

## Chapter 6

# POWER STRUCTURE AND THE SINGLE WOMEN

In feminist perspective power can be identify through three main ways; (i) as a resource to be distributed, (ii) as domination and (iii) as empowerment. Power can be define as ability or a capacity to act, which called the power to do something. According to Max Weber, power means the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance of others. He also stated that power is the ability to achieve desired ends despite resistance from others (Seshadri 1976:23). Power is based on various sources; gender is one of the sources of power. It is the male who is always in the forefront of social participation both in family and outside. Therefore, it is found that in everyday life people practice and utilize power. According to symbolic interactionalism the element of power could be categorized into two segments; (i) Micro Politics- it refers to the exercise of power in everyday life. (ii) Macro Politics – it refers to the exercise of power over a large group (Philliee 1983).

Constitution of India provides equal right to man and women for participating in all aspect of the political process. But in many cases women's political decisions are influenced by their husband, father, son or other male family members. In India women are silent audience in the field of politics (Das 1997). Seshadri (1976) is of the view that women are not active participants of politics; their presence in politics is symbolic, ineffective and latent.

Single women are marginalized in social, economic, cultural and political spare of life. Participation in political process is the way by which single women can register their presence. But in patriarchal society women are traditionally not allowed to be the head of the family, participate in family's major decision making process and be a active member of traditional, political organization. But change started to occur in women's participation in power structure. This chapter mainly deals with single women's political right here includes single women's right to be the head of family, participate in decision making on different activities of the family, community and societal level.

## HEAD OF THE FAMILY

The term 'Head of the family' is commonly used by the family members to describe an authority position of the household. In patriarchal domain, the family structure consider elderly male person as 'head of the family' who have the power and control over all family matters and take active decision making role. So it means males are symbolizes power and authority in the family structure. It is because males are generally expected to protect and look after the family members needs. As a family head, he expected to fulfill all social, physical and integrative needs of family. But this traditional family structure has been experiencing considerable change due to rapid transformation through urbanization, industrialization and globalization. These changing formations not only affect the family structure or traditional setup of household head but also disrupt family relationship and enhance family breakdown such as divorce, separation, desertion, widowhood and remaining unmarried. Women life and traditional role are undergoing a significant change. Increasing number of female-headed families in India is the evidence of social mobility where women are found capable to take the role of family head (Dowd 1997). Now a day's family headed by women has become a significant phenomenon worldwide which directly challenged the standard of household composition headed by male members. In developed countries women are found more empowered, educated and economically stable, so that they can take the role of headship for exercise their power. But so far as India is concern a combination of factors contribute to increasing incidence of female headship. Divorce, separation, widowhood and migration are the major reasons for increasing the number of female headed family (Ghosh, 1984). So in the country like India, female headship is not seems as power status among women but a forced phenomena to face various miseries like economic hardship, overburden of work, insecurity feelings, feelings of worthlessness, stress and social criticism and so on.

In patriarchal society, women became head of family in the absence of adult male member only. The headship of respondents' family is discussed here under.

Table 6.1: Distribution of the Respondents on the Basis of the Head of Their Family

Head of Family	Marital Status			Total (%)
	Widow	Divorce	Unmarried	
Father	24 (18.75)	4 (3.92)	21 (24.28)	45 (15)
Mother	5 (3.90)	12 (11.76)	18 (11.42)	25 (8.33)
Brother	12 (9.37)	10 (9.80)	21 (15.71)	33 (11)
Son	23 (17.96)	22 (21.56)	-	45 (15)
Daughter	3 (2.34)	1 (0.98)	-	4 (1.33)
Self	56 (43.75)	53 (51.96)	10 (48.58)	143 (47.67)
Father-in-laws/ Brother-in-laws	5 (3.90)	-	-	5 (1.67)
Total (%)	128 (100)	102 (100)	70 (100)	300 (100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during February 2013 – January 2015.

Above data shows that 47.67% respondents' family headed by themselves, 15% each family headed by respondents father and son, 11% respondents' families headed by their brothers and 8.33% respondents' families headed by their mother, 1.67% respondents family headed by in-laws, 1.33% family headed by daughter.

Marital statuswise, 51.96% divorced, 48.58% unmarried and 43.75% widows respondents' families headed by themselves. 24.28% unmarried, 18.75% widows, and 3.92% divorced respondent's family headed by their father. 21.56% divorced and 12.96% widow respondents' family headed by their son. 15.71% unmarried, 9.80% divorced and 9.37% widows respondents' families headed by their brother. 11.76% divorced, 11.42% unmarried and 3.90% widow respondents' families headed by their mother.

It is obvious that more than half (52.33%) of the respondents family headed either by their son, daughter, father, mother brother and in-laws. Less than half (47.67%) of the respondents are the head of their own family. Though large number of single women leading their family life under the headship of other person but in many occasion most of them are consult by the family head for taking major decision especially decision related to them. It is also found that the single women who are the

head of their family, in certain cases or circumstances take the advice of their brother, father, son and in-laws while taking major decision related to their children's marriage, property purchase etc. The roles of respondent in family decision making process are discussed bellow.

Table 6.2: Distribution of the Respondents on the Basis of Their Role in Family Decision Making

Role in Family Decision Making	Marital status			Total (%)
	Widow	Divorced	Unmarried	
Take all decision by self	8 (6.25)	28 (27.45)	20 (28.57)	56 (18.67)
Self with father/brother	17 (13.29)	4 (3.92)	4 (5.71)	25 (8.33)
Father	24 (18.76)	4 (3.92)	13 (18.57)	41 (13.67)
Brother	12 (9.38)	10 (9.80)	11 (15.71)	33 (11)
Mother and self	15 (11.71)	15 (14.70)	10 (14.28)	40 (13.33)
Father-in-law/brother-in-law	5 (3.90)	-	-	5 (1.67)
Daughter and self	26 (20.31)	23 (22.54)	-	49 (16.33)
Self and brother	21 (16.40)	18 (17.64)	12 (17.14)	51 (17)
Total (%)	128 (100)	102 (100)	70 (100)	300 (100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during February 2013 – January 2015.

Above data shows that 18.67% respondents take all family decisions by themselves, 17% respondents takes family decisions by consulting with their brothers, 16.33% respondents takes decisions by consulting with their son and daughter, 13.67% respondents family decisions taken by their father, 13.33% respondents family decisions taken by their brother, 8.33% respondents family decisions were taken by themselves but always consult with their father, 1.67% respondents family decisions taken by their father-in-law or brother-in-law.

Marital Status wise, 28.57% unmarried, 27.45% divorced and 6.25% widows takes all family decision by themselves, 17.64% divorced, 17.14% unmarried and 16.40% widows' take all family decisions by consulting with their brothers. 22.54% divorced and 20.31% widows takes all family decisions after consulting with their

son/daughters'. 18.76% widows, 18.57% unmarried and 3.92% divorced respondents' family decisions taken by their father. 14.70% divorced, 14.28% unmarried and 11.71% widows family decisions taken by them along with the advice of their mother. 15.71% unmarried, 9.80% divorced and 9.38% widows' family decisions taken by their brother. 13.29% widows, 5.71% unmarried and 3.92% divorced takes all major decision of their family by consulting with their father. 3.90% widows family decisions taken by their father-in-law and brother-in-law.

Therefore, it appears that more than half (55%) respondents participate in family decisions making process as they are consulted by their father, mother, son / daughter and brothers. Nearly one fifths (18.67%) of the respondents take all family decision by themselves without consulting with other and nearly one fourth (26.33%) of the respondents family decisions are takes by their father, brother and father-in-law/ brother-in-law.

#### **Case I**

Rupchori Debbarman, 44 years old widow said, though I am the head of my family but for taking any major decision like education of my children, purchasing any valuable commodities I always take the advice of my older brother, Mr. Angshuman Debbarman. In last year I failed to decide in which school I enroll my son. So I called my brother, he advice me to enroll my son in government Bengali medium school because in government school expenditure will be less. Accordingly I enrolled him in government school.

#### **Case II**

Another respondent Sabina Bibi, 35 years old divorced said that she always takes the advice of her mother for deciding any family matter. She said I have four young children and to solving their health problems, educational issues etc, I always take the advice of my mother.

#### **Case III**

Bela Rani Das, 40 years old and Tulika Debnath, 46 years old divorced said that they did not take help from anybody for deciding their family matters. They expressed their grievance that during crisis situation of their life nobody helps them rather avoid and insulted them. These attitudes made them bold enough to decide their family matter by themselves.

#### Case IV

Sabita Saha, 35 years old divorced said I am living with parents and my father is the head of our family. He takes all major decisions of the family. I have one daughter and I am working as a sales girl in a garment shop. So my income and contribution is less to the family. That is why I have no power to participate in family decision making process. She also said may mother always tell me ‘do not interfere in our family matters’. After divorce and returning back to my parent’s home I fell they treated with me as a gust.

#### Case V

Nayantara Deb Nath, 47 years old unmarried said that she takes all the major decision of her family. She said ‘I scarify my life for younger brother and sister and I am the main earning member of the family. All my younger brother and sister respect me and obey my order.

So, most of the single women whether unmarried or once married face different kind of situation in deciding family matters. But one thing is common among most of the single women that they are excluded by their family member in deciding family matters where as some of the respondents willingly take advice from their close relatives in deciding their family matters.

#### CASTE PANCHAYAT

Caste Panchayat is also known as community panchayat. It is a formally organized unit in the Indian society. The key objective of caste panchayat is to maintain unity of the caste and secure uniformity of the rules. Caste panchayat play significant role in rural society but in certain extent it also plays role in urban areas. To know about respondents’ knowledge about caste Panchayat some questions were asked. The following table makes it clear.

Table 6.3: Distribution of the Respondents on the Basis of Knowledge about Caste Panchayat

Knowledge about Caste Panchayat	Marital Status			Total (%)
	Widow	Divorced	Unmarried	
Yes	23 (17.97)	36 (35.29)	11 (15.71)	70 (23.33)
No	105 (82.03)	66 (64.70)	59 (84.28)	230 (76.67)
Total	128 (100)	102 (100)	70 (100)	300 (100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during February 2013 – January 2015.

Above data shows that 76.67% respondents do not have any idea about caste Panchayat, 23.33% respondents have knowledge about caste Panchayat. Marital status-wise, 84.28% unmarried, 82.03% widows and 64.70% divorced respondents' do not have any idea about caste Panchayat. Whereas 35.29% divorced, 17.97% widows and 15.71% unmarried respondents have knowledge about caste Panchayat.

So, nearly one fourth (23.33%) respondents have knowledge about caste Panchayat. Caste Panchayat in Agartala town is mainly functioning among Muslims, schedule castes especially among the 'Rishidas' or 'Rabidas'. They call it as '*Somaj*'.

#### MEMBERSHIP OF CASTE PANCHAYAT

To evaluate the role of single women in caste Panchayat, it is found that none of the single women, irrespective of caste and community is member of caste/community Panchayat. Moreover no woman is permitted to sit along with men in caste Panchayat meeting. Woman is permitted to attend Panchayat meeting only when she has filed complaint before the Panchayat or when it gives verdict. 14.28% respondents have attended their respective caste/community Panchayat meetings either as complainant or accused. Nearly 30% deserted or divorced respondents belong to Muslim community and schedule caste (Rishi Das and Rabi Das) take written document of divorce from caste/community Panchayat as proof of their dissolution of marriage. So that they can apply for government pension schemes or other facilities for single women.

#### Case I

Amina Begam, 44 years old divorced said, my husband was an auto – rickshaw driver. One day morning he goes out with auto rickshaw and did not come back. We wait for two days and after that my father-in-law file FIR in police station for his missing. I took all possible steps to find out my husband or at least to get information about him, but I failed. I stayed two year with my parents-in-law. But one day my father-in-law in the absence of other family member tried to rape me and threat not to disclose this matter in front of other. In that day I leave parents- in-laws house and take shelter in my parents' home. After listening all my parents advice me

to file complain in 'Somaj'. The head of the Panchayat called a general meeting to solve the problem and asked Amina Begam to remain present in the meeting. During meeting Amina's father-in-law denied and said all allegation imposed by Amina on him are false. After lots of debate lastly he agreed to give 50,000/- to Amina as a compensation and return all her commodities. The Panchayat give her one 'Talak nama' that is the certificate of dissolution of her marriage.

### **Case II**

Lakshmi Rishi Das, 38 years old widow was tortured by her mother-in-law and brother-in-law. She also said that after the death of my husband my mother in-law stated to believe that only because of me her son died. My mother-in-law said I am impure and have illicit relation with other that is why her son died. In order to purify me she frequently called 'Ojha' who in the name of ritual beated me with stick and bamboo. She did not give me food as a result I became weak. Watching all these my sister-in-law Ranju advice me to leave the house. Lastly with my two sons I took shelter in my parental home. My father informs the 'somaj' about their torture. 'Choudhury', the head of panchayat called emergency meeting and resolve the matter. The 'somaj' asked Lakshmi's mother in law to return her jewelry and other property. The 'somaj' also advised her to file case against her in-laws under Domestic Violence Act 2005.

### **Case III**

Taniya Rishi Das, 42 years old divorced said just after marriage my ex-husband told me that he did not like me because I am ugly and not presentable. I thought he did not seriously told me but few days later I realized that he is not even ready to tolerate me. He stated to humiliate and torture me physically without any reasons. Gradually it became unbearable and I inform my parents about the matter. They talk with my husband and his family member but no result came. Then my father approaches 'Somaj'. In somaj's meeting also my husband and his family member remain absent. Lastly from the Panchayat I got a written paper which describes permission of the dissolution of our marriage.

### **Case IV**

Dulali Rishi Das, 52 years divorced said seven years ago my husband leave me and my four children. Every day I wait for him but still he is not return home. Why he leave us? Where he goes? I do not know. Now I files complain in our Samaj



for divorce. She also said if I got divorce certificate then it helps me to get deserted or divorce woman pension.

All these cases reveal that among the Muslim and Risi Das community of Agartala town, caste/community panchayat plays very vital role in maintaining discipline among the members. This informal body also tried to provide justice to its members. Women of these communities at least have one institution where they can express their grievances and some extent get relief from their sufferings. Though women's are not the member nor have right to seat along with male member of panchayat to decide the matter but they can approach it for solution of their problem.

#### AWARENESS ABOUT THE ROLE OF MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

Agartala municipal council is the body which governs and maintains the town. It is one of the oldest municipal body in north-east India, founded in 1871. Agartala municipal council consist of 35 wards and 42 members including one chairman, one Vice-chairman, three chairman of council and 37 ward members. The Agartala municipal council reserves 50% seats for woman. The following table discussed the respondents' level of awareness regarding the role of municipal council.

Table 6.4: Distribution of the Respondents on the Basis of Level of Awareness about Municipal Role

Level of Awareness	Marital Status			Total (%)
	Widow	Divorced	Unmarried	
Fully Aware	32 (25)	28 (27.45)	20 (28.58)	80 (26.67)
Partially Aware	75 (58.59)	32 (31.37)	38 (54.28)	145 (48.33)
Not Aware	21 (16.40)	42 (41.17)	12 (17.14)	75 (25)
Total (%)	128 (100)	102 (100)	70 (100)	300 (100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during February 2013 – January 2015.

Above data shows that 48.33% respondents partially aware regarding the role and functions of municipal council, 26.67% respondents totally aware about the role of municipal council and 25% of the respondents not aware about the role and activities of municipal council.

Marital statuswise, 58.59% widows, 54.28% unmarried and 31.37% divorced respondents have partial knowledge about the functions and activities of municipal

council. 28.58% unmarried, 27.45% divorced and 25% widows have full knowledge about the role and activities of municipal council. 41.17% divorced, 17.14% unmarried and 16.40% widows not aware about the role of municipal council.

More than three fourth of the respondents are aware about municipal council's activity either partially or fully. But in spite of knowing the activities of municipal council most of the respondents deprived from getting the benefits of various schemes of municipal council. The distribution of the respondents' awareness about municipal council schemes is given in the following table.

Table 6.5: Distribution of the Respondents on the Basis of Awareness Regarding Various Schemes of Municipal Council

Name of Developmental Scheme	Marital Status			Total (%)
	Widow	Divorced	Unmarried	
Prime Minister Awash Yojona (PMAY)	12 (11.21)	7 (11.66)	8 (13.79)	27 (12)
Tripura Urban Employment Program (TUEP)	55 (51.40)	37 (61.66)	29 (50)	121 (53.79)
Widow pension/old age pension	31 (28.98)	-	-	31 (13.78)
Deserted/ divorced women pension	-	12 (20)	-	12 (5.33)
Pension for unmarried women	-	-	16 (27.59)	16 (7.11)
Differently able pension	2 (1.87)	1 (1.67)	-	3 (1.33)
Domestic worker pension	7 (6.54)	1 (1.67)	5 (8.62)	13 (5.78)
Swaran Jayanti shahari Rozgar yojona (SJSRY)	-	1 (1.67)	-	1 (0.44)
Self-Employment Programme	-	1 (1.67)	-	1 (0.44)
Total (%)	107 (100)	60 (100)	58 (100)	225 (100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during February 2013 – January 2015.

Above data shows that over half (53.79%) of the respondents are aware about Tripura Urban Employment Program (TUEP), 13.78% respondents aware about widow pension/ old age pension schemes, 12% respondents aware about Prime Minister Awash Yojona (PMAY), 7.11% respondents aware about unmarried pension, 5.78% respondents aware about domestic worker pension scheme, 5.33% respondents aware about deserted or divorced women pension scheme, 1.33% respondents aware

about differently able pension scheme. 0.44% respondents aware about Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojona (SYSRY) and Self-Employment program scheme.

Marital statuswise, 61.66% divorced, 51.40% widows and 50% unmarried respondents aware about Tripura Urban Employment Program (TUEP), 28.98% widows aware about widow pension/ old age pension schemes, 13.79% unmarried, 11.68% divorced and 11.21% widows aware about Prime Minister Awash Yojona (PMAY), 8.62% unmarried, 6.54% widows and 1.67% divorced respondents aware about domestic worker pension scheme,. 20% divorced respondents aware about deserted or divorced women pension scheme. 1.67% divorced respondents were aware about the Swarna Janti Shahari Rozgar Yojona (SYSRY) and Self-Employment Schemes.

So, it found that majority of the respondents aware about Tripura Urban Employment Programme which is almost similar with of MGNREGA.

#### **Case I**

Sweeta Shingha, 42 years old unmarried said I have no home because after the death of my parents two brothers occupy the house and thrown me out of the house, because my father transferred all his property in their name. Fortunately I got a job of care taker cum fulltime domestic worker in a family where only two aged person living. Presently I have no problem of shelter but after the death of these two people where I will go? I want to apply for unmarried pension but the office barer of the ward 25 informed me that I am not eligible for any such schemes because my one brother is government servant so according to them I am not belongs to below property line (BPL). I repeatedly visit ward office but they always misguide me.

#### **Case II**

Anamika Nath, 48 years old divorced said after divorce I took shelter in my parental home. But they cannot accommodate me and my son properly. But within one year with the help of my father I made a separate room within my parent's house for myself. But at that time the ward committee gave three sanction of Prime Minister Awash Yojona (PMAY) as because I was unaware about the scheme I missed the chance.

So it can be said that single women in Agartala town are living in most disadvantage position because most of them does not have any certainty about their shelter, food etc and fail to get the government benefit either due to ignorance or due to ill treatment of office bearer.

#### PARTICIPATION IN MUNICIPAL COUNCIL WARD MEETING

Municipal council ward meeting generally conducted by the elected ward members with the adult people of the particular ward. In the meeting various welfare schemes, programmes developmental plans regarding ward and selection of beneficiaries for various scheme are done in the presence of the people of the ward. The women of respective ward are also informed to participate in the ward meeting. Following table shows the mode of participation of single women in the ward meetings.

Table 6.6: Distribution of the Respondents on the Basis of Participation in Ward Meetings

Participation in Ward Meeting	Marital Status			Total (%)
	Widow	Divorced	Unmarried	
Regular	78 (60.93)	15 (14.70)	10 (14.28)	103 (34.33)
Sometimes	13 (10.17)	4 (3.92)	5 (7.14)	32 (10.67)
No	37 (28.90)	83 (81.38)	55 (78.58)	165 (55)
Total (%)	128 (100)	102 (100)	70 (100)	300 (100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during February 2013 – January 2015.

Above data shows that over half (55%) of the respondents never attend the ward meetings. 34.33% respondents regularly attend ward meetings and 10.67% respondents sometimes attend ward meetings.

Marital statuswise, 81.38% divorced, 78.58% unmarried and 28.90% widows not attend any ward meetings. 60.93% widows, 14.70% divorced and 14.28% unmarried regularly attended in ward meetings. 10.17% widows, 7.14% unmarried and 3.92% divorced respondents' occasionally participate in the ward meetings.

Therefore it obvious that widow respondents has a tendency to attend ward meetings regularly. On the other hand over three four of the unmarried respondents

not attend any ward meetings because they believe that it will not give them any benefit.

#### LEVEL OF SATISFACTION OVER THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL'S ROLE

For the development of the town municipal council plays a significant role but every family or people may not be happy with the decision of the council. So the level of satisfaction of the respondents over council's roles discussed here under.

Table 6.7: Distribution of the Respondents on the Basis of Level of Satisfaction about Municipal Council Role

Level of Satisfaction	Widow	Divorced	Unmarried	Total (%)
Fully Satisfied	21 (16.40)	12 (11.77)	10 (14.28)	43 (14.33)
Partially Satisfied	50 (39.07)	54 (52.94)	22 (31.42)	126 (42)
Not Satisfied	54 (42.19)	15 (14.70)	33 (47.15)	102 (34)
No Comments	3 (2.34)	21 (20.59)	5 (7.15)	29 (9.67)
Total (%)	128 (100)	102 (100)	70 (100)	300 (100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during February 2013 – January 2015.

Above table shows that 42% of the respondents partially satisfied with the role of municipal council, 34% respondents not satisfied with the role of municipal council, 14.33% respondents expressed their full satisfaction regarding the role of municipal council and 9.67% respondents not give any response to this question.

Marital statuswise, 52.94% divorcee, 39.07% widows and 31.42% unmarried respondents share that they were partially satisfied with the role of municipal council. 47.15% unmarried, 42.19% widows and 14.70% divorced respondents were not satisfied with municipal council role 16.40% widows, 14.28% unmarried and 11.77% divorced respondents expressed their satisfaction regarding the role of municipal council. 20.59% divorced, 7.15% unmarried and 2.34% widows were not give any comments.

Thus, it appears that majority of the respondents partially satisfied with the municipal council role. Whereas, over three tenths of the respondents not satisfied with the role of municipal council. Very less number of respondents expressed full

satisfaction about the role of municipal council. Those respondents not express their views about the municipal council role were either not satisfied or may feel insecure to express their comments.

### Case I

Shimultoni Deb Barman said after divorce I took shelter in my parental home with my daughter. I have neither job nor house, so I attend number of word meetings and seek help from word committee. I applied more than three times for TUEP job card but every time my name was rejected. She also said I meat with councilor and expressed grievance. Ward councilor Miss Gita Das assured me to look after my matter but still no action taken. So I am not happy with the work of Municipal council. It works for those who have money and manpower.

### Case II

Anjana Rishi Das, 49 years widow said that after the death of my husband, one day the ward member Bivek Rishi Das visit my house and informed me to apply for widow pension scheme. With the help of my elder son I applied for the same. I already got the bank passbook and the office informed me that very soon my monthly pension will start. She also express her thanks toward all ward members and the councilor for help.

These cases show that some people get benefit from Agartala Municipal Council where as other failed to get it. Those who benefited express their satisfaction where as other are dissatisfied with it.

## PARTICIPATION IN MUNICIPAL COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

Municipal council is a democratic body elected by their people for the development. Anybody (Indian citizen) can be the part of it through contesting election. For empowering the urban woman the council resaved 33% seats for them. The following table makes it clear.

Table 6.8: Distribution of the Respondents on the Basis of Contesting in Elections

Contested election	Respondents Marital Status			Total (%)
	Widow	Divorcee	Unmarried	
Yes	-	-	1 (1.42)	1 (0.33)
No	128 (100)	102 (100)	69 (98.58)	299 (99.67)
Total (%)	128 (100)	102 (100)	70 (100)	300 (100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during February 2013 – January 2015.

Above table shows that expect one none other the respondents ever contested in municipal council election. Only one unmarried respondent Deepa Majumdar, 48 years lawyer contested 2014 municipal council election from the ward no - 12. She contested for the post of councilor but she defected. Deepa said that ‘I am not disappointed for this failure. I will contest again in coming election. So very less number of single women are interested to participated activity in politics.

#### MEMBERSHIP IN POLITICAL PARTY

Normally male often take membership of political parties whereas women rarely take membership of it. Of the respondents only 33 (11%) are the member of political party. The following table displays the political party membership among the respondents.

Table 6.9: Distribution of the Respondents on the Basis of Membership in Political Party

Membership of Political Party	Marital Status			Total (%)
	Widow	Divorced	Unmarried	
Yes	50 (39.07)	40 (39.21)	22 (31.42)	112 (37.33)
No	78 (60.93)	62 (60.79)	48 (68.58)	188 (62.67)
Total (%)	128 (100)	102 (100)	70 (100)	300 (100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during February 2013 – January 2015.

Above data shows that 62.67% respondents do not have membership of any political party, 37.33% respondents are the member of political party. Marital statuswise, 68.58% unmarried, 60.93% widows and 60.79% divorced respondents do not have any membership in political party. 39.21% divorced, 39.07% widows and 31.42%unmarried have membership in political party.

Less than one fifth of the respondents have membership in political party. But majorities (62.67%) of the respondents do not have membership in political party. To get more clear picture the respondents were asked to the party with whom they were associated. Their responses are shown in the following table.

Table 6.10: Distribution of the Respondents on the Basis of Name of Political Party They Supported

Name of the Political Party	Marital Status			Total (%)
	Widow	Divorced	Unmarried	
Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPIM)	41 (82)	32 (80)	17 (77.27)	90 (80.36)
Indian National Congress	7 (14)	8 (20)	3 (13.63)	18 (16.07)
Bharatiya Janata Party	2 (4)	-	2 (9.90)	4 (3.57)
Total (%)	50 (100)	40 (100)	22 (100)	112 (100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during February 2013 – January 2015.

Above data shows that among the member of political party 80.35% respondents are associated with Communist party of India (Marxist), 16.07% respondents are the member of Indian National Congress and 3.57% respondents are the member of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Marital statuswise, 82% widows, 80% divorced and 77.27% unmarried respondents are the member of CPIM. 20% divorced, 14% widows and 13.63% unmarried respondents are the member of National Congress. 9.90% unmarried and 4% widows' respondents are the member of BJP. A round four fifths single women associated with CPI (M) the ruling party of Tripura and 15% engaged with second dominating political party congress and a negligible percent of single women have membership of BJP. Congress and CPI (M) considered as secular political party and Tripura has long history of existence of these two dominating party. Most of the respondents prefer those political parties which are preferred by their family member

#### VOTE CASTING

Vote casting is an important political right as well as duty of the citizen. Male and female equally can exercise their right to vote. Most of the respondents cast their vote in municipal, assembly and parliament elections.



Table 6.11: Distribution of the Respondents on the Basis of Vote Casting in Elections

Vote Casting	Marital Status			Total (%)
	Widow	Divorced	Unmarried	
Yes	107 (83.60)	78 (76.48)	55 (78.58)	240 (80)
No	14 (10.93)	6 (5.88)	10 (14.28)	30 (10)
No response	7 (5.47)	18 (17.64)	5 (7.14)	30 (10)
Total (%)	128 (100)	102 (100)	70 (100)	300 (100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during February 2013 – January 2015.

Above table reveals that 80% respondents cast their vote in the Assembly, Parliamentary and Municipal election. 10% respondents do not cast their vote in any election and same percentages of respondents do not give response to this question respectively.

Marital status wise, 86.60% widows, 78.58% unmarried and 76.48% divorced respondents cast their vote in every election. 14.28% unmarried, 10.93% widows and 5.88% divorced respondents do not cast their vote. 17.64% divorced, 7.14% unmarried and 5.47% widow respondents do not give any response.

So it reveals that majority of the respondents exercise their voting right in different level of election. Most of the respondents who do not cast their vote said that they lost voter Identity card during shifting from one place to another. Single women of Agartala town are aware about voting right.

#### MOTIVATION FOR VOTE CASTING

Large number of single women casted their vote in different level of election shows they are much politically empower. To understand whether they are really empower or not, It is important to know whether they are passive voter or not. A passive voter means those who cast their vote according to the wish of other people. Following table explain it clearly

Table 6.12: Distribution of the Respondents on the Basis of Motivation for Vote Casting

Motivation for Vote Casting	Marital Status			Total (%)
	Widow	Divorcee	Unmarried	
Father	36 (28.12)	20 (19.60)	17 (24.29)	73 (24.33)
Brother	10 (37.63)	8 (7.84)	15 (21.42)	33 (11)
Son	8 (6.25)	4 (3.92)	-	12 (4)
Party Members	43 (33.59)	49 (48.03)	13 (18.57)	105 (35)
Self	3 (2.34)	2 (1.96)	12 (17.14)	17 (5.67)
Party Leader	28 (21.87)	19 (18.62)	13 (18.57)	60 (20)
Total (%)	128 (100)	102 (100)	70 (100)	300 (100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during February 2013 – January 2015.

Above data reveals that 35% respondents motivated by party members for casting their vote, 24.33% respondents motivated by their father, 20% respondents motivated by party leaders, 11% respondents motivated by their brother, 5.67% respondents take decision for casting their vote by themselves and 4% respondents motivated by their son.

Marital status-wise, 48.03% divorced, 33.59% widows and 18.57% unmarried respondents motivated by party members for casting their vote. 28.12% widows, 24.29% unmarried and 19.60% divorced respondents motivated by their father. 21.87% widow, 18.62% divorces and 18.57% unmarried respondents motivated by party leaders. 21.42% unmarried, 7.84% divorced and 7.81% widows respondents motivated by their brother. 17.14% unmarried, 2.34% widow and 1.96% divorced respondents take own decision for casting their vote. 6.25% widows and 3.92% divorced respondents motivated by their son.

Therefore, it appears that more than nine tenth respondents cast their vote according to choice and advice of other. It reflects that single women are not much politically aware and fail to understand the cost of their vote. Though most of them have knowledge, aware and go to cast their vote almost all election as per decision and wish of others.

Briefly, the single women in Agartala town are not politically empowered. Among them very few participate in decision making process either in family's decisions or other formal organizations decision. Large numbers of single women are aware about different government scheme implemented by the municipal council. In exercising voting right, a very few cast their vote according to their own choice.