



WOMEN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN INDIA: AN ANALYSIS

Economics

Dr. Vidya S

Assistant Professor (on Contract) College of Co-operation Banking and Management
Kerala Agricultural University Vellanikkara, Thrissur

ABSTRACT

Women empowerment process must evolve a new understanding of power, and experiment with ways of democratizing and sharing power, building new mechanics for collective responsibility, decision making and accountability. Women consist of 48.9 per cent of the population, but their status in our society is not improving at par with men. Since decentralized planning a vast opportunity got the local people to participate in the local self governments. But there is a huge difference between the participation of women in local and national politics. Decentralisation is a bottom up planning, and the active participation of women in local bodies provides a smooth transition of women participation in the national legislature. But in the case of Kerala there is no spill over in women participation from local body to national legislature. So, in this paper explore women participation in local politics is really a sign for women empowerment.

KEYWORDS

Political Leadership, Women Empowerment, Participatory Planning, Representation.

INTRODUCTION

Participatory Planning or people's participation is one of the important features of Kerala's decentralised governance. Our nation is celebrating the Silver Jubilee of the land mark Amendment Act in the history of Panchayat Raj System. On 24th April 1993 the Panchayats and on 1 June 1993 the Municipalities were achieved the Constitutional Status and it was the beginning of the silent revolution. With the implementation of these revolutionary Acts, the status of the minority sections especially the women, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes has improved. Women constitute half of the population, so their active contribution in the development process is necessary thing. Decentralisation strengthens the people through the support of "Local Self Governments". Equal democratic citizenship will be complete only when women get equal participation in direct decision making too. Therefore, political participation in the National Level is more important. This paper focussed on the importance of women representation in the National Legislature and the lack of women participation in decision making process of our nation.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Social status of women is better in India but in the case of economic and political indicators their position is worse. But, the better participation of women in political power has not seen in national politics. Hence, to analyse political status of women in India is the need of the day.

OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the political participation of women in India

DATASOURCE

For satisfying this objective, has been used secondary. That collected from Election Commission Report, General Election 2014 and 2016, press Information Bureau. Govt. India, India Ministry of Human Resource Department, Department of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Rural Development, Report of Planning Commission, and Report of the Committee for Evaluation of Decentralised Planning and Development, Web sites etc.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH NATIONAL REPRESENTATION

Women's Empowerment through National Representation Increasing women's representation in politics is grounded on the identification that inequality between men and women is not an individual but a political problem, bound up with the state. In order to eliminate the inequality, the state must actively effect radical changes in the social, economic, educational, legal, and political fields. Political representation is taken as an important dimension to measure gender position in many of the indices currently being used. For eg: Gender Equality Index developed by UNDP measures empowerment, by the proportion of parliamentary seats occupied by females. The Global Gender Gap Report brought out by World Economic Forum measures political empowerment in terms of per cent of women in parliament, per cent of women holding ministerial position and number of years with female as head of state (Review 2014). All these ensure that

female participation is necessary for development. Sen argued that "Development as a process of expanding the real freedom that people enjoyed. And representation of women in elected bodies is often treated both as a sign of an increase in their capabilities as well as effective instrument to further increase their freedom (Sen, 2000, jafar 2013). So women's political representation is important, but in the case of National political representation of women in India is will be discussed one.

TABLE 1 Representatives Of Women Members In Lok Sabha (1st To 16th)

LOK SABHA	YEAR	TOTAL NO: OF SEATS	NO: OF WOMEN MEMBERS	PER CENT OF TOTAL
1 st	1952	499	22	4.4
2 nd	1957	500	27	5.4
3 rd	1962	503	34	6.8
4 th	1967	523	31	5.9
5 th	1971	521	22	4.2
6 th	1977	544	19	3.4
7 th	1980	544	28	7.9
8 th	1984	517	44	8.1
9 th	1989	544	27	5.3
10 th	1991	543	39	7.2
11 th	1996	543	39	7.2
12 th	1998	543	43	7.9
13 th	1999	543	49	9.0
14 th	2004	545	45	8.2
15 th	2009	545	59	10.8
16 th	2014	543	61	11.23

Source: General Election 2014, press Information Bureau, Govt. India, India Ministry of Human Resource Department, Department of Women and Child Development, WWW.Parliamentofindia.nic.in

This table indicates that trends on women representation in Lok Sabha election 1st to 16th. It portrays the low profile of women's representation in parliament. The 16th Lok Sabha election have delivered a record 61 women as members of parliament, the highest since independence, raising their parliamentary participation to 11.23 per cent from 10.8 per cent in 2009. This clearly indicates that political participation of women India is vulnerable but women consist of half of the population and voting rate of women is also high in India. This result clearly indicates that women's political participation is very less in our country and it also pointed that the political status of women is low in our country.

TABLE 2 Women Representation In Rajya Sabha

Year	Total No. Of Seats	No. Of Women Members	Per cent
1952	219	16	7.31
1957	237	18	7.59
1962	238	18	7.56

1967	240	20	8.33
1971	243	17	7.0
1977	244	25	10.25
1980	244	24	9.84
1984	244	28	11.48
1989	245	24	9.80
1991	245	38	15.51
1996	223	19	8.52
1998	245	15	6.12
1999	245	19	7.76
2005	243	25	10.29
2006	242	25	10.41
2008	242	23	9.50
2010	244	25	10.24
2014	242	28	11.57

Source: Rajya Sabha Secretariat, New Delhi.

Like Loksabha, the percentage of total number of women representation in Rajya Sabha has never gone beyond 16 per cent. This table shows that the women representation in Rajya Sabha is dreary. During the year 2014 the total number of women elected members in Rajya sabha is 11.57 per cent. The political culture of our nation had changed but the attitude of political party is not changed and the political status of women is very low in our nation.

The representation of women in the state legislative assemblies is not better than parliaments. Before, that analysis we focus on the polling per cent of various states in India. Then analyse women participation in state legislative assembly we can seen the same trend.

TABLE 4 Women Representation In State Legislature In India

State	Year of Election	No. Of Seats	No. Of Elected Women	Per cent
Andhra Pradesh	2014	294	27	9.18
Arunachal Pradesh	2014	60	2	3.3
Assam	2016	126	8	6.34
Bihar	2015	243	28	11.5
Chhattisgarh	2013	90	10	11.1
Delhi	2015	70	6	8.57
Goa	2017	40	2	5
Gujarat	2012	182	16	8.79
Haryana	2014	90	13	14.4
Himachal Pradesh	2012	68	3	4.41
Jammu & Kashmir	2014	87	2	2.29
Jharkhand	2014	81	8	9.87
Karnataka	2013	224	6	2.67
Kerala	2016	140	8	5.7
Madhya Pradesh	2013	230	30	13.04
Maharashtra	2014	288	20	6.94
Manipur	2017	60	2	3.33
Meghalaya	2013	60	4	6.66
Mizoram	2013	40	0	0
Nagaland	2013	60	0	0
Odisha	2014	147	11	7.48
Puducherry	2016	30	4	13.3
Punjab	2017	117	6	5.12
Rajasthan	2013	200	28	14
Sikkim	2014	32	3	9.37
Tamil Nadu	2016	234	21	8.97
Tripura	2013	60	5	8.33
Uttaranchal	2017	70	5	7.14
Uttar Pradesh	2017	403	42	10.42
West Bengal	2016	294	39	13.26

SOURCE: Election Commission Report (Various Years).

This table indicate that women representation in State Legislature has dismal. The average per cent of elected women in state assemblies is 6.94 per cent. The states like Mizoram, Nagaland and Union Territory Puducherry have no representation of women in assemblies. It is show that women participation in the state legislature is lower. The real picture is that their participation not increased in to single digits for

almost all States. From the table 3 clearly indicates the female voting percentage is high or equal among the Indian states. But an opposite result is got from the political participation of women in Indian states. This is the actual situation of India in the case of women political participation.

The dismal record of women in Lok sabha Rajya sabha and in the legislature shows that how poorly Indian women have fared in winning election. The failure of women to make inroads into national politics has various causes. India's traditional culture does not favour promoting equality for women. It is widely held that the family is the woman's proper place, while only men work outside the home. Women stay home taking care of children, doing housework, and sweet home for their husbands to rest in after work. A male-dominated political culture adds to women's low political representation. Political parties' biases against women lead to gender discrimination in various ways. Party leaders do not recruit women to run for seats in the national legislature.

TABLE 2.5 Polling Percentage of Various States

State	Year of Election	Male	Female
Andhra Pradesh	2014	74.22	74.18
Arunachal Pradesh	2014	63.23	66.76
Assam	2016	84.33	84.67
Bihar	2015	53.32	60.48
Chhattisgarh	2013	76.93	77.32
Delhi	2015	67.63	66.49
Goa	2017	78.40	83.94
Gujarat	2012	72.94	69.50
Haryana	2014	76.59	75.59
Himachal Pradesh	2012	69.39	76.20
Jammu & Kashmir	2014	64.85	66.27
Jharkhand	2014	65.90	67.00
Karnataka	2013	72.40	70.47
Kerala	2016	75.97	78.14
Madhya Pradesh	2013	73.86	70.09
Maharashtra	2014	64.33	61.69
Manipur	2017	83.65	87.99
Meghalaya	2013	85.17	88.44
Mizoram	2013	79.50	82.12
Nagaland	2013	89.09	91.33
Odisha	2014	72.95	74.42
Puducherry	2016	82.46	85.44
Punjab	2017	75.88	77.90
Rajasthan	2013	74.67	75.44
Sikkim	2014	80.31	81.31
Tamil Nadu	2016	74.16	74.33
Tripura	2013	90.73	92.94
Uttaranchal	2017	61.11	68.72
Uttar Pradesh	2017	59.15	63.31
West Bengal	2016	82.23	83.13

Source: Election Commission of India

This table elicits the details on polling percentage during the last election in various states in India. We know that women consist of half of the population and these results also shows that women are equally or more than polling their votes in election. This means women actively participate in politics as a voter but the political parties are not interested to give any position to women in their party and politics. The table 1 and 2 clearly indicates that women participation in Lok Sabha and Rajya sabha is very less.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH LOCAL REPRESENTATION

One of the important features of decentralisation is People's participation. The 73rd and 74th Amendment provides 33 per cent of seats reserved for the women in the local self governments. It's provides an invited space for the women. The LSG's provide a platform for women to participate in politics and it leads to the political empowerment of women.

TABLE: 5 STATE-WISE ELECTED WOMEN REPRESENTATIVES IN PANCHAYAT

STATES	Elected Women Representatives	Proportion of Elected Women Representatives
Andhra Pradesh	85154	33.5

Arunachal Pradesh	3889	41.6
Assam	9903	36.9
Bihar	68065	50.0
Chhattisgarh	86538	54.5
Goa	504	32.3
Gujarat	39206	33.0
Haryana	24876	36.5
Himachal Pradesh	13947	50.1
Jammu& Kashmir	NA	NA
Jharkhand	31157	58.6
Karnataka	41577	43.6
Kerala	8718	54.63
	198456	50.5
Maharashtra	836	49.9
Manipur	NA	48.5
Odisha	29389	50.0
Punjab	54673	34.9
Rajasthan	NA	50.0
Sikkim	41790	50.0
Tamil Nadu	21044	35.0
Tripura	309511	36.0
Uttar Pradesh	34494	40.0
Uttarakhand	19762	56.1
West Bengal	13364154	38.4

Source: Ministry of Rural Development, As on 1 March 2013.

This table indicates that selected women representatives in panchayats in India. In panchayat level the seat reservation of women are distributed in all states. But in the upper level their participation is restricted. This means that seat reservation is the only reason for women active participation in the panchayat level. There is no reservation implemented in the parliament and state legislative assemblies, hence the political participation is very less in there. The panchayati raj institutions provide 30 or some states revised their reservation policies in local self government and provide 50 per cent reservation to women. This is a positive step for rural women in our nation.

When we take the case of Kerala, many of the studies cited as Kerala is a good example of panchayat raj system and decentralised planning, its timely revised policies and programmes for the welfare of the society. So in 2010 Kerala revised its reservation policy and women reservation in local bodies increased 33 to 50 per cent.

TABLE 6 District Wise Details Of Grama Panchayat And Ward Reserved For Women (local Body Election)

DISTRICT	Total No. Of Grama Panchayats	Total No. Of Wards	Total No. Of Ward Reserved for Women in G.P	Per cent of Ward Reserved for women
TVM	73	1299	669	51.5
Kottayam	73	1180	613	51.9
Alapuzha	73	1189	624	52.5
Pattanamthitta	54	811	424	52.3
Kollam	70	1274	646	50.7
Idukki	51	780	385	49.4
Ernakulam	84	1369	708	51.7
Thrissur	88	1501	-	—
Palakkad	91	1542	-	—
Malappuram	100	1921	983	51.2
Kozhikode	75	1335	694	51.9
Wayanad	26	487	251	51.5
Kannur	81	1356	683	50.4
kasaragod	37	647	346	53.5

Source: Department of Economics and Statistics, Kerala 2011

When compared in to these two cases we can see that there is a lack of spill over effect. Because with the effect of decentralisation or reservation policies women participation in the local self governments increased and Proponents of local politics contend that women's participation in local legislatures will help them to make a smooth transition to the national legislature by enabling them to gain political experience and expertise. But we look in to the reality that lack of spill

over in the case of women representation in local body to nation legislature. The active participation of women in local body helps to improve their personal qualities, administration skills, leadership qualities and sociability traits and give a platform for women to empower. In the case of Kerala with the support of reservation women are actively participate in the panchayati raj institutions but did not make a smooth transition to National legislature. Therefore, the question is the achieved empowerment is real or not?

CONCLUSION

Indian women in the case of political participation achieved a long way, but they still have a long way to go. In the wake of decentralised planning in Kerala, women are more focused on the local politics. But lack of confidence in women to participate in the national politics and we did not see a spill over effect from local political participation to National politics. We will take a more time to break in this situation without representation. Therefore, it is necessary to develop active programmes to widen the pool of viable female candidates, to field capable women to run for political office, and to educate women to raise political ambitions.

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