



Emerging Leadership Among Tribal Women Through Panchayat Raj Institutions: A Sociological Study

KEYWORDS

Empowerment, Leadership, Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs), Reservation policy, Tribal Women.

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ABSTRACT

The Indian Constitution has been committed to introduce socio-economic and political transformation. The initiatives of empowering women and the marginalized sections are the reflection of its democratic spirit that can be noticed from a number of amendments in these fields. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act is an important landmark in the history of Indian women's participation in the formation of democratic institutions at grassroots level. The most significant aspect is that the gender representation in the decision-making has been taken into consideration. Hence, this paper examines the Emerging leadership among Tribal Women through Panchayat Raj Institutions with reference to Chitradurga District of Karnataka, a sociological study.

INTRODUCTION:

The Indian Constitution has been committed to introduce socio-economic and political transformation. The initiatives of empowering women and the marginalized sections are the reflection of its democratic spirit that can be noticed from a number of amendments in these fields. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act is an important landmark in the history of Indian women's participation in the formation of democratic institutions at grassroots level. The most significant aspect is that the gender representation in the decision-making has been taken into consideration. At the outset it must be noted that the concept of empowerment cannot be defined in precise terms as it is multifaceted and multidimensional. Yet one can attempt a workable definition of empowerment that can be viewed as gaining of strength such that the presence of empowered person is felt, voice heard, opinion respected and suggestions received in the formulation of the policies as well as their implementation. The process of empowerment encompasses political, economic, social, educational and other aspects. In this background an attempt is made to analyze, how PRIs have empowered tribal women and what kind of empowerment and to what extent, empowerment must result in the creation of individual and collective autonomy and enable the persons to exercise constitutionally granted rights and privileges. Provisions of political education and training and creation of political awareness are necessary prerequisites of political empowerment of women and the latter becomes meaningless and ineffective if these prerequisites are not met with. This view is strongly advocated by Prof. Susheela Kaushik (1993). Women empowerment in other parts of the world may not be the same as it is in India. It is because in the Indian context the pace of women empowerment process is slowed down by factors such as low literacy rate, lack of political awareness and low level of financial autonomy. According to Mahipal (1999) these weaknesses act as a big handicap in the process of women empowerment in India. According to some other feminists empowerment of women means getting liberated in a male dominated society.

In Indian context women are still hesitant to make their presence felt in active politics. They must be motivated and persuaded to enter active politics and enticed by providing political reservation. In this context, 73rd amendment has much more relevant in the Indian constitution. To fulfill the constitutional provision, the Karnataka government brought PRI amendment in 1993, with 33% reservation to women in membership and for the posts of president and vice president.

Hence, this paper examines the Empowerment of Tribal Women through Panchayat Raj Institutions with reference to Chitradurga District of Karnataka. Here this paper is based on primary data and collected information through primary survey and selected respondents are from tribal women member of elected panchayat raj institutions in the study area.

The impact of reservation for tribal women and their political representation/leadership, it includes role of respondent, good relationship with government, changes in their behaviour, self confidence, role affected in their family and community, role models, commitment to the village problems, reasons for contesting election, efforts to win, current status enhancement, decision making power at home, attitude of family members, personal improvement, empowerment which has taken place, source of empowerment, larger ambitions, benefits from the politics etc. Some of the points are analyzed here.

Entrance to politics they receive respect from people

Women empowerment through PRIs, women not only get good position but also they get respect by the people. Here we observed that participation in panchayat by the women respondents creates good social and economic status as well as respect in the society. The present study examines the relationship between entry to politics and the level of respect they receive from the people. Out of 300 respondents, 97%(292) respondents have felt that they have got respect before and 3%(8) respondents have felt that they don't have difference from past.

Continuation of reservation

Data shows that respondent wants to continue the benefits of the reservation in the next election also. 98% (293) respondents are satisfied in the political field and they want to continue use the benefits of the reservation in the next election and 2% (7) respondents are not agreed to this. This shows reservation policy provided them lots of opportunity in politics and there was a emergence of leadership among tribal women.

Reservation and Satisfaction

Reservation for women is must for their empowerment and status in the society. Here study conducted by the researcher in the study area of tribal women felt that they are benefitted by the reservation policy and got good status and decision making capacity. In this context respondents were asked to state how reservation helps for their satisfactions.

Data shows the respondents, feeling of their position, when compared to others who don't have that facility. 99% (297) re-

spondents feel their position is good, when compare to others and 1%(3) respondents have no feeling like this. The data reveals that the majority of the respondents in study area are thinking that they are happy with reservation policy.

Role of Members in Panchayat Raj Institution

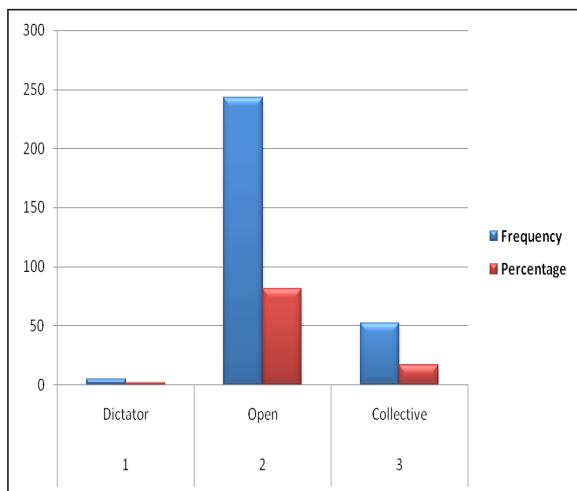
Participation in panchayats and reservation policy created leadership quality and decision making capacity among tribal women. Hence, here information gathered regarding the role of Tribal woman in day today function of panchayat. So we asked the respondent to choose three options, i.e, dictator, open and collective participation.

Table No 1: Role of respondent members in PRI

Sl.No	Role	Frequency	Percentage
1	Dictator	5	2
2	Open	243	81
3	Collective	52	17
	Total	300	100

Source: Field survey

Figure No.1: Role of respondent members in PRI



Above table No 1 shows the respondents opinion regarding, role which they play in panchayat functioning. 2% (5) of the respondents have said that they play role as dictator, 81% (243) of the respondents have said role as open and 17% (52) of the respondents have said role as collective participation. Here data analyzed shows that the majority of respondents have expressed that the role by discussing openly.

Commitment towards their village problems

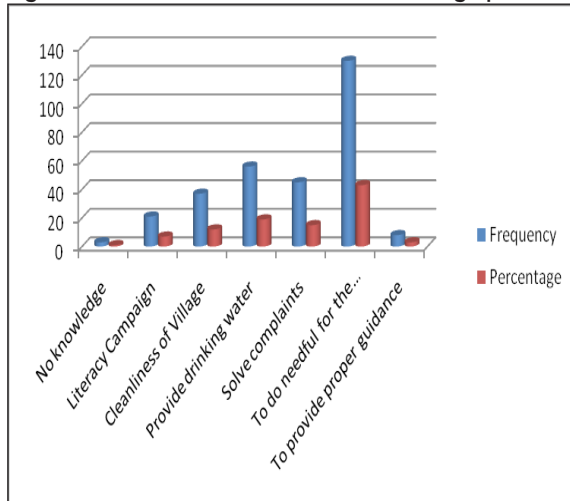
With the participation of tribal women in panchayats they can do anything for their village.

Table No 2: Commitment towards their village problems

Sl.No	Type of Commitment	Frequency	Percentage
1	No knowledge	03	01
2	Literacy Campaign	21	07
3	Cleanliness of Village	37	12
4	Provide drinking water	56	19
5	Solve complaints	45	15
6	To do needful for the development of village	130	43
7	To provide proper guidance	08	03
	Total	300	100

Source: Field survey

Figure No 2: Commitment towards their village problems



Above table No 2 shows the commitment towards their village problems. Out of 300 respondents, 1%(3) respondents said that they have no knowledge about this, 7%(21) respondents have campaign of literacy, 12%(37) respondents have committed toward cleanliness of village, 19%(56) respondents have thought of to provide drinking water, 15%(45) respondents have said that they wanted to solve complaints, 43%(130) respondents want to do needful for the development of village and 03%(08) respondents wanted to give the proper guidance to the villagers. The data reveals that women respondents are committed with their work and do the needful for overall development of the village.

Changes in behaviours in functioning PRI

Here paper examined to know that whether women respondents changed their behavior after entering to panchayat politics as a member, president and vice-president. Different views collected on behavioral changes of the respondents after entering to panchayat analyzed here. The data shows that a change occurred in behavior of the respondent in their administration after entering into politics. 92%(275) respondents told that there is change in their behaviour after entering to panchayats like they have become confident, decision maker, efficient and good leader as researcher asked to them and 8%(25) respondents they don't feel that there is no change in their behaviour after entering to politics because it may be because of lack of dependency on their family and other. Here, researcher found that this is good sign of women empowerment process through participation of women in panchayat.

Increase of Self confidence

To analyze the any persons character self confidence is very much essential factor to determine the empowerment. Hence, study wanted to know that whether changes occurred in respondent's behavior after entering to the panchayat politics, and gained self confidence or not.

The data shows the participation of women in politics and increase self confidence. 98% (293) respondents felt that there is a change in their behavior and increased self-confidence and only 2% (7) respondents said that there is no change in their behavior and increased the self-confidence. The data analyses that regarding their changes they have very good self confidence with their family support.

CONCLUSION:

This shows reservation policy provided them lots of opportunity in politics and there was emergence of leadership among tribal women. In conclusion it may be remarked that Tribal women must get greater social and political exposure so that they can be dynamic in active politics. If they take active participation, they can contribute a lot to the all-round development of their regions.

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