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A STUDY ON INDIAN DEMOCRACY AND WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNING BODIES: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES.

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ABSTRACT

We are proud of the fact that India is one of the countries in the world to give women the right to vote. The Indian Constitution is one of the most progressive in the world, and guarantees equal rights for men and women. Indian women are free and equal members of society. The 73rd and 74th Amendments of Constitution of India in 1993 are landmarks to ensure political empowerment of women. These provisions surely ensure protection of women's political rights granted by one third reservation of seats in Panchayat and Local Governing bodies. Now they are coming forward to contest elections right from Panchayats, Local Governing bodies, and Assemblies. Women have now realised their potentials, inherent energy and power. one can hope that they would be able to full-fill the desire and ambitions of millions of Indian women in near future. But there is major problem that due to illiteracy, and social background; they are facing many challenges.

Introduction

Democracy is defined by Abraham Lincolns in words as Government is by the people, of the people, and for the people. It means the ruler are elected by the people, the real power is in hands of the people, the voice of the Government is the choice of the people. Justice, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity which are essential characteristics of democracy.

According to Clarke The term "Local Government" or "Local-self-Government" is that part of government of a nation or state which deals mainly with such matters as concern the inhabitants of the particular district or place together with those matters which parliament has deemed to able to administered by local authorities subordinate to the central government.[8] For sustainable social development it is necessary that people participate in the political process. women in India do not seem to have attained or able to exercise the complete constitutional rights of citizenship under the law. They are often relegated to the position of second-class citizens and are subjugated under male dominance. The women in rural areas who once were not even independent voter i.e. whose choice of vote was guided by the male members of family are now strongly participants in the rural politics. Women's participation in politics is increased not merely quantitative but actually qualitative. Women play an important role in the development of human society. Our late prime Minister Honourable Jawaharlal Nehru has observed that to awaken the people it is women who must be awakened. Once she is on the move, the family moves, the village moves, the nation moves. Today many such villages are counted into the list of developed villages in the country. Women are working actively in rural politics with efficiency and transparency. Education is the most powerful instrument for changing women's position in society. Investing in women's and girl's education is one of the most effective ways to reduce poverty and it is same like future investment for our better future in worst condition.

[8] Clrk, j j Local Government of the United Kingdom,p.1.

The value which were vague that women do not disserve freedom, their primary goal's in life are marriage and motherhood, after all if they are educated, they should be educated to perform these roles to the satisfaction of all other member of the family that a woman should sacrifice all her aspiration for sake of her family. Self-sacrifice, tolerance and subservience are among the values that have been handed over to women from one generation to another. Even though educational policies and programmes have been emphasizing on the need for promoting, such values are equality, self-respect and freedom.

Aims and objects

1) To study position and status of women's participation in local governances in India.
2) To Study Role of Women in Leadership
3) To examine Opportunities and Challenges,

The Constitution of India guarantees the Right to Equality to Indian women, there still exists a disparity between constitutional guarantees and the realities of women's lives. Reservation for women at local government level is supported on the ground that it will provide an opportunity for women's political participation. Our great visionary leader and the Chief Minister of the newly created State of Maharashtra Honourable Shri Yashwantraoji Chavan advocated the decentralization of power in all walks of governance and thus to bring a true spirit of democracy at the grass root level. His efforts brought the fruit of the Maharashtra Zillah Parishad (District body) & Panchayat Act of 1961.

All political parties have shown their commitment in raising the status of women. They have almost agreed to give 33% Reservation to Women in the Parliament and the State Legislatures. However, the 73rd and 74th Amendments of Constitution of India in 1993 are landmarks to ensure political empowerment of women. These provisions surely ensure protection of women's political rights granted by one third reservation of seats in Panchayat and Local Governing bodies. Now they are coming forward to contest elections right from Panchayats, Local Governing bodies, and Assemblies. Women have now realised their potential inherent energy and power. One can hope that they would be able to full-fill the desire and ambitions of millions of Indian women in near future. But there is major problem that due to illiteracy, and social background; they have not been very effective and vocal.

With various other factors such as lack of political party nomination, lack of family support, and other limitations on women's mobility have been acting as deterrents to their participation in the political processes. In spite of these hindrances it has been observed that the overall performance of women elected representatives at the local government level is better than their male counterparts. Till today power is not vested with them. Most of women Sarpanch's are dummies or rubber stamps of their husband or son or other male member. Though there are opportunities provided by Constitution of India still women political leader has to face many challenges

Challenges:

a) Low levels of Literacy: Literacy levels for women at rural level is very poor because they do not enable them to access good schools but also the strong cultural beliefs that do not favour girls' education in rural areas. This limits women from contesting for some leadership positions where there is a set academic level requirement.
b) Lack of finance resources means that women are not able to raise the required funds to raise nomination fees and money to run an effective campaign. Elections by design need money for one to set up the required structures to manage a campaign, create visibility and network with colleagues which are key elements for success of any campaign.
c) Lack of support from family members including the spouse for women intending to participate in elections demotivates some women from standing for positions. In patriarchal societies men still exert a lot of influence on their wives and in extreme cases they are

refused to contest for elective positions because this is perceived as challenging the power of the man in the home. Sometimes their movement is controlled with claims that women might become promiscuous once they are given liberty to move out of the home and in such a situation, they cannot effectively participate in decision making bodies. Women faces numerous challenges while running for election and during campaign at various stages of the process, some challenges were unique to women like managing travel, family and household responsibilities it is difficult to divided time between family and household responsibilities. while participating in elections is the main challenges that female candidates faced.

d) Lack of encouragement during the election is one of the challenges that women participant faced as comparative to male because male received encouragement from "multiple sources" such as families, friends and other people, even on the archery ground, on other hand, as a female are discouraged and remained of the negative aspect of being a local leader. Women contestant faced challenges related to gender bias, some challenges are usually associated with gender stereotypes roles. Some people considered the notion of women being inferior to men as a big challenge[9].

e) Women's aspirations to contest in the local government elections are also affected by gossip and criticism that spread in the villages. This seemed to have affected the interest and confidence of women to contest in the elections, political, public, cultural and social environment is often unfriendly or even hostile to them. Even a quick glance at the current composition of political decision makers in any region provides evidence that women still face numerous obstacles in articulating and shaping their own interests[10]. Negative Culture and attitude in Patriarchal societies there is always a belief that public space is not women and that cant be good leaders. This type of perceptions is stronger at the lower levels making it very hard for women to contest and take up leadership at these levels.

ership: Major factor that influenced women's leadership aspiration is education.
tion has apparently not given young women in communities the confidence to participate in
c life and local governance most of the women are a high school certificate, but young women did
rticipate because they are shy and lack self-confidence and are anxious about not getting any
from the public. This implies that there is fear and uncertainty attached to their youthfulness,
the reason for low level of participation. there is mismatch between capabilities necessary for
ole in local governance and formal education. There is a prevalent belief that young educated
n do not have leadership qualities, and those who are capable and vocal do not have adequate
education. Education dilemma facing communities seeking good local leader. Elderly women
e capable lack literacy and even if they are interested, lack of literacy may be a barrier there is
x of education and capability. We don't have women who are capable. Some women are
e, have confidence and good communication skills, but those who have such qualities but they
k of education, and those who have education but lack of capability. Things don't click together.
ed women are attracted to other opportunities, and, they are not interested in participating in
overnance.

The value of Confidence: Women's own lack of confidence is an important reason for the low level of women's participation in local government elections. The areas where women

g Women's Participation in Local Governance-An Explorative Study of Women's Leadership Journeys in Eight Districts of Bhutan
dfs.semanticscholar.org/d998/eb3ddd02ef10d7a1b4f1d0fd15dbc95c557f.pdf, accessed on February 03, 2018).

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lacked confidence included public speaking, experience, fear of losing the election, and ability to perform duties effectively upon election. Women in general are shy and "leadership requires a person to listen as well as speak effectively.[11]

II) Women's participation in local governance through leadership roles is the lack of motivational and encouragement for women to participate. The first step in this regard is to motivate and provide support to potential and elected female leaders with aim to increase their confidence levels.

Participation in Panchayats Elected representatives are expected to work for their constituents. Mandated reservation is only the beginning of their presence. Their effective participation would require not only attendance in meetings but also articulation, joining discussion, taking up issues and solving problems brought to them. The percentage of women who reported regular attendance in Panchayat meetings is less than their male colleagues. In fact, doubts have been expressed about the extent to which women can or really care to participate in Panchayats or in other similar institutions due to their personal disabilities or other social and institutional constraints. Sweeping statements are often made about women representatives not coming in Panchayat meetings, and not taking interest in the Panchayat work. These impressions and perceptions are reflected in statements like these women representatives being only proxies, 'namesake' members or illiterate, ignorant, absentee. There have been evidences that due to reservation policy, certain women have got elected into the setup, but they acted merely as the mouth-piece of the male family members.

Time must be given to women to cope with this problem it is duty of state and society to uplift women in all spheres of life. Because today's women are tomorrows ruler. The Gram Sabha or Municipalities / Municipal Corporations are seen as the basic institutions of decentralized governance. It is the people's forum and is visualized as the 'watch dog' to make the politician-bureaucratic nexus accountable to people. Therefore, this space should also be accessible to the women so that they can be part of planning and decision-making process at the village level, to Country level.

Conclusion: - The 73 rd amendment is a landmark which provides prospect to marginalized section of society to play a part in political field. To make this affirmative action successful all the stakeholder of democracy needs to put their sincere endeavour because local self-Government operates as a crucial instrument of social engineering. Socio-economic and political transformation of rural Indian is possible after effective functioning of local governing bodies.

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