

Significance of Women Role in PRI's at the Grassroots

Dr. Hanumanthappa D G

Assistant Professor, Dept. of PG Studies in Political Science, Rani Channamma University, Belgaum, Karnataka (India)

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*Corresponding Author

Email: hanumanthappadge@rcub.ac.in

ABSTRACT

The real dignity and the grandeur the women can enjoy when she gets an access to the development activities at the grassroots and if nation wants to seek the true development at the national level the women, must be engaged at the development activities at the grassroots through participation and the Proportionate representation of male and female gender that can be seen being practiced at PRI's in India. Article 40 of the DPSP (Directive principal of state policy) envisages the genuine development of this country emphasizing the participation of women in PRI's. 73rd amendment act of 1992 which gives details of panchayat raj act. This paper deals with empowerment of women and PRI's as the bolster of democracy at the village levels.

1. Introduction

Democracy signified the participation of people in the governance as Abraham liken said "of the people, by the people and for the people" which also implies the total participation of total population of a country in all the aspects of human development. India until now as not purely implemented democracy for development at the grassroots. This according to the provision of Indian constitution requires an equal number of women participation for development at the grassroots. With this aim Nehru launched this new panchayat raj system at grassroots at degana village of Rajasthan. The main aim of panchayat raj was provide space for women for the development of women themselves and the nation.

2. Review of Literature

- Vyasulu & Vyasulu (1999) highlighted that due to the presence of strict social restrictions on the mobility of women, women who mix around openly with their male counterparts in political meetings are looked down upon as women of dubious character. Sometimes it also so happens that a number of villages come under one Gram Panchayat, in such cases representation and participation of women become difficult as women have much less mobility than men.
- Ambedkar (2000) showed that larger size of participation of women in Panchayati Raj Institution could take place because of reservation of seats for the women candidates.
- Nambiar (2001) in her study of 'Making the Gram Sabha Work' noted the difference utilities in organizing the Gram Sabha. Majority of women reported that they were not informed or invited to the meetings. However, they have to forego their day's wages or household duties just to identify beneficiaries as to convey what the gram Panchayat would do in future.
- Pai (1998) according to his field notes in Meerut District 'Pradhanis in New Panchayats' revealed that many of the Pradhanis were illiterate and only able to put their signatures on official papers. Regarding their

roles, the study revealed that they were almost insignificant in the functioning of Gram and Block Panchayat bodies. As they belonged to better off families in the villages, they do not work outside their homes. They agreed to stand for elections due to family pressure and also the decision of their community and not because they were keen to do so. The reservations provided by the Government had forced them to contest elections; provision of reservation has not led them to participate in decision-making in local bodies.

- Baviskar (2005) argued that women have now come to value their newfound freedom to move out of the four walls of the house and are finding a space for themselves in the public realm.
- Ravi *et al.* (2004) highlighted that in Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh list the cases of various women who used their position in the PRIs to engage in developmental work in their respective localities and bring in positive changes. Bringing forth the positive implications of affirmative action in case of tribal women.
- Chauhan (2003) argued that owing to their election to the PRIs and their becoming a part of village self-governance, there is a positive change that has come about in the image and status of tribal women and the women feel that their respect in the eyes of their family and community has increased. Thus it is observed that participation in the affairs of the PRIs have enabled elected women representatives to have a better understanding of the workings of subnational politics.
- Vidya (1997) stated that reservation got the women into the PRIs as elected officials, they soon realized that "women members have to prove that they can work equally well as male members. Ridge (2010) highlighted that West Bengal villages reveal that women in the villages where the PRIs are headed by a female sarpanch have recorded a rise from 7 percent to 10 percent in women's participation in Panchayat meetings.

- Buch (2000) gives an understanding and estimation of this change in attitude in women elected representatives of the PRIs.

3. Objectives

- To analyze factors responsible for success/failure related to political participation of the people specially women in Panchayati Raj Institutions.
- To examine the impact of Panchayati Raj Institutions on rural masses.
- To suggest measures for further strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions and empowerment of women

4. Methodology

The present paper is based on the secondary data collected from secondary sources in the form of published literature on the subject. The various sources include reports on women empowerment, and research papers found in Economic Political Weekly, publications by Ministry of Panchayathi Raj, and materials found in websites related to 73rd Amendment in Panchayathi Raj Institutions.

5. Importance of women participation in Panchayat's

The 73rd amendment of the constitution creates a facility for the reservation of 1/3 rd of the total number of seats for women. The essence of the article is to enhance participation of women in election held at the grassroots. The main fund behind this is to crate women politicians for national politics. Even promoting common women citizens in variegated fields such as grama Saba, panchayt meeting etc...

With the act coming into the being women are prominently participating in various activities of rural development in accordance with their capacity.

The participation of women does not end at the near participation but it has enhanced women capacities to level of decision making which includes their extension of suggestions for all the problems persisting at the grassroots.

Women through the grassroots agencies of democracy have gone to the extent of raising their voice against all injustices and atrocities.

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The women participation at the grassroots PRI's is ebbing the corruption and violence. It has become possible because women at the grassroots PRI's become successful in breaking the nexus of male elected member and the officer. The awareness of women of right and power as dampened the muscle power of local male politicians.

This act also provided for the decline of domestic violence at the grassroots as her is the domineering force.

The women participation at the grassroots at PRI's allows the decline of dominance of upper caste leaders and also the dalit's free and happy as the violence rate is dwindling as the women folk seem to be more predominant and potential at PRI's at the grassroots.

This act also creates a space for changing democracy from representative to participatory democracy.

This also imparts awareness at understanding and also the information to women and that is reason why the common women goes to panchayat and says her opinion at grievances to women leaders at the PRI's. This democratic space would constrict the extent of atrocities against weaker sections.

6. Conclusion

The establishment of PRI's under 1992 act. The whole gamut of this development in the context of constitutional development towards more pragmatic development of India. The 1992 act is hallowed development which craves for the overall Socio-Economic development involving every human species. The underlining idea democracy is the role of themselves In which case not a single gender is suppose to be participated and benefited. The very significance of this development (1992 act) aspires for universal involvement in which women participation is given more emphasis as all the developmental activities at the grassroots are women-centric and therefore this article less more emphasis on women's intensive participation in the developmental activities. The main focus of 1992 act to develop nation or national economy from the development at the grassroots through equal participation women gender.