

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Before an attempt to review available relevant literature it should be mentioned again that research on women's political participation, either in the mass or elite levels, has been mainly restricted to the Western countries. Bulk of the literature related to the subject above comes from the United States and European nation. Little research along these lines have been done in developing countries. A review of both the literature available from the West and the developing countries has helped in the design of the present study.

#### 2.1 Studies Conducted in Bangladesh

There is a dearth of general and research studies on women in politics in Bangladesh. Most of the general studies in this respect have been done by Najma Chowdhury.<sup>1</sup> Her studies are basically descriptive and center around the picture of women's underrepresentation in the various levels of the political system. In an article "Women in Politics in Bangladesh",<sup>2</sup> Chowdhury describes women's participation in electoral politics based on information on electoral performance of women politicians in the parliamentary elections of 1979. She also highlights the limitations of women's representation through reserve seats in the Parliament and precisely describes how this system undermines women's effective roles as legislators. The analysis provides important insights on the nature and problems of women's participation in

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<sup>1</sup> Najma Chowdhury, "Women in Politics", paper presented at the seminar and workshop on Women in Politics organised by Dhaka Business and Professional Women's Club, Dhaka, January 28-29, 1994; "Women's Participation in Political Process in Bangladesh: Nature and Limitations", in Women in Politics in Bangladesh, Lecture series - 2, (Dhaka: Center for Women and Development, 1985); "Women in Politics in Bangladesh", in Situation of Women in Bangladesh, (Ministry of Social Welfare and Women's Affairs, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, May 1985).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

representative bodies in Bangladesh.<sup>3</sup> Chowdhury's other two articles, "Women in Politics"<sup>4</sup> and "Women's Participation in Political Process in Bangladesh: Nature and Limitations"<sup>5</sup> present a general description of women's participation in the different levels of the political process in Bangladesh. But the former provides more and recent information on women in electoral politics. As such, it offers data on women's participation and performance in all previous parliamentary elections since 1973 to 1991. But there is not much information on women in party organisation. Nevertheless, all three articles are the major sources of general information and explanations of women in politics in Bangladesh.

There exists an almost complete lack of empirical research on women in the national politics of Bangladesh. Except for Jahan's study,<sup>6</sup> there has not been, to the researcher's knowledge, any research conducted in Bangladesh on women in national level politics. Jahan's study was based on male and female Members of Parliament (MPs) of 1973. She had investigated their socio-economic background, political careers and their perceptions of the major problems facing the country. In each aspect, Jahan found clear differences between men and women MPs.

Jahan observed that compared to their male colleagues, the women MPs more frequently originated from educated and urban-oriented families. The fathers of all fifteen women MPs she studied belonged to the government service or had professional jobs, whereas the majority of the fathers of male MPs were found to be cultivators.<sup>7</sup> There was no indication in Jahan's analysis about the occupation of the fathers of the

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., see pp.262-263.

<sup>4</sup> Chowdhury, 1994, op.cit.

<sup>5</sup> Chowdhury, 1985, op.cit.

<sup>6</sup> Rounaq Jahan, "Women in Politics: A Case Study of Bangladesh", in Asian Women in Transition, eds., Sylvia A. Chipp and Justine J. Green (The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1980).

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p.230.

rest of the male MPs. However, based on the finding of occupations of fathers Jahan assumed an urbanised background and different socialisation experience for women MPs. Except for the fathers' occupations, the author did not use any other criteria to determine the urbanised background of women MPs.

The same study further showed that although women MPs were more frequently highly educated compared to their male counterparts, they were not as affluent as them and their occupational status was also lower.<sup>8</sup> Jahan also observed that women MPs differ from men with respect to their political experiences. This will be discussed later in more detail.

In the same study, Jahan analysed women's political participation at the level of citizens by using data obtained from a survey of voters during the 1973 national elections in Bangladesh. Jahan interviewed male and female voters in an urban constituency and only male voters in a rural constituency. However, based on survey results, the study suggested that "apart from the act of voting, men and women generally do not participate in any other electoral or political activities."<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, Jahan found some differences between men and women in their levels of political information and their involvement in various types of political actions. Urban women appeared to be less informed about politics and less interested in election politics than urban men. Interestingly they were found to be better informed than rural men on general political issues, but their interest in elections was lower than that of rural men. Jahan observed that men, both urban and rural, took more interest in elections, were more partisan and voted in larger numbers than women. Thus Jahan concluded that "in Bangladesh, men, both urban and rural, are more active participants in politics than women."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., pp.229-231.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p.237.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p.240. For details, see pp.237-240.

However, although Jahan's study provided valuable information on the political participation and behaviour of women at the mass level, there was no information from rural women who constitute the overwhelming majority of the country's female population in this respect. Moreover, the study showed differences between urban men and women in political participation and behaviours, but it did not say to what extent these differences were due to demographic differences between urban men and women.

There are two available studies conducted on women political elites at the local level in Bangladesh. A study by Qadir and Islam<sup>11</sup> made on 191 nominated women members of 66 Union Parishads (UP, the lowest tier of local government in Bangladesh) examined their socio-economic backgrounds and role performance as UP members. The study showed the higher socio-economic background of these women and also highlighted their passive and less effective roles as members of UP.

Another study was made by Alam<sup>12</sup> on six women chairmen of Union Parishad in 1987. Like Qadir and Islam, Alam also observed the privileged family backgrounds of women chairmen. What did not appear in Jahan, Qadir and Islam's studies, but appeared in Alam's study, was the political background of the families. There was much evidence in Alam's study to indicate that the political background of the families is a vital factor which propel women towards political participation.

## 2.2 Studies Conducted Outside Bangladesh

Apart from the above mentioned studies pertaining to women in Bangladesh politics, a brief review of selected studies on women's political involvement in other

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<sup>11</sup> Sayeda R. Qadir and Mahmuda Islam, Women Representative at the Union Level (Dhaka: Women for Women, 1987).

<sup>12</sup> Bilquis Ara Alam, Women in Local Government: Profile of Six Chairmen of Union Parishads", Journal of Local Government, 10 (Dhaka: National Institute of Local Government, January-June 1987):79-93.



countries is deemed to be useful for the writer to gain a better insight. It is noted that the development of much scholarly interest in women political elites is recent in the literature of political science. Studies in political behaviour, those published during the 1960s and subsequently, started discussion on gender-differences in political behaviour, especially with regard to political socialisation and political participation.<sup>13</sup> Some political scientists such as Milbrath, Verba and Nie, Almond and Verba documented the lower political participation of women without attempting much explanation.<sup>14</sup>

Milbrath dealt with the gender variable very briefly. He only pointed out that women are less psychologically involved in politics, less participatory, and less active in civic groups than men.<sup>15</sup> In "Participation in America", Verba and Nie noted gender differences in political participation but they paid little attention to the gender variable rather placed more emphasis on the "race-gaps" in political participation.<sup>16</sup>

In their five nations study "The Civic Culture", Almond and Verba noted that men showed higher frequencies and higher intensities than women in all the indices of political orientation and activity that they employed.<sup>17</sup> They observed that women's political participation varies across the countries. American and British women participate more in politics than German, Mexican or Italian women. The researchers attributed the reason for more political orientation and frequent participation by

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<sup>13</sup> For example, Fred I. Greenstein, Children and Politics (Yale University Press, 1965); Lester W. Milbrath, Political Participation, (Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1965); Dean Jaro, Socialization to Politics (New York: Praeger Publishers, Inc., 1973).

<sup>14</sup> Milbrath, *Ibid.*, pp.135-136; Sidney Verba and Norman H. Nie, Participation in America, (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), pp.95-101; Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, The Civic Culture (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963), pp.337-401.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.135-136.

<sup>16</sup> Verba and Nie, *op.cit.*, pp.95-101.

<sup>17</sup> Almond and Verba, *op.cit.*, pp.387-400.

American and British women to the relative "openness" of the American and British family.<sup>18</sup>

Before 1960s, Duverger<sup>19</sup> described women's underrepresentation in elite level politics in his well known cross-national report. The author discovered the proportion of women in political leadership and what influence the women leaders exercise in different countries. Based on the available evidence and information, Duverger reached the conclusion that the "general feature of women's direct part in political leadership is its extreme smallness.....the proportion of women playing a real part in political leadership is ridiculously small".<sup>20</sup>

However, since the late 1960s, when the first scholarly efforts to explore women's political behaviour began to appear in print, considerable emphasis has been placed on women's participation in elite politics, such as holding party, elective or appointive public offices. Many differing explanations have been offered as to why women are underrepresented in the ranks of political officials. It is necessary to look at these explanations first, because most past studies have been centered around these explanations. There are three major explanations:

- (a) Political socialisation explanation;
- (b) Situational explanation; and
- (c) Structural explanation.

(a) Political Socialisation Explanation

In probing gender differences in the political behaviour of adults, one widely offered explanation is the gender-differences in childhood political socialisation

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p.387.

<sup>19</sup> M. Duverger, The Political Role of Women, (Paris: UNESCO Report, 1955).

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., pp.75-76.

patterns.<sup>21</sup> It is seen to account for gender related differences in political attitudes and behaviour. The political socialisation explanation focuses upon the way in which females and males come to believe that politics is 'a man's game', and not an appropriate pursuit for women. The essence of this explanation is the differences in political participation between males and females originate from the female's childhood socialisation, which leads her to be less interested in politics.

This explanation points out that political habits form before individuals reach adulthood and that gender-differences in adult participation patterns result from the same dynamics of childhood learning as other gender differences.<sup>22</sup> Childhood socialisation defines women's roles and concerns as limited to the private sphere of home and that assigns the public sphere, within which politics is located, to men. Since political orientation arises within the context of already established differential roles and norms of behaviour of men and women, both sexes perceive politics as inconsistent with feminine roles and behaviour. Consequently, women become less active at either citizen or elite level in the political realm.

Although the above explanation has been much highlighted by the recent researchers, some political scientists have long acknowledged this constraint. While stressing the impact of socialisation, Lipset argued that "the sheer demands on a housewife and mother mean that she has little opportunity or need to gain politically relevant experience."<sup>23</sup> Campbell et al., found that "men are more likely than women

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<sup>21</sup> For extensive discussion, Greenstein, op.cit., pp.107-27. Also see, Fred I. Greenstein, "Sex-Related Political Differences in Childhood", *Journal of Politics*, 23 (1961):353-371.

<sup>22</sup> For details, Anthony M. Orum, Roberta S. Cohen, Sherri Grasmuck and Amy Orum, "Sex, Socialization and Politics", *American Sociological Review*, 39 (April 1974):197-209; Robert E. Dowse and John A. Hughes, "Girls, Boys and Politics", *British Journal of Sociology*, 22 (March 1971): 54; Lynne B. Iglitzin, "The Making of the Apolitical Women: Femininity and Sex-Stereotyping in Girls", in *Women in Politics*, ed., Jane S. Jaquette (John Wiley and Sons, 1974), pp.25-36. An extensive bibliography and commentary on this subject appears in Wilma Rue Kraus, "Political Implications of Gender Roles: A Review of the Literature", *American Political Science Review*, 68 (December 1974):1706-23.

<sup>23</sup> S.M. Lipset, *Political Man* (New York: Anchor Books, 1963), p.206.

to feel that they can cope with the complexities of politics and to believe that their participation carries some weight in the political process."<sup>24</sup> Lane explained the lower electoral involvement of women by pointing out that:

"The culture emphasizes.....politically less competent images of women which reduce their partisanship and sense of political effectiveness and define a less active political role for them. The common association of politics with power and ascendance tends to exclude women from many political roles.<sup>25</sup>.....a woman enters politics only at the risk of tarnishing, to some extent, her femininity".<sup>26</sup>

Hedlund et al.,<sup>27</sup> suggest that the socialisation explanation encompasses two distinct perspectives for the lack of women in political office. One type of socialisation effect is seen in the development of lower levels of political interest by women. A second effect of political socialisation is seen in the beliefs developed among boys as well as girls that females are less well suited and prepared to hold political offices.

Moreover, research dealing with socialisation as an explanatory variable contends that normative behaviour internalised by women limits their aspirations for public office. In a study of political party leaders in the United States, Jennings and Farah noted striking gender-differences in ambition and aspiration. Women political leaders were found to have less aspiration for higher public offices than men.<sup>28</sup> Jennings and Farah explain this fact by stating that cultural norms with other factors i.e., the dual

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<sup>24</sup> Angus Campbell, P.E. Converse, W.E. Miller and D.E. Stokes, The American Voter (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1964), p.259.

<sup>25</sup> Robert E. Lane, Political Life (New York: Free Press, 1959), p.216.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p.213.

<sup>27</sup> Ronald D. Hedlund, Patricia K. Freeman, Keith E. Hamm, Robert M. Stein, "The Electability of Women Candidates: The Effects of Sex Roles Stereotypes", Journal of Politics, 41 (1979): 516.

<sup>28</sup> M. Kent Jennings and Barbara G. Farah, "Social Roles and Political Resources: An Over-Time Study of Men and Women in Party Elites", American Journal of Political Science, 25 (August 1981): 479-80.

demands of homemaking and career and less opportunities, exert a dampening influence on the political life expectancies of women. Welch also argues that socialisation to the gender-role reduces the number of female candidates for public offices.<sup>29</sup> All these studies substantiate the notion of socialisation constraint.

(b) Situational Explanation

This explanation describes how motherhood and the family responsibility constrain women's political ambition by preventing them from more active political pursuits and gaining relevant political experiences.<sup>30</sup> According to this view, domestic and mothering responsibilities, that keep a woman housebound, limit her interest and actual involvement in politics. She has less opportunities to learn of and discuss political affairs and less time and freedom to undertake political work. The situational explanation, however, highlights the immediate situation that constrains women's political participation. It attributes gender-differences in political behaviour to the circumstances and life experiences of adulthood.

A number of studies show that the situational factor negatively affects women's participation in the political elite level.<sup>31</sup> Politically active women continuously face the strain or actual conflict of being a wife and mother and simultaneously a full-time politician. The difficulty of meeting these dual demands dissuades women from

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<sup>29</sup> Susan Welch, "Recruitment of Women to Public Office: A Discriminant Analysis", Western Political Quarterly (September 1978): 372-380. Also see, Vickey Randall, Women and Politics (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1982), p.62.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*; Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, Political Women (New York: Basic Books, 1974), p.17.

<sup>31</sup> Virginia Currey, "Campaign Theory and Practice - The Gender Variable", in A Portrait of Marginality, eds., Marianne Githens and Jewel L. Prestage, (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1977); Kirkpatrick, *op.cit.*; Virginia Sapir, The Political Integration of Women, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983); Marianne Githens, "Women and State Politics: An Assessment", in Political Women, ed., Janet A. Flammang (London: Sage Publications, 1984), pp.47-48; Emily Stoper, "Wife and Politician: Role Strain Among Women in Public Office", in A Portrait of Marginality, *Ibid.*, pp.320-337.

participating in elite politics. Lynn and Flora<sup>32</sup> go further and claim that there is societal punishment for women who deviate from traditional female roles, and that this punishment affects the pattern of female political participation.

Many researchers have discovered how the situational problem constrains women's early start in politics. A host of studies conducted in America show that women delay the start of their political careers until their children are grown up and thus they enter political life at more advanced ages than their male counterparts.<sup>33</sup> All these studies conclude that a later start hinders the political advancement of women as they suffer from lack of seniority and difficulty of establishing a strong political base.

Sapiro<sup>34</sup> finds in her study that family and political life create conflict for both men and women who hold public office, but their ways of resolving this conflict are different. When conflict might arise, women appear to choose in favour of their families and men in favour of their political ambition.

### (c) Structural Explanation

The structural explanation outlines the women's situation in terms of their location within the structure of educational and occupational opportunities which potentially limit their availability for the political elite. It contends that women participate less than men largely because they are less likely to be found in those

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<sup>32</sup> Naomi Lynn and Cornelia B. Flora, "Societal Punishment and Aspects of Female Political Participation", in A Portrait of Marginality, op.cit., pp.139-149.

<sup>33</sup> Kirkpatrick, op.cit., pp.38, 55; Emmy E. Werner, "Women in Congress: 1917-1964", Western Political Quarterly, 19 (1966): 16-30; Freda Gehlen, "Women in Congress: Their Power and Influence in a Man's World", Transaction, 6 (1969): 36-40; Edmond Costantini and Kenneth H. Craik, "Women as Politicians: The Social Background, Personality and Political Careers of Female Party Leaders", Journal of Social Issues, 28 (1972):217-236; Susan G. Mezey, "Does Sex Make a Difference? A Case Study of Women in Politics", Western Political Quarterly, 31 (December 1978):492-501; Irene Diamond, Sex Roles in the State House, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977). Chapter 3; Marcia M. Lee, "Why So Few Women Hold Public Office: Democracy and Sexual Roles", Political Science Quarterly, 91 (Summer, 1976): 297-314.

<sup>34</sup> Virginia Sapiro, "Private Costs of Public Commitments or Public Costs of Private Commitments? Family Roles Versus Political Ambition", American Journal of Political Science (May 1982): 269-274.

categories of people who participate in politics: the employed and highly educated in particular.<sup>35</sup> Randall argues that attitude, skills and experience compatible with holding political office originate from employment in specific kinds of occupations, such as the brokerage profession, law and business. Women's relative absence in these professions largely accounts for the small number of women in the political elite.<sup>36</sup>

However, Welch<sup>37</sup> advances the "eligible pool" proposition to explain the structural problem. She contends that an important reason for women's exclusion from political or public office is their severe underrepresentation in the "eligible pool" of the population from which candidates for public office are drawn. This "eligible pool" is mainly determined on the basis of educational and occupational status. Welch conceives women's underrepresentation in the "eligible pool" as the outcome of socialisation. Women are not socialised to pursue those occupations such as business, law and other professions from which most officials are recruited.

The three explanations discussed above have dominated most scholarly discourse and are among the main reasons why there are few women political elites. Over the past years a number of studies have appeared about women who have overcome the barriers and attained political offices. A continuing question is seen in most of the studies whether women political elites have different characteristics and behaviour patterns from their male counterparts. Some studies examine the ways in which these women differ from women in the general population and how closely they resemble males in the political elite in various aspects. In past studies the most frequently discussed aspects related to women political elites were their socio-economic

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<sup>35</sup> Susan Welch, "Women as Political Animals? A Test of Some Explanations for Male-Female Political Participation Differences", *American Journal of Political Science*, 21 (November 1977): 727-728.

<sup>36</sup> Randall, *op.cit.* p.89. Also see Marianne Githens, "Spectators, Agitators and Lawmakers: Women in State Legislatures", in *A Portrait of Marginality* *op.cit.*, pp.189-201.

<sup>37</sup> Welch, 1978. *op.cit.*, pp.372-373.

backgrounds, the influence of family in their political socialisation, gender-differences in the socio-economic background and career patterns. These are also the main research concerns of the present study.

### 2.3 Research Related to Political Socialisation and Family Background

Past research on political participation and the recruitment of party and public officials suggest a number of factors which motivate certain peoples to be active in politics and facilitate their intensive participation. Socio-economic background factors and political socialisation are the most frequently suggested variables related to participation in politics.<sup>38</sup> In the political socialisation context, the role of socialisation agents, the timing and circumstances of the development of an interest in politics and the entrance into political activity have gained much attention from researchers.

However, political socialisation research seeks to investigate the development of political attitudes that shape adult political behaviour. In the process of political socialisation, scholars identify mainly three agents as important: the family, the school and the peer group. Political scientists differ on the relative influence of these agents. Harvey asserts that the peer group appears to be the most important of all socialisation agencies during adolescence.<sup>39</sup> On the other hand, Beck argued that there are no other agents which can compete with the parents in their impact on a wide variety of political orientations.<sup>40</sup> Almond and Verba concluded from their five-nation study that the work group was most influential, but they supported that the individual's early

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<sup>38</sup> For a good review, William E. Wright, ed., Comparative Study of Party Organisation (Ohio: Chalmers E. Murnll Publishing Co., 1971), pp.101-111.

<sup>39</sup> T.G. Harvey, "Computer Simulation of Peer Group Influence on Adolescent Political Behaviour: An Exploratory Study", American Journal of Political Science, 16 (November, 1972): 601.

<sup>40</sup> Paul A. Beck, "The Role of Agents in Political Socialization", in Handbook of Political Socialization, ed. Stanley A. Renshon, (New York: The Free Press, 1977), p.139.



socialisation experiences in the family exerts an important influence upon his later political attitudes and participation.<sup>41</sup>

However, research studies have failed to show that the school in general, and the curriculum in particular, have much influence on the political learning of students. In a study of three Boston high schools, Litt found that civic courses had little impact upon students' attitudes toward political participation.<sup>42</sup> A comparison of civics course graduates and nongraduates was undertaken by Jennings et al.,<sup>43</sup> for a national sample of high school seniors in the United States. Across a wide variety of political orientations, very little differences were found between two groups. When Jennings et al. investigated the student sample as a whole they found not one single case out of the ten examined in which the civics curriculum was significantly associated with political orientations. Thus the evidence presented in this study demonstrates that the effect of school upon the political socialisation of students is scarce and inconclusive. Almond and Verba also found that the impact of school on political socialisation varies across the countries and the evidence in this respect is not conclusive.<sup>44</sup>

However, in spite of disagreement on the relative roles of the different agents which most affect political socialisation, there exists little dispute among the scholars regarding the role of the family in political learning. Considerable efforts in the study of political socialisation have centered around the role of family and its prime importance has been thoroughly documented in a host of studies.<sup>45</sup> Much evidence has

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<sup>41</sup> Almond and Verba, *op.cit.*, pp.323-374.

<sup>42</sup> Edger Litt, "Civic Education Norms and Political Introduction", *American Sociological Review*, 28 (February 1963): 69-75.

<sup>43</sup> M.K. Jennings, K.P. Langton and R.G. Niemi, "Effects of the High School Civics Curriculum", in *The Political Character of Adolescence*, M. Kent Jennings and Richard G. Niemi, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), pp.181-206.

<sup>44</sup> Almond and Verba, *op.cit.*, p.361.

<sup>45</sup> Herbert H. Hyman, *Political Socialization*, (New York: The Free Press, 1959), pp.51-70; Richard E. Dawson and Kenneth Prewitt, *Political Socialization* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1969), pp.105-26, 99; K.P. Langton, *Political Socialization*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp.21-51; James C. Davies, "The Family's Role in Political Socialization", *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 361 (September 1965): 10-19.

been gathered to support the contention that political tendencies are established early in life, and that a child's basic attitude towards politics is well developed by the time he reaches adolescence.<sup>46</sup> The type of attitudes is largely family determined. Sigel argues that as the child absorbs the family's value system, philosophy and status, it absorbs the political values that go along with it.<sup>47</sup> Beck and Jennings uphold the family's position as an agent of political socialisation in the following words:

"The accident of birth places the individual into a particular family political environment, which nurtures political (or apolitical) outlooks early in life and locates the individual in a socio-political setting that may last a life time. Other individuals may have profound influence on a person's political outlooks, but none of them is typically credited with as much influence as the child's parents."<sup>48</sup>

In the political socialisation literature proclivity for political participation is considered an "inherited" trait.<sup>49</sup> The most obvious channel to active political life is identified by Prewitt as family inheritance - transmission of political interest from parents to children.<sup>50</sup> Prewitt reviews a number of variables (social stratification, skill requirements, personality, and socialisation) related to political leadership recruitment patterns. He stresses the importance of political socialisation variables in forming his hypothesis of "overexposure" to political stimuli and emphasises the socialisation role of the family.

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<sup>46</sup> R.D Hess and J.V. Torney, The Development of Political Attitudes in Children, (Chicago: Aldine, 1967), p 110; David Easton and Robert D. Hess, "The Child's Political World", Midwest Journal of Political Science, 6 (1962):229-46.

<sup>47</sup> Roberta S. Sigel (ed.), Learning About Politics (New York: Random House, 1970), pp.104-5

<sup>48</sup> Paul A. Beck and M. Kent Jennings, "Family Traditions, Political Periods, and the Development of Partisan Orientations", Journal of Politics, 53 (August 1991): 742-743.

<sup>49</sup> Kenneth Prewitt, "Political Socialization and Leadership Selection", Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 361 (1965): 106-107.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 96-111.

The literature on political recruitment also has given considerable importance to the level of political activity in the home environment where political activists grew up.<sup>51</sup> Bowman and Boynton argued that the development of skills essential to political activity will be facilitated if the child sees these skills practiced by members of his home environment.<sup>52</sup> Thus, the political activity of the parents contributes to the development of political competence in their children. Research on the political socialisation of political activists substantiate this notion through providing evidence that they more frequently come from politically concerned and active families.<sup>53</sup>

Many studies show this trend to be true in the case of women political elites. In a study made on the political socialisation of thirty-six elite women drawn from different countries, Kelly and Boutilier noted that they were more likely to receive participatory impulses from the home environments.<sup>54</sup> In her notable work "Political Women", Kirkpatrick revealed that American women state legislators grew up in politically active families.<sup>55</sup> She found that forty percent of the mothers and over fifty percent of the fathers of female legislators were active in politics. Viewing this Kirkpatrick concluded that this factor had been significant in setting the stage for their daughters' later political involvement. The logic she offered for this conclusion was, "a girl growing up in a family where the mother as well as father was involved in public affairs would never 'learn' that politics is men's business."<sup>56</sup> However, although

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<sup>51</sup> Lewis Bowman and G.R. Boynton, "Recruitment Patterns Among Local Party Officials", in Comparative Study of Party Organisation; Wright, op.cit., pp.116-134.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid. p.120.

<sup>53</sup> Allan Kornberg, J. Smith and David Bromley, "Some Differences in the Political Socialization Patterns of Canadian Party Officials", Canadian Journal of Political Science, 2 (March 1969):64-88; Henry Valen, and D. Katz, Political Parties in Norway: A Community Study. (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1964); Prewitt, op.cit., K.L. Bakers, "Political Participation, Political Efficacy, and socialization in Germany", Comparative Politics, 6 (October 1973):73-78.

<sup>54</sup> Rita M. Kelly and M. Boutilier, The Making of Political Women: A Study of Socialization and Role Conflict, (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1978), pp.299-302.

<sup>55</sup> Kirkpatrick, op.cit., p.35, for details, pp.34-36.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p.35.

Kirkpatrick studied a group of forty male state legislators as well, there was nothing about their political socialisation experience. Thus it did not suggest how women legislators differ from men in this respect.

In another study of black American women state legislators, Prestage found that the majority of them had family impact in their political involvement and most of these women's parents were politically active.<sup>57</sup> A study by Werner<sup>58</sup> made on the seventy Congresswomen in the United States who have served in the twenty-four Congresses as between 1916 to 1964 showed a strong relationship between political families and the rise of Congresswomen. The author observed that prior to World War II, most of the women in Congress were appointed to serve the remainder of their husbands' terms. Only infrequently did they later seek election in their own right. However, Werner noted that this picture had changed later, and an increasing proportion have secured election on their own.

Jennings and Thomas<sup>59</sup> did not find family connection to politics to be important for American female political leaders who were occupationally active, but interestingly, in the case of non-working female leaders, they found one half had husbands with exceptionally high political status. However, besides mentioning this, Jennings and Thomas did not say anything more about the political socialisation of female political leaders.

Currell<sup>60</sup> and Vallance<sup>61</sup> both draw attention to the extent to which women Members of British Parliament are encouraged to become active by being brought up

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<sup>57</sup> Jewel L. Prestage, "Black Women State Legislators: A Profile" in A Portrait of Marginality, eds., Githens and Prestage. op.cit., p.408.

<sup>58</sup> Werner, op.cit., pp.16-30.

<sup>59</sup> M. Kent Jennings and Norman Thomas, "Men and Women in Party Elites: Social Roles and Political Resources", Midwest Journal of Political Science, 12 (November 1968): 490.

<sup>60</sup> M.E. Currell, Political Women (London: Croom Helm, 1974).

<sup>61</sup> E. Vallance, Women in the House: A Study of Women Members of Parliament (London: The Athlone Press), 1979.

in politically active families. Currell reports that of the thirty-two labour and twenty-one Conservative women members first elected to Parliament in the period of 1945 to 1970, nearly a half of both the parties "could be traced as having, or having had members of their family active in politics locally or nationally".<sup>62</sup> Vallance refers to women Members of Parliament (1974-79) who generally originated from politically aware families.<sup>63</sup> There was no data to compare the importance of this factor between men and women in Currell and Vallance's studies. Still both authors have placed a lot of importance on a political family background being more important for a woman than for a man, because of the strong weight of tradition against women entering politics.<sup>64</sup> They argued that a political career is something well understood by a woman reared in a politically active family and her vision of what is possible for her will be quite different from that of a woman brought up in a non-political family.

In Japan, Pharr<sup>65</sup> also found that nearly half of the hundred political women on whom the study was based, had one or both parents who were politically interested. Moreover, a positive relationship between the level of political interest of the parents and their daughters' level of political activism was noted by Pharr. The author observed that women who were leaders in their political groups more frequently came from politically interested and aware families than women who played less active roles. However, Pharr did not investigate the parents' involvement in political activities.

Means<sup>66</sup> observed a high incidence of political role models in the backgrounds of Norwegian women law makers. She found that a majority of them had politically

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<sup>62</sup> Currell, op.cit., p.69.

<sup>63</sup> Vallance, op.cit., pp.61-64.

<sup>64</sup> Currell, op.cit., pp.164-166; Vallance, op.cit., p.63.

<sup>65</sup> Susan J. Pharr, *Political Women in Japan*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), pp.88-89, for details, pp.83-95.

<sup>66</sup> Ingunn N. Means, "Political Recruitment of Women in Norway", *Western Political Quarterly*, 25 (September 1972): 511, for details, pp.491-521.

active fathers and relatives. Moreover, twelve of the fourteen women she studied shared party membership with their husbands. Despite that, Means asserted that the American phenomenon of "widow's succession"<sup>67</sup> was unknown in Norway. She explained it by saying that her female sample were instilled with positive attitudes toward political participation from their politicised childhood environments. However, although the studies of Pharr and Means provided valuable insights on women's political learning, both studies did not show gender-differences in this regard as there was no data from males.

Not only do the studies conducted in Western countries consistently suggest that women political elites tend to come from politically active families, available studies made in developing countries also provide the same evidence. In the context of Mexican women political leaders, Camp commented that "family ties are a passport, allowing easy access into the highest political echelons".<sup>68</sup> Camp found this to be true in the case of both males and females and attributed this fact to the small number of persons who dominate high-level positions in the political sphere of Mexico.<sup>69</sup>

Jaquette also showed a similar trend in Latin America by suggesting that female politicians, who have gained national prominence, gained access to politics through marriage or kinship ties with male politicians.<sup>70</sup> Kearney found the same to be true in Sri Lanka, when of the seventeen women who have been elected to the Parliament since 1947, more than half were elected as the replacement for a husband or a father.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> It has been discussed earlier. See Werner, op.cit., pp.21, 24.

<sup>68</sup> Roderic Camp, "Women and Political Leadership in Mexico: A Comparative Study of Female and Male Political Elites", *Journal of Politics*, 41 (May 1979): 430.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. p.429.

<sup>70</sup> Jane S. Jaquette, "Female Political Participation in Latin America", in *Women in the World: A Comparative Study*, eds. Lynn B. Iglitzin and Ruth Ross (California: American Bibliographic Center - Clio Press, 1976), p.70.

<sup>71</sup> Robert N. Kearney, "Women in Politics in Sri Lanka", *Asian Survey* 21 (July 1981): 737.

However, Kearney's study was based on information obtained from secondary sources. Thus it had little scope to analyse the political socialisation of women legislators. Moreover it did not provide comparisons between males and females in this variable.

In India, Devi investigated the political socialisation of women state legislators and discovered a profound family impact on them in this respect.<sup>72</sup> She found a recurrence of party membership in the immediate family members of these women. The data obtained from 46 women showed that 84.7 percent of them had relatives in politics. Based on this Devi concluded that the experience of political socialisation in the family provides an impetus to women's initiation into politics.<sup>73</sup> Devi did not study a comparable group of males. Thus, her findings did not suggest how far the female legislators were different from their male colleagues in political socialisation.

In Bangladesh, there is a lack of information on the political socialisation of women political elites. Jahan's earlier mentioned study<sup>74</sup> on women MPs did not examine how these women were instilled with political proclivity and what prompted them towards political participation. Although the study presented the findings on the socio-economic background of their parental families, there was no evidence how far their families were concerned with politics. The subject of the political socialisation of women political elites remained unexplored in Jahan's study.

It has been mentioned earlier that Qadir and Islam<sup>75</sup> also did not examine the political socialisation of women members of Union Parishads. In Alam's study, there was information on the political background of women political elites at the local level

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<sup>72</sup> Annapurna Devi, "Women in Orissa Politics: A Study in Political Socialisation" in Women and Society: The Developmental Perspective, ed. Amit Kumar Gupta (New Delhi: Criterion Publications), p.151.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.* p.159

<sup>74</sup> Jahan, *op.cit.*

<sup>75</sup> Qadir and Islam, *op.cit.*

in Bangladesh.<sup>76</sup> She observed that five out of six women Chairmen of Union Parishads she studied filled the places of their husbands. Moreover, three of the six women were found to come from families with a long tradition of association with local government and the other three also had close relatives who were active in politics at the national level. Thus, there was strong evidence in Alam's study to say that the political background of the family may play a significant role in the emergence of a woman political elite.

However, the impression that results from the above discussion is that, irrespective of developed and developing countries, the role of the family appears important in the political socialisation of women political elites. Furthermore, it is evident from the above that most studies are unable to provide a comparative view of the political socialisation of men and women political elites. Another shortcoming to be noted here is that most studies describe the subject - the political background of the families and the political socialisation of women - in a simplistic way without adequate explanation. Thus there is a lack of systematic study on the political socialisation of women political elites. It is therefore, necessary to undertake such a study to fill up this gap.

## 2.4 Research Related to Socio-economic Background

It is a well-established proposition with cross-national validity that socio-economic status correlates positively with political participation.<sup>77</sup> There exists ample evidence

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<sup>76</sup> Alam, *op.cit.*, pp.91-92.

<sup>77</sup> For a discussion of the literature on this area, see Milbrath, *op.cit.*, chapter 5. Also see, Norman Nie, G.B. Powell and K. Prewitt, "Social Structure and Political Participation", parts 1 and 2, American Political Science Review, 63 (June 1969):361-378, and 808-832; Robert D. Putnam, The Comparative Study of Political Elites (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1976); Sidney Verba, N.H. Nie and Jao-on Kim, Participation and Political Equality - A Seven Nation Comparison (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), pp.64-66.



in political participation literature indicating that people enjoying a higher social status tend to participate in politics to a greater extent than those from lower status groups.<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, it is suggested that political leaders tend to be of higher socio-economic status than general party members or voters.<sup>79</sup> Viewing the same trend in the developed and in the developing countries Putnam concludes that political elites "are drawn disproportionately from upper-status occupations and privileged family backgrounds".<sup>80</sup>

Bowman and Boynton explain the link between higher socio-economic status and involvement in higher levels of politics. Higher social status, high levels of occupation, education and income produce the competence to operate easily in the work of politics as well as a set of attitudes which dispose the individual to take an active part in the political world.<sup>81</sup> A high level of occupation provides the competence to operate in a political environment and high education provides the ability to conceptualise political issues and verbalise these conceptions.<sup>82</sup> These explain why political leaders are more frequently seen with higher occupational and educational attainment.

Existing literature on the socio-economic background of women political elites consistently suggest two findings. A number of empirical studies based on only female samples demonstrate their higher socio-economic backgrounds. On the other hand, a number of comparative studies based on male and female samples show that in terms of socio-economic status women are different from their male colleagues.

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<sup>78</sup> Verba, Nie and Kim, *Ibid.*, pp.1-5; Putnam, *op.cit.*, pp.22-24; Nie, Powell and Prewitt, *Ibid.*, p.365.

<sup>79</sup> Bowman and Boynton, *op.cit.*, pp.124-25; Valen and Katz, *op.cit.*

<sup>80</sup> Putnam, *op.cit.*, p.22

<sup>81</sup> Bowman and Boynton, p.121, Nie, Powell and Prewitt, *op.cit.*, p.817; Putnam, *op.cit.*, p.40.

<sup>82</sup> Bowman and Boynton, *Ibid.*, p.120.

Available studies conducted in different countries point out that women political elites share some similar socio-economic background characteristics. In the United States, Werner's earlier mentioned study reveals that Congress women usually come from elitist backgrounds with higher education, considerable professional training and experience.<sup>83</sup> In Latin America, Aviel shows that the most active women in the right and left parties come from educated upper-middle class backgrounds.<sup>84</sup> Elsa Chaney's study on women bureaucrats and elected officials at the municipal level in Chile and Peru discovers that they came from the middle or upper classes, had had university training, and usually were natives of the capital and largely engaged in "masculine" professions of law and engineering.<sup>85</sup> Riddell also observes that Mexican women who actively engage in politics are a separate and distinct group of women as they tend to come from families of a "high socioeconomic status, to look like, dress like, and act like American women in a similar situation".<sup>86</sup>

Currell<sup>87</sup> and Vallance<sup>88</sup> in their earlier mentioned studies noted that a disproportionate number of women Parliament members in Britain came from the upper and middle-classes in the periods they studied. The report on the status of Indian women suggested elitist and privileged family backgrounds of women legislators and candidates for Parliament.<sup>89</sup> Devi also confirmed the higher socio-economic

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<sup>83</sup> Werner, *op.cit.*, pp 16-39.

<sup>84</sup> Jo A. Fagot Aviel, "Political Participation of Women in Latin America", Western Political Quarterly, 158 (March 1981):156-173.

<sup>85</sup> Elsa M. Chaney, "Women in Latin American Politics: The Case of Peru and Chile", in Female and Male in Latin America, ed. Ann Pescatello (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1973), pp.121-122.

<sup>86</sup> A S Riddell, "Female Political Elites in Mexico: 1974", in Women in the World, ed. Iglitzin and Ross, *op.cit.*, p.266.

<sup>87</sup> Currell, *op.cit.*, p.164.

<sup>88</sup> Vallance, *op.cit.*, p 69.

<sup>89</sup> Status of Women in India: A Synopsis of the Report of the National Committee on the Status of Women, 1971-74 (New Delhi, 1974), p.106.

background of the women state legislators in India.<sup>90</sup> Her study was based on forty-six women of a state legislature, who were elected between 1951 to 1985. Devi found that they were predominantly middle-class or upper-class in origin and belonged to the higher social class. Means' study based on fifteen of the sixteen women serving in the Norwegian Parliament in 1970, suggested that they came from middle-class backgrounds with a better than average education.<sup>91</sup>

In Bangladesh, available studies showed the privileged family backgrounds of women who were active at local level politics. Qadir and Islam noted that the nominated women members of Union Parishads came from the rural elite group.<sup>92</sup> They were better educated than their rural sisters with higher family incomes compared to the average rural people of the Union Parishad. Alam also found that the socio-economic status of fathers and husbands of all six women chairmen of UP she studied were from the middle-and upper-classes.<sup>93</sup> Although all these six women were found to be fairly educated and occupationally inactive, their husbands appeared well educated with prestigious occupations.

However, the findings of the socio-economic status, educational and occupational achievements of women political elites appeared paradoxical when they were compared with their male counterparts. A number of comparative studies done on male and female political elites provided evidence that even when women attain higher political positions, they lack those socio-economic characteristics which are commonly accepted as attributes of the political elites.<sup>94</sup> They were found to have

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<sup>90</sup> Devi, *op.cit.*, pp.146-50.

<sup>91</sup> Means, *op.cit.*, p.502.

<sup>92</sup> Qadir and Islam, *op.cit.*, pp.7-16.

<sup>93</sup> Alam, *op.cit.*, pp.79-93.

<sup>94</sup> Kirkpatrick, *op.cit.*, chapter 12, Costantini and Craik, *op.cit.*, pp.217-236; Diamond, *op.cit.*, chapter 3; Jennings and Thomas, *op.cit.*, pp.469-472; Paula J. Dubeck, "Women and Access to Political Office: A Comparison of Female and Male Legislators", *Sociological Quarterly* 17 (Winter 1976): 42-52.

lower incomes, less formal education, and lower occupational status than a comparable group of men.<sup>95</sup>

Two separate studies have found similar gender differences in the class and educational backgrounds of male and female party elites in the U.S. Both the Jennings and Thomas study in Michigan<sup>96</sup> and a study by Costantini and Craik<sup>97</sup> in California expected that women of upper socio-economic status were more likely to be the party elites than women of lower socio-economic status. But they found the opposite as their data more frequently showed lower social positions and lower levels of educational and occupational achievements for women party elites than for men.

In an overtime study on Michigan party elites, Jennings and Farah<sup>98</sup> assumed that as the position and role of women in society change, the disparity between men and women party elites in socio-economic status should be decreased. They found women were to be marginally better off relative to men in 1976 than found by Jennings and Thomas in 1964. Women had also moved closer to men in terms of economic standing but men still came from more affluent families. Moreover, like Jennings and Thomas, Jennings and Farah also observed striking differences between men and women in employment status. The top categories - attorneys and other professional, proprietors, managers and executive - were heavily populated by men, whereas women were vastly underrepresented in these fields. Thus the researchers did not observe any change over time in occupational disparity between men and women. It led them to conclude that the relative absence of women in higher-status occupations has been a key stumbling block to equality at the elite level.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Jennings and Thomas, *op.cit.*, pp.469-492.

<sup>97</sup> Costantini and Craik, *op.cit.*, pp.217-236.

<sup>98</sup> Jennings and Farah, *op.cit.*, pp.462-482.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., pp. 466-67.

Kirkpatrick's earlier mentioned study suggested that the occupational experience of American women state legislators was in most cases less directly relevant to their roles and functions as political office bearers.<sup>100</sup> Kirkpatrick found them to have had lower educational attainment and family incomes than men and are less likely to be engaged in the professions, business, or other prestigious occupations.<sup>101</sup> Lynn's review of the United States Congresswomen from 1917 through 1978 also provided the similar evidence of occupational disadvantage of these women.<sup>102</sup>

In a study on Canadian and American male and female political party officials, Clarke and Kornberg noted that males in both countries were more of an elite in terms of social background and current status characteristics than their female colleagues.<sup>103</sup> Despite that, the researchers asserted that the officials of both sexes tended to be highly elitist compared to the general public.

However, a study by Camp did not observe that women political elites differ significantly from men with respect to socio-economic status.<sup>104</sup> It revealed that over seventy percent of the women in Mexico's political elite he studied have come from middle and upper-class backgrounds compared to two-thirds of the men. Lee's findings are also noteworthy. She found that the most active women in local politics in the United States are primarily from upper middle class families but the same is not true for men.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Kirkpatrick, op.cit., pp.42-43.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., pp.55-56.

<sup>102</sup> Naomi B. Lynn, "Women and Politics - The Real Majority", in *Women - A Feminist Perspective*, ed. Jo Freeman (Palo Alto Calif: Mayfield Publishing Co., 1984), pp.408-409.

<sup>103</sup> Harold D. Clarke and Allan Kornberg, "Moving up the Political Escalator: Women Party Officials in the United States and Canada", *Journal of Politics*, 41 (May 1969): 453.

<sup>104</sup> Camp, op.cit., p.429.

<sup>105</sup> Marcia M. Lee, "Toward Understanding Why Few Women Hold Public Office", in *A Portrait of Marginality*, eds. Githens and Prestage, op.cit., p.122.

Jahan's earlier mentioned study, however, noted that women MPs in Bangladesh have been blessed with adequate educational attainment.<sup>106</sup> She found that more women MPs were highly educated than their male counterparts as 80 percent of them were college graduates compared to 69 percent of the male MPs. Jahan found clear difference in the occupational status of men and women. Her data suggested that 60 percent of the women MPs were housewives and 33 percent were teachers before they entered the Parliament.<sup>107</sup> On the other hand, the two most common occupations for the male MPs were law and business.

Moreover, Jahan observed that although women MPs were found to be more educated they were not "excessively rich - only comfortably rich".<sup>108</sup> A mere 6 percent of the women, as against 35 percent of the men, had a high family income. Thus, Jahan's findings clearly showed the lower socio-economic status of women MPs compared to their male colleagues.

It appears from the above review of the studies on the socio-economic backgrounds of women political elites that women who achieve political elite position usually come from higher socio-economic backgrounds. But when their social class, educational and occupational achievements are compared with those of males, women appear to lag behind men in each aspect. Although some studies shown otherwise, still there is more evidence of their disadvantages in terms of socio-economic attributes than advantages.

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<sup>106</sup> Jahan, *op cit.* p.229.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.229-230.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p.231.

## 2.5 Research Related to Political Career and Experiences

Little research has been done on the political career and experiences of women political elites. The existing few available studies again exclusively focus on American female elites and show that gender is an important variable in determining the extent of participation, career and experiences. Clarke and Kornberg found salient differences in the political careers of the male and female party officials of the U.S. and Canada.<sup>109</sup> They discovered the ratio of men to women increases sharply at the upper echelons of the party organisations.

Costantini and Craik observed major gender-difference among the political party leaders in California in their position in the political arena.<sup>110</sup> The researchers determined the political position of their respondents on the basis of their public office holding experience. They found that a substantially greater proportion of male than female leaders had ever held elective public office. It led them to conclude that "politics for the male leader is more likely to be a vehicle for career advancement, which is not true for females."<sup>111</sup> Costantini and Craik, however, did not provide any adequate explanation of gender-difference in office-seeking behaviour. In addition, they found gender-differences in motives for party involvement. Women were found to be motivated by public service considerations, while men wanted to run for other offices and to achieve power. Based on this the authors argued that the disparity in political position would be removed if women themselves would change their attitudes and motivations. Costantini and Craik, however, did not explain the circumstances that block women's range of behaviour options, which can consequently affect their motives.

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<sup>109</sup> Clarke and Kornberg, *op.cit.*, pp.465-466.

<sup>110</sup> Costantini and Craik, *op.cit.*, pp.227.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.234-35.

Jennings and Thomas also indicated such differences, as they observed men were much more likely to have held either appointive or elective public office, to have sought public office, and to have succeeded in their quest.<sup>112</sup> The most striking finding suggested in the Jennings and Thomas study was the female party leaders' inaccessibility to public office. The authors attributed the reason of this fact to women's fewer opportunities for attaining such office.

Unlike Costantini and Craik, Jennings and Farah observe that women have nearly equal footing with men in party officeholding.<sup>113</sup> The authors argue that a substantial proportion of this equality stems from the governmental or party requirements of gender parity on bodies such as state central committees. Jennings and Farah again warn that parity in numbers does not necessarily mean equality in terms of political status, credentials, and influence, as men dominate the most prestigious and powerful political offices.

In Bangladesh, Jahan found clear differences between men and women MPs in their political career and experiences. The women MPs were found to have had little experience of holding a party office and in working with the party organisation at the village, subdivision or district levels than their male counterparts.<sup>114</sup> Based on this Jahan concluded that compared to the men, women in Parliament had less grass-roots contact and experience and had very little experience with party work at the constituency level.

In addition, Jahan noted that women MPs were much less politicised than their male counterparts, as their participation in the various political movements of the

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<sup>112</sup> Jennings and Thomas. *op.cit.*, pp.479-484.

<sup>113</sup> Jennings and Farah. *op.cit.*, pp.468.

<sup>114</sup> Jahan. *op.cit.*, p.232.



country was marginal.<sup>115</sup> However, Jahan did not examine their experiences in contesting elections. Moreover, although Jahan commented on the limitations of the reserved seats in the parliament that it limits women's real and effective participation in politics, she did not enquire about the respondents' attitude towards female representation through reserved seats in the Parliament.

## Conclusion

The review of literature suggests that there are remarkable gender-differences in the characteristics, attributes and behaviour of political elites. The literature indicates that not only is gender an important determinant in deciding who is or is not a member of a political elite, but it also tends to imply that gender may be an important determinant in political behaviour and opportunities.

From this literature review, it appears that the composition of women political elites in Bangladesh can be discerned by examining their personal characteristics and socio-economic backgrounds. It also seems safe to say that the development of a female political elite can be traced to her experiences at familial level. Early circumstances and experiences seem to formulate attitudes and values which later give rise to action. By understanding these early circumstances and experiences, one can understand the development of a female political activist.

Moreover, it also emerges from the review of literature that the political behaviour and experience of women political elites are conditioned by their gender. Gender may be an important factor in determining the way women political elites behave in the political arena and pursue political careers.

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid.