

CHAPTER–II

Women Empowerment In PRIs; Evolutionary Perspective

Politics decides the fate and destination of people and therefore active participation of people particularly women in grass root level democracy and the national level political activities of the state is tremendously essential. This is specially so in democratic countries where all stage of the government is run for the people, by the people, and of the people. The people and popular opinion ought to be the one and only deciding factor in the creation of any national policy and act of the government including PRIs.¹ If the people's opinion is not reflected in the democratic set-up, then their hope and objective cannot be met by the government. Therefore, all segments of people principally women with their divergent views, interests, attitudes etc., must be given representation in formulating national policy of the government. If a particular section or group of people as like women, schedule caste, schedule tribes and minorities are mistreated or not represented in the democratic set-up of all tier the government, then that group stands to suffer. Even though, democracy is a rule by the majority, it is the elementary duty of all such government to take into consideration the interests of the majority, majority interests ought to be also be duly represented while collective decision are taken by the government.²

2.1 Women & political participation in India

As per the Indian constitution equality is accorded to all the citizens of India irrespective of caste statement of belief, sex and religion etc and it is a unique feature of Indian tradition and law that have been improving its civilization for years. But some people may argue that in practice it (the principle of equality) doesn't hold water and as to them, it may be seen all over the place that is a not healthy for India to any point of view.³ To resolve this debatable issue of gender equality in all arenas of life, a perfect framework needs to be instituted. The approach shouldn't be top down, in its place, it should be bottom up. As far as the question of political empowerment of women in Indian society is concerned, it would take a long way to reach the developed world standard. In political area, women have been inadequately entered in national parliament and state assemblies. although, Indian constitution provided equal rights to all citizen through articles 325 and 326 so that all section of society would be run without any limitations

and countries their political energy society and nation.⁴ It is a unique initiative of India that provided as rights in a single initiative through constitution without create any partiality among citizens.

As per the association for the democratic reforms currently women constitutes around 10% in union legislature that is shocking point for policy makers. Now, a very obvious question arises, why the women in India after being 50% of the population are holding only 10% in the union legislature. It clearly shows the inherent discriminatory structure of our social system.⁵

2.2 Structure of Governance

Having got independence, August 15, 1947, India received parliamentary form of government along with federal structure. It have tree tier including panchayati raj that is unique feature of Indian democracy. There are 29 states and 7 territories in Indian federation and power and authority were divided in it through seven scheduled of Indian constitution. Each state government of India has its unique political system as to required. All three tier of government together perform the basic work of government. In center, parliament of India have two chambers –Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, first is called lower house which called house of people also and second is called upper house in which called house of state. Unicameral legislative structure assembly is seen in many states.⁶ The upper house is called Legislative Council in which many representatives participate in it through indirect election and the lower house is called Legislative Assembly which is called house of people. Local government is a good initiative to implement state and central development policies and programmes at grass root level for improving living stander of common people. the local self government is known as panchayati raj institution, are monitor by state government.⁷ Three tier panchayati raj institutions have implemented by Uttar Pradesh government and they are following-

- In Uttar Pradesh panchayati raj system, Gram Panchayat has been consisted a village or a group of villages in which population would not be less then 1000
- In Uttar Pradesh panchayati raj system, Gram Kshetra panchayat has been consisted a village or a group of villages in which population would not be less then 2000.
- In Uttar Pradesh panchayati raj system, each district has Zila Panchayat

In the urban area in Uttar Pradesh, municipal institutions are instituted through 74th constitutional amendment and they are running entirely, they are improving status of urban people. In Uttar Pradesh, the Municipal Council constituted for smaller area and Municipal Corporation constituted for larger urban area, based on the range of inhabitants.⁸ The provision of affirmative action has accepted by constitution therefore one third reservation provided to women local government. the constituency of reserved area is changed through rotation system. it is unique policy to maintain equality and social justice.

2.3 Governance in the Scheduled Areas:

There are many scheduled area are in Indian Territory and it have specific features in its nature. Development of that area, extraordinary provision provided to it so that can be developed. Scheduled tribe constitutes around 8% of India. They are spread over almost all part of the country. The constitution of India, in article 244 part (1) and (2), in part X, has listed the scheduled areas and tribal areas under the 5th and 6th schedule.

5th schedule cover the tribal dominated areas in the states of A. P. Jharkhand, Gujarat, H.P, M.P, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Odessa and Rajasthan. And the 6th scheduled covers the north eastern states of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura. The basic idea behind the scheduled areas is to enable the tribal population in enjoying their right and to develop the economic educational social structure of the tribal society. The 5th schedule accords a special system of administration directly under governors of the state and directions of the central government. As per 5th schedule state government is responsible for implementing the provisions related to welfare and development of tribes in the region. It also provides the tribal advisory council which protects the tribal population from exploitation and discrimination.⁹

6th schedule provides for special mechanism for administration in the state discussed above, entry to of this law provides for district and regional council and each of the autonomous district and region. It also gives powers of legislation and administration and justice on the council which is parallel with the executive and financial responsibility. Thus we can conclude that the 5th and 6th schedule works as facilitator to preserve the costmary practice and distinct culture.¹⁰ And recently the panchayat provisions are also made applicable to the scheduled areas as per the provisions of the PESA (panchayat extention of scheduled areas).

2.4 Evolution of Women's Participation in Political Activities:

India being the multi facilitated society where no one can generalize nation various religious social economic group nevertheless some broad pattern can be found which underpin the situation of the women in our society. A common perception that is often applied to the fearer sex that they are generally confined to home with restricted mobility and isolation.¹¹ Throughout Indian history women has got treatment on the basis of her being, a mother, a wife etc. But in the recent time some major changes are taking place which has changed to some extent the status of women in Indian society but the larger picture is that they are excluded from political life, which by its very nature takes place on public platform. The routes of women participation politics can be trace backed to the reform movement in 19th century. This reform movement mainly works on caste inequality, child marriage and sati pratha etc. The maker of modern India Raja Ram Mohan Roy was advocated of women political empowerment. But he said that we need to start from the scratch. So in this way prior to political representation of women, he took of the cause of women education and abolition of child marriage and sati pratha.¹² Several other women reformer also came to the issue. In this period and one can be reminded of Pandit Rama bai, Manorama etc.

2.5 Women's Participation in the Independence Movement:

Indian national movement have democratic feature in various point of view because India have multi fold culture in its nature. Therefore, Indian national movement had provided to participated many section of society including women, scheduled caste, schedule tribe, minorities and women for getting independence to maintain status of all section of society and individuals. In this context, Swadsi movement is a destination point for women participation in national movement. There are many women individually hand families including women have participated in various activities, they have actively involved in the activities of boycott of foreign good and revolutionary activities. Sister Nivedita, a big fish in this context, they became member of revolutionary and they organized to women for getting participation in national movements. In that way followed by others women revolutionary as like Agyati in Delhi, Madam Kama , was identified as a women leader for the revolutionary movements. And she initiated many

revolutionary activities not only in India but also in the world. She globalized Indian national movement. Kumudini Mitra who is a prominent leader and published a journal called 'Suprabath' that is linked by nationalist leaders.

A Parsi woman, Madam Cama participated in the international socialist congress getting support for Indian national movement and published a journal called 'Vande Matram'. Her movement highlighted women's suffrage during British rule in India. In 1917, Annie Besant including other women leaders met Montagu for getting voting rights for each section of women in Indian society. Various Indian women's organizations emerged during the same period. In 1917, Annie Besant along with many Indian women like Dorothy Jinarajadasa, Mrs. Dadabhai, Mrs. Ambujamal had instituted India women's association. It is identified as the chief feminist organization in India.¹³ This feminist organization powerfully stood with the Home rule movement. All India women's Conference had outlined and it raised questions of women's suffrage, labour issues and welfare including nationalist work. Second generation of feminist movement in 1920's, advocated issues of women's rights. There were many prominent activists Lady Puroj Bai Mehta, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur and Mrs. N. Sengupta played major roles in that period. All of these revolutionary and social reformist women were taken to write on social and nationalist issues to improve national movement.¹⁴ Sarojini Naidu including Basanti Devi, Kamala Devi, Chattopadhyay and Aruna Asaf Ali had actively participated in national movement. They had supported women's rights. Sarojini Naidu who was elected first women president of Indian national congress and passed a resolution in favor of the franchise.¹⁵

In the satyagrah movement that is led by Mahatma Gandhi, Kamala Devi Chattopadhyay keenly contributed in 1930. Aruna Asaf Ali's was also participated in salt march and she was under arrest. Quit India movement was a landmark in national movement, Aruna Asif Ali took part in it and edited a magazine known by 'Inquilab' and set up the National Federation of Indian Women. She is also known grand old lady of Indian national movement and leading lady of the 1942, Quit India movement. Basanti Devi including with her colleagues were arrested on the issue of anti-British activities including restraining foreign policy that was destroying Indian retail economy based on agriculture sector. In 1922, she presided over provincial congress committee of Bengal. In first time in Indian history of national movement, thousand's women associated in salt Satya Grah.¹⁶ Many women organizations have been structured to train women to participate in national events as like pickets and charka spinning.

It is clear many women including all section of society to participate and contribute on various points of view.

2.6 Women in Independent India:

India got the freedom in 1947 after long struggle against the English and it is identified that women of all section of Indian society contributing their role in freedom struggle. During last stage of struggle in 1946, a constituent assembly was setup by English. However, it was sovereign in its nature in which a number of member including schedule caste, schedule tribes, minorities and women were participated in it.¹⁷ Having took long and valuable discussion, Indian constitution came in existence. There are many special provision included related to women and other wicker section of society so that they can maintain their status in society and state.

As to constitution objectives, women could not participate in political and economical area due to various restriction generated by society. Some people of society might have assumed that women have lack of potential to enter into public life. Criminalization of politics, corruption, lack of tolerance, gender prejudice, male dominated attitude and lack of integrity have been playing role to ignore women rights in each dimension of human life. After independence, women played a major role in agriculture that is base of manufacturing sector and provide food security to every section of society. In addition, it play a major role in export and create a large number of employment in rural area. It have been seeing contribution of women in education sector for years.¹⁸ In other hand women played valuable contribution in health sector. Through non governmental organization and civil society women activist have been fighting against various types of challenges that are generated problem at all over world.

But women empowerment have remained mare myth due to lack of political participation at the grass root level and in the parliament and assemblies of states. Women can improved their status in political system, if male member can not performed dominant role in public life, and mail dominating attitude can be reduced.¹⁹ As to, the committee for status of women report,1974 ,pointed out low participation of women in politics that is getting key experience of Karnataka that accepted reservation policy at grass root level in 1983. In 1993, the conception of affirmative action was accepted by Indian government. 73rd constitutional amendment act and 33percent reservation provided to women in PRIs. 74th constitutional amendment act, reservation policy was introduced in urban institutions. Through both amendments three million women have now participated at local level politics. There are serious limitation of affirmative action at

states and central level. Earlier to 73rd and 74th amendment of Indian constitution, Karnataka, single state of India, introduced reservation in PRIs so that women can improved their status and living, in 1991, a bill was passed by Janta Party to introduce reservation policy for panchyat raj system. And 25 percent reservation provided to women candidate.²⁰ After that, several states of country have discussed on the policy of reservation, pointed out positive thinking for women reservation in local politics. for examples in 1991 Maharashtra announced 30 percent reservation in municipal corporation and reservation policy was introduced in PRIs in Maharashtra. After these initiative, 73rd and 74th constitutional were passed. As to this act, it act became compulsory for many provisions related to panchyati raj so that they can work properly. However, many states of India avoided the provision of 73rd amendment as like Arunachal Pradesh and Pancherry and few states want to do weak provision of PRIs.

Assam where election due was in1997, it postponed due to varies reasons as like budget, line order and etc.

2.7 Table showing: Percentage of elected women representatives (EWR) and number of Elected representatives in PRIs

States	Percentage of EWRs among total representative	Total elected representatives
Kerala	18,482	35
Karnataka	96,090	42.81
Haryana	69,805	36.51
Himachal Pradesh	24,581	38.81
Gujarat	1,114,187	33.3
Bihar	1,30,091	54
Andhra Pradesh	2,24,003	33.04
Madhya Pradesh	3,96,516	34
Maharashtra	2,29,740	33
Odisha	9,24,543	36.37
Punjab	90,963	34.97
Rajasthan	1,20,247	35.38
Tamil Nadu	7,71,661	38.71
West Bengal	58,826	36
Uttar Pradesh	7,71,661	38.71

Source: Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India

2.8 Table: showing to male and female voting percentage from first parliamentary election till 11th

Year	Total Percentage	Male Percentage	Female Percentage
1952	60.5	53	37.1
1957	63.7	56	39.6
1962	55.0	62	46.5
1967	61	66.7	55.5
1971	55.1	69.6	49.14
1977	60.0	65.61	54.18
1980	75.8	57.69	51.29
1984	62.4	63.60	68.16
1989	62.0	70.08	43.07
1991	53.5	52.56	47.42
1996	57.93	62.47	53.40
1998	62.04	66.06	58.02

Source- office of election commission

2.9 - Table: Showing women position in hierarchical system of political parties in India

Party	Hierarchy	Total Number	Number of women
Bharti Janta Party	Parliamentary committee	09	01
	National executive	73	09
CPI(M)	Polite bureau	15	00
	Central committee	70	05
Congress	Executive committee	19	02
Janta Dal	Committee on parliamentary affairs	15	00
	Parliamentary committee	15	00
	National executive	75	11
CPI	Secretariat	31	03
	National executive	125	06
	National council		

Source- Desai, Neera, "women in Indian society", NBT, 2014

2.10 - Table: showing elected number and percentage of women in Lok Sabha

Lok Sabha	Year	Total seats	Number of women competitor	Number of elected women	Percentage of elected women
First	1952	499	-	22	4.4
Second	1957	500	45	27	5.7
Third	1962	503	70	34	6.7
Fourth	1967	523	67	31	5.9
Fifth	1971	521	86	22	4.2
Sixth	1977	544	70	19	3.4
Seventh	1980	544	142	28	5.1
Eighth	1984	544	164	44	8.1
Ninth	1989	517	198	27	5.2
Tenth	1991	544	325	39	7.18
Eleventh	1996	544	599	40	7.18
Twelve	1998	544	271	44	8.8

Source- Election commission of India

2.11- Table: showing elected number and percentage of women in Rajya Sabha

Year	Number of total seats	Total number of women	Percentage
1952	219	16	7.3
1957	237	18	7.5
1962	238	18	7.6
1967	240	20	8.3
1971	243	17	7.0
1977	244	25	10.2
1980	244	24	7.8
1985	244	28	11.4
1990	245	24	9.7
1991	245	38	15.5

Source- Election commission India

2.12- Table showing participation of women in legislature assemblies in states

State	Year	Total seat	Number of women	Year	Total seat	Number of women
Andhra Pradesh	1957	252	11	1994	294	09
Karnataka	1957	179	18	1994	224	07
Kerala	1957	127	06	1991	140	08
Madhya Pradesh	1957	218	26	1993	320	12
Delhi	1972	56	03	1993	70	03
Uttar Pradesh	1967	341	24	1993	425	12
West Bengal	1967	195	11	1991	294	18
Rajasthan	1957	136	09	1993	200	09
Tripura	1967	30	00	1992	60	02
Punjab	1957	101	05	1992	117	06

Source- Election commission India

2.13- Table showing elected members in PRIs

District panchyats	532
Block / Tehsil / Mandal panchyats	5,919
Village panchyats	2,31,630
Total no. of elected seat	30,00,000
Number of women elected	10,00,100
Number of SCs/ STs elected	6,60,000

Source- figure are approximate, adapted from Mathew (2000).

2.14- History of Participation of Women in Indian Politics and decision making

Participation and representation are two different dimension of democracy. It is relatively easy to legislate representation, But a far more complex and challenging task to create the condition for participation. Women participation in national politics and at grass root level, to implement is a very challengeable task before policy maker because India is male dominated society.²¹ There are many hardness and challenges have remained in its civilization proper representation does not automatically lead to proper participation. Institutional and social problems and factors affected to participation. The way the quorum for meeting is devised has become an issue.²² In this context, Himachal Pradesh and Chhattisgarh have instituted specific provision for quorum requirements in Gram Sabha to determine the existence of women. Participation depends on external environment in which panchyati raj institution have run. There are to special characteristics of this environment – first, governance environment within with elected representatives were measured by some of inequality, local power relation, caste based division, and the different ways in which all these factors coalesce in different states it critical to effectiveness of the policy, in other hand , second, local political leaders and social dominated man play major domination activities , thus the government environment lies at the heart of question of the effectiveness of representatives on reserve seats and of reservation policy.²³ There are many case of an individual pradhan are the sarpanch who has done remarkable work despite heavy odds. In West Bengal, Kamla Mehato, a panchyat pradhan in Purulia district, stands out as one who is commanded for digging ten wells for drinking water as for as irrigation,

and initiating employing scheme under the Integrated rural development programme. Fatimabee, a sappanch in a village in Andhra Pradesh, caught the national imagination. She wore the traditional burqua and was illiterate but managed to get many things done for her village, again, women member of gram panchyat in the Akola district of Maharashtra were fed with the drinking habit of their husbands and the atrocities following the drinking sessions, the were success full in closing liquor shops that were doing brisk business in their village for last 20 years.²⁴

The caste system in India has systematically discriminated against Dalit and prevented their participation in the social economic, and political life of society. In this peculiar system of social stratification, the bottom categories of people in social hierarchy have been treated as untouchable outcastes, this has forced them to live a life of destitution and deprivation. Historically these groups have been subjected to economic and social exploitation, the system bars mobility by creating hierarchical occupational categories, and thus has forced these groups to continue to do work that involves demeaning task, the social distance between this category and the upper casts is defined by rituals sanctified by custom and religion.²⁵

Under article 243, the constitutional amendment has mandated that seats will be reserve for SCs at all level of panchyats in proportion to the number of dalit in the area. One third will be reserved for women, it has left it to the state legislatures to determine the reservation of chair persons at the panchyat are other level.

The population of dalits varies across the states the highest proportion of dalits to the total population is in Punjab. But dalits are primarily concentrated in Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Bihar.²⁶

The barriers to the participation of dalits women in decision making are embedded in historical practices of social exclusion. The participation of dalit women was as good as that of others in the Gram Sabhas the most significant finding was that the participation of poor in Kerala is higher than in others, a study on West Bengal, mention that the average attendance in Gram Sabha was low at 12 percent(10 percent is the quorum).²⁷

It is clear that women participation in national and state politics is very low that is not maintaining the basic objectives of political philosophy and it is a challenging issue for scholars, researchers and political leaders, there are many scholars suggested that 73rd constitutional amendment ought to be completely implemented in its basic notion and it is need to reserve 33 percent seats for women at party level due their real and adequate participation.²⁸

1. Only 16 women members had participated in constituent assembly out of 150 members.
2. Maharashtra zila parishad and panchayat samit Act had complimented in 1961. only two women candidate had filled nomination but they can't get success.
3. West Bengal panchyati raj act had emplied in 1973 and only two women candidate were elected.
4. 25% Seat had reserved for women in Karnataka in 1983. It act was emplied in 1987 and thirty thousand candidate had filled nomination in 1987 as it which 14 thousand women candidate were elected.
5. Only a women was elected in 1988 in U.P. general election that taken place after twenty two year.
6. One third seat had reserved for women in Odisha in 1991 twenty two thousand women had elected and women representation reached to 35%
7. In 1994 after women reservation policy is integrated in Madhya Pradesh 150500 women had elected in PRIs election.
8. In Jharkhand Women reservation is implemented after it more than 80% women get success to elected in Zila parishad election in December 2010 & consequently 55% women elected in gram sabha level elcection. In Jharkhand there are 4,423 panchyat & 53,207 member are there in which 29,415 representative are women

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