

WOMEN AND POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT- A STUDY IN JAMMU AND Kashmir

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Abstract:-

Women constitute an important part of the social structure of the world. Women were oppressed and suppressed in all spheres of life, especially in Jammu and Kashmir. However, like other states of India, the position of women in the state of Jammu and Kashmir remained inferior. When we see the political awareness of women in Jammu and Kashmir it has declined due to various reasons. In this paper, I want to examine the role of women in political affairs of state, Property rights of women and wants to show the reasons behind the low participation of women.

Keywords:- political empowerment, women, property rights, leadership, challenges, suggestions.

1.1 Introduction:-

Women make up half of the population of every country in the world but this half population is not well represented in politics. They are at receiving the end of much socio, political, ill-treatment, harassment and are driven out of the mainstream politics. In spite of a series of formal and informal efforts aimed at uplifting them, they are still in the dark and forced to continue in this age-old deprived condition. Hence women's status draws worldwide attention and accordingly decisions, debates etc are going at various levels among the public, academic and policymakers so as to improve their backward status and provide them dignity and self-respect (shahda A 2011)

In old Kashmiri society, women generally remained confined to or around the family. The people of Jammu and Kashmir enfranchised in 1934 for the first time very low. As for as women were concerned the right to vote was given to those who are literate. This exercise for its low scale is as given by the franchise commission was "the inclusion of the excuse for its low scale is as given by franchise commission was, "the inclusion of women voters would increase the administrative difficulties of election". But with the leadership of S.M.Abdullah that provided women a vibrant in 1944. The part x of the constitution of J&K dealt with the election in the state. It proposed of women to elect and to be elected in all forms of institutions and given equal rights as men (no discrimination on the basis of sex). If the governor found inadequately represented women in assembly, he can nominate not more than two women members (section 47). Women in Jammu and Kashmir did not yet enter the assembly. After independence, The economic condition of women in Kashmir was improving, but the political activism by the women in Kashmir was hardly visible. The political participation of women before 1972 was remained very low. It was only in the

elections of the year 1972 eight women candidates' contested election and four of them won the election. The four women who win the elections were Zainab Begum, Hajra Begum, Nirmala Devi, and Shanta Bharti

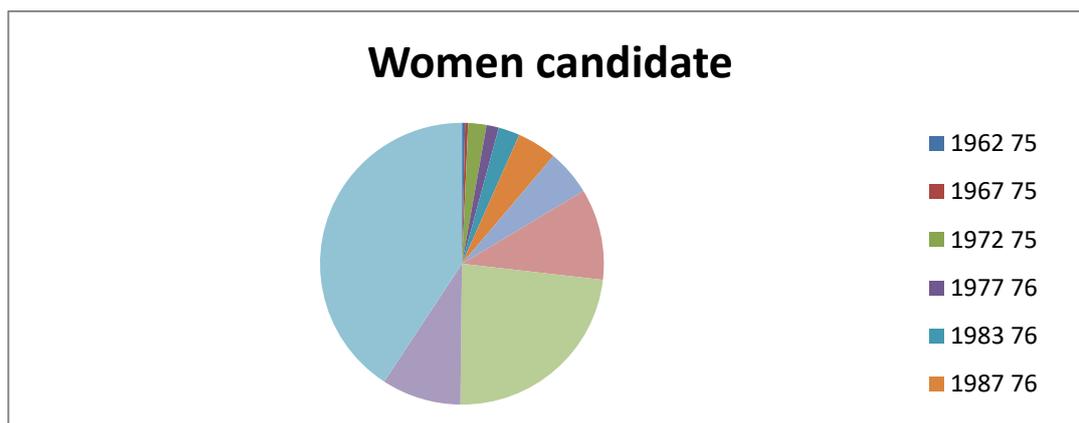
The election of 1977 showed low participation of women candidates there were only four women contestants and out of this only one woman managed to win and that too was a reserved seat for them. In 1983, elections the participation of women voters was high as 70.48 percent, however, the contestants' women were only seven and not a single woman won the election. In 1987 and 1996, elections there were respectively (13) thirteen and (15) fifteen women participants and in 1987 only one and in 1996 only two managed to win.

In 2002 the voter's turnout was not very high out of 709, there were only 13 female candidates and only two managed to win, and the 2008 elections witnessed the unprecedented women participation. Out of total 1354 candidates, there were 67, women contestants however only 3, candidates managed to win in 2014 election only 2, candidates managed to win. The 73rd and 74th amendment of the Indian constitution gave some hope the women members to Develop self-confidence. These amendments related to the panchayat raj institutions (PRIs) have brought revaluation 33% reservation for in the local self-government

1.2 Women in Jammu and Kashmir assembly:-

Year	Total seats	Women candidate	Elected women	Runner up
1962	75	01	00	00
1967	75	01	00	00
1972	75	06	04	00
1977	76	04	01	01
1983	76	07	00	01
1987	76	13	01	01
1996	87	15	02	03
2002	87	30	02	02
2008	87	67	03	04
2014	87	26	02	01
	Total	117	16	13

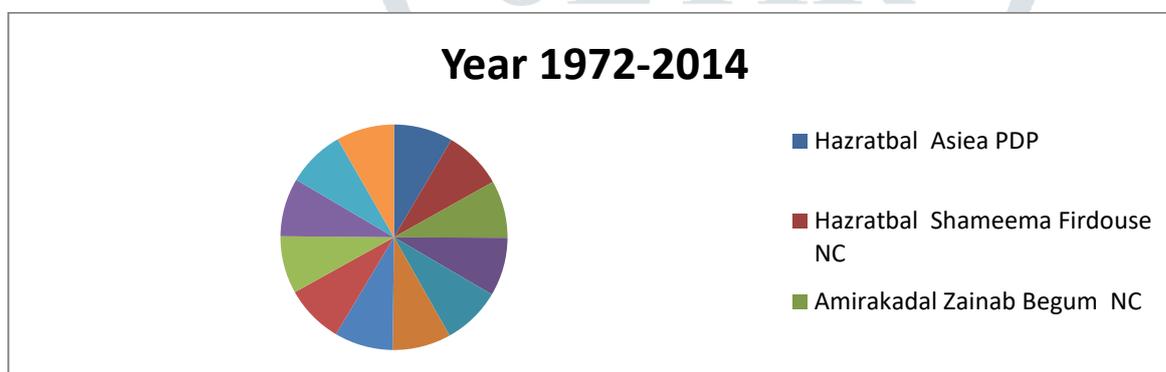
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1.3 General constituency: winning women candidates

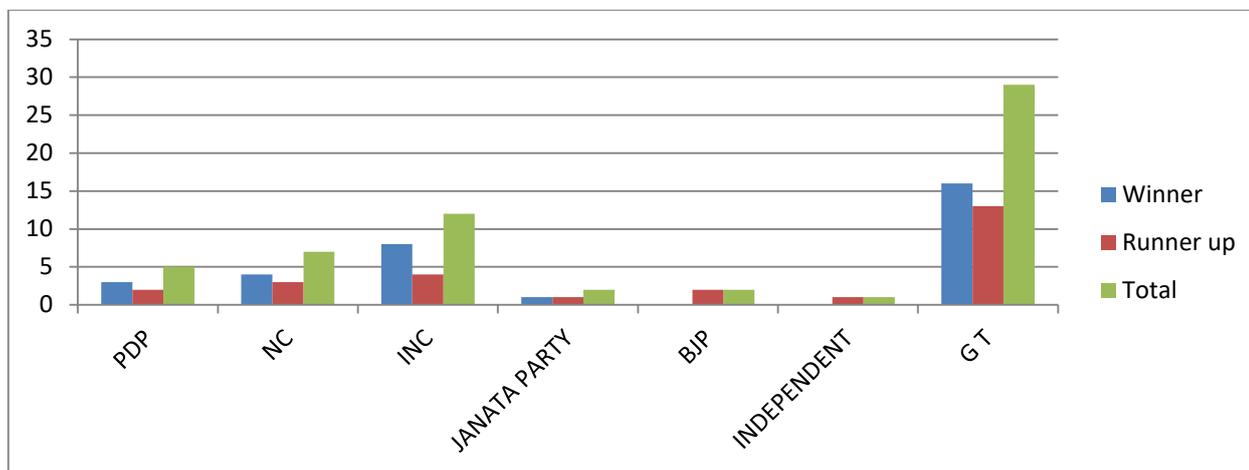
Constituency	Women MLA	Party	Year
Hazratbal	Asiea	PDP	2014
	Shameema Firdouse	NC	2014
Amirakadal	Zainab Begum	NC	1972
Wachi	Mehbooba Mufti	PDP	2008
Noorabad	Sakina Itoo	NC	2008
	Sakina Itoo	NC	1996
Bijbehara	Mehbooba Mufti	INC	1996
Phalgam	Mehbooba Mufti	PDP	2002
Banihal	Hajra Begum	INC	1972
Basohli	Kanta Andotra	INC	2004
Tikri	Normal Devi	INC	1972
Jandrah Gharota	Shanta Bharti	INC	1972

Source: http://eci.nic.in/eci-main/1/Election_statistics.aspx.

**1.4 Status of women in various parties in Jammu and Kashmir Assembly:-**

Party	Winner	Runner up	Total
PDP	03	02	05
NC	04	03	07
INC	08	04	12
JANATA PARTY	01	01	02
BJP	00	02	02
INDEPENDENT	00	01	01
G T	16	13	29

Source: http://eci.nic.in/eci-main/1/Election_statistics.aspx



From 1962 till date, only 171 women candidates have electorally tried and tested their fate, out of which only 16 have EMERGED AS WINNERS. The main reason behind this is armed conflict and patriarchal family.

1.5 Leader of the Party:-

The two most famous women today in Jammu and Kashmir politics sarcastically occupy opposite ends of the political spectrum. Mahbooba Mufti, president of the Jammu and Kashmir People's Democratic Party founded by her father and former Union Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed. Mahbooba Mufti entered politics on a Congress ticket in the 1996 Assembly Elections. But afterward, she acquiescent and joined her fathers' opposition Party. Next, woman Sakina Itoo who at 24 years of age was pressurized by militants in contesting the 1996 elections, because militants had already killed her father, who was the speaker in the Legislative Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir. Waiting in the wings are women like Shameem Firdouse, a political activist and close associate of Begum Abdullah, who heads then the constituted women's wing of the National Conference. Firdouse agreed on the decline in women's political participation, but she puts it down to the uneven conditions in Kashmir. Mahbooba Mufti believes that the barriers to women's political participation have become almost impossible. Today very few Kashmiri Muslim women get authorization from their families to join politics. To go and meet all kinds of people- militants and security forces included-without protection is almost unimaginable for them. As for the active women among the Kashmiri Pandits, they have either fled to Jammu or Delhi or are almost invisible (Younis AS, 2014)

1.6 Property Right

Over 3000 properties have been registered in Srinagar in the name of females since may when the government abolished stamp duty for land and real estate purchases by women. According to records at sub-registrar city's (Srinagar office) on an average of 25 to 30 cases are received every working day where properties worth crores are registered in the name of women. The Jammu and Kashmir government in may 2018 this year issued a notification abolishing stamp duty on land and property purchased by women or in the name of female members of families in the rural and urban areas. Earlier women had to pay 5 percent stamp duty on land or estate purchased within the municipal limits and 3.5 % in rural areas, compared to men 7% and 5% respectively. According to government data, asset ownership in the state is largely

dominated by men, with approximately 33% women in the 15-49 age group owning a house . in case of land ownership, only about 23 % women in Jammu and Kashmir hold property in their name, while 72%men own land. As of 2017 only 18% of women aged 15-49 were employed in the 12 months, according to the national family health survey, compared to 75% of men employed in the same period. Female literacy rate in the state is at 56.43% compared to 76.75% for males.

1.7 Challenges:-

- ✓ There are countless challenges faced by women in Jammu and Kashmir, they were oppressed and suppressed by every walk of life, both socially and politically. The center and state government had taken some initiatives for the empowerment of women, but it is not enough for them to develop our self. A large population in the state is illiterate, unemployment, widows, unaware about rights, poor and lagging behind in every sphere of life. These are some challenges that act as a hindrance in the way empowering the women:
- ✓ Lack of decision-making authority
- ✓ Violence against women is on leaps and bounds both in socially and politically J&K.
- ✓ Illiteracy or ignorance of people also a constraint in the empowerment of women.
- ✓ Many girls in many districts of J&K still get married at an early age, which affects their overall development to a greater extent
- ✓ The poor and low status of women
- ✓ High level of illiteracy among women.
- ✓ Many customs and cultural practices hinder the empowerment of women. For examples, many parents do not send their daughters to schools when they attain puberty.
- ✓ Lack of women's participation in political affairs
- ✓ Lack of awareness
- ✓ Inadequate & unorganized health care delivery system

All these challenges act as a barrier in the way of various developmental programmers for the empowerment of women. These challenges need to overcome at the earliest, only then we can achieve the desired target. Though the state government has taken some good steps recently, what State really needs right now are sizable leaps! As we progress towards a developed nation, so every care must be taken to compositely develop and empower women along the way to stand true to what our great Jawaharlal Nehru said "You can tell the condition of a nation by looking at the status of its women"(Ghulam Sarwer-2017)

1.8 Conclusion:-

Empowerment of women is a need of an hour. It needs efforts of both the state and central government. the progress of the nation depends upon the development of manpower which includes 50% of women power because in every nation women constitute half of the population , unless and until this half population is not empowered the development of any nation is impossible. the women of Jammu and Kashmir face too many

challenges related to health, economy, education, politics, domestic violence, declining sex ratio, female feticide and infanticide, late marriage, state violence, dowry harassment, eve teasing, unequal wages, child sexual abuse, child labour and sexual harassment at work. To reduce domestic violence and other discriminations society also to take initiative. Separate educational institutions should be established in both rural and urban areas, awareness programmes were given to women.

The bills which are pending in the parliament for the reservation of women in the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, and the state legislature should be passed. The political parties should be given more mandates to women.

1.9 Recommendation and suggestions :-

- I. Women should be given reservation both in central as well as state legislatures and in panchayats so that they can empower themselves.
- II. Women should be protected from all types of violence's, especially social, political, economic and cultural. Strict rules should be made against the violence of women.
- III. Both the center as well as the state government to make policies and programmes regarding the political empowerment of women, in their party manifesto and they should also show trust on women and give mandate more and more women.
- IV. More and more educational setups should be open to women's. in these institutions leadership training and how to protect our life, what are the values of leadership.
- V. Political parties should be given equal opportunities to all, men as well as women to produce ourselves before the people or in political participation in the state.
- VI. Separate educational institutions should be established for women.
- VII. Technical and job-oriented courses for womenfolk.
- VIII. The government of state should provide a kind of legal aid to the women so that in case of violation of women political rights they can approach courts and have access to justice.
- IX. The constitution should be given more property rights to women.
- X. Some schemes especially widows, weaker sections and needy women should be given so that they can improve themselves.

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