

SOCIO POLITICAL EMPWORNMENT OF RURAL WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

Empowerment of women is viewed as all round development in the status of women that can be realized through several inter-related and mutually reinforcing components such as awareness development in regard to Economic Status, discrimination, rights and opportunity towards gender equality, which ultimately develop their ability to plan and pursue economic activities, participate in the decision-making process at all spheres.

The present study undertakes re-examination of the relationship between the socio-economic statuses of women the findings on participation of women in politics is increasing. There is significant in the study on political empowerment and participation of women in politics. To secure women's rightful place in society and to enable them to decide their own destiny and for the growth of genuine and sustainable democracy, women's participation in politics is essential. This will not only uplift their personality but will open the way for their social and economic empowerment. Their participation in public life will solve many problems of society

Keywords: Women, Empowerment, Well-Being, Paschim Medinipur District.

Introduction:

The empowerment of women is examined as a development in the status of women and demonstration of their probable in all walks of life. This is realized through complementary and mutually bolster components. The situation in Maharashtra is same from the vacation of the India. Disparity between men's and women's were responsible for not only lower socio-economic development but also for a large-scale restlessness among women. Empowerment of women is a crucial issue which would enable women to realize their full identity and potential and contribute effectively to the growth of the society. These are awareness construction in regard to their socio-economic status, discrimination, rights and opportunity towards gender equality; skill development and capacity building in order to acquire ability to plan and pursue economic activities and participation in the decision-making process in the house and society as well as promoting actions for achieving gender equality. Empowering them economically and politically and socially can build up the status of women. Constitution of India advises equal rights on men and women. Due to developmental exploit, the India has witnessed improvement in the status of women in many circles such as nutrition, health, education, social and economic concert. But the gender divergence still persists, insignificant participation in the economic activities and gaps in the life expectancy, which is evident from declining sex ratio, fatality rates between men and women and nutritional indicators for women. Low literacy among females and lack of skills, awareness, social taboos and conventions, above all lack of economic independence and lack of participation in the decision-making process among them are the principal reasons for inequality between men and women.

Research Methodology:

The research paper is based on secondary data and data is procured from published sources like the websites of Ministry of Rural Development of India, books and periodicals, papers, and newspaper reports.

Objective: - To study women's socio and political empowerment through 73 constitutional amendments.

Hypothesis: - Women's socio and political condition is improved through 73 constitutional amendments.

73rd Constitution Amendment Act 1992:

During the post-Independence period many States in India enacted legislation to constitute Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in accordance with Article 40 of the Indian Constitution in the Directive Principles of State Policy. This Article states that the State should take steps to organize village Panchayat and endow them with such power and functions so as to enable them to function as units of local self-government. But the Panchayati Raj Institutions in many States were not uniform in structure and functions and they failed in many instances to acquire the status and dignity required for viable and responsive people's institutions due to absence of regular elections, prolonged supersession and inadequate representation of women and weaker sections and insufficient devolution of power and lack of financial resources. Therefore, there was rethinking on reviving the Panchayati Raj Institutions which resulted in constitution of different committees to study the Panchayati Raj systems and make recommendations to strengthen these grassroots democratic institutions. The important committees were G.V.K Rao Committee (1985), Asoka Mehta Committee (1977), and L.N Singhvee Committee (1986), Balwant Ray Mehta Study Team (1957). All these committees recommended the need to evoke local initiatives and participation and therefore, recommended to reengineer the PRIs by giving them the Constitutional status and making them responsible for planning, implementation and monitoring of the rural development schemes. The attempt to consolidate the PR System resulted in the Seventy-third Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992.

The most notable feature of the Act is that it gave specific Constitutional mandate to the State Government for the establishment of three-tier structure for local self-governance. The landmark feature of the Seventy-third Constitutional Amendment is that not less than one-third of the total number of offices of the chairpersons and members of various Panchayati Raj Institutions has to be reserved for women. This was a big escalation towards women empowerment which provided them the scope and opportunity to participate in public life as well as in the decision-making and nation-building process. So far as ensuring women's representation in the PRIs, the State of Maharashtra took daredevil initiatives to implement one-third reservation of seats for women at a time, when the Union Government was still deliberating on the issue. Moreover, even among the reserved seats for SCs and STs, one-third is set aside for women candidates belonging to the SCs and STs. Another breakthrough step was that, according to 73rd Constitution (Amendment) Act, 1992, Maharashtra Government had not only made one-third of the seats reserved for women, but also went a step ahead in reserving the post of vice-president for women in the Panchayats at all levels, if the chairperson elected was not a woman.

Government initiatives and Constitutional provisions:

There bill was on 2008 as Women's Reservation Bill or the constitutional amendment 104th which clearly states that women have 33% reservation to participation in politics.

The Constitution of India guaranteed justice-social, economic and political, liberty of thought, and equality to all citizens. Constitution provided for equality of women and called State to take measures to neutralize the socio-economic, educational and political disadvantage faced by women.

- **Article 14:** It guarantees equality before law and equal protection of law with in the territory of India.
- **Article 15:** It prohibits discrimination on the basis of caste, sex, religion, race place of birth. According to article 15(3), State can make special provisions for the benefit women and children.
- **Article 16:** Equality of opportunity for all citizens in matter relating to employment. No citizen can be denied employment on grounds of religion, race, cast, sex, decent, place of birth residence or any of them.
- **Article 39:** Article 39(a) provides for an adequate means of livelihood for all citizen. Article 39 (b) has provisions for equal pay for equal work for both men and women. Article 39 (c) has provisions for securing the health and strength of workers, men and women, and not to abuse the tender age of children.
- **Article 42:** It guarantees just and humane condition of work and maternity relief. Article 42 is in accordance with Article 23 and 25 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- **Article 243 (D):** It provides for the political reservation to women in every panchayat elections. It has extended this reservation to elected office as well.(Damodaran and Neupane)
- **Article 325 and 326:** They guarantee political equality, equal right to participate in political activity and right to vote, respectively.

In spite of the above provisions, participation of women in politics has not improved significantly. (D.Syamala Devi and G Lakshmi Jan-March 2005), (“Constitutional Law: Constitutional and Charter Provisions: Right of Women to Vote”) The increase in the number of women in legislature definitely will not bring overnight changes in the status of women. It is foolishness to think that it will solve the entire problems faced by women and bring equality immediately. It is also true that powerful women leaders in our politics have failed to do much to the women in India. The 73rd and 74th Amendment to the Constitution of India with 33.33% reservation for women has given opportunity for the entry of large number of socially marginalized category such as women to enter into the domain of local institution and their performance is very encouraging. In the year 2006, 10,41,430 women were elected to the local institutions. These reservations or quota brought quantitative changes, facilitated women to be represented in local governments and deserved to be hailed as major achievement in the empowerment of women. Success stories of women in local governments indicate the qualitative changes that are coming forth. Instrumentalist perspective would enable qualitative change in the performance of women in politics and governance. It would provide a way to bring a sense of equality in gender (Sumitra Mahajan, 2017)

Review of literature:

Researcher has been reviewed the following books, articles, research papers etc. for completing the research work that has been discussed about Political participation of women is not impressive when compared with men. This is the case in most of the countries across the world. However, women’s political participation now is absolutely encouraging compared to the older period. Today it remains stronger than ever. But in Indian women who have decision making powers unflinchingly hail from urban and elite groups. (Singhal) India falls in the lowest quartile with respect to the number of women in parliament is 9.1%. Even the UAE, with 22.5%, has more women representatives, according to the UN’s 2008 survey of women in politics. That said, the recently concluded 15th Lok Sabha elections have delivered a record 59 women as members of Parliament, the highest since independence, raising their parliamentary participation to 10.9%. Women presence in Lok Sabha 1952-2014 is only 36%. And only 6.91% are women MPs in parliament. The presence of women in Rajya Sabha from 1952 to 2014 is about 22.92% out of total seats. (Fadia)Seventeen of these women are under 40. And representation of women leaders at the grassroots level in India is nearly 50%, especially since the passing of the 73rd amendment in 1992, which allotted one-third of all seats to women.

Women’s participation in decision-making is essential for women’s interests to be incorporated into governance. It has been widely experienced that governance structures which do not provide for adequate participation of women, often suffer from state interventions which are neither inclusive nor democratic. Including women, especially in local governments are an essential step towards creating gender equal opportunities and gender sensitive policies. Women are properly involved in household, community work and hence well aware of real issues faced by people. Only 21% of national parliament is women. Lack of financial resources can limit participation given the costs associated with elections. Independent funding and placing limits or campaigns spending may support women in overcoming the barriers to politics. This gives them insight and perspective which can be instrumental in sustainable overall development. Since women have different needs and perspectives on social and political issues and it is important to involve women in governments to incorporate all of the societal viewpoints in policy and decision-making processes.

Women’s political participation in India is religious factors, socio-economical factors. The Lack of economic resources is one of the biggest threats that prevent women from participating in politics in greater numbers. Making it accessible for women to access economic resources is a key in expanding women’s presence in the political dimension. In fact women’s participation in political life depends largely on their access to employment which gives them not only material independence, but also certain professional skills and greater self-confidence. So that access to means of production and finances has a direct relationship and influence on the participation of women in political institutions.

India’s ranking in women’s participation in political empowerment by United Nations reveals that According to number of women elected or appointed to parliament as on 1st January. It is ranked 148 out of 193 nations with only 11.48% women in Lower House of Parliament. The number of women heads of state government fell from 19 to 17 since 2015. The progress continues to be slow. Indian women are relatively disempowered and enjoy lower status than of men. The women in India participate in voting, run for public offices and political parties at lower levels. About 59 MPs out of 543, meant the Lok Sabha was represented by 11% of women. Indira Gandhi was one of India’s strongest prime ministers

and she served for 14 years. Several states currently have women Chief Ministers and leading parties, chairperson for more years etc. only 12% of elected members of parliament are women. India ranks 9th on the global gender gap report in terms of political participation.

There was a bill on 2008 as women's reservation bill or the constitutional amendment 104th which clearly states that a woman has 33% reservation to participation in politics. These reservations or quota brought quantitative changes, facilitated women to be represented in local governments and deserved to be hailed as major achievement in the empowerment of women. A success story of women in local governments indicates the qualitative changes that are coming forth. Increment list perspective would enable qualitative change in the performance of women in politics and governance. It would provide a way to bring a sense of equality in gender. (Damodaran and Neupane)

The Lack of economic resources is one among the most important obstacles that forestall girls from collaborating in politics in bigger numbers. Creating it easier for ladies to access economic resources, therefore, may be a key in increasing women's presence within the political realm. of course women's participation in political life depends for the most part on their access to employment which supplies them not solely material independence, however additionally bound skilled skills and kitchen utensil confidence. So access to suggest that of production and finances contains a direct relationship and influence on the participation of girls in political establishments. Thanks to these facts girls continually has to get permission of the daddy to shop for some consumption materials and different resources of the unit. Although girls are salaried, most of the time their financial gain is controlled by men and typically if father and mother have their own financial gain severally, girls cowl unit expenses whereas men get pleasure from outside home like hotels and bars. Thus girls are continually obsessed on men economically that is that the main cause for his or her low participation to politics of the country. (Shimelis Kassa, 2015)(Costa and James)

Conclusion:

The issue of gender-based violence and provision of safety and security of women should also be addressed on a priority basis to promote gender equality in the social and political arenas. Although the Government of India has initiated the National Mission of Empowerment of Women in 2014 with the broad objective of gender empowerment, the progress of this project is not up to the mark. The key challenges faced by women are lack of education which burdens their political involvement. We recommend bridging this gap by providing quality education to women's and girls in the country. Awareness about their rights as mentioned in the Constitution can only be ensured once women are appropriately educated. It is thus imperative to strengthen its functioning and implementation. In addition, there is need for capacity building of prospective women leaders by imparting leadership training to the female members of political parties. To secure women's rightful place in society and to enable them to decide their own destiny and for the growth of genuine and sustainable democracy, women's participation in politics is essential. This will not only uplift their personality but will open the way for their social and economic empowerment. Their participation in public life will solve many problems of society.

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