

Political Policy As a Tool For Empowerment of Women



Political Science

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ABSTRACT

Over the past decades, women's are suffering from the men's domination. Naturally men's and women's are equal but some practices make difference between them. Women's suffer social exclusion and inequality on the basis of their appearance from time to time. Women's empowerment is a new phrase in the vocabulary of gender literature. The phrase is used in two broad sense i.e. general and specific. In a general sense, it refers to empowering women to be self-dependent by providing them access to all the freedoms and opportunities, which they were denied in the past only because of their "WOMEN". In a specific sense, women empowerment refers to enhancing their position in the power structure of the society. Political policies are make empowerment of women in all the fields, like educationally, cultural, socio and economically. Hence, in this paper I argue that without political policies we can't empower of women.

The word women empowerment essentially means that the women have the power or capacity to regulate their day-to-day lives in the social, political and economic terms – a power which enables them to move from the periphery to the center stage. The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution in its preamble, fundamental rights, fundamental duties and directive principles. The Constitution not only grants equality to women but also empowers the state to adopt measures, a position; indiscrimination in favor of women. Within the frame work of democratic polity our laws, developmental policies, plans and programmes are aimed at women's advancement in different spheres. India has also ratified various international conventions to secure rights of women. The women's movement and a widespread network of Non-Government Organisation (NGOs) having strong grass-root presence and deep insight into women's concerns have contributes in inspiring initiatives for the empowerment of women. Women today are trying to understand their position in the society. Women have become increasingly aware of sexual inequalities in every sphere of life and are seeking ways to fight them.

The Indian women have cast of their age old shackles of serfdom and male domination. She has come to her own and started scaling the ladders of social advance with proud and dignity. Women of India are now uplifted and emancipated and granted equal status with men in all walks of life-political, social, domestic and educational. They have a franchise, they are free to join any service or follow any profession. Free India has, besides her women prime minister, women ambassadors, women cabinet, ministers, women legislators, women governors, women scientists, engineers-doctors-space researchers-giant IT specialists, women Generals, women public officers, judiciary officers and in many more responsible positions. No distinction is now made in matters of education between boys and girls. Their voice is now as forceful and important as that of men. They are becoming equal partners in making or dismissing of a government.

Hindu law has been changed and modified. Far – reaching changes have been introduced in the Hindu Marriage Act. Women have been given right to divorce in certain cases. Besides this, the Hindu Succession Act has given to the daughter, the right to the property of her parents. Our Constitution has been made on the basis of caste, religion or sex. Thirdly, three percent reservation for women is apt to be enacted in the future.

Basaveshvara's Thought's about Empowerment of Women

Basaveshvara was born on 1105 A.D. at Ingaleshvara Bagevadi in Bijapur district. His Brahmin parents were Madiraja and Madalamba. In fact Madaraja who belonged to the Kamme Kula, was the chief of the assembly of the mahajanas of Bagevadi, and

was also reputed to be a scholar. Basava as a boy studied Sanskrit and Kannada, and had the occasion to observe and realize the futility of traditional rituals and sacrifices. His sensitive mind rebelled against the hollow religious set-up. He refused to go through the thread ceremony, which was arranged to be performed at the age of eight. He left Bagevadi and went to Kudala Sangama, where he pursued his spiritual practices under Isanya Guru, who according to Dr. P.B. Desai, might have belonged to the pasupata sect. Basava's stay at Kudala Sangama helped him in achieving a spiritual maturity, which made him a revered leader of the movement. Basava went to Mangalavada and took service in the treasury office of Bijjala. His efficiency and sincerity made great impression on Baladeva, a minister of Bijjala, in fact, Baladeva gave his daughter in marriage to Basava, who soon rose to the position of the Chief treasurer. His high office did not prevent him from gathering around him a large number of devotees of Siva. Basava associated freely with people of all castes, which raised many an orthodox eye-brow. Though Bijjala did not approve the activities of Basava, he could not, at first, take the side of the conservative section. When Bijjala overthrew the Chalukya power and shifted his capital to Kalyana, Basava and his entourage also shifted the venue of their activities to the great imperial city. Basava continued his spiritual and organizational work with great vigour. "Anubava Mantapa", an Academy of Mysticism, a great center of religious discussions, was founded at kalyana. Here came a host of Saiva devotees and mystics who gave great impetus to the Virasaiva movement. However, it is also provoked a reaction from the orthodox groups complained to Bijjala and persuaded him to take stern measures untouchable, and Madhuvayya, a Brahmana, had brought about an inter caste marriage.

Basava was , first and last, a great Bhakta. In his Bhakti there is an emotional exuberance, a philosophical insight, and a moving compassion. There is no empty sentimentalism, on dry philosophical or metaphysical speculation. It is frank, vigorous and pure. Basava's devotion is like a full flooded river; it runs with great dignity. And, it moves inexorably to join the expansive ocean of Kudala Sangama's Infinite Grace. Basaveshvara believed that salvation is attained not by renouncing the world. But by accepting it. Life, according to him, is a struggle and a battle: hence, he called upon his followers. "Grid up your loins and come to the field; yours is the lot to fight, not to yield;" Basava did not preach asceticism. Life is worthwhile and one may enjoy the delights of the sense through legitimate ways. But man ought to know that there is balance of outlook, which is the clue to true success. Basava accepted both the material and the spiritual aspects of life: "Those who earn merit here, earn also there, And those who earn not here, earn neither there..." Samsara or life is like a mad horse; one must have the resoluteness of a war-

rior to ride it.

Basava believed that women were not inferior to men, an attitude, which was at once modern and revolutionary. Many women saints like Akkamahadevi, Nilambike, Gangambike and others strengthened the Virasaiva Movement. It shows that Basava encourage the empowerment of women his period and his teachings are relevant to that also.

More steps to be taken for Empowerment of women: Indian Government

There can't be dramatic movement in the system just by including women members in Grama Panchayat. At the same time, it is also essential to shed certain stereotyped prevailing notions about role and importance of women in socio-economic development. Women should be encouraged to play a more active part the male representatives have to establish a respect and attention to their views. In the process of development and decision-making women have to operate along with men. Of course, there is some awareness among women due to reservation for them in the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). But there is need for appropriate training and education relating to different aspects in functioning of Panchayat Samiti. This kind of training can be organized at the district or block level immediately following the election. We have to understand that women representatives can play a vital role in the formulation and implementation of various **women and child development programmes**. This would increase the efficacy of such programmes. For instance, the women representatives and Grama Panchayat should have sufficient control over the primary education, primary health care and running of the public distribution system.

The state must pass and enforce legislation so that the status of women in society is brought to a respectable level through the long arms of the laws. In 1985, a separate department of "**Women and Child Development**" was set up. In the Sixth Five Year Plan, a separate chapter on "Women and Development" was included. The government had started and implemented major programmes like-

- STEP-Support to Training-cum-Employment for Women.
- Mahilakosh.
- Women's Development Corporation.
- Pre-natal Diagnostic Technique (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act-1994.
- Free and Compulsory Education.
- Domestic Violence Act.
- Policies are like reservation in political, education, jobs etc.
- Women's Rights Commissions.
- Women's police stations.
- Women's Helpline.

Women must become literate, as education is beneficial for them as well as their families. The family web is woven around the women. She has to be up to the mark and educated so that she could fend for herself and her family during the hour of crisis. The status of women would improve only if they educate themselves and grab every opportunity to become stronger and more powerful than before. The discussion brings a major conclusion to light- the status women themselves and nobody else. It is the modern era of satellites, achievements and technology-based gadget. Why should women be left behind?

There should be a better and fuller understanding of the problems peculiar to women, to make a solution of those problems possible. As these problems center round the basic problem of inequality of treatment and full integration of women in the total development effort of the country.

It may be concluded that women have shifted traditional as-

sumptions about their roles and capabilities. There has been marked change, and it has been for the better. Many of its benefits however have yet to touch the majority and all of us continue to experience various forms of gender discrimination. If laws designed to address the concerns of women are to have a dramatic and positive impact of women's lives, they must be sensitive to the social, economic and political disempowerment of women throughout the world. The most important measure of their success should be the extent to which they enable women to interpret, apply and enforce laws of their own making, incorporating their own voices, values and concerns. Basaveshvara was indeed a revolutionary saint of Karnataka. He rose above caste and sex. The hierarchy and orthodox, and democratized religion. In him head and heart, knowledge and devotion, action and mediation, rationalism and mysticism combined in religion with honesty and morality. His vigorous but simple teachings created a revolution in the religious and social outlook in Karnataka. It is for this reason that Arthur Miles called Basaveshvara the "**Martin Luther of Karnataka**".

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