



POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT OF DALIT WOMEN IN PANCHAYAT RAJ; A CASE STUDY OF KALABURAGI DISTRICT OF KARNATAKA

Political Science

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ABSTRACT

Dalit women in general are less corrupted. They give emphasis more on infrastructure development, adult education, problem of nutrition in the local Government meetings. They utilize development expenditure more effectively. Now Dalit women representatives do whatever their male counterparts want. Their husbands or sons direct them. Many female members are unwilling to contest and get reelected in the future. True democracy can be obtained only when men and women take the unanimous decisions after thorough examination and discussion. Participation of Dalit women in political process not only will benefit themselves but also the society. A real empowerment of Dalit women will definitely raise their status in society. The inexperienced should be trained for such jobs. The candidates should be chosen suitably, who are fit for the post. There must be representation of the really eligible and energetic Dalit women from all sections of the society so that Dalit women empowerment in the political process could become meaningful. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act has provided for the constitution of Gram Sabha and Panchayats at different levels. On the basis of the Constitutional Amendment Act, In this article an attempt has been made to analyze empowerment of Dalit women respondents after the implementation of 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act on the basis of certain indicators of women empowerment in the Kalaburagi District of Karnataka.

KEYWORDS

Women, Empowerment, Local, Development, Political, Leadership.

Introduction:

India promulgated in 1950 an article (Article 40) in the Directive Principles of State Policy providing for setting up of Grama Panchayat and endowed them with such powers and authority as may be necessary for them to function as units of self government. In pursuance of this directive, Grama Panchayats were set up in almost all the states. But emphasis was not given on the empowerment of women through ensuring their participation in Panchayats.¹ So participation of women in Panchayats was either microscopic or nonexistent. In 1957, a committee headed by Balwant Rai Mehta was set up by the Central Government to examine and report on the community development project and National Extension Service.² Along with other recommendations like three tier Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), the Mehta Committee recommended co-option of two women each in all three tiers of Panchayats, who could look after the welfare of women and children. Thus it provided for a role of women in Panchayats.³ But some of the states still did not provide for co-option for women and some other states accepted the recommendation in principle but did not implement it. On the other hand the co-opted women had marginal power and role to participate in the decision making process. Thus the Mehta Committee recommendations failed to empower women practically.⁴

Method of Research

Social survey method has been made use of in this study as the study is mainly based on the data collected from a sample of Dalit women representatives of the Panchayati Raj Institutions in Kalaburagi District of Karnataka District.

Sources of Data

The data for this study have been collected both from primary and secondary sources. The primary sources of data have been collected from the schedules furnished to the Dalit women respondents of the Panchayati Raj Institutions in Kalaburagi District of Karnataka. The secondary sources of data have been collected from the Books; Articles, Reports, Acts and Monographs.

Participation in Political Activities

The respondents were asked whether reservation of seats for Dalit women in Panchayati Raj Institutions has encouraged participation in political activities. The responses of the respondents are provided in table .01

Table .01 Participation in Political Activities

S. No.	Dalit women respondents	Responses of the Respondents				
		SA	A	NI	DA	SDA
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1	Zilla Panchayat	-	-	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	-
2	Taluka Panchayat	3 (17%)	4 (21%)	2 (10%)	4 (23%)	5 (29%)
3	Grama Panchayat	8 (9%)	5 (5%)	16 (18%)	40 (45%)	21 (23%)

Source : Field Study

The responses of the respondents provided in the above table indicate that about 38% of the Taluka Panchayat Dalit women respondents and about 14% of the Grama Panchayat Dalit women respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the reservation of seats for Dalit women in Panchayati Raj Institutions has encouraged participation in political activities; about 50% of the Zilla Panchayat Dalit women respondents, about 10% of the Taluka Panchayat Dalit women respondents and about 18% of the Grama Panchayat Dalit women respondents have no idea that the reservation of seats for Dalit women in Panchayati Raj Institutions has encouraged participation in political activities; and about 50% of the Zilla Panchayat Dalit women respondents, about 52% of the Taluka Panchayat Dalit women respondents and about 68% of the Grama Panchayat Dalit women respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that the reservation of seats for Dalit women in Panchayati Raj Institutions has encouraged participation in political activities.

Participation in Social Activities

The respondents were asked whether reservation of seats for Dalit women in Panchayati Raj Institutions has allowed to participate in social activities. The responses of the respondents are provided in table .02

Table .02 Participation in Social Activities

S. No.	Dalit women respondents	Responses of the Respondents				
		SA	A	NI	DA	SDA
1	Zilla Panchayat	-	1 (50%)	-	1 (50%)	-
2	Taluka Panchayat	2 (13%)	4 (25%)	2 (8%)	4 (22%)	6 (32%)
3	Grama Panchayat	5 (6%)	3 (3%)	24 (27%)	41 (46%)	17 (18%)
	Total	7 (8%)	8 (9%)	26 (29%)	46 (51%)	23 (24%)

Source : Field Study

The responses of the respondents provided in the above table indicate that about 50% of the Zilla Panchayat Dalit women respondents, about

38% of the Taluka Panchayat Dalit women respondents and about 9% of the Grama Panchayat Dalit women respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the reservation of seats for Dalit women in Panchayati Raj Institutions has allowed to participate in social activities; about 8% of the Taluka Panchayat Dalit women respondents and about 27% of the Grama Panchayat Dalit women respondents have no idea that the reservation of seats for Dalit women in Panchayati Raj Institutions has allowed to participate in social activities; and about 50% of the Zilla Panchayat Dalit women respondents, about 54% of the Taluka Panchayat Dalit women respondents and about 64% of the Grama Panchayat Dalit women respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that the reservation of seats for Dalit women

Social Status

The respondents were asked whether reservation of seats for Dalit women in Panchayati Raj Institutions has improved social status. The responses of the respondents are provided in table .03

Table .03 Social status

S. No.	Dalit women respondents	Responses of the Respondents				
		SA	A	NI	DA	SDA
1	Zilla Panchayat	-	1 (50%)	-	-	1 (50%)
2	Taluka Panchayat	3 (17%)	3 (17%)	2 (8%)	4 (25%)	6 (33%)
3	Grama Panchayat	13 (14%)	8 (11%)	21 (23%)	32 (36%)	16 (18%)
	Total	16 (21%)	12 (17%)	22 (36%)	36 (51%)	24 (32%)

Source : Field Study

The responses of the respondents provided in the above table indicate that about 50% of the Zilla Panchayat Dalit women respondents, about 34% of the Taluka Panchayat Dalit women respondents and about 23% of the Grama Panchayat Dalit women respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the reservation of seats for Dalit women in Panchayati Raj Institutions has improved social status; about 8% of the Taluka Panchayat Dalit women respondents and about 23% of the Grama Panchayat Dalit women respondents have no idea that the reservation of seats for Dalit women in Panchayati Raj Institutions has improved social status; and about 50% of the Zilla Panchayat Dalit women respondents, about 58% of the Taluka Panchayat Dalit women respondents and about 54% of the Grama Panchayat Dalit women respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that the reservation of seats for Dalit women in Panchayati Raj Institutions improved social status.

Political Status

The respondents were asked whether reservation of seats for Dalit women in Panchayati Raj Institutions has improved political status. The responses of the respondents are provided in table.04

Table .04 Political status

S. No.	Dalit women respondents	Responses of the Respondents				
		SA	A	NI	DA	SDA
1	Zilla Panchayat	-	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	-	-
2	Taluka Panchayat	3 (17%)	4 (21%)	1 (8%)	4 (22%)	6 (33%)
3	Grama Panchayat	16 (18%)	13 (14%)	21 (23%)	24 (27%)	16 (18%)
	Total	19 (21%)	18 (20%)	23 (26%)	28 (31%)	24 (32%)

Source : Field Study

The responses of the respondents provided in the above table indicate that about 50% of the Zilla Panchayat Dalit women respondents, about 38% of the Taluka Panchayat Dalit women respondents and about 32% of the Grama Panchayat Dalit women respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the reservation of seats for Dalit women in Panchayati Raj Institutions has improved political status; about 50% of the Zilla Panchayat Dalit women respondents, about 8% of the Taluka Panchayat Dalit women respondents and about 23% of the Grama Panchayat Dalit women respondents have no idea that the reservation of seats for Dalit women in Panchayati Raj Institutions has improved political status; about 53% of the Taluka Panchayat Dalit women respondents and about 45% of the Grama Panchayat Dalit women

respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that the reservation of seats for Dalit women in Panchayati Raj Institutions has improved political status.

Economic Status

The respondents were asked whether reservation of seats for Dalit women in Panchayati Raj Institutions has improved economic status. The responses of the respondents are provided in table .05

Table .05 Economic status

S. No.	Dalit women respondents	Responses of the Respondents				
		SA	A	NI	DA	SDA
1	Zilla Panchayat	-	1 (50%)	-	-	1 (50%)
2	Taluka Panchayat	2 (9%)	3 (17%)	1 (8%)	5 (29%)	6 (33%)
3	Grama Panchayat	13 (14%)	8 (9%)	16 (18%)	37 (41%)	16 (18%)
	Total	15 (17%)	12 (13%)	17 (19%)	42 (47%)	24 (27%)

Source : Field Study

The responses of the respondents provided in the above table indicate that about 50% of the Zilla Panchayat Dalit women respondents, about 30% of the Taluka Panchayat Dalit women respondents and about 23% of the Grama Panchayat Dalit women respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the reservation of seats for Dalit women in Panchayati Raj Institutions has improved economic status; about 10% of the Taluka Panchayat Dalit women respondents and about 18% of the Grama Panchayat Dalit women respondents have no idea that the reservation of seats for Dalit women in Panchayati Raj Institutions has improved economic status; and about 50% of the Zilla Panchayat Dalit women respondents, about 66% of the Taluka Panchayat Dalit women respondents and about 59% of the Grama Panchayat Dalit women respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that the reservation of seats for Dalit women in Panchayati Raj Institutions has improved economic status.

Conclusion

As a result, it is clear that mere reservation is not enough because a dalit women representative lacks qualitative participation due to both internal and external factors. 'Dalit Women's Empowerment' is not something which can be handed over to women. This is a process which involves sincerity, earnestness, and capacity and capability on the part of men and more particularly, of women. It is a challenging task in an Indian village as even today a woman cannot take any independent decision. She feels subordinate to her husband and sometimes even to her son.

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