



## A Retrospection of women Empowerment in Tripura

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**“Man and woman as the two wings of a bird which can move forward only if the wings flap together. There is no chance of the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved.” (Vivekananda).** Tripura is one of the states of India, where at least one third women reservation has been adopted following 73rd amendment. The geographical area is 10,491.69 sq. km. and total population as per census 2011 is 36,71,032 Lacks. Tripura merged with Indian Union on 15th October, 1949 and became a union territory of India on 1st November, 1956. It became a full fledged State on 21st January 1972. Decentralisation of administration is notable in respect of its geographical area and population.

### Administrative Decentralization of Tripura

Sl. No	Name of the Districts	No. of Sub-Division	No of Blocks	No of Panchayats	No of Revenue Village	No of ADC Village
1	West District	3	6	70	96	77
2	Sepahijala District	3	5	103	119	52
3	South District	3	6	90	138	70
4	Gomati District	3	7	62	134	95
5	North District	3	6	52	89	51
6	Unakoti District	2	3	51	78	28
7	Dhalai District	4	6	34	146	96
8	Khowai District	2	6	48	78	58
Total	23	45(58)	511(591)	878	527	

Sources: Tripura Info year Book-2013(4th edn).

Various literatures and government records highlighted that women are empowered at grassroots level in Tripura. But the book “Grass root Democracy and Women in Tripura” (Kamal and Bhattacharya, 2013) has given another facet of women empowerment. But in social science research, there is a limitation that data collection and quantitative information makes a difference in different time and circumstances. In this context, observation and experiment became a good tool for better understanding. Hence, a qualitative investigation with the quantitative analysis of that book has been made whether really women are being empowered? In order to search this answer following numbers of respondents were selected randomly.

SI No	Total no of women members	Total no of respondents	% of respondents
1	73	35	48
2	116	60	52
3	61	30	50
Total	250	125	100

Accordingly, the researcher interviewed the different personalities, representatives of people, experienced government employee and different section of people and it seems to me that the situation is becoming more worst after publishing the book..Some of observations are given here

### s1: Husband's wives are preferred

Name of Blocks	Total no. of Married	Total no. of unmarried	Total no. of widow	Total no. of Divorce	Total
Dukli	27	04	03	01	35
Melaghar	42	10	06	02	60
Jampuijal	22	06	01	01	30
Total	91(73%)	20(16%)	10(8%)	04(3%)	125

It is detected that wives are comparatively more active than youngsters in panchyat Raj system in respect of electoral politics, where elected members from these three constituencies, married women occupied 73%, unmarried 16%. Divorced and widow are less participating in compare to married and unmarried.

Statistics cannot speak alone. Anyone can highlights from this analysis that most of the married women besides their family parts are coming forward and becoming peoples representative to strengthen the grassroots democracy. But this is not the true fact. This observation has been done through qualitative and quantitative information.

Fact is that they are the husband's wife who will follow ditto. They are the just shadow of their male counterpart. Male domination remained as it is like their home in everyday life.

What about the unmarried representative? The answer is they are the father's daughter or brothers sister whatever the brother the brother elder or younger.

**2. Illiteracy is more welcomed**

Sl. No.	Name of Blocks	Just literate	Up to class-v	Up to class-X	Class-XII & Above	Total
1	Dukli	13	15	04	03	35
2	Melaghar	25	27	05	03	60
3	Jampuijala	11	13	04	02	30
Total	49(39%)	55(44%)	13(11%)	08(6%)		125

It's a long debate whether only the educated person should be welcomed in politics?

But the following findings show that illiteracy is more welcomed than literate in the process of democratization. But figure shows that every woman is literate here. The percentage of just literate, Up to class five and up to class X and Class X or above is respectively 39%, 44%, 11% and 6%.

But fact is that just literate woman only can write their name and some digits with a good effort. But they cannot read. The leader at low level from all political parties wants to nominate the candidate as far as possible from illiterate so that they can control easily. This observation has been supported by local people.

**3. Motivation for politics: Party domination**

Sl. No.	Name of Blocks	Family Motivation	Party Motivation	Self Motivated	Total
1	Dukli	10	20	05	35
2	Melaghar	20	34	06	60
3	Jampuijala	10	17	03	30
Total	40(32%)	71(57%)	14(11%)		125

The Chart shows that only 11% women of total representatives are coming to participate by their self motivation, Where 71% influenced by party and 40% motivated by family. It is also learned that party used to promise financial opportunities (like employment, small business opportunity etc.) will be ensured, if they joined in politics and the family members also influenced expecting some benefits, though ultimately it remained a bogus in both cases..

This picture clearly indicates that in spite of reservation they are not willing to join in politics. But democracy cannot be successful, if the half of nations will remain far from decision making part. And the basic aim of introduction of panchayat raj ultimately will be meaningless.

**4. Representatives do not attend the meetings**

Sl. No.	Name of Blocks	Attended in the meetings	Not Attended in the meetings	Total
1	Dukli	29	06	35
2	Melaghar	51	09	60
3	Jampuijala	24	06	30
Total	104(83%)	21(17%)		125

Generally it cannot be believed that 21% elected woman representative usually do not participate in the meetings at panchayat level. But it is fact. It does not make me surprise when I saw parliamentarians are not attending non-officially in the deliberation of non-political issues in the parliament. People also see it normal happenings. This is a very alarming for the democratic decentralization especially in the process of women empowerment.

**5. Proxy Politics**

Sl. No.	Name of Blocks	Husband	Father	Brother	Others	Total
1	Dukli	14	05	04	01	24
2	Melaghar	15	06	03	00	24
3	Jampuijala	12	09	06	04	31
Total	41(52%)	20(26%)	13(16%)	05(6%)		79

52% husband takes part in the meetings in favour of their wives. Fathers 26%, brother 16% and others 6% are so cordial to attend in the meetings killing the democracy.

It is not that all the women do not want to participate in the meetings. Sometimes they are not allowed. Sometimes they do not know the date and events of the meetings. Important is signature that collected later on.

In this situation the reservation of women is bound to cause great resentment (offense) and every effort is made to subvert (undermine) and sabotage (damage).

Experienced members of the family, who cannot contest due to reservation, try to make them puppet their female counterpart.

**6. Good governance means party agenda**

Sl No	Name of Blocks	Neutral & people oriented actions	Transparent and accountable actions	Actions with peoples' participation	Actions with party agenda	Total
1	Dukli	08	11	05	11	35
2	Melaghar	12	12	13	23	60
3	Jampuijala	08	06	07	09	30
Total	28(23%)	29(23%)	25(20%)	43(34%)		125

Yes, the women elected candidate whatever they are literate or illiterate, attended in the meetings or not, almost of them heard Susana.

But what is surprising that most of the elected candidates i.e. 34% feel that action with party agenda stands for good governance. It indicates that whatever good or bad of party agenda is good governance. So it is assumed that in this process of good governance, the poor people who do not belong the ruling party in that particular panchayat may not be eligible for a BPL card, dwelling house may not get the work of NREGA or other facilities. Despite that, the others 66% can understand the good governance which is people oriented, neutral and transparent oriented action.

Sl. No	Name of Blocks	No Information on IT	Knowledge about Computer	Use of Computer	Use of Internet	Total
1	Dukli	25	07	03	00	35
2	Melaghar	52	07	01	00	60
3	Jampuijala	27	03	00	00	30
Total	104(83%)	17(13%)	04(3%)	00		125

Yes, they have heard the word susasana and they just understand neutral work, people oriented work, party work etc. is good governance. But they could not understand how to achieve this governance. 83% don't have any information about computer. 13% got the information from various sources, but nobody could operate computer. Just 3% have used computer. But regarding internet-everybody says- No.

It may not be expected that they will be computer oriented. But the question is the whole operations including accounts maintaining are made in computer. Corruptions spread in most panchyats. About 100 panchayat secretaries have been suspended. At this position ignorance about the minimum knowledge of computer elected candidates will have problem to find out the corruptions.

The researcher also observes that Party normally wants to nominate fresh candidate for controlling. It is the opinion of local people of the concerned area that candidates having experience become efficient more or less than earlier for which they cannot be misused like earlier. The purpose of panchayat raj system is to promote the local people to initiate the plan and programs for their own development. The study reveals that elected panchayat body do not bother to go through the details to ensure participatory planning of development work. Most of the plans, rules, and strategies are forced by the panchayat department. Govt. Officials send the report to the higher authority without any proper endorsement (backing) by the community. Most of the elected women are unknown to power and function assigned to them. Very few can understand and explain in proper way. Many times they remain as deaf to the decision taken with consent from the majority of male members. After election was over women were given pradhanship in obedience (in respect) to rotational reservation. Upapradhan of the panchayat actually the senior leader of the party became stronger and hold the office of pradhan. Woman pradhan could not use her discretion under her own rights in the institutional affairs of panchayat. These trends have been increasing.

#### **Conclusion:**

Charity begins at home. When political party itself could not reserve one-third position in its own executive committee, how it will serve the women properly? Every political party in the state should reserve a minimum position for women comrade.

## **REFERENCES**

Mostafa Kamal and Alak Bhattacharya, Grassroot Democracy and Women in Tripura, Lambert Academic Publishing, Germany, 2013.