planning committee.

From the above discussion it is evident that there was no uniformity in the structure, composition and administrative control of urban local bodies before the implementation of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act (1992). Mainly, the Act has provided for the urban decentralisation promoting the citizens from local level including marginalised sections and women. In addition, the Act has also become successful to bring the uniformity in the structural composition of local bodies. Excluding Municipal Corporation (*Nagar Nigam*) and Municipality (*Nagar Palika*), on the basis of mode of establishment, administrative control, urbanisation and number of population different types of urban local bodies were emerged. These include: (i) Notified Area (*Nagar Panchayat*) – They are the fast developing towns which are established through a notification of state government published in official gazettes. (ii) Town Area Committee – It is established for the administration of small town by separate Act of state government. The members may be eight elected or nominated. (iii) Cantonment Board - They are military areas which perform municipal functions. The administration is under the control of Ministry of Defense. (iv) Township- It is established by public enterprise related with housing settlement and managed by Town Administrator. (v) Port Trusts-They are urban bodies

established in port areas by Act of Parliament. It is managed by the official appointed by central government. (vi) Special Purpose Agencies- These are the established for special purpose and do not come under the control of municipalities. Examples are Housing Board, Water and Electricity Supply Undertakings etc.

Committee on Urban Decentralisation in India

The guidance for how to develop the urban local government and its responsibility fell on a series of national committees and commissions. The Committees were formed by various authorities to advice the central government on different aspect of transforming urban local government as an institution of self-government and as an institution of social transformation. Some of the Committees on Decentralisation for empowering urban local government are the Local Finance Committee was appointed in 1947-51 which recommended for the increase in of the sphere for taxation of Urban bodies. It is followed by the Taxation Enquiry Commission 1953-54 and it suggested for the separation of certain type of taxes for exclusively utilisation of urban local government. In 1963 an important Committee was set up i.e. the Committee on Training of Municipal Employees, to train the municipal personnel both at central and state. The Committee on Rural-Urban Relationship 1963-66 which also suggested a report on the entire subject related to municipal administration focusing on the interdependence between the town and the villages surrounding it. Later on the Committees such as Ministers on Augmentation of Resources of Urban Local bodies 1963, Committee on Service Condition of Municipal Employees 1965-68 and also the National Commission on Urbanisation 1988 were also set up by the government (Arora and Goyal, 1996).

Later on, India was provided with very good illustration of the wave of decentralisation reforms which was launched in 1980s and 1990s acknowledged as the priority by the late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1986, by proposing the 64th and 65th Amendment Bills to make it mandatory for all states to established three-tier system of panchayats rule of local government and municipalities for urban local government but the bill was not passed in Rajya Sabha (Milbert, 2014). It was only on 22nd December 1992, the Government led by Shri Narashima Rao was able to convert Shri Rajiv Gandhi's pledge to the nation by adopting the 73rd and 74th Amendments Acts, to the Constitution which, introduced local governments into the governance structure of India through Part IX (The Panchayats) and Part IX (The Municipalities) by giving them the

constitutional status for the first time. Thus, two Constitutional Amendments were eventually voted in 1992 concerning rural and urban decentralisation in India (Milbert, 2014).

History of Evolution of Municipal Governance in West Bengal

The evolution of the Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) in West Bengal dates back to 1680s with the establishment of former Calcutta Municipal Corporation (Kolkata Municipal Corporation) along with the Madras and Bombay municipalities. That was the rudimentary period of Local Government in India when the Calcutta had the status of presidency town. As one of the oldest urban bodies of the country, Calcutta municipality was initially established to cater the socio-political needs of that time. But later on, gradually with time its requirement and aims started changing. During the British period, few municipalities were created but all of them came under the bureaucratic control without any provision of the election. Later, in 1842, the Conservancy Act X of 1842 provided the legislative reforms in Calcutta municipality. The Act promoted the establishment of town committees which mainly envisaged for sanitary purpose but it remained inoperative. In 1850, another municipality act was passed in Bengal Presidency, which was provided for the regulation of development of hill station of Darjeeling. By 1870, in an undivided Bengal there were 65 municipalities dominated by only appointed members (Awan and Uzma, 2014). Later in 1881, according the Resolution of Lord Mayo, the Bengal Presidency was empowered with elective system. So in Bengal out of 138 municipalities only 3 had partly or wholly elected members (Awan and Uzma, 2014). Further different municipality acts were enacted which mainly encourage the reforms in elective system for the formation of municipality. The municipal committees were provided with power of to elect or appoint the members at their own.

However, after post-independence, the procedure of municipal governance was changed due to the policy of the decentralisation, which gave emphasis on increasing the number of Municipal Corporation and other Urban Local Bodies under the Left Front Government of West Bengal. The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act 1992 has been enacted to give Constitutional recognition to the Urban Local Bodies and also for ensuring as well as maintaining democracy at local level. The provisions of the Act were made mandatory to incorporate by all the states within one year from the date of its enactment. The government of West Bengal was among the first states to accept all the provisions of the said Act except the provisions of State Election Commission. Hence, West Bengal Government became the pioneer for implementing the 74th

Constitutional Amendment Act with some minor changes made under the West Bengal Municipal Amendment Act 1993 to accommodate the provisions of 74th Amendment. The provisions of the West Bengal Municipal Amendment Act 1993 was applied to the whole of West Bengal except in Calcutta and Howrah Municipal Corporation and such other corporations established by law and the number of municipalities in West Bengal has now increase to 118 (www.bdma.gov.in). But recently there are 128 Urban Local Bodies in West Bengal, of which 119 Municipalities, 2 Notified Areas, 1 Industrial Township are manage as per the provisions of West Bengal Municipal Act, 1993. Out of 6 Municipal Corporations, Kolkata Municipal Corporation and Howrah Municipal Corporation are governed according to the respective Acts of 1980. Of the remaining 4 Municipality Corporations, Siliguri, Asansol and Chandennagore is governed by the respective Acts of 1990 and Durgapur by the Act of 1994 (Govt. of West Bengal, 2014).

The implementation of the 74th Amendment was intended to change the urban landscape in three ways- create local democracy, provide guaranteed representation for the weaker sections of society, devolve urban functions together with a sound financial devolution procedure corresponding to these functions and create an institutional framework which would strengthen the urban capacities for planning and managing the city such as District Planning Committees, Ward Committees, Metropolitan Planning Committees, State Finance Commissions and regular auditing of accounts (Milbert, 2014).

The 74th Constitutional Amendment has also provided for the regular and fair conduct of elections to urban local bodies by statutory Election Commissions. It secures the territorial jurisdiction of urban local bodies by clearly defined criteria, designated as Nagar Panchayats, Municipal Councils, and Municipal Corporation (for large urban areas). It aims at giving an adequate representation to women and weaker sections of society in municipalities and Ward Committees, and to the offices of chairpersons. It foresees the constitution of Ward Committees for a number of wards in large urban areas, in order to ensure popular participation in civic affairs and decentralised governance. There is also the specification, through a separate Schedule provided in the Constitution (12th Schedule), of the powers and functional responsibilities to be entrusted to municipal bodies and their committees, to be confirmed by state laws (Milbert, 2014). The Twelfth Schedule of the Constitution permits a state to entrust eighteen specified powers to a municipality, including urban planning, regulating land-use, planning for economic

and social development, alleviating urban poverty and upgrading slums, building roads and bridges, supplying water and managing solid waste. The constitutional provision sets forth guideposts and outer limits on what powers may be devolved, stating that the municipalities should be provided with powers and authority but their power may be restricted on the basis of schemes as may be entrusted to them including those in relation to the matters listed in the Twelfth Schedule. These constitutional amendments represent an important formal shift in the distribution of power in India by improving delivery of public services in urban areas (Murthy et al. 2015). The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act also foresees that there will be a specification, by state laws, of provisions for the mobilisation of local finances through taxes and revenues sharing and assignment and the appointment of Statutory Finance Commissions every five years for reviewing the financial position of local bodies, for making recommendations on local taxes and transfers by way of assigned taxes and grants-in-aid. There are also provisions for setting up committees, predominantly composed of elected representatives, for comprehensive district planning and metropolitan planning by integrating urban and rural plans for land use, resources use, environment, and limitations on the state's power for the dissolution of elected local bodies (Milbert, 2014).

The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 represents the boldest initiative anywhere in the world spreading of local democracy in urban areas. The Act has acted upon the recommendations of Rural-Urban Relationship Committee and seeks to provide more power and authority to the local bodies an attempt to provide and ensure more power and authority for stabilising democratic municipal government by giving it constitutional provisions for the first time. The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 finally gave a concrete shape to the Government of India's commitment to vest power in the hands of the people by enabling them to introduce fundamental changes in 3,000 urban bodies (Milbert, 2014).

The following are the salient features of 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992:

Mandatory Provision of 74th Constitutional Amendment Act

1. Division of the Corporation into Wards.
2. Direct election of members from the electors.
3. Direct election of Chairpersons of the Municipality.
4. Provision for Ward Committees in Municipalities having a population of 3 lakhs and more.

5. Reservation of seats members to women belonging to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe people and also for women (General) at a percentage.
6. Reservation of seats of members to the women separately and to the people belonging to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities at a specific percentage.
7. Reservation of Chairperson to the people belonging to the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe.
8. Reservation of offices of Chairpersons to the women belonging to the Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and general.
9. Duration of Municipality.
10. Additional disqualifications prescribed for elections.
11. Holding of elections to the Municipalities before the expiry of term of office.
12. Appointment of judicial authority for deciding the questions of disqualification.
13. Constitution of District Planning Committees in all districts.
14. Constitution of Metropolitan Planning Committee if there is a metropolitan area in any State.
15. Devolution of powers to the Municipalities.

Discretionary provision of 74th Constitutional Amendment Act

1. Composition of Municipalities.
2. Composition of Ward Committees.
3. Method of choosing the members to the Ward Committees.
4. Manner of choosing the Chairperson to the Ward Committees.
5. Deciding the powers and functions of the Ward Committees.
6. Constitution of other Committees in the Municipalities.
7. Percentage of reservation of offices of Chairpersons to the people belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.
8. Percentage of reservation of offices of Chairpersons to women.
9. Rotation of reserved seats of members of municipalities in different wards of Municipalities in different ordinary elections.
10. Rotation of reserved offices of the Chairpersons of the Municipalities in different elections.
11. Appointment of judicial authority for deciding the questions of disqualification.

12. Constitution of District Planning Committees in all districts.
13. Constitution of Metropolitan Planning Committee if there is a metropolitan area in any State.
14. Devolution of powers to the Municipalities.
15. Deciding the nature, content and extent of powers, which the State Legislature can delegate from the State to the Municipality.

The Government of West Bengal following the footsteps of 74th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992 along with its broad guidelines has also passed the West Bengal Municipal Act of 1993 only with the small deviations in its content which came into force in June 1994.

West Bengal Municipal Act 1993

Although the Government of West Bengal has incorporated almost all provisions said under the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act 1992, under West Bengal Municipal Act it has made some minute changes to accommodate the provision which can be observed as under the West Bengal Municipal Act in which the Municipalities were formed on certain criteria defined by the Act of 1993, whereas under the 74th Amendment Act talk about three types of Municipality i.e. Nagar Panchayat, Municipalities and Municipal Corporations. The West Bengal Municipal Act also has some special provisions which are only applicable to the hill areas with regard to the sharing of responsibilities but in case of the 74th Amendment no such provisions are seen. The Municipal Act of West Bengal 1993 highlights various provisions regarding the establishment as well as characterising the Municipal area which is absent in 74th Amendment Act for the establishment of various municipal bodies. The 74th Amendment does not have any specific provision related to the notified area whereas the Municipal Act of West Bengal, 1993 has provision specifically concerning notified area of the state in chapter XXV of the Act (Khawas, 2003).

Brief History of Darjeeling

Little is known about the early history of Darjeeling. Darjeeling was historically a part of the kingdom of Sikkim. In 1706, the present Kalimpong Sub-division of the district was taken from Raja of Sikkim by Bhutanese. Later on, in 1780 the Gorkhas marched into Sikkim and annexed the Terai and they had trodden on the toes of the East India Company and the war of 1814 was fought with Nepal and signed the Treaty of Titaliya in 1817. The Raja of Sikkim was reinstated with his sovereignty guaranteed by the Company and Sikkim including Darjeeling became a

buffer State between Nepal and Bhutan. But after 10 years in 1828 another dispute occurred between Nepal and Sikkim and the two officers Captain Lloyd and Mr Grant were deputed to deal with the dispute. They, later on, found that Darjeeling region very suitable as a sanatorium for British troops. The East India Company started to negotiate with the King of Sikkim to lease the area starting in 1835. The responsibility to found a hill station was given to Dr Campbell and Lieutenant Napier. Hence, in 1835 the Deed of Grant was signed between King of Sikkim and British, which gave them the permission for establishing the sanatorium. However, this was an unconditional secession but the British granted the Raja an allowance of Rs 3000 as compensation and raised the grant to Rs 6000 in 1846. In 1839, Dr Campbell became the first superintendent of Darjeeling and he was given the charge of Political Relation with Sikkim and other administrative responsibility (Das and Bhuimali, 2011).

The Darjeeling Municipality was established in 1850. Darjeeling was declared as Non-Regulation District till March 1937 and the acts and regulation did not automatically come into force in the district in line with the rest of the country unless they were extended to it. But after Independence of India in 1947, Darjeeling became the part of the state of West Bengal. A separate district of Darjeeling was established consisting of the hilly towns of Darjeeling, Kurseong, Kalimpong and some parts of the Terai region (Das and Bhuimali, 2011).

Darjeeling Municipality

The name of the district 'Darjeeling' has a Tibetan origin and this means where the thunderbolt rested. Darjeeling Town is situated in the district of Darjeeling, the northern most district of the state of West Bengal. It was established in the year 1850 by the British and thus is one of the oldest municipal towns in the country. The Darjeeling town is the headquarters of the district and is the largest among the hill towns situated in the district. It spreads over an area of 10.7 sq km and comprises of 32 wards. As per the Census of India (2011) the town houses about 1, 20,414 population. Tracing the old history of Darjeeling Municipality becomes a bit difficult as almost all the records were destroyed in the fire that gutted its office on the night of 20th May 1996.

Location and Boundary

Darjeeling is northernmost district of West Bengal and located between 26°31' and 27°13' North latitudes and 87°50' and 88°53' East longitudes. The principal town and administrative headquarters of the district is Darjeeling town located at 23°3' North latitude and 88°16' East longitude. Darjeeling is surrounded by the Nepal in the West, Sikkim to the north, Bhutan and

Jalpaiguri and Bangladesh to the south. The area of the Darjeeling district according to the Director of Land Records and Survey, West Bengal is 1200 sq miles (Das and Bhumali, 2011).

Population distribution

The town of Darjeeling has fluctuation in the growth of its population in the last one century. When the rough census was done in the year 1969, there were only 22000 inhabitants (Das and Bhumali, 2011). After that Darjeeling offers the most remarkable example of growth of population and at an average, the town has supported the growth rate of over 20 percent decade. The growth rate has been increased from the 1970 and in the year 1990, the growth rate has touched the sky height of 45 percent which is far above the national, state and district average (Table 3.1). It is because Darjeeling is the head-quarter of various subdivisions which acts as the centre of economic and all other activities and so it attracts the rural people to migrate to the town for a better opportunity and to settle there permanently (Manda, 2013).

Table 3.1: Population Growth of Darjeeling Municipality

| Year | Population (Lakh) | Growth rate (%) |
|-------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 1901 | 16,924 | - |
| 1911 | 19,005 | 12.30 |
| 1921 | 22,258 | 17.21 |
| 1931 | 21,185 | -4.82 |
| 1941 | 27,224 | 28.51 |
| 1951 | 33,605 | 23.44 |
| 1961 | 40,651 | 20.97 |
| 1971 | 42,873 | 5.47 |
| 1981 | 57,603 | 34.36 |
| 1991 | 71,470 | 24.07 |
| 2001 | 1,07,194 | 44.63 |
| 2011 | 1,20,414 | 12.33 |

Source: Darjeeling Municipality, 2013

At the time of British administration, Darjeeling Municipality had only nine wards, which were increased to 26 in the year 1964. Later on, some of the wards were further bifurcated because their areas were very large to look after properly by the single councillors. Darjeeling Municipality requested the State Government for the bifurcation of wards through the letter No. 47/GD dated 25th April 1998, which was appropriately accepted by the Government under the term of section 8 of the West Bengal Municipal Act 1993. Hence, increased the number of ward from 26 to 32 in through G.O. No.495/C-4/MIM-9/94Pt. Dated 26th August, 1998 (Gurung,

2000). Hence, the following table (Table 3.2) highlights the wardwise decadal population increase in all the 32 wards of the Darjeeling Municipality.

Table 3.2: Ward Wise Population Distribution in Darjeeling Municipal Town

| Ward No. | Area (sq km) | Ward Wise Population | | | Area (sq km) | Ward Wise Population | |
|--------------|-----------------|----------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|----------------------|---------------|
| | (1971 - 91) | 1971 | 1981 | 1991 | (2001 - 11) | 2001 | 2011 |
| 1 | 0.3671 | 1513 | 1761 | 2032 | 0.3229 | 4153 | 3256 |
| 2 | 0.6585 | 1065 | 1404 | 2596 | 0.4268 | 2604 | 4033 |
| 3 | 1.5151 | 2083 | 2373 | 3301 | 0.0837 | 3119 | 2219 |
| 4 | 0.4021 | 1331 | 1668 | 2182 | 0.6582 | 3515 | 3937 |
| 5 | 1.113 | 2673 | 3536 | 5286 | 0.2847 | 2389 | 2679 |
| 6 | 0.4108 | 2825 | 4339 | 5193 | 0.345 | 4359 | 4568 |
| 7 | 0.6002 | 1175 | 2164 | 3490 | 0.1667 | 3457 | 4865 |
| 8 | 0.2943 | 1893 | 2705 | 3694 | 0.1194 | 3858 | 4089 |
| 9 | 0.37587 | 2892 | 4203 | 5015 | 0.3822 | 2804 | 2443 |
| 10 | 0.0542 | 1139 | 1322 | 1172 | 0.1051 | 2314 | 2777 |
| 11 | 0.1107 | 651 | 1187 | 2294 | 0.1621 | 2810 | 3980 |
| 12 | 0.3729 | 748 | 1813 | 3671 | 0.0843 | 3278 | 3632 |
| 13 | 0.2273 | 1625 | 2353 | 2552 | 0.2476 | 1545 | 2263 |
| 14 | 0.0233 | 1462 | 1908 | 2476 | 0.0931 | 5499 | 6442 |
| 15 | 0.0233 | 1460 | 1044 | 1003 | 0.0413 | 1281 | 1750 |
| 16 | 0.0536 | 1129 | 1312 | 1344 | 0.0991 | 4526 | 4647 |
| 17 | 0.5536 | 1643 | 1855 | 1801 | 0.2751 | 4882 | 5172 |
| 18 | 0.227 | 1561 | 1837 | 2446 | 0.1765 | 4187 | 4224 |
| 19 | 0.0175 | 1109 | 1409 | 1175 | 0.0332 | 3519 | 3643 |
| 20 | 0.0425 | 1355 | 2022 | 1798 | 0.0148 | 1663 | 1541 |
| 21 | 0.0892 | 1901 | 1955 | 2223 | 0.155 | 1022 | 1618 |
| 22 | 0.2447 | 2154 | 3307 | 3108 | 0.302 | 2358 | 2191 |
| 23 | 0.9982 | 1439 | 2346 | 2405 | 0.1743 | 3249 | 4965 |
| 24 | 0.4458 | 2301 | 2225 | 3761 | 0.0188 | 1288 | 1354 |
| 25 | 0.736 | 2351 | 2838 | 3721 | 0.0186 | 1766 | 2164 |
| 26 | 1.1317 | 1695 | 2717 | 3101 | 0.1059 | 2279 | 2950 |
| 27 | - | - | - | - | 0.1544 | 3423 | 3612 |
| 28 | - | - | - | - | 0.1452 | 7076 | 5026 |
| 29 | - | - | - | - | 0.7836 | 5604 | 6209 |
| 30 | - | - | - | - | 0.4007 | 3920 | 4321 |
| 31 | - | - | - | - | 0.6514 | 4794 | 4846 |
| 32 | - | - | - | - | 0.811 | 4156 | 4152 |
| Total | 11.08847 | 43173 | 57603 | 72840 | 7.8427 | 106697 | 115568 |

Sources: Darjeeling Municipality (1971 – 2011); West Bengal District Census Handbook, Darjeeling, 2011.

Evolution of Darjeeling Municipality

Darjeeling Municipality was established on 1st July 1850. Darjeeling Municipality in the beginning was placed in 1st (First) Schedule along with Khulna, Haribagh, Muzzafarpur, Darbhanga, Bhagalpur in which the commissioners were appointed by the local government and also place in the 2nd Schedule along with the Burdawan, Hoogly, Nadia, Hazaribagh etc. in which the chairman who to be appointed by the local government. It was only in the year 1916 a nomination cum election of the commissioners was held on trial basis. The first general election of Commissioners of Darjeeling Municipality as provided u/s 24 Bengal Municipal Act 1993/32 was held on 4th October 1937 and thereafter formed the Board (Khawas, 2003). The system of Universal Adult Franchise started around the 1960s and the Deputy Commissioner was the ex-officio Chairman of the Municipality (Gurung, 2000). The first general election on the basis of the adult franchise of as notified vides G.O. No. 4120/ME-13/52 dated 17.07.1963 was held on 23rd March 1964. But the newly elected boards was not, however, been able to function for an Interim order of Injunction till disposal of Civil rule No. 430(W) of 1964. Hence, the old board continued till the next election. The Municipality Board formed after the election held on 1st May 1966 was superseded in September 1970 and was kept in supersession till 14th July 1984. The Municipal Board constituted in 1984 was again superseded on 3rd August 1989 and remained in supersession until May 1994 (Khawas, 2003). The general election of Councillors of Darjeeling Municipality was held on May 1994 and the election was for the first time contested on party basis and the Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) party formed the board with overwhelming majority, till the election of 2004 the party continued to rule for almost four conjugative terms followed by the latest election of 2011 won by the overwhelming majority of Gorkha Jan Mukti Morcha (GJMM) party.

Till 28th August 1998, Darjeeling Municipality was placed in the “D” category of the state municipality (based on the criteria of the population). In view of the various problems faced by the hill municipalities different from their plan counterparts the government of West Bengal vide letter No. 569/MA/O/C-4/1A-1-18/95 dated 12th October 1988 upgraded Darjeeling Municipality from “D” to “A” category and the number of wards increased from 26 to 32 wards. Further, on the persuasion of the Board, the state government has agreed to upgrade Darjeeling to status of a Municipal Corporation vide their letter No. 87/MA/O/C-4/1-A/2000 dated 29th February 2000 (Pradhan, 2000). As per the constitution of India, the district is still under the presidency division

and thus enjoys no special status. However, under the State Legislature, the hill a region of the district has been extended special provisions after the creation of Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC) in 1988. But after 2008 a new political party Gorkha Jan Mukti Morcha (GJMM) came into power demanding the change in administration. Thereafter, in July 2011, an agreement was signed between the Government of India, Government of West Bengal and Gorkha Jan Mukti Morch (GJMM), (Thaindian, 2010) which leads to the formation of a new autonomous region Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) and the hill council endowed with more power than its forerunner DGHC (and Khawas,2003).

The Composition of Municipality and its Power and Functions

The Municipalities which are located in the hills of Darjeeling areas under the political jurisdiction of the state of West Bengal were governed by the West Bengal Municipal Act of 1993. It is comprised of 32 members who were elected from the each of 32 wards of Darjeeling municipality and authorities that are charged with the administration and responsibilities are as follows:

1. Municipality
2. The Chairman in Council (CNC)
3. The Chairman

The Darjeeling municipality is composed of all the Board of Councillors, and are the elected members from all the respective wards who along with the non-elected members nominated by the state government. Therefore, was charged with the authority of Municipal Governance of the town. The Board of Councillors (BOC) is vested with the responsibility to elect the Chairman from among themselves and the Chairman later on elects the Vice-Chairman among the members of Board of Councillors. The Act provides for the Chairman in Council of governance and in Darjeeling they consist of seven members, the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and the rest of five members are elected by the Chairman from among the elected members of the Board of Councillors and they distribute the functions and responsibilities of Municipality. Though all the executive powers are vested to the Chairman in Council but the decision of the Board of Councillors was also taken into consideration while executive action is taken in the name of Municipality. The Chairman is the executive head of Municipal administration and Municipality. He is the presiding officer in the meeting of Chairman in Council as well as Boards of Councillors and in the absence of Chairman, the Vice-Chairman presides over the meeting.

The administrative functions of the municipalities are carried out by the different departments and are headed by the Chairman in Council. They are –

- (i) Market and Estates
- (ii) Mutation
- (iii) Health and Sanitation
- (iv) Building
- (v) License
- (vi) Finance and Establishment and
- (vii) Assessments

The Act of 1993 also lays down the provision list of the officers who were appointed by the municipality as an Executive Officers, Engineer, Health Officers, Finance Officer and Secretary. With regard to the creation of the post, Board of Councillors has the power to make the decision with the prior sanction of the state government. The executive officer was the principle executive of Municipality and all other employees are subordinate to him. The chairman controls and supervises the power of the executive officers and offices while exercising their power and functions. An elected member of the Board of Councillors distributes the functions and responsibilities to governance the town (Khawas, 2003).

Women Participation and Darjeeling Municipality

The democratic set up in India since its existence has undergone a series of changes. It has gone through numerous trends and challenges from the starting of its journey towards democratisation since 1947, but the most significant one being the implementation and the passing of the 74th Amendment Act during 1992. Hence, bringing the positive impact on the political landscape of the county by encouraging the further decentralisation in the administrative system of Urban Local Bodies (Lama, 2014) provided the opportunity for the women to participate actively in the local level and gave them the opportunity to influence the decision-making process providing them 33 percent of seat reservation in the ULBs which was absent before. In case of Darjeeling Municipality, the decentralised reform brought by the Act of 1992 has acted as the boon for the women as they for the first time got the opportunity to participate in the civic administration as well as they got the opportunity to influence decision-making process as an executing agent of the marginalised and excluded section of the society.

The adult franchise was not applicable during British rule in Darjeeling Municipality. Only the taxpayers were the eligible voters. Even the representation of women was nil. But, after independence, the first General Election on the basis of Adult Franchise was held on March 23rd, 1963 (Chakraborty et al., 2004). It was only after the 74th Amendment Act, women were represented in municipality. The election from 1994 onwards started on the basis of party line and provision of the Act was taken into consideration by providing the reservation for the women in Urban Local Bodies. But, in the initial stage of implementation of the Act, the effort to make participant in decision making as well as implementing process did not give the fruitful outcome but it gave them the opportunity to participate in local bodies. The decentralised effect brought by the 74th Amendment became successful after the election of 2000 because it was accomplish to provide more than 33 percent seat reservation to the women in Darjeeling Municipality. Now, there are 46 percent of women representatives in Darjeeling Municipality after the latest election of 2011 held under the sole dominance of single Gorkha Jan Mukti Morcha (GJMM) party.

On analysing the women representation in Darjeeling Municipality since 1951 onwards (Table 3.3), it is revealed that in the board formed in the term of 1965 – 1970, one women councillor was represented for the first time and that was simply a coincident. But, with regard to the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act when the provision of women reservation was implemented under West Bengal Municipal Election Rules, 1994, the general election was held in 1994. Then, the board was formed by the GNLFF party and the women representation was found to be increased significantly (Table 3.4). And also for the first time in 2000, a woman councillor from ward number 30 elected as Vice-Chairman of Darjeeling Municipality.

Table 3.3: The Number of Elected Women Representative before the Implementation of 74th Amendment Act, 1992.

| Sl. No. | Year of election | Total members | Nominated | Elected | Male | Female | Percentage of Female |
|---------|------------------|---------------|-----------|---------|------|--------|----------------------|
| 1 | 1951 | 31 | 8 | 23 | 23 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | 1952 | 29 | 6 | 23 | 23 | 0 | 0 |
| 3 | 1960 – 64 | 28 | 0 | 28 | 28 | 0 | 0 |
| 4 | 1965 – 70 | 28 | 0 | 28 | 27 | 01 | 3.57 |
| 5 | 1984 | 28 | 0 | 28 | 28 | 0 | 0 |

Source: Souvenir of Darjeeling Municipality, 2000.

Table 3.4: The Number of Elected Women Representative after the Implementation of 74th Amendment Act in Darjeeling Municipality.

| Sl. No. | Year of election | Total members | Nominated | Elected | Male | Female | Percentage of Female |
|---------|------------------|---------------|-----------|---------|------|--------|----------------------|
| 1 | 1994 | 26 | 0 | 26 | 25 | 01 | 3.57 |
| 2 | 2000 | 32 | 0 | 32 | 20 | 12 | 37.5 |
| 3 | 2004 | 32 | 0 | 32 | 20 | 12 | 37.5 |
| 4 | 2011 | 32 | 0 | 32 | 18 | 14 | 43.75 |

Source: Souvenir of Darjeeling Municipality, 2000; Darjeeling Municipality, 2016

In 2007, again the GNLFF formed the board by winning the election by a majority. But at the same time, another opposition local political party was formed in Darjeeling under the leadership of Shri Bimal Gurung on 7th October 2007. The GNLFF, a majority party which formed the Municipality Board started breaking and almost 15 members (Members of the Board of Councillors) joined the opposition local party i.e. GJMM. It caused a rift within the functioning of the municipality as well as GNLFF party itself. Although, the GNLFF party tried to secure its party member as the chairman of Municipality out of its 17 members (Members of the Board of Councillors) but failed to secure their earlier position due to the influence of their counterpart GJMM members. Later on, because of the conflict between the two political parties, Municipal administrative function came under the supervision of the Sub-Division Officer (SDO) of Darjeeling district as a head executive.

After withdraw of the GNLFF members, the party was also dispersed. The members of the board of councillors supported by GJMM party under the guidance of ex-officio chairman (SDO) ran the Municipality for almost three years. It was only after the election of 2011 GJMM won by a majority without opposition that the chairman was appointed as the head executive of the municipality and the women representation was also seen increasing in number in Municipality (Table 3.5).

The increase in number of women participation beyond the reservation level can be observed as a success in providing them the opportunity in decision making process but despite their representation it is very important to understand the effort of women and their progress in real participation in the decision making because of the difference in the presence and empowerment in Darjeeling Municipality.

CONCLUSION

Urbanisation in India was said to have been started since the Vedic period but little is known about it. Even during the Mauryan, Gupta and the Mughal periods, ancient forms of urban lifestyle existed. The king or ruler during those periods had appointed intermediary personnel to deal with administration and management of urban issues and maintenance of law and order and security in the provinces. That was the centralised system of governance. With the initiation of British rule in India, the native system of local governance transformed into totalitarian form whose main objectives were to collect revenues and promote administrative efficiency for their own favour. Later on, the British Government rule started in 1858. Then feeble changes were made in the policy of local administration, which were merely an attempt to adjust the erudite and well-read approach and aspiration of Indian people. In this way the centralised governance of British Government showed a bit of transformation with trivial indication of devolution of power. That was the initiating phase of decentralised system of governance in India. In 1688, Madras Municipal Corporation was formed following the administrative pattern of Great Britain. That was the real beginning of urban administration in the post-independence India. With the effort of Lord Ripon's Resolution of 1882, new legislature was enacted in 1884 and 1888, which promoted decentralisation and devolved system of local urban governance.

In India, the urban administration since its inception, suffered from many shortcomings and limitations, which were mainly related with decentralisation and devolution of powers to the local citizens, financial devolution and method of electing representatives. Up to the period of independence many Acts and Resolutions were passed but were not successful to bring the required changes in urban administration. Even after the independence, when the Indian Constitution was resolved in 1950, the urban governance regarding its decentralised administration did not receive prominent status. Contrarily, the rural governance acquired more constitutional prominence and recognition. Many attempts were made 1980s, to resolve the Amendment Bills in favour of urban governance but could succeed. It was only after the enactment of 74th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992, urban governance required the bonafide constitutional status and the Act provided for the decentralised urban governance in terms of devolution of powers local citizens and participation of marginalised groups and women. In addition, to some extent, the Act helped to provide the basis of uniformity in the administration and typology of all the Urban Local Bodies in India. Accordingly, on the basis of

nature of establishment, rate of urbanisation and population growth different types of urban local bodies were constituted in India. They are – (i) Municipal Corporation (ii) Municipality (iii) Notified Area (iv) Township (v) Cantonment Board (vi) Town Area Committee (vii) Port Trust and (viii) Special Purpose Agencies.

The 74th Amendment Act was earnestly followed by all the states including West Bengal. But the government of West Bengal brought some required modifications to accommodate the aspirations and circumstances of different urban localities. With the same regard, the district of Darjeeling being located in the distant hills of West Bengal could be given special eminence. The Darjeeling district being formed by the incorporation of the territories acquired from Nepal, Sikkim (prehistoric Sikkim), Bhutan and India, has a unique history of its development. Presently, there are three Municipalities (Darjeeling, Kurseong and Kalimpong), one Notified Area (Mirik) and one Municipal Corporation (Siliguri) in Darjeeling district. Among them, Darjeeling Municipality is oldest one and was established during British rule in 1850. Historically, the Darjeeling Municipality was one of the well planned municipalities in West Bengal. But due to greater pace of urbanisation resulting from migration of people from adjacent rural areas, other districts as well as from other states, the population has been increased enormously. Even in the span of 17 years i.e. from 1994-2011, the number of Municipal Ward was increased from 26 to 32. According to the report of Darjeeling Municipality Office, the total population of town was 1, 20,414 in 2011 with increase of 12.33 percent of population of 2001. Interestingly, there are almost equal numbers of male and female population. Furthermore, since the British period the town houses were built and many renowned schools and colleges were established to provide labeled education to the local people. So, the urban population of town constitutes the competent human resources, which can sustainably be utilised for overall development of the local community according to the layout of decentralisation reforms. More importantly, with the provisions of women empowerment and women right, specifically, the women population needs more consideration in this regard. Alternatively, there is greater feasibility and prospect of offering more opportunities to women for successful participation in local affairs such as decision making, politics, education etc. However, amidst the substantial possibility for encouraging and promoting the women for participation in community affairs, still a sort of patriarchal attitude persists in local administrative culture. This state of affair is contradictory to the notion of decentralisation, devolution, delegation and federalism provided

by 74th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992. In Darjeeling Municipality, such circumstance of disagreement to the said still persists, which is evident from the past and present record of women representation in the Board of Councillors.

CHAPTER 4

DECENTRALISATION AND WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN DARJEELING MUNICIPALITY

Introduction

In India the initiation of decentralisation reforms dates back to 1980s. A very large consensus for the need of decentralisation were due to the factors such as increase in effectiveness and functioning of government; speeding up the sense of ownership of development among the ordinary citizens; reduction of impediment and delay in decision-making; increase of local participation embracing each and every sections of community; promotion of partnerships between government agencies and private sector; transparency of government practices for the ordinary citizens; greater accountability of bureaucrats vis-a-vis elected representatives; reduction in the corruption in the political system; accomplishment of more responsive and better programmes suited to local conditions; increasing the legitimacy of government with the common people with greater transparency and accountability (Manor, 1999). Therefore, a number of stakeholders turned to optimistic that decentralisation results a new form of nationality with greater empowerment of minorities, women and poorer sections of the population (Milbert, 2014). The endeavour of decentralisation reforms with many anticipated advantages especially to local actors was further enhanced and encouraged by the implementation of 73rd and 74th Constitutional (Amendment) Acts (1992), which granted the constitutional status to the rural and urban Bodies respectively and recommended them to function as local governments (Chhetri, 2013). The 74th Amendment Act prescribes for greater devolution of functional responsibilities and financial powers to the municipal bodies and also ensures greater participation of weaker sections and women. Crucially, the Act provides for fair, free and regular elections within the municipal bodies for its representatives, constitution of ward committees to ensure greater citizen participation in the decision making, and constitution of district planning committees, metropolitan planning committees and State Finance Commission (TERI, 2010). The Act has offered a wide arrangement for decentralisation of urban governance with the aim to create the dynamic association between the citizens and the governance which

can be considered as the first serious attempt to ensure a democratic municipal government through constitutional provisions. The provision for constitution of ward committees is an important step towards achieving citizens' participation in governance at the lowest level. It also provides that every urban area with more than 3 lakhs population should constitute ward committees consisting of one or more wards. The ward committees are given the accountability to address local problems by participating in the planning, financial and administrative functions having a direct liability on the related wards. In addition, if there is more than one ward in the ward committee, the Act also provides to elect a Chairperson/Chairman from amongst them. The ward committee also has the provision of seat reservation for women (1/3), schedule tribe and schedule caste. So, we can affirm at this juncture that both decentralisation reforms and 74th Constitutional (Amendment) Act (1992) at parallel stipulate and encourage the women's participation at local level of every kind of urban bodies either large or small. For instance, Darjeeling Municipality is such an urban centre situated in the northern most part of West Bengal, inhabited with utmost proportion of marginalised groups and the women populace, who are comparatively ever steady for the acceptance of required government's provisions of any kind of reforms and amendment. Therefore, the discussion of status and scenario of representation and participation of women in Darjeeling Municipality becomes contextual with regard to the provisions of decentralisation reforms and 74th Constitutional Amendment Act (1992).

REPRESENTATION AND PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN DARJEELING MUNICIPALITY FROM 1994 TO 2015

At the initial stage of advancement, Darjeeling Municipality was placed in 1st and 2nd schedules in which Chairman was appointed by local government. During British period no adult franchise was adopted in election. But the first general election in accordance with the adult franchise was held on 23rd March 1964 (Pradhan, 2000). With the consensus of implementation of 74th Constitutional (Amendment) Act (1992) in West Bengal since 1993, the general election in party line was started in Darjeeling Municipality in which provision of women reservation was secured for the first time. But prior to the implementation of this Act, one woman representative was elected in 1965-70, which was merely coincidental. Later, in 1994-99 regardless of provision of reservation of seats for women, again only one woman member was elected with

reservation of 3.57 percent. But in 2000-04, out of total 32 member 12 women members were elected which constitutes 37.50 percent reservation. So in the gap of 35 years, the increase representation of women was 33.93 percent. That incredible increase of women representation was historically very significant. In later period i.e. from 2004-10, because of political turmoil in the hills, general election could not be held. But after the long chaos of administration of Darjeeling Municipality mainly because of Gorkhaland agitation, first by led by (GNLF) Gorkha National Liberation Front and then by (GJMM) Gorkha Jan Mukti Morcha, the new party GJMM finally form Board of Councillors in 2011. The administration of board was controlled by single party i.e. GJMM and is still continuing its functions. In this new Board of Councillors, out of total 32 members 14 women members have been represented with reservation of 43.75 percent. Therefore, in the span of 45 years the increment of women representation was 40.18 percent. In addition, on analysing the trend of women representation in Darjeeling Municipality, it has been found that in the span of 45 years, no women member has been elected as Chairman. It was only in 2000 when for the first time a woman Vice-Chairman was elected and in the recent tenure i.e. 2011 onwards out of seven members of Chairman-in-Council (CNC), three are women Councillors of which one is the head of Water Development Department.

From the above investigative analysis of records of representation of women before and after implementation of 74th Constitutional (Amendment) Act (1992), it is conspicuous that numerical representation of women is adequate as well as satisfactory. But mere numerical strength is not the required criterion which ensures an ideal participation. Therefore this chapter further deals with the analyses of recent level of participation of women as well as the related criteria for participation such as awareness on the concepts of decentralisation, provisions of 74th Constitutional (Amendment) Act (1992) and participation in decision making among the common citizens and 32 members of Darjeeling Municipality.

Brief Description of Analysis of Level of Women's Participation

The main objective of this study is to assess the decentralisation and the level of its impact on women participation in Darjeeling municipality. Here the participation means the complete involvement in the administrative affairs including the decision making at local level. For this purpose, the data collected through interview schedule was analysed, presented in tables and figures and the results were interpreted accordingly. The main intention of this study was to

explore the status of women's participation in decision making and other administrative processes after implementation of decentralisation reforms in Darjeeling Municipality. The present study being mixed-method, historical investigation, survey and analytical approaches were adopted. To know the historical background of Darjeeling Municipality journal, magazines and articles were searched as well as the common citizens and municipality members were interviewed. Statistically, there are two main variables on the basis of which data were collected. The variables were decentralisation reforms and women's participation. The data were collected through interview schedule in which some of the questions resulted suggestive, elaborate and comprehensive answers and were analysed separately.

The brief steps of analysis are as follows:

Demographic profile

Demographic profile of respondents specifying their age, gender, marital status, educational qualification, occupation and income were presented in simple numerical form and percentage.

Analysis and Interpretation of Responses

After fine judgment of the responses of interview schedule having open-ended questions the responses were categorised as '*positive*' and '*negative*' and presented in percentage and the mean number of respondent were also determined. In addition, individual response percentage, the mean number of respondents and total response percentage for positive and negative responses were calculated and also the results were shown by required diagram i.e. pie chart and bar diagram.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF COMMON CITIZEN

The age, gender, educational qualification, occupation and income are important attributes which describe the respondents. In terms of age, the highest (32.35 percent) and lowest (16.18 percent) percentage of respondents are with age of 31-40 years and 51 years and above respectively (Table 4.1). Similarly, the female respondents were more in number (54.41 percent) than the male (45.59 percent). As per the educational qualification, all kinds of respondents were interviewed. Only 2.94 percent respondents were illiterate, whereas remaining were literate having different levels of qualification. Among the literate respondents the highest number was that of the senior secondary passed i.e. 26.47 percent and graduate and post-graduate were 23.53 percent and 16.18 percent respectively. According to occupational status, maximum respondents were unemployed i.e. 38.24 percent and 17.65 percent were with government service and

remaining were self-employed (17.65 percent) and with private service (22.06 percent). Among the four categories of income groups 80.88 percent was with 500 – 25000 monthly income and 25001 – 45000 and 45001- 65000 groups constitute 14.71 percent and 4.41 percent respectively. There was not a single respondent who is with monthly income of 65001 and above.

Table 4:1: Demographic profile of respondents among the common citizens of Darjeeling Municipality, (n = 68).

| Sl. No. | ATTRIBUTES/ TRAITS | CATEGORY | NO. OF RESPONDENT | Percentage (%) |
|---------|---------------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| 1 | Age | 20 – 30 | 16 | 23.53 |
| | | 31 – 40 | 22 | 32.35 |
| | | 41 – 50 | 19 | 27.94 |
| | | 50 and above | 11 | 16.18 |
| 2 | Gender | Male | 31 | 45.59 |
| | | Female | 37 | 54.41 |
| 3 | Marital status | Married | 39 | 57.35 |
| | | Unmarried | 22 | 32.35 |
| | | Widow | 5 | 7.35 |
| | | Divorcee | 2 | 2.94 |
| 4 | Educational qualification | Illiterate | 2 | 2.94 |
| | | Primary | 7 | 10.29 |
| | | Secondary | 12 | 17.65 |
| | | Senior Secondary | 18 | 26.47 |
| | | Graduate | 16 | 23.53 |
| | | Post-graduate | 11 | 16.18 |
| | | Any other | 2 | 2.941 |
| 5 | Occupation | Unemployed | 26 | 38.24 |
| | | Self-employed | 15 | 22.06 |
| | | Govt. Service | 12 | 17.65 |
| | | Private Service | 15 | 22.06 |
| | | Any other | 0 | 0 |
| 6 | Income | 5000 – 25000 | 55 | 80.88 |
| | | 25001 – 45000 | 10 | 14.71 |
| | | 45001 – 65000 | 3 | 4.41 |
| | | 65001 & above | 0 | 0 |

Source: Field Survey

Educational qualifications, occupational status of female respondents

The women respondents among the common citizens are one of the important focus groups of this study. Therefore, evaluation of their educational qualifications and occupational status bear a unique significance in this study. These two attributes determine their social status and position, responsibility and participation in social and political sphere.

Among the total 37 women respondents, 86.49 percent are with educational qualification above secondary and up to post-graduate (Table 4.2). The women with illiterate and primary level of education constitute 10.81percent and 2.70 percent respectively. The highest number of them i.e. 29.73 percent are with graduate and 18.92 percent are with post-graduate level of qualifications.

Table 4: 2: Educational qualification and occupational status of women respondents among the common citizens, (n = 37).

| ATTRIBUTES | CATEGORY | NO. OF | |
|----------------------------------|------------------|-------------|---------|
| | | RESPONDENTS | percent |
| Educational qualification | Illiterate | 1 | 2.70 |
| | Primary | 4 | 10.81 |
| | Secondary | 4 | 10.81 |
| | Senior Secondary | 10 | 27.03 |
| | Graduate | 11 | 29.73 |
| | Post-graduate | 7 | 18.92 |
| | Any other | 0 | 0 |
| Occupation | Unemployed | 8 | 21.62 |
| | Self-employed | 10 | 27.03 |
| | Govt. Service | 5 | 13.51 |
| | Private Service | 14 | 37.84 |
| | Any other | 0 | 0 |

Source: Field Survey

According to the occupational status, 21.62 percent of the women from the common citizens were unemployed and remaining 78.38 percent were self-employed as well as with government

and private services. The major percentage (37.84 percent) was engaged in private service and government and self-employed constitute 13.51 percent and 27.03 percent respectively.

CATEGORISATION AND SUBSTANTIATION OF RESPONSES

There was no uniform pattern of responses or the answers obtained from the respondents (common citizens and municipality members). Some of them provided comprehensive answers while some presented very short responses such as yes, no, to some extent, not sure, not know, agree and disagree for the same questions. It was cumbersome to analyse the varied pattern of responses quantitatively. Therefore, such diverse responses were broadly categorised into “*Positive*” and “*Negative*” types. The bases of categorisation of responses are:

(i) All the correct answers as well as the responses such as ‘*Yes*’, ‘*Agree*’, ‘*strongly agree*’ ‘*I think so*’ ‘*to some extent*’ and ‘*to great extent*’ were considered as positive. Besides, the positive responses were supposed to indicate the high awareness level among the respondents about the given concepts and also the greater, productive and encouraging implications of the aspects from which questions were framed to achieve the research objectives.

(ii) All the incorrect answers as well as the responses such as ‘*No*’, ‘*Don’t know*’ ‘*No idea*’, ‘*Not agree*’, ‘*Strongly disagree*’ ‘*I don’t think so*’, ‘*not sure*’, ‘*not aware*’ and ‘*not to that extent*’ were considered as negative responses. In addition, due to lack of knowledge of the aspects from which questions were framed, some of the respondents even did not reply to several questions. So the nil answers or ‘*No response*’ were also considered as negative responses. The negative responses were hypothesised to indicate lack of awareness among the respondents about the given concepts and also lesser, ineffective and discouraging implications of the aspects from which questions were framed.

Analysis and Interpretation of Responses of Common Citizens

There are 20 open-ended questions for common citizens and the responses to them were categorised as ‘*Positive*’ and ‘*Negative*’ according to the above mentioned basis of response categorisation and substantiation. The 20 questions were so framed to know the awareness of four aspects related with the objectives of the study. These four aspects were – awareness about (i) *background of Darjeeling Municipality* (seven questions) (ii) *decentralisation reforms in Darjeeling Municipality* (five questions) (iii) *provision of 74th Constitutional Amendment*,

1992(four questions)and (iv) *women’s participation in local self government*(four questions). The analyses of responses to the questions pertaining to these four aspects are discussed below.

Background of Darjeeling Municipality

Total seven questions were asked to know the level of awareness about the general background of Darjeeling Municipality among the common citizens of the town (Table 4.3). Comparatively, more negative responses were obtained for this interview scheduled. The highest positive response (33) was obtained for the questions related with functions of Darjeeling Municipality, whereas, lowest positive response (4) was obtained for the question concerning the number of election held in Darjeeling since its inception. It can further be interpreted as follows –

- (i) The 41.18 percent of the common citizens know well about Darjeeling Municipality.
- (ii) Only about 14.71 percent of the common people knew the year of establishment of Darjeeling Municipality
- (iii) The 48.53 percent of the people were aware about the main functions that are performed by Darjeeling Municipality.
- (iv) The 42.65 percent of the people know the exact number of Municipal Wards in Darjeeling Municipality.

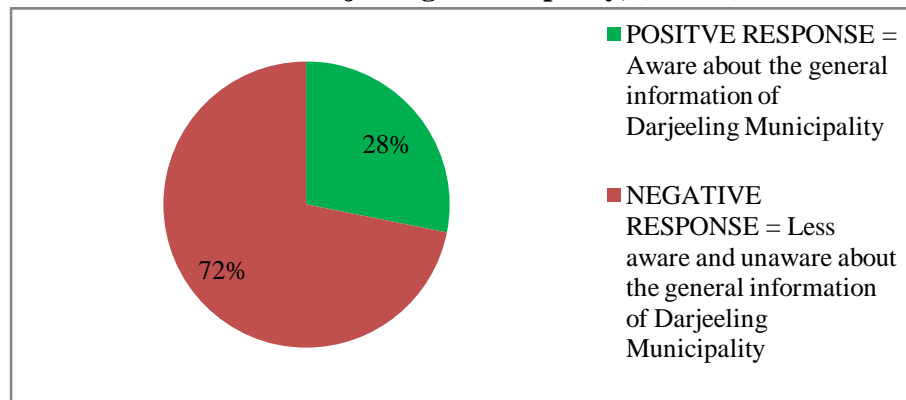
Table 4.3: Shows the result of analysis of responses obtained from the questions asked to the common citizens to know the awareness about the general background of Darjeeling Municipality. (n = 68)

| SL. NO. | QUESTIONS | RESPONSE TYPE | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|---------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|
| | | POSITIVE | % | NEGATIVE | % |
| 1 | What do you know about municipality? | 28 | 41.18 | 40 | 58.82 |
| 2 | When did the Municipal administration start in Darjeeling town? | 10 | 14.71 | 58 | 85.29 |
| 3 | What are the main functions that are performed by Darjeeling Municipality? | 33 | 48.53 | 35 | 51.47 |
| 4 | How many wards are there in Darjeeling Municipality? | 29 | 42.65 | 39 | 57.35 |
| 5 | How many members are there in Darjeeling Municipality? | 25 | 36.76 | 43 | 63.24 |
| 6 | How many women members are there in Darjeeling Municipality? | 5 | 7.35 | 63 | 92.65 |
| 7 | Till now how many election held in Darjeeling Municipality? | 4 | 5.88 | 64 | 94.12 |
| TOTAL | | 134 | -- | 342 | -- |
| TOTAL RESPONSE PERCENTAGE | | 28.15 | -- | 71.85 | -- |
| MEAN NO. OF RESPONDENT | | 19.14 | | 48.86 | |

Source: Field Survey

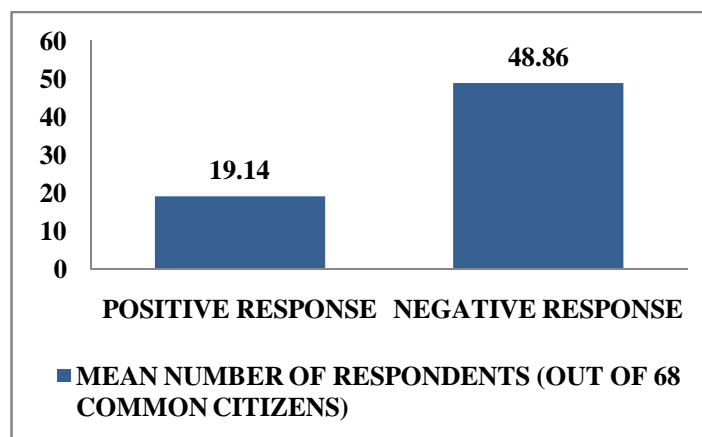
- (v) The 36.76 percent of the common people know the total number of representative members in municipality.
- (vi) Only 7.35 percent of the people know the exact number of present women members in Darjeeling Municipality.
- (vii) A very less number of people i.e. 5.88 percent of the people have the information about the number of municipal election held in Darjeeling since its inception.

Figure 4.1: Shows the overall response percentages of common citizens to the questions related to general information of Darjeeling Municipality, (n = 68).



In addition, in terms of total response percentage 28.15 percent and 71.85 percents common citizens provided positive and negative responses respectively (Figure 4.1). It means that, only 28.15 percent common citizens are aware about the general background of Darjeeling Municipality, whereas, 71.85 percent are either less aware or lack awareness.

Figure 4.2: Shows the mean number of common citizens who presented positive and negative responses to the questions related to the general information of Darjeeling Municipality, (n = 68)



It is also evident that, out of 68 respondents, the average numbers of respondents who presented positive and negative responses are 19.14 and 48.86 respectively (Figure 4.2).

Decentralisation reforms

To know the perception level of respondents on the idea of decentralisation and its implication in the context of governance of urban local bodies, five questions were asked to the common citizens of different wards of the Darjeeling Municipality Table 4.4. The highest positive responses (32) were obtained for the question concerning the meaning of decentralisation. Whereas, the lowest as well as equal numbers of positive responses were obtained from the questions relevant to the meaning of urban local bodies and opportunity of people's participation in developmental activities in local governance offered by decentralisation (question no. 2 and 3).

Table 4.4: Shows the result of analysis of responses obtained from the questions asked to the common citizens to know the perception and awareness level about the decentralisation reforms, (n = 68)

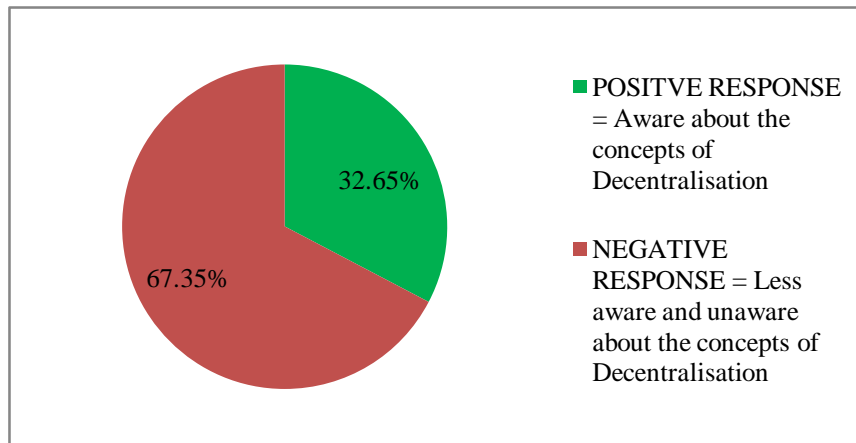
| SL. NO. | QUESTIONS | RESPONSE TYPE | | | |
|---------|---|-------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|
| | | POSITIVE | % | NEGATIVE | % |
| 1 | What do you mean by Decentralisation? | 32 | 47.06 | 36 | 52.94 |
| 2 | What do you mean by Urban Local Bodies? | 13 | 19.18 | 55 | 80.88 |
| 3 | Can decentralisation offer more people's participation in developmental activities in local governance? | 13 | 19.18 | 55 | 80.88 |
| 4 | Is the functioning of Darjeeling Municipality is relevant to decentralisation reforms? | 31 | 45.59 | 37 | 54.41 |
| 5 | Do you think that the decentralisation in Darjeeling Municipality has facilitated greater participation of people in decision making process? | 22 | 32.35 | 46 | 67.65 |
| | TOTAL | 111 | -- | 229 | -- |
| | RESPONSE PERCENTAGE | 32.6470588 | -- | 67.3529412 | -- |
| | MEAN VALUE OF RESPONDENT | 22.2 | | 45.8 | |

Source: Field Survey

It is further analysed and interpreted as follows

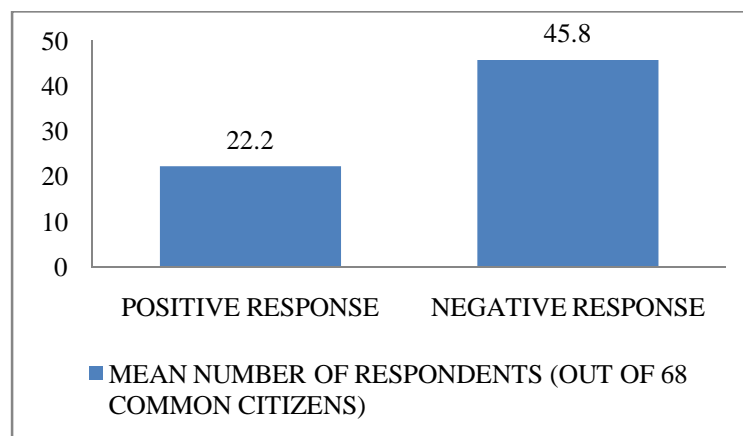
- (i) The 47.06 percent common citizens know the meaning theoretical and functional of decentralisation.

Figure 4.3: Shows the overall response percentages of common citizen to the questions related to Decentralisation Reforms, (n = 68).



- (ii) Only 19.18 percent people know the meaning of urban local bodies.
- (iii) Only 19.18 percent people were agreed that decentralisation can offer more people’s participation in developmental activities in local governance.
- (iv) The 45.59 percent of the common citizens of Darjeeling town believed that the functioning of Darjeeling Municipality is relevant to decentralisation reforms.
- (v) Only 32.35 agreed that the decentralisation in Darjeeling Municipality has facilitated greater participation of people in decision making process.

Figure: 4.4: Shows the mean number of common citizens who presented positive and negative responses to the questions related decentralisation reforms, (n =68).



In terms, of total response percentage, 32.65 percent and 67.35 percent common citizens presented positive and negative responses to the question related to decentralisation reforms

respectively (Figure 4.3). Therefore, it can be interpreted that 32.65 percent common citizens of Darjeeling town are aware about the concept of decentralisation reforms and their implementation, whereas, 76.35 percent are lacking the awareness. In addition, out of 68 common citizens, average numbers of respondents who presented positive and negative responses are 22.2 and 45.8 respectively (Figure 4.4).

Provisions of 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992

To investigate the level of understanding of provisions of 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 among the common citizens and their implication in Darjeeling Municipality four questions were asked (Table 4.5). Among them, highest number of positive responses (21) was obtained for the question concerning the awareness of provisions of 74th Amendment Act, 1992 among the member i.e. question number 1. Whereas, lowest number of positive responses were obtained from the question, pertaining to implementation of the Act in Darjeeling Municipality i.e. question number 2.

Table 4.5: Shows the result of analysis of responses obtained from the questions asked to the common citizens to know the level of perception of 74th Amendment Act, 1992 among them and their implication, (n = 68)

| Sl. No. | QUESTIONS | RESPONSE TYPE | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|----------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|
| | | POSITIVE | % | NEGATIVE | % |
| 1 | Are you aware of the provisions of 74 th Amendment Act, 1992 brought about by the decentralisation reforms? | 21 | 30.88 | 47 | 69.12 |
| 2 | Do the provisions of 74 th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 properly implemented in Darjeeling Municipality? | 3 | 4.41 | 65 | 95.59 |
| 3 | Are you aware of the provision of women reservation in Municipality / Local Governance? | 12 | 17.65 | 56 | 82.35 |
| 4 | What is the percentage of reservation for women in Darjeeling Municipality? | 18 | 26.47 | 50 | 73.53 |
| TOTAL | | 54 | -- | 218 | -- |
| RESPONSE PERCENTAGE | | 19.85 % | | 80.15 % | |
| MEAN NO. OF RESPONDENT | | 13.5 | | 54.5 | |

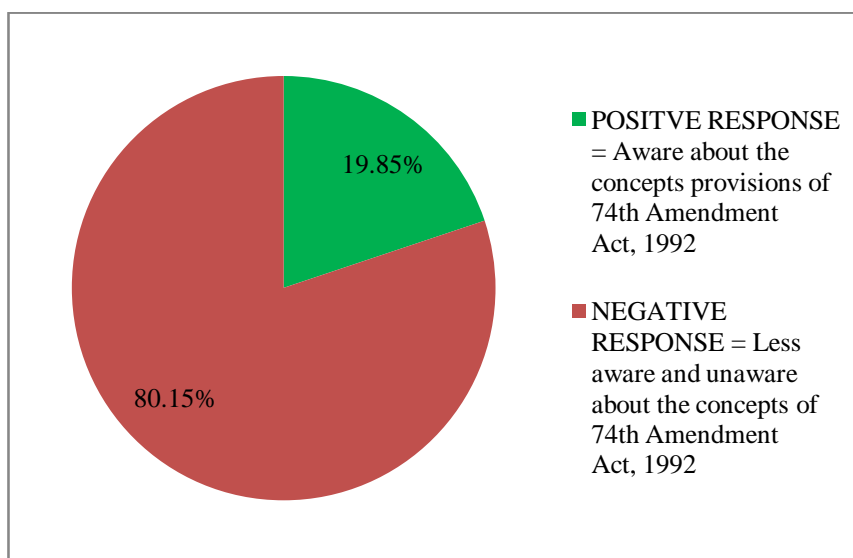
Source: Field Survey

The responses obtained in this regard were analysed as follows:

- (i) Among 68 common citizens, only 30.88 percent were acquainted with the concept of provisions of 74th Amendment Act, 1992.
- (ii) According to a huge majority i.e. 95.59 percent of the respondent, the provisions of 74th Amendment Act are not properly implemented in Darjeeling Municipality.
- (iii) Only 17.65 percent common citizens know the concept of the provision of women reservation in municipality and local governance.
- (iv) Only 26.47 percent people know the exact percentage of reservation for women in Darjeeling Municipality.

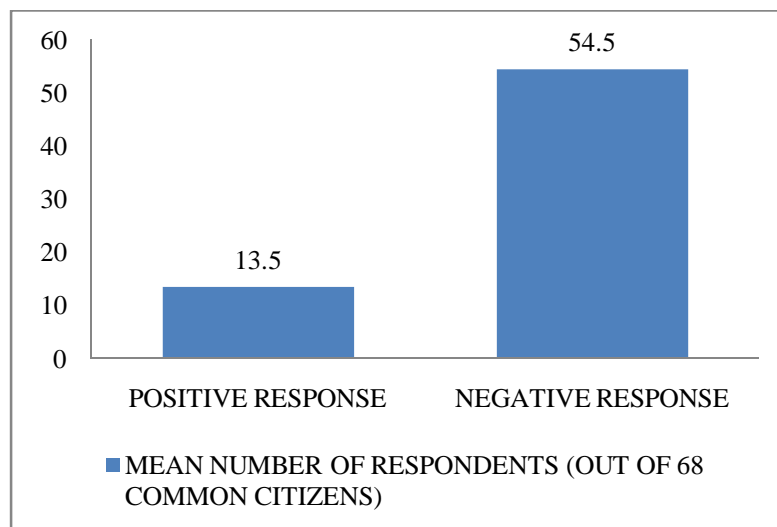
On comparing the total response percentages pertaining to the four questions, it is found that 19.85 percent and 80.15 percent respondents provided positive and negative responses respectively (Figure 4.5). So, it can be interpreted that out of 68 common citizens, 19.85 percent are aware about the provisions and implication of 74th Amendment Act, 1992 in Darjeeling municipality. Whereas, remaining 80.15 percent were uninformed about this Act.

Figure 4.5: Shows the overall response percentages of common citizens to the questions related to provisions of 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992, (n = 68).



Furthermore, out of 68 common people, on an average 13.5 and 54.5 have responded positively and negatively (Figure 4.6).

Figure 4.6: Shows the mean number of common citizens, who presented positive and negative responses to the questions related to the provisions of 74th Amendment Act, (n = 68).



Women’s Participation

The present status of women’s participation, its implications and perception related to the idea of women’s participation among the people of Darjeeling Municipality were investigated through four questions (Table 4.6).

Table 4.6: Shows the result of analysis of responses obtained from the questions asked to common citizens about women’s participation, (n = 68).

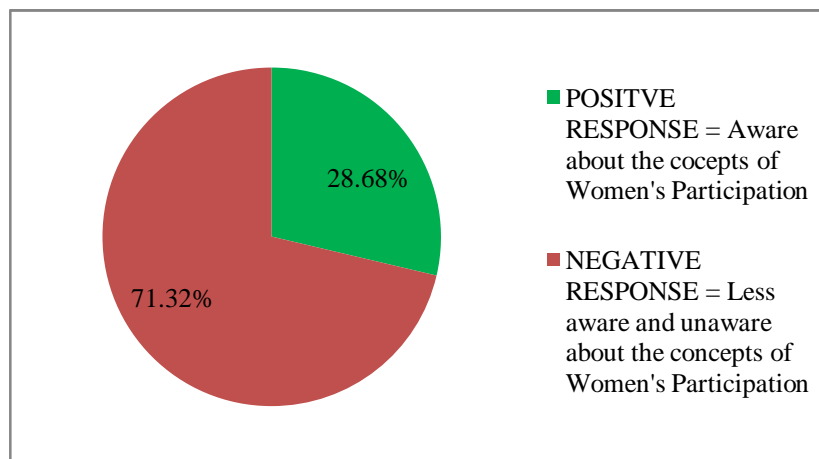
| Sl. No. | QUESTIONS | RESPONSE TYPE | | | |
|---------|--|----------------|-------|----------------|-------|
| | | POSITIVE | % | NEGATIVE | % |
| 1 | What do you mean by participation? | 24 | 35.29 | 44 | 64.71 |
| 2 | Do you agree that the decentralisation has paved the way for more participation of women in Darjeeling Municipality? | 15 | 22.06 | 53 | 77.94 |
| 3 | Do you believe that the participation in local self government is relevant to women empowerment? | 14 | 20.59 | 54 | 79.41 |
| 4 | Do you think that many of the women in Darjeeling town are interested to be represented in Municipal Governance? | 25 | 36.76 | 43 | 63.24 |
| | TOTAL | 78 | -- | 194 | -- |
| | RESPONSE PERCENTAGE | 28.68 % | | 71.32 % | |
| | MEAN NO. OF RESPONDENT | 19.5 | | 48.5 | |

Source: Field Survey

Among all, the highest number of positive response (25) was obtained for the question pertaining to the possibility that many of women in Darjeeling town are interested to be represented in Municipal Governance i.e. question number 4. Whereas, the lowest positive response (14) was obtained for the question concerned with relevancy of women empowerment to the participation in local governance. Besides, the obtained response data were further analysed as follows:

- (i) Out of 68 common citizens, 35.29 percent know the meaning of participation, whereas 64.71 percent do not know to the meaning and implication of participation.
- (ii) Only 22.06 percent were agree to the view that decentralisation has paved the way for more women participation in Darjeeling Municipality.
- (iii) Only 20.59 percent common citizen believed that the participation in local self government is significant to increase women empowerment.
- (iv) Out of 68 common people, 36.76 percent think that many of the women in Darjeeling town are interested to be represented in Municipality.

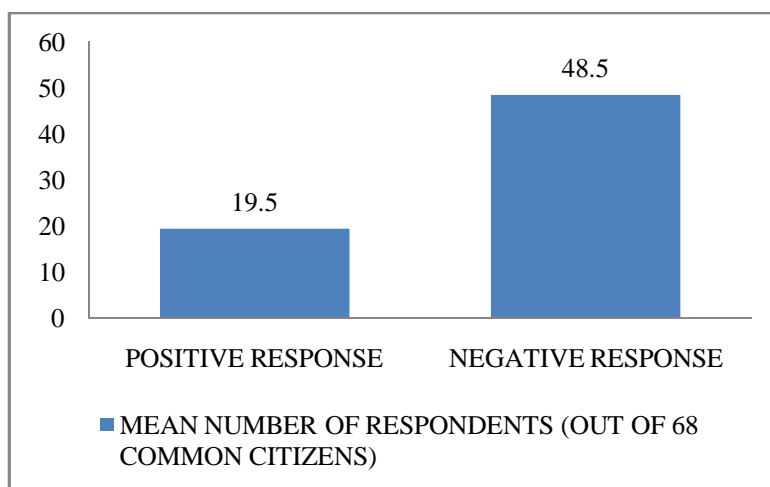
Figure 4.7: Shows the overall response percentages common citizens to the questions related to women’s participation, (n = 68).



On making overall comparison it is revealed that 28.68 percent and 71.32 percent provided positive and negative responses respectively (Figure 4.7). This can be interpreted that, out of 68 common citizens only 28.68 percent are acquainted with the concept of participation, relation between decentralisation and participation and its implication in women empowerment.

In addition, on an average, out of 68 common people who were asked the questions related to women’s participation, 19.5 and 48.5 provided positive responses and negative responses respectively (Figure 4.8)

Figure 4.8: Shows the mean number of common citizens, who provided positive and negative responses to the questions related to women’s participation, (n = 68).



DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF MUNICIPALITY MEMBERS

During survey and interview of elected members of Darjeeling municipality, only 27 members were available and interviewed. This is because, among the 18 male members one has resigned and two were sick and among the 14 women members two were out of station. Their demographic profile is presented in tabular form (Table 4.7). In terms of age, 51.85percent of the members belong to 31-40 years of age group and 50 years and above and 31-40 years constitute 29.63 percent and 18.52percent respectively. Interestingly, there is not a single member who belongs to age group of 20-30 years. As per the gender wise categorisation, there were 55.56 percent males and 44.44 percent females. The 92.59 percent members were married and unmarried and widows constitute equal percentage i.e. 3.70 percent. But there were no divorcee members. As to categorise the members according to literacy level no one is illiterate and 3.704percent were with primary level of education. The highest percentage i.e. 37.04 percent of members has qualified senior secondary and graduate and secondary constitute equal percentage i.e. 25.93percent. Interestingly, only 7.407 percent of them were with post-graduate qualification. According to occupational status, maximum percentage i.e. 44.44 percent were self-employed and 29.63 percent and 25.93 percent were in government service and private

service respectively. There was not a single member who is unemployed. All the members belong to two income groups. The maximum i.e. 96.3percent has monthly income of 5000-25000 and only 3.704 percent of them have monthly income of 25001-45000. But there were no members who belong to 45001-65000 and 65001 above income groups.

Table 4.7: Demographic profile of respondents among the members of Darjeeling Municipality (n = 27).

| Sl. No. | ATTRIBUTES/ TRAITS | CATEGORY | NO. OF RESPONDENT | PERCENTAGE (percent) |
|---------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | Age | 20 – 30 | 0 | 0 |
| | | 31 - 40 | 5 | 18.52 |
| | | 41 - 50 | 14 | 51.85 |
| | | 50 and above | 8 | 29.63 |
| 2 | Gender | Male | 15 | 55.56 |
| | | Female | 12 | 44.44 |
| 3 | Marital status | Married | 25 | 92.59 |
| | | Unmarried | 1 | 3.70 |
| | | Widow | 1 | 3.70 |
| | | Divorcee | 0 | 0 |
| 4 | Educational qualification | Illiterate | 0 | 0 |
| | | Primary | 1 | 3.70 |
| | | Secondary | 7 | 25.93 |
| | | Senior Secondary | 10 | 37.04 |
| | | Graduate | 7 | 25.93 |
| | | Post-graduate | 2 | 7.407 |
| | | Any other | 0 | 0 |
| 5 | Occupation | Unemployed | 0 | 0 |
| | | Self-employed | 12 | 44.44 |
| | | Government Service | 8 | 29.63 |
| | | Private Service | 7 | 25.93 |
| | | Any other | 0 | 0 |
| 6 | Income | 5000 – 25000 | 26 | 96.3 |
| | | 25001 – 45000 | 1 | 3.704 |
| | | 45001 – 65000 | 0 | 0 |
| | | 65001 & above | 0 | 0 |

Source: Field Work

Educational qualifications and occupational status of women members

The educational qualifications and occupational status of the women members are the key considerations by which we can assess their involvement and participation in the proposed arena. While considering their educational qualifications and occupational status some important facts were revealed (Table 4.8).

Table 4.8: Numbers and percentages of women members of Darjeeling municipality according to their educational qualifications and occupation, (n = 14).

| ATTRIBUTES | CATEGORY | NO. OF RESPONDENTS | |
|----------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|---------|
| | | | percent |
| Educational qualification | Illiterate | 0 | 0 |
| | Primary | 1 | 7.14 |
| | Secondary | 7 | 50 |
| | Senior Secondary | 5 | 35.7 |
| | Graduate | 1 | 7.14 |
| | Post-graduate | 0 | 0 |
| | Any other | 0 | 0 |
| Occupation | Unemployed | 0 | 0 |
| | Self-employed | 9 | 64.3 |
| | Govt. Service | 2 | 14.3 |
| | Private Service | 3 | 21.4 |
| | Any other | 0 | 0 |

Source: Field Survey

[*N.B.*: Only 12 women members were available at the time of interview but general information of 2 members was collected by short telephonic interview].

Regarding educational qualifications, among the 14 women members 13 members (92.86 percent) have the qualification above secondary level, of which 7 are with secondary education (50 percent). Only one member (7.14 percent) have passed graduate, which constitute the highest qualification among the group. Five (35.7 percent) of them are with senior secondary education and there are not a single illiterate members and even the members with post-graduate degree and other qualifications. On analysing the occupational status, 9 of them are self-employed i.e. 64.3 percent and 3 (21.4 percent) are with private service. Only 2 of them i.e. 14.3 percent are with government service.

Analysis and Interpretation of Responses of Municipality Members

There were 27 open ended questions for municipality members (Board of Councillors) and like that of common citizens responses to these questions were categorised as positive and negative with required judgments. These questions were framed to investigate the present status of implementation and awareness level of three major aspects which are related with the objectives of the study. The three aspects were – (i) Decentralisation reforms (ii) Provisions of 74th Constitutional Amendment Act (1992) and (iii) Women’s Participation.

Decentralisation Reforms

Like that of common citizens, the perception level among the representative members of Darjeeling Municipality on decentralisation reforms and its implication were probed by 5 questions (Table 4.9). Among the five questions, the question (question 3) pertaining to the function of decentralisation reforms for the empowerment of local government to support and advance gender equality and women right, procured the highest number positive response (13). Whereas, lowest number of positive response (8) was obtained for the question (question number 5) related to implication of decentralisation in Darjeeling Municipality. The responses obtained for all the five questions were analysed and interpreted as follows:

- (i) Among the 27 municipality members who were interviewed, 37.04 percent were able to define and describe decentralisation, whereas, remaining 62.96 percent members, did not could not responded positively.
- (ii) The 40.74 percent municipality members think that decentralisation reforms have facilitated the greater representation and participation of people in decision making process.
- (iii) As per the 48.15 percent of members, decentralisation reforms can empower local government to cater gender equality and women right.

Table 4.9: Shows the result of analysis of response obtained from the questions asked to municipality members about the decentralisation reforms and its implications, (n = 27).

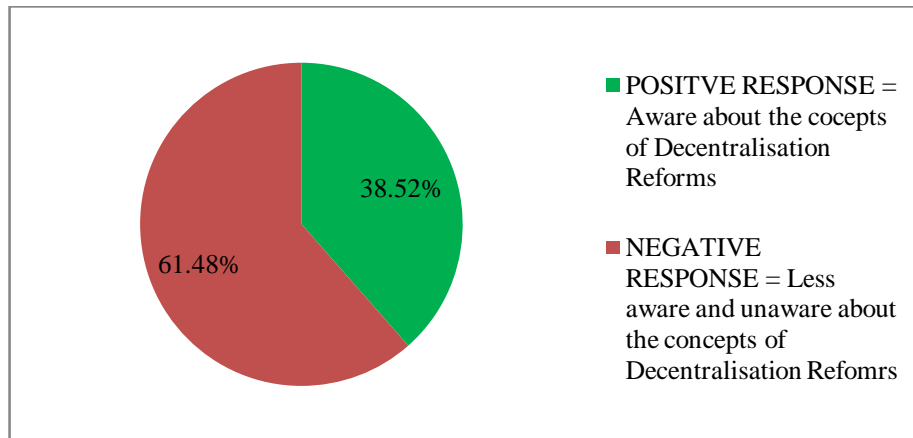
| Sl. No. | QUESTIONS | RESPONSE TYPE | | | |
|---------------------------------|--|----------------|-------|----------------|-------|
| | | POSITIVE | % | NEGATIVE | % |
| 1 | What do you mean by Decentralisation? | 10 | 37.04 | 17 | 62.96 |
| 2 | Do you think that decentralisation reforms have facilitated the greater representation and participation of people in decision making process? | 11 | 40.74 | 16 | 59.26 |
| 3 | Do you think that decentralisation reforms empower local government to cater gender equality and women right? | 13 | 48.15 | 14 | 51.85 |
| 4 | Do you think that decentralisation improve the representation of marginalised group in political arena? | 10 | 37.04 | 17 | 62.96 |
| 5 | Do you find any implication of decentralisation in Darjeeling Municipality? | 8 | 29.63 | 19 | 70.37 |
| TOTAL | | 52 | | 83 | |
| RESPONSE PERCENTAGE | | 38.52 % | | 61.48 % | |
| MEAN VALUE OF RESPONDENT | | 10.4 | | 16.6 | |

Source: Field Survey

- (iv) Only 37.04 percent members think that decentralisation can improve the representation of marginalised group in political arena.
- (v) Only 29.63 percent of the members find real implication of decentralisation in Darjeeling Municipality.

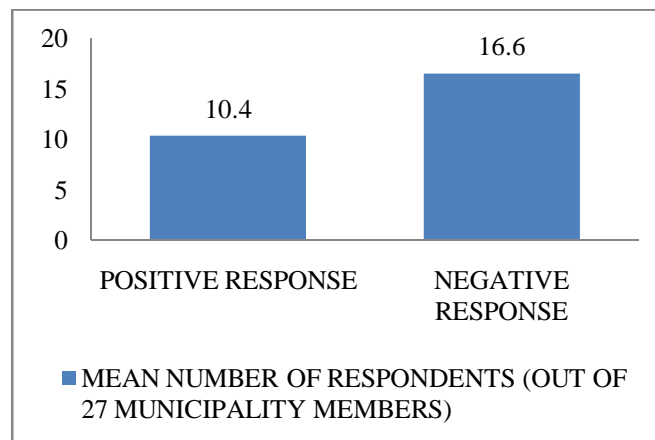
The total positive and negative percentages of responses to above questions are 38.52 percents and 61.48 percent respectively (Figure 4.9). So these figures imply that, only 38.52 percent members are informed about the concept of decentralisation reforms, their implication and even they can correlate the concept with women right and empowerment, gender equality and empowerment of marginalised section of society and whereas, 61.48 percent members lack these perceptions.

Figure 4.9: Shows the overall response percentages of municipality members to the questions related to decentralisation reforms, (n = 27).



Furthermore, among 27 members, the mean numbers respondents who presented positive and negative responses are 10.4 and 16.6 respectively (Figure 4.10).

Figure 4.10: Shows the mean number of municipality members who presented positive and negative responses to the questions related to the concept of decentralisation, (n = 27).



Provisions of 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992

To know the perception level of provisions of 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 among the members of Darjeeling Municipality and its implication and relevancy, five questions were asked (Table 4.10). The highest number of positive response (20) was obtained for the question which is examining the adequacy level of number of women members in municipality. While the question pertaining to the implementation of 74th Amendment Act in Darjeeling Municipality,

obtained less positive responses (7). The analysis of question wise response percentage is given below:

- (i) Out of 27 members, 29.63 percent have the knowledge of provisions of 74th Amendment Act, 1992.
- (ii) Only 25.93 percent respondents believed that the provision of 74th Amendment Act is properly implemented in Darjeeling Municipality.
- (iii) The 48.15 percent are aware about the provisions of women reservation in municipality.

Table 4.10: Shows the result of analysis of response obtained from the questions asked to municipality members about the provisions of 74th Amendment Act, 1992. (n = 27).

| Sl. No. | QUESTIONS | RESPONSE TYPE | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|---------------|-------|--------------|-------|
| | | POSITIVE | % | NEGATIVE | % |
| 1 | Are you aware of the provisions of 74 th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 brought about by the decentralisation reforms? | 8 | 29.63 | 19 | 70.37 |
| 2 | Do the provisions of 74 th Constitutional Amendment Act properly implemented in Darjeeling Municipality? | 7 | 25.93 | 20 | 74.07 |
| 3 | Are you aware of the provisions of women reservation in Municipality? | 13 | 48.15 | 14 | 51.85 |
| 4 | What is the present women reservation percentage in Darjeeling Municipality? | 10 | 37.04 | 17 | 62.96 |
| 5 | Do you think that representation of women is adequate in Municipality? | 20 | 74.07 | 7 | 25.93 |
| TOTAL | | 58 | | 77 | |
| RESPONSE PERCENTAGE | | 42.96 | | 57.04 | |
| MEAN VALUE OF RESPONDENT | | 11.6 | | 15.4 | |

Source: Field Survey

- (iv) The 37.04 percent members know the exact present reservation percentage of women in Darjeeling Municipality.
- (v) Very high percentage i.e. 74.07 percent believed that the present women representation in municipality is well adequate.

Besides, on calculating the total percentage of overall positive and negative responses, it is found that 42.96 percent and 57.04 percent members presented positive and negative responses respectively (Figure 4.11). So, these figures signify that, out of 27 members 42.96 percent are well known to the provisions of 74th Amendment Act and also have the understanding of their implication. But, remaining greater percentage i.e. 57.04 percent members are unaware about the proposed information.

Figure 4.11: Shows the overall response percentages of municipality members to the questions related to the provisions of 74th Amendment Act, 1992, (n = 27).

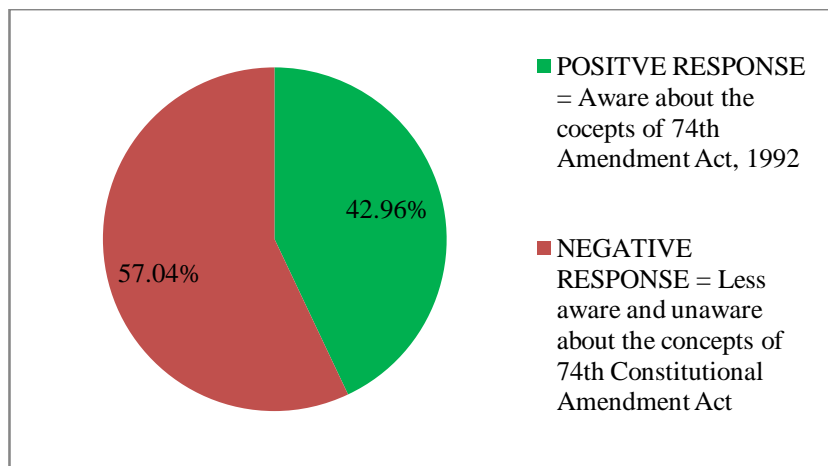
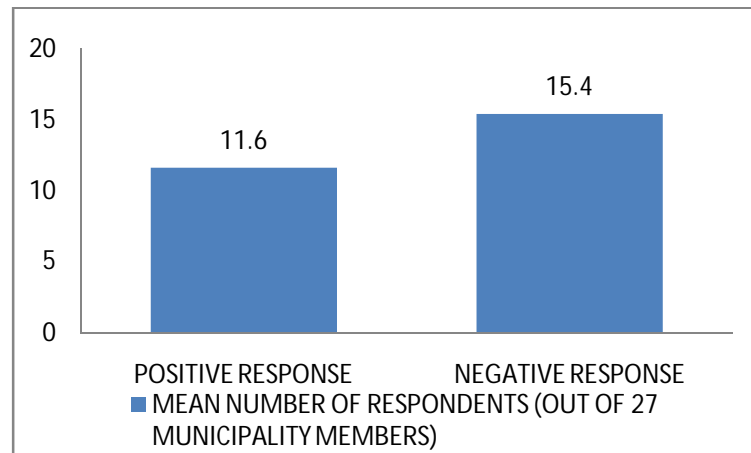


Figure 4.12: Shows the mean number of common citizens, who provided positive and negative responses to the questions related to women’s participation, (n = 27).



In addition, out of 27 members, the average numbers of respondents who provided positive and negative responses are 11.6 and 15.4 respectively (Figure 4.12).

Women's Participation

To investigate the awareness level of women's participation, its broad implications among the municipality members as well as the present level of women's participation its advantages and 18 questions were asked to 27 municipality members (Table 4.11). Among the 18 questions, the question (question number 7) related to provision of equal power and status to women as male members was responded with highest positive answers (23). At the same time, the question the question (question number 1) which was asked to differentiate the involvement and participation resulted lowest positive answers (8). The analysis and interpretation of response percentage of individual question is given below.

- (i) Out of 27 members, 40.74 percent have the proper understanding to differentiate involvement and participation.
- (ii) According to 37.04 percent members, participation in local government is helpful to empower the status of women in the community.
- (iii) The 59.26 percent members believed that women in Darjeeling town are interested to be represented in municipal governance.
- (iv) Less than 50 percent i.e. 44.44 percent members are agree that Darjeeling Municipality has good contribution to the participation of women in administrative system.
- (v) The 66.67 percent members agree that women members enjoy equal right as male members in policy formulation in Darjeeling Municipality.
- (vi) The 59.26 percent members agree that male and female members are given equal opportunity for implementing any policy in Darjeeling Municipality.
- (vii) According to 77.78 percent members, male and female members are given equal power and status in any of the issue concerned in the municipality.
- (viii) According to 55.56 percent members the representation of women is adequate and their presence in municipal governance is not just to ensure attendance for the fulfillment of reservation criteria.
- (ix) The 81.48 percent members agree that women councillors actively participate in Ward Sabha meeting.

- (x) The 70.37 percent members think that cultural norms and the perception of limitation of women's role in family domain is not the obstacle for the women's participation in municipal governance.
- (xi) The 59.26 percent members agree that in Darjeeling Municipality, the women participation has increased after 1994.
- (xii) As per the 62.96 percent members Darjeeling Municipality has become successful in increasing women participation.
- (xiii) According to 44.44 percent respondents, women's enhance participation in any governance structure and administration is a vital to advocate and readdress the issues of gender inequality in society.
- (xiv) The 77.78 percent members are agreed that the women in Darjeeling Municipality enjoy more autonomy and power related to decision making than any other places/ states of India.
- (xv) The 70.37 members are satisfied with the present level of women participation in Darjeeling Municipality.
- (xvi) According to 37.04 percent member women service provided by municipality is helpful in gender discrimination.
- (xvii) The 55.56 percent member think that sometimes the women councillors faced problems in order to perform their role more efficiently is primarily due to their gender identity.
- (xviii) According to 62.96 percent member, Darjeeling Municipality provides the opportunity to address the women issues, if any.

In addition, in terms of comparison made on the basis of total responses for 18 questions, 59.05 percent and 40.95 percent members provided negative and positive responses respectively (Figure 4.13). So it implies that 59.05 percent municipality members are has the proper understanding of the concepts of women's participation and its related implication and also support its relevancy in municipal governance. Contrarily, 40.95 percent members either do have the proper understanding level of concept of women's participation and its implications or are not satisfied with the provisions and present status of women's participation in Darjeeling Municipality.

Table 4.11: Shows the result of analysis of responses to the questions asked to municipality members about women’s participation and its relevant issues, (n = 27).

| Sl. No. | QUESTIONS | RESPONSE TYPE | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|---------------|-------|----------|-------|
| | | POSITIVE | % | NEGATIVE | % |
| 1 | What is the difference between involvement and participation? | 11 | 40.74 | 16 | 59.26 |
| 2 | Do you think that the participation in local self government is relevant to women empowerment? | 10 | 37.04 | 17 | 62.96 |
| 3 | Do you think that many of the women in Darjeeling town are interested to be represented in Municipal governance? | 16 | 59.26 | 11 | 40.74 |
| 4 | Do you agree that Darjeeling Municipality has contributed to the participation of women in administrative affairs? | 12 | 44.44 | 15 | 55.56 |
| 5 | In case of policy formulation do women member enjoy equal right as male colleagues in Darjeeling Municipality? | 18 | 66.67 | 9 | 33.33 |
| 6 | Do you think women are equally involved in implementing policy as their male colleagues in Municipality? | 16 | 59.26 | 11 | 40.74 |
| 7 | Do the women members enjoy equal power and status as male members in Darjeeling Municipality? | 21 | 77.78 | 6 | 22.22 |
| 8 | Do the women are properly represented and participated in Municipality or have simply ensured the attendance because of reservation? | 15 | 55.56 | 12 | 44.44 |
| 9 | Are the women councillors are actively participating in Ward Sabah Meeting? | 22 | 81.48 | 5 | 18.52 |
| 10 | Do you think that the cultural norms and perception that the women's role is limited to the family domain has become the obstacle to their participation in Municipality? | 19 | 70.37 | 8 | 29.63 |
| 11 | Is there any increase in participation of women in Darjeeling Municipality after 1994? | 16 | 59.26 | 11 | 40.74 |
| 12 | Has the Municipality in Darjeeling becomes successful in increasing women participation? | 17 | 62.96 | 10 | 37.04 |
| 13 | Do you think women's enhance participation in governance structure is key to readdress gender inequality in society? | 12 | 44.44 | 15 | 55.56 |
| 14 | Do you agree that women in Darjeeling Municipality enjoy more autonomy and power related decision making than other places / states of India? | 21 | 77.78 | 6 | 22.22 |
| 15 | Are you satisfied with the women participation in Municipality? If no, why? | 19 | 70.37 | 8 | 29.63 |
| 16 | Is there any reduction in gender discrimination in assessing women service provided by Municipality? | 10 | 37.04 | 17 | 62.96 |
| 17 | Do you think that sometimes the women councillors faced problems in order to perform their role more efficiently is primarily due to their gender identity as women? | 15 | 55.56 | 12 | 44.44 |
| 18 | Does the Municipality in Darjeeling provide the opportunity to address the women issues? | 17 | 62.96 | 10 | 37.04 |
| TOTAL | | 287 | -- | 199 | -- |
| RESPONSE PERCENTAGE | | 59.05 | | 40.95 | |
| MEAN VALUE OF RESPONDENT | | 15.94 | | 11.06 | |

Source: Field Survey

Furthermore, on calculating the mean number of members who responded positively and negatively, out of 27 members, 15.94 and 11.06 provided positive and negative responses (Figure 4.14). It means that, 15.94 have the proper level of understanding about the women's participation and its implication and also support the present status and scenario of women's participation in Darjeeling municipality. Whereas, remaining 11.06 members have contradictory views with this regard.

Figure 4.13: Shows the overall response percentages of municipality members to the questions related to women's participation, (n = 27).

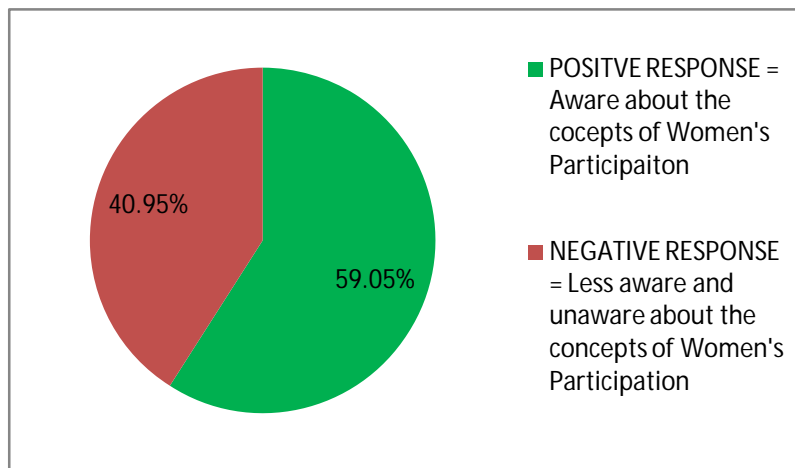
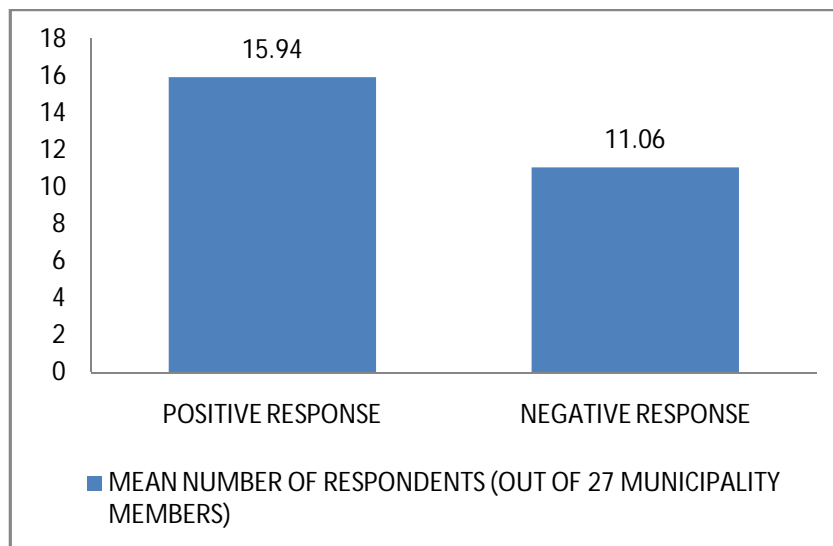


Figure 4.14: Shows the mean number of municipality members who presented positive and negative responses to the questions related to women participation, (n = 27).



Conclusion

To understand the present level of women's participation in Darjeeling Municipality with reference to Decentralisation Reforms the span of 1994-2015 was investigated. Since, the year 1994 is the landmark instance in which, the first municipal election of Darjeeling Municipality was held after the implementation of 74th Amendment Act, 1992 embodied in the form of West Bengal Municipal Act, 1993. Besides, the provision of women representation was very profoundly recommended in 74th Amendment Act with the reservation percentage of 33 percent. Therefore, the implementation of these Acts forms the basis of the present study. To achieve the proposed objectives quantitative method of investigation was adopted. Accordingly, 68 common citizens and 32 elected municipal members of Darjeeling Municipality were selected as the samples of this study. The 68 common citizens were selected randomly while, 32 municipality members were selected purposively. The interview scheduled was the main tool of this investigation. The separate interviews scheduled were used for common citizens and municipality members. In additions, necessary information in this regard was procured from required secondary sources of data (journal, article and records). There were 20 and 27 open-ended questions for common citizens and municipality members respectively. The questions were framed encompassing the four important aspects, which include- (i) General background of Darjeeling Municipality (ii) Concept of decentralisation reforms and implications in Darjeeling Municipality (iii) Concept and implications of 74th Amendment Act, 1992 in Darjeeling Municipality and (iv) Concept of women's participation and its implication in Darjeeling Municipality. The open-ended questions resulted the various forms of information, answers and responses, which were further analysed and expressed in the form percentages with diagrams. Importantly, both interview scheduled and the secondary data provided the information about the decentralisation reforms and its implication and also the status and trend of women representation in Darjeeling Municipality. It has been interpreted that the women representation in the span of 1994 to 2015 has been increased in Darjeeling Municipality but the actual participation by women mainly in decision making, policy formulation and implementation are debatable. So the findings in this regards are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Introduction

The decentralisation is one of the key concepts of this study. As to comment on the foundation and implementation of decentralisation, most of the developing and developed countries, after Second World War adopted decentralisation as an important mechanism for the improvement of public service delivery and extension of service coverage by increasing their accountability, encouraging and bringing the local public close to central machinery of governance. Theoretically, decentralisation recommends and encourages relocation of central authority and accountability to the sub-ordinate levels of government including quasi-independent government organisations and even the private sector. The decentralisation is a wide and vast notion that bears absolute scope in politics, administration, finance, and economy. Accordingly, it has been categorised into political decentralisation, administrative decentralisation, financial decentralisation and economic decentralisation. The political decentralisation is related with the pluralistic politics and representative governments. Due to greater influence in the policy formulation and implementation, it supports more democratisation of citizens and their representatives. It also ensures the distribution of powers among the elected authorities. The administrative decentralisation is based on the principle of subsidiarity. It provides the transfer of accountability of planning, financing, management and execution of projected public functions from centre to its subordinate agencies that may be governmental, semiautonomous civic authorities or corporations etc. There are three forms of administrative decentralisation-deconcentration, delegation, and devolution. The deconcentration reallocates authorities and responsibilities of decision making, finance and management among the different subordinate strata of central government. The delegation facilitates the central government to transfer accountability of decision-making and administration of public functions to semi-autonomous organisations accountable to central government. Through devolution, the quasi-autonomous components of local government with corporate status like municipality and will get the authority for decision-making, finance and management. In this system, local governments have

definite and legally distinguished geographical boundaries, over which they execute authority for performing public functions. While mechanising the decentralisation process, any local sub-agencies of government, private, semi-autonomous, corporate, or government accounted organisations must have required amount of revenues. Such revenues may be produce either from central government or respective responsible authority. So a kind of decentralisation concerned to revenue distribution, collection and mobilisation must be operative along with the political and administrative decentralisation, which is called as fiscal decentralisation. The fiscal decentralisation involves certain finance related mechanisms such as self-financing, co-financing, revenue increase through different taxes, transfer of revenues from central to local government. Another kind of decentralisation is economic or market decentralisation, whose main components are deregulation and privatisation, which are usually, accompanied by economic liberalisation and market development policies.

Another key concept of the present study is participation. In its simple form participation is the people's involvement in economic, social, cultural and political process that affects their lives (UNDP, 1999). The decentralisation and participation are mutually related concepts. For successful decentralisation certain extent of participation by citizens and local agencies is inevitable. On one hand, decentralised planning enhances and encourages the participation of local people and citizens. On the other hand, the least citizen participation in the deprived environment can be monitored and minimised through proper decentralisation planning by providing proper opportunities at grass-root level. So the mechanism of citizen participation could be taken as the measure to evaluate decentralisation and vice-versa. There are many ways of participation by the common citizens, which mainly involves participation in politics, administration, finance, management etc. In all such kind of participation decision making is a vital means which determine the outcome of participation.

In Indian context, inception of decentralisation planning can be traced back to 1882, when Resolution of Local Self Government was passed for the first time. Since then, various committees and commissions were formed and resolved to arrive at the final stature to the decentralisation planning (Craig Johnson, 2003). Among them, The Royal Commission on Decentralisation 1907, The Local Finance Enquiry Committee 1949-51, The Taxation Enquiry Commission 1953-54, The Committee on Training of Municipal Employees 1963, The Rural-Urban Relationship Committee 1963-66, The Committee on Ministers on Augmentation of

Financial Resources of Urban Local Bodies 1963, The Committee on Service Condition of Municipal Employees 1965-68 and The National Commission on Urbanisation 1988 (Arora and Goyal, 1996). Later in 1993, the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Act (1992) granted constitutional status to both Rural and Urban Local bodies, which was a major accomplishment in the procedure of decentralisation reforms.

The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act (1992) provides for devolving administrative powers, responsibilities and financial liabilities to municipalities and lays out a democratic framework (Murthy and Mahin, 2015). Moreover, the Act also provides for the authority for the creation of several local administrative bodies such as Ward Committees, District Planning Committees, and Metropolitan Planning Committees for purposeful decentralisation planning. The Act further enshrines the municipal governance and its subordinate bodies to function as the agencies for the accomplishment of decentralisation planning by encouraging the local citizens (especially the women and weaker sections) for more participation.

While talking about the implementation of decentralisation reforms through mechanising the local self governments (both rural and urban) in West Bengal, it is one of the few pioneer states in India which keenly followed and adopted resolutions of every related commission and committee. But it was only after getting the constitutional status by rural and urban local bodies respectively by the provisions of 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts, the settings of decentralisation planning has been changed into present forms in many Indian states including West Bengal. In the context of West Bengal, regarding the functioning urban local bodies, the provisions of 74th Constitutional Amendment Act (1992) have been adopted but some minor changes have been made through the resolution of West Bengal Act (1993). Those changes were made to accommodate the prevailing setting of the state, since the state of West Bengal encompasses the varied geographical areas (from plains to hill) with their own local provisions, which require area specific administrative procedure. On the basis of nature of urban extension the 74th Amendment Act provides for specifying various municipal bodies like Municipal Corporation and Municipality on the basis of nature of urban extension but the Municipal Act (1993) has the provision of specifying the notified area (Khawas, 2003). The Notified Area and the related Committee can be formed in the area which does not realize all the necessary criteria laid down for the establishment of a municipality or it may be organised for newly developing towns or areas (Census of India, 2011).

The present research has focused the analysis of decentralisation and its impact on women's participation specifically in Darjeeling Municipality which is one of the oldest urban local bodies in West Bengal situated in the northernmost district of Darjeeling. Initially Darjeeling district was an exclusive administrative body declared as "Non-Regulation District", whose constituent areas were acquired by the British from Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan through different treaties and settlements. The present day Darjeeling town was established as a sanatorium in 1835 under the leadership of Dr. Arther Campbell (a member of Indian Medical Service) which was later declared as Darjeeling Municipality in 1850 (Census of India, 2011). Later, the district with rapid population and economic growth sustained by revenues generation based on Tea and Cinchona plantation, timber and tourism has been shaped into present form. Now, there are four sub-divisions Darjeeling Sadar, Kalimpong, Kurseong and Siliguri. In addition, there are five Urban Local Bodies in the district, consisting of three Municipalities – Darjeeling, Kurseong and Kalimpong, one Notified Area-Mirik and Siliguri Municipal Corporation (Census of India, 2011). As per the population growth of the Darjeeling Municipality, in 1901 it was 16924 and now the town is housed with 115568 people (Darjeeling Municipality, Census, 2011).

Although the pace of urbanisation is not so rapid (Bhutia, 2015), presently there are 32 wards in Darjeeling Municipality, with almost equal percentage of male and female population (Census, 2011). It is evident from various studies that Darjeeling Municipality is such an urban hub occupied by utmost number of marginalised group and women population. In addition it is also the centre for school level of education having number of distinguished schools as well as some colleges. In terms of literacy status females are equally qualified as male citizens. The women populations in Darjeeling with proper level of education are ever fascinated to accept any kind of reforms related to their livelihood including education, occupation, business, work etc. Therefore, the analysis and investigation of present status of women representation and participation in Darjeeling Municipality has become inevitable with regard to provisions of decentralisation reforms proposed by the Indian Government. The present study has particularly focused the level of women's participation of Darjeeling Municipality after implementation of 74th Constitutional Amendment Act (1992) i.e. from 1994-2015.

SUMMARY

The main purpose of this study was to find out the status of decentralisation and women's participation in Darjeeling Municipality since 1994 to 2015. The study was delimited to common citizens from different wards and municipality members of Darjeeling Municipality. As to summarise the progression of present investigation, the entire study was divided into five chapters. The first chapter dealt with the background of the study, research problem, and framework of analysis, literature review, scope and objectives of the study, research questions and methodology. The second chapter described the conceptual analysis of decentralisation and participation, their interrelationship, implications in the global, Indian as well as in the local contexts, solely focusing the Urban Local Bodies. In the Indian scenario, the provisions of women's participation in Municipal Governance, embodied in 74th Constitutional Amendment Act (1992) have mostly been highlighted with their theoretical framework and practical implications and related shortcomings. Further, in chapter three process of urban decentralisation in West Bengal orienting its historical perspectives and present status were described. More importantly, the historical background, the evolution of Municipal Governance of Darjeeling Municipality were vividly analysed and interpreted. The chapter four underscored the past and present status of decentralisation reforms in Darjeeling Municipality and its implications with regard to the women's participation in urban governance emphasising the decision making practice in any relevant matters and issues. This chapter being the key section of the study to achieve the proposed objectives of the study was further supported by evidences extracted from different primary and secondary sources. In addition, data obtained through interview schedule were further analysed to investigate the decentralisation reforms and its implication in women participation, particularly in Darjeeling Municipality. In this way, findings were obtained according to the anticipated objectives.

MAJOR FINDINGS

The major findings emerging in this study are presented here.

(i) According to age, among the common citizens, highest numbers of respondent (27.94 percent) was of 41-50 years, while lowest numbers of respondent (16.18 percent) was of 50 years and above. Similarly, among the municipality members, the maximum (51.85 percent) and minimum (18.52 percent) respondents were of 41-50 years and 31-40 years respectively.

(ii) According to gender, in case of common citizens, more number (54.41 percent) of respondents was female and among the municipality members, male respondent was greater in number (55.56 percent).

(iii) As per the marital status, maximum respondents among the common citizens were married (57.35 percent). In case of municipality members, more number of respondents was married (92.59 percent) while unmarried and widows constitute equal number (3.70 percent).

(iv) On the basis of educational qualification, among the common citizens, senior secondary passed respondents were greater in number (26.47 percent) and primary passed and illiterate constitute the equal (2.94 percent). In case of municipality members, senior secondary passed respondents were more in number (37.04 percent) while 3.70 percent respondent was primary passed.

(v) Occupation wise, among the common citizens, maximum number of respondent (38.24 percent) was unemployed and minimum number (17.65 percent) of them was government service holder. In case of municipality members, more number of respondents was self-employed (44.44 percent) and minimum number of respondents was in private service (25.93 percent). In terms of income, among the common citizens, highest number (80.88 percent) and lowest number (4.41 percent) of them were with monthly income of 5000-25000 and 45001-65000 respectively. While in case of municipality members, maximum (96.30 percent) and minimum (3.704 percent) percentages of them were with 5000-25000 and 25001-45000 monthly income.

(vi) On the basis of educational qualification, only among the females from the common citizens, the highest (29.73 percent) and lowest (2.70 percent) percentages of them were with graduate degree and illiterate respectively. While, among the female individuals from municipality members, the highest (35.70 percent) were with senior secondary level of education. Whereas, there were equal percentage (7.14 percent) of female members with primary and graduate level of education, which constitute the lowest percentage among the group.

(viii) As per the occupational status, only among the females from the common citizens, the maximum (27.03 percent) and minimum (21.62 percent) number of them were self-employed and government service holder. While in case of female individuals among the municipality

members, the highest (64.30 percent) and lowest (21.4 percent) numbers of them were self-employed and with private service respectively.

Findings about decentralisation reforms and their participation

The 32.65 percent common citizens and 38.52 percent municipality members of Darjeeling Municipality were found to be more informed about the concept of decentralisation reforms and their implications in urban governance including Darjeeling Municipality. On the other hand 67.35 percent common citizens and 61.48 percent municipality members were found to be less informed in the given aspects.

Only 19.85 percent common citizens and 42.96 percent Darjeeling Municipality members were aware about the concept of provisions of 74th Constitutional Amendment Act (1992) and their implication in urban governance including Darjeeling Municipality. Contrarily, 80.15 percent common citizens and 57.04 percent municipality members were found unaware about the present aspects.

Only, 28.68 percent common citizens and 59.05 percent Darjeeling Municipality members were found to be acquainted with the concept of women's participation and its implications in Darjeeling Municipal Governance. At the same time, 71.32 percent common citizens and 40.95 percent municipality members were found to be less acquainted with the perception of women's participation and its implications. So, comparatively, the municipality members showed more awareness about the women's participation and its implications than the common citizens.

The common citizens and municipality members, who lack the knowledge of decentralisation, could not correlate the concept of decentralisation reforms and provisions of 74th Constitutional Amendment Act with participation, gender equality, women empowerment and women right.

In Darjeeling Municipality, the provision of women representation by either normal quota or reservation in accordance with 74th Constitutional Amendment Act has been followed and well adopted. In 1965-70, the women representation was only 3.57 percent and later in 2000-2004, it was increased to 37.5 percent. So, in the span of 30 years i.e. 1970-2000, the increase of women representation was 33.93 percent. From 2011 onwards the representation of women in numeric form is 43.75 percent. So, in the span of 46 years i.e. 1965-2011, the increase in women representation is 40.18 percent. In addition, in the span of 46 years (1965-2011), not a single woman Chairman/Chairwoman has been selected. It was only in the term of 2000-04 a woman

Vice-Chairman was elected and in the recent term i.e. 2011 onwards three women Councillors in the Chairman-in-Council consisting of total seven members and one of the women Councillors is Head of Water Development Department.

The 70.37 percent members are quite satisfied with the existing women representation. But 7.41 percent women members insisted and encouraged that the women must come in forefront because of their capabilities and should get the chance to be elected in normal quota excluding reservation.

All 15 male members are very much satisfied with the women representation in municipal governance and insisted that the present level of women representation is well enough and they do not find the need to increase it any further.

Although numeric representation of women is well adequate, their actual participation in administrative affairs particularly in decision making is not satisfactory. All the women members regularly attend the Ward Sabha Meeting but according to 4 women members (14.81 percent), all of them cannot deliver their ideas and decisions regarding any matter to the board; if placed, may not easily be acknowledged. So the participation of women in decision making is not satisfactory. Many factors were found to be responsible for this. There are various factors which control the present status of women's participation.

Lack of awareness of concepts and provisions of different acts related with the functioning of Municipal Governance among the members (both male and female). This may be either due to lack of required competency or ignorance among the members as either lack of interest to know the bureaucratic know-how.

The lack of eligibility, particularly the deficiency of sufficient understanding of the functioning of urban local bodies because of lack of required educational qualification to have the understanding of the theories and laws governing the local government.

The Board of Councillors is formed by single party, so any members with high political influence remain in dominating level in any kind of decision making process.

According to the interview responses from the women members, it is found that women are incapable to make a significant input and involvement on municipal affairs considered in the meeting. In this instance, it is detected that lack of required educational qualifications, expertise and awareness cannot be acknowledged as convincing reasons for futile participation of women

members. The important reason accounted by many of the women councillors in this regard is the dominating role played by the male members.

It is recognised that there is a general feeling of dissatisfaction among some women members regarding their involvement and participation in municipal affairs.

The 66.67 percent and 59.26 percents municipality members viewed that the women are given equal right and power as male members in policy formulation and implementation respectively. Moreover, the acquisition of such right and power by women members depends upon their competence and capability.

Additional findings

The feeling of discredit and dishonour for the members who have joined the board as per the reservation was observed among the normal members who have been elected in normal quota. They considered that the members in reserved quota are ill-experienced and incapable for municipal governance.

Though gender inequality and discrimination are not prevalent in the community and also most of the women members are capable and well qualified to be the representatives in local self government, due to selection of members according to recommendation of party line appropriate candidates may not get the opportunity to be represented. Therefore, the selected women candidates may not vocalised the major issues related with decision making.

Most of the members particularly women were found to have feeling of resentment regarding the fund allotment for the development of their ward. According to them due to single party domination only the politically influential and much preferred members get the priority for receiving development fund. This inequality in fund distribution was found to deteriorate general harmony and coordination among the members, consequently the members turned to be less enthusiastic and less passionate for the involvement and participation.

Even the municipality members were found to be less satisfied with the government's negligence and delay in disbursing fund and required financial support. Some of the members reported that they are unable to offer mandatory assistance to some of the beneficiary including pensioners, widow, women, schedule caste and tribe, who are supposed to get the privileges through government schemes and projects. So they believe that deficit of required fund has hampered the operation of overall developmental projects and which has debarred them from being involved

and participation in municipal affairs. So at this instance, from the idea of members who correlate the lack of participation with fund deficiency, a paradoxical presumption can be made that 'more fund, more development and more participation', which actually indicates the lack of perception about the real meaning of participation among the members.

Conclusion

In Darjeeling Municipality, there is huge increase of numeric representation of women (from 3.57 percent to 43.75 percent) in the span of 1994-2015. But qualitatively, the real and optimum participation of women in decision making, policy formulation and implementation is still lacking. This is evident from the fact that during the span of 21 years (1994-2015) only one Vice-Chairman was elected in the term of 2000-2004 but still today no women Chairman has been elected. The synchronisation of decentralisation reforms and women's participation has theoretically and officially been established but pragmatically it is still lacking in Darjeeling Municipality. The various reasons of impediments in this regard include lack of knowledge, required qualifications, competencies, experiences, and attitudes among the people of Darjeeling Municipality including the authority, members and common citizens. Besides, there may be some political factors which are responsible for hindering the issue of decentralisation and participation, the mention of which actually is out of scope of the present research.

The decentralisation reform has also brought the positive and striking impact on the Darjeeling Municipality. As it is said that decentralisation and participation shared reinforced relationship because it tended to give more representation to the more marginal and weaker section of the society, to increase the participation there needs to be some form of decentralised process and vice-versa. In Darjeeling municipality which is the main study area of present study the participation of women in urban governance has increased only because of decentralised reform brought under the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act 1992 which was incorporated by the West Bengal State Government by passing the West Bengal Municipal Act of 1993 that come into force in Darjeeling municipality in 1994 which increase the provision of reservation of 33 percent seats for women. This suddenly paved the way for the women of Darjeeling and built a platform to participate in urban governance to have their say and contribution with regard to decision-making, policy formulation and implementation. Though the decentralisation and participation have been synchronised in Darjeeling municipality, it has been successful in providing the

women a position to participate in governing the urban areas. Although participation has increased but the quality of participation of women is still lacking when it comes to in the decision-making process because most of the women member were not satisfied regarding the opportunity they were getting as for the making of the decisions and policies. The lack of proper training, knowledge regarding governance has been acting as the limiting factor for their quality or active participation despite their interest and desire for participation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the findings of the present study, following recommendations are projected for reconsiderations which might be supportive on the ground of policy making and future researches in urban governance of Darjeeling town related with decentralisation and women's participation.

- It is evident from the present study that there is good representation of women (43.75%) in Darjeeling Municipality. So to facilitate them to be participated in decision making process, they must be provided to be elected as the Chairman of the municipality and various departments. Therefore, in every alternative year chairman can be elected on the basis of gender.
- There is almost equal male and female population in Darjeeling Municipality and also the homogeneity of competency and educational qualification among them. So, the mandatory reservation percentage for women needs to be increased from 33 percent to 50 percent as many other Indian states have already brought the reform in this regard. The proposed effort in this aspect has more anticipated potentiality, which obviously provides more opportunities for the women to be represented and participated in decision making, policy formulation and implementation local governance.
- At the time of election or nomination of members for the Municipality, political influence and participation of a candidate must not be considered as vital criteria. More importantly, the requisite capabilities like experience, social attitude, qualifications, etc should be regarded as mandatory criteria.
- Members once elected or nominated, should be given the chance to complete the workshop and training to make them acquainted with the administrative know-how of Municipal Governance.

- The data of this study draw attention to the need for policy makers to be alert of credibility of common citizens about their voting right and responsibility to elect the appropriate representative. So an appropriate strategy should be developed that help the common public to easily elect the appropriate candidate from their ward, who can actively participate in every administrative affair in Municipal Governance.
- Every decision and actions related to any important issues liable to municipal authority must be transparent to all the councillors including women members. Besides, every councillor must be aware about the accountability to their duties and responsibilities and also they must be provided the prospects of being so by the authority.
- It has been perceived that, in Darjeeling Municipality, the decentralisation has been adopted just to ensure its theoretical and official implication. The women councillors are supposed to perform assigned and spelled-out charge and job. In real sense it is a form of delegation and women councillors seems to be the actors of delegation. So, the real devolution of power and authority must be sustained to the members.
- The Network of Elected Women Councillors is such a forum by which councillors from different municipalities discuss and resolve the subjects and problems concerned with the urban local governance. So all the councillors in Darjeeling Municipality must be encouraged and facilitated to unite with NEC, so that any important issues in their concerns can be vocalised and justified appropriately.
- With reference to the present study further comparative investigations can be conducted in the aspects of decentralisation and participation on the basis of gender and literacy. In addition, the role and participation of women from marginalised section with reference to the decentralisation reforms can be analysed. Furthermore, role and participation of women in the government's explicit mission proposed for Local Governance.

Contributions of the Study

This study is concerned with the decentralisation and women's participation in Darjeeling Municipality and has contributed to the body of knowledge in the following manner:

- Firstly, the study has highlighted the trend of women representation in Darjeeling Municipality in the span of time i.e. 1994 – 2015, which has been presented in the form of percentage. This is very much helpful to know and prepare statistical record of concerned aspect.

- It has underscored the present status of women participation in Darjeeling Municipality, including its accomplishment and shortcomings.
- The study also has highlighted the demographic variables of common citizens and municipality members. These can be used to make the difference and comparison between common citizens and municipality members on the basis of important variables such as gender, literacy level, occupation and income.

Suggestions for the future study

With reference to the present study further investigation can be conducted in the aspects of decentralisation and participation. The present research can be continued with the aspects of gender and literacy level differences among the common citizens as well as among the municipality members. The comparative studies of participation of women from unreserved and reserved or marginalised sections or with other municipal bodies can be conducted. The study of direct impact of decentralisation on women's participation can be conducted quantitatively, with the method of hypotheses testing. The status of women's role and participation in the different government's missions and schemes proposed for the Urban Governance also can be investigated.

Limitations of the study

The present study has the following limitations. In terms of limitation of geographical boundary of study area, it has covered only 32 wards of Darjeeling Municipality. Secondly, due to time constraint and some methodological limitations, the small sample of hundred (100) respondents was considered as the population of this study.

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