TO DEMONSTRATE THE DYNAMICS CHANGES AND POLITICAL POWER OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

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ABSTRACT

Women have ruled throughout human civilization's history, throughout a range of eras, dynasties, social classes, and castes. Feminists contend that women, who make up about half of society worldwide, are not only denied their legitimate rights but are also denigrated as second-class citizens by the male-dominated other half, whose superiority over women is assumed to be innate. Men played important roles in the production system and gained more social authority over the centuries as class and caste society and power dynamics changed. A lengthy period of feudal and capitalist social history resulted in women's role as dependent on men, primarily responsible for taking care of the home, bearing children, and raising them. The concept of empowerment represents the interests of society's marginalized groups. Feminist analysis and the popular education movement assumed that gender subordination and gender construction were social constructs. The goal was to form a network of women and men both domestically and abroad, as well as to assist women in learning how to confront oppressive conduct and express themselves. and to support the development of a robust civil society that can exert pressure for change, as well as a democratic community and workplace.

KEYWORD: dynasties, social classes, castes, gender, women

1. INTRODUCTION

Human resource development was one of the main areas of focus for the Indian government during the eighth plan. Men, women, and children were all given equal opportunities to participate in the national development process. Making women independent and self-sufficient was the primary goal, whilst the primary goal for children was to secure their survival, with a particular emphasis on the girl child.

One of the main goals of the Ninth plan is also to empower women. In order to accomplish this goal, the plan emphasizes the significance of establishing an enabling environment with the necessary policies and programs, legislative backing, unique institutional mechanisms at different levels, and sufficient financial and human resources. The plan calls for empowering women on all fronts—social, economic, political, and legal—by taking an integrated approach.

The Indian Constitution's Article 15(3) gives governments the authority to provide for women and children in any way they see fit. In light of these clauses, it has been decided that reservations for women in local or educational institutions are legitimate.

The number of women voting in elections has been rising since the first general election in 1952. However, their portrayal falls short. In light of this, a modified approach was taken to enhance women's involvement in political decision-making through the implementation of a "quota system for women" in legislative bodies. Women's reservation in panchayats was highly demanded in order to formally establish the equality guaranteed by the Indian constitution. The seventy-third constitutional amendment, which gives women a third of the seats in all rural local self-government organizations, is regarded as a significant step toward women's political empowerment in India. The constitution's 73rd Amendment Act, 1992, which went into force on April 24, 1993, sought to eliminate bias and gender inequality in local self-government institutions while also decentralizing power. This clause essentially aims to increase women's awareness and achieve more gender parity in the decision-making process. Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (SCs and STs) are to be reserved in each Panchayat in accordance with their population, according to Article 243(D). These seats will be distributed by rotation among various constituencies and filled through direct election. Women who belong to SCs and STs must be given at least one-third of the available seats. Additionally, at least one-third of the seats—including those designated for SC/ST women, who will be elected directly—must be reserved for women and distributed by rotation. The position of chairman in the village or other Panchayat level would be reserved for women and members of the SC and ST categories in accordance with any provisions made by the state legislature. One However, women's involvement is formal or "de jure" in Indian democracy, as guaranteed by statutory regulations. The majority of rural women devote the most of their time to taking care of the family's fundamental needs. They don't have much time for any form of political activity. Their low level of engagement is explained by their low social standing, low literacy, and ignorance of their legal rights and obligations as well as the goals and workings of Panchayati Raj institutions. Rural women do not lack dynamism or leadership abilities, nor do they lack awareness of their own desire for personal growth.

They are uninterested and reluctant to participate in public affairs because of their inferior status and culturally enforced limitations. They have been bullied, exploited as stand-ins for men, and discouraged by conventional taboos. Therefore, a pivotal moment in the political history of independent India is the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act. In addition to addressing the constitutional and legislative flaws that had prevented women from participating in grassroots politics, the Act gives women—especially the most marginalized ones—the chance to influence policy, planning, and program administration.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Social activists and researchers of women's studies have expressed concern about the underrepresentation of women in politics and their passive political roles. They think women should be more involved in political decision-making. Setting goals for their own and others' growth requires their active political participation. This would necessitate women's political empowerment, which can only be achieved through their socio-political advancement and increased representation and involvement in decision-making bodies.

As its tentacles stretch across all parts of society, gender inequities are ubiquitous in numerous layers of social existence. Women's deprivation is a global phenomenon. Women all around the world have been not only ostracised, but also subjected to cruel suffering. As a result, gender scholars and theorists have paid close attention to the problem of women's emancipation.

Women all throughout the world have equal citizenship and rights under the democratic system. However, its institutions and political processes are demonstrating that they are unable to guarantee or implement these assurances. Political power has a significant part in women's dominance. Women have a hard time breaking into politics. Women's voices are too often ignored in global decision-making forums. They continue to be underrepresented in democratic institutions, and women's organizations often have limited impact on policy discussions. Half of the world's population is made up of women. No country can afford to overlook half of its population's abilities, talents, and experiences. Furthermore, institutions that ignore women's viewpoints and experiences are more likely to make decisions that ignore the realities of women's lives. In these circumstances, policies are unlikely to address the demands of women.

To protect women's rights, we need a participatory democracy. Participation by empowered women, as well as the empowerment of many more women, is required to realize the ambitions and dreams of many

women who place a high value on female leadership. This faith in women and trust in their leadership has been proved in several studies and activities done among rural and disadvantaged women. They believe that women are more concerned about women's issues and, as a result, would prefer women to males as leaders.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In his research, Schuler (1986) contends that empowerment is a broader notion that includes raising individual consciousness, fostering communal consciousness, and mobilizing resources for legal and political action. The most noteworthy components of empowerment have been identified by Hashemi (1993) and Malhotra and Schuler (2005) as being mobility and visibility, a sense of economic security, self and future vision, the position of decision-making authority within the household, the capacity to communicate effectively in public, and involvement in non-farm groups. According to Bisht (2015), empowerment is the capacity to take charge, and this might differ depending on the individual and the circumstance. It is viewed as a personal characteristic; the conclusion is that an empowered person possesses particular qualities. By identifying the conditions that lead to helplessness and excluding them from both official and informal organizational practice methods of providing adequate information, empowerment is the process of increasing organizational groups' awareness of their own sufficiency (Conger and Kanungo, 1988). Rao (1996) outlined the key elements of empowerment, including equal participation in decision-making, control over resources and maintaining gains, improvement of social and physical conditions, and a focus on the social transformation component of empowerment.

According to Hazel and Baden (2002), empowerment is a positive process that involves changing gender power dynamics in groups or individually as well as raising awareness of women's subordination and building their capacity to confront it. Instead than being something that can be rigorously described as a top-down approach, empowerment is a process that is too complicated. Demanding that women be empowered is completely ridiculous, and it is also unfair to define empowerment in terms of specific behaviors or outcomes. In reality, empowerment is a process that allows women to freely develop and express their desires and interests, either individually or collectively, without external limitations. In order to implement the NPP's program of action, Bagchi (1999) referenced the statement that "women become empowered through collective reflection and decision making." The development of critical thinking skills, the strengthening of group cohesion, the development of a positive self-image and self-confidence, the encouragement of decision-

making and action, the establishment of equal participation in the process, the bringing about of social change, and the provision of resources for economic independence are all crucial components of women's empowerment.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To demonstrate the extent to which political power can affect women's standing.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The focus of this research is on women's political empowerment via Panchayati Raj institutions. For this work, the case-study approach was adopted as a research strategy. The main sources of primary data collecting have been interview and observation. Secondary data is gathered from various sources such as reports, records, newspapers, journals, and books.

Initially, library research on gender-based discrimination in society was conducted in order to develop a theoretical framework. For the presentation of the notion of women and political empowerment, many published materials on feminism and gender studies were examined. The Feminist Standpoint Theory was chosen as the technique for this study after a thorough examination of feminist theories.

All feminist ideas aim to find a more accurate "stand-point" for understanding the world than prevailing paradigms. Women's experience of marginality, combined with our material activities of reproduction and labour, and our refusal of dualisms such as culture/nature, mind/body, provide us with an understanding of social life that is distinct from, and perhaps superior to, that of men, according to feminist stand-point theorists.

By pointing out that gender, class, and race will always impact each individual's perspective of the world, feminist standpoint theorists reject the concept that there are universal truths or universal answers to social concerns. Stakeholder theory is akin to postmodernism because of its scepticism toward universal assertions.

This research uses feminist viewpoint epistemology as its theoretical foundation. This idea is based on the aforementioned objectives. At the same time, it retains a strong and long-term commitment to achieving those objectives. This idea is a challenge to academics because it forces them to observe and

understand the world through the eyes and experiences of oppressed women. Furthermore, oppressed women's knowledge and perspective are used to promote social activity and change. This theory, it could be stated, necessitates the integration of theory and practice. It's also known as a philosophy that combines a method of knowledge building with a call to political action.

6. RESULTS AND DATA INTERPRETATION

TABLE 6.1

DIFFICULTIES TO CONVENE GRAMA SABHA

Difficulties	Position				Total
	President	Vice-President	Member	Standing Committee Chairman	
No Response	6	3	87	27	123
	(30.0)	(30.0)	(41.0)	(46.6)	(41.0)
Low Participation of people	0	1	4	2	7
	(0.0)	(10.0)	(1.8)	(3.4)	(2.3)
Non Cooperation of Other party People	0	0	15	1	16
	(0.0)	(0.0)	(6.9)	(1.7)	(5.2)
Non Co-operation of People	3	0	6	4	13
	(15.0)	(0.0)	(2.8)	(6.9)	(4.3)
All of the Above	3	1	21	3	28
	(15.0)	(10.0)	(9.7)	(6.9)	(9.5)
Multiple Response	8	5	82	18	113
	(40.0)	(50.0)	(37.8)	(34.5)	(37.7)
Total	20	10	215	55	300
	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)

This table is based on whether elected female members encountered any challenges while trying to call a meeting of the Grama Sabha. because the majority of the elected women are housewives with lower levels of education and are running for office for the first time in a Panchayat election. The Grama Sabha is a public forum, and a variety of people attend its meetings. Therefore, it was challenging for the elected women to convene the Grama Sabha. The majority stated that they hardly ever attend the Grama Sabha before running for office. As a result, it was really challenging at first, but they now run the meetings quite well. when 41% of respondents claimed they had no trouble calling a meeting of the Grama Sabha, 37% stated they had a number of challenges when they were in office. Low public participation and non-cooperation from other party members are among the challenges. Furthermore, it is difficult to call a Grama Sabha because of the diverse castes, religions, and party ideologies of the populace.

TABLE 6.2

ACQUIRING PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

Qualities	Position				Total
	President	Vice-President	Member	Standing Committee Chairman	
Leadership	0	0	5	1	6
Quality	(0.0)	(0.0)	(2.3)	(1.7)	(2.0)
Self Confidence	0	0	6	0	6
	(0.0)	(0.0)	(2.8)	(0.0)	(2.0)
Assessment	0	0	1	0	1
Capacity	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.5)	(0.0)	(0.3)
Management	0	0	1	0	1
Capacity	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.5)	(0.0)	(0.3)
All of the above	12	4	90	25	131
	(60.0)	(40.0)	(41.5)	(46.6)	(43.6)
Multiple	8	6	112	29	155

Response	(40.0)	(60.0)	(52.5)	(51.7)	(51.8)
Total	20	10	215	55	300
	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)

In order to convene the Grama Sabha, elected women acquire certain qualities for their own and society's overall growth, similar to those required to attend Panchayat Committees. The characteristics of the elected women who were gathered by the Grama Sabha are the basis for this table. According to the majority (51.8%), they create a variety of personality traits in order to convene the Grama Sabha. According to the majority of elected women, they are just regular women who don't know how to call a Grama Sabha meeting. They have been afraid to speak in front of others since the beginning and are unsure on how to handle and make decisions. Members of political parties and officials, particularly those from their wards, were quite supportive at the time. They claimed that the Grama Sabha had made them feel like leaders and that it was an excellent place for them to grow as individuals.

TABLE 6.3

ACQUIRING ADMINISTRATIVE SKILL FOR CONVENING GRAMA SABHA

Qualities	Position				Total
	President	Vice-President	Member	Standing Committee Chairman	
Planning	0	0	1	1	2
	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.5)	(1.7)	(0.7)
Judging	1	0	5	0	6
Capacity	(5.0)	(0.0)	(2.3)	(0.0)	(2.0)
To Supervise	0	0	1	0	1
	(0.0)	(0.0)	0.5	(0.0)	(0.3)
Practical	1	0	15	1	17
Mindedness	(5.0)	(0.0)	6.9	(1.7)	(5.6)

Doing Thing Well	0	0	7	1	8
	(0.0)	(0.0)	3.2	(1.7)	(2.6)
All of the Above	10	5	76	27	118
	(50.0)	(50.0)	35.5	(48.3)	(39.3)
Multiple Response	8	5	111	25	149
	(40.0)	(50.0)	51.2	(46.6)	(49.5)
Total	20	10	215	55	300
	(100.0)	(100.0)	100.0	(100.0)	(100.0)

Similar to personality development, the Grama Sabha provided an area for the elected women members of the Grama Panchayat to hone their administrative skills. According to 49.5% of respondents, they acquired a variety of administrative skills in order to call a Grama Sabha meeting. Since the Grama Sabha is a public forum and regular people belong to diverse castes, religions, political parties, etc., the elected women who serve as its conveners frequently make forceful choices during sessions. As a result, these discrepancies could cause issues in the Grama Sabha. As a result, it aided in the development of their judging and supervising skills as a convener in the Grama Sabha. Of the total, 39.3% believe that every element helped them develop their administrative skills.

7. CONCLUSION

It was significant when the 73rd and 74th amendments to the Indian constitution were passed. By allocating 33% of the seats to Indian rural women, it cleared the path for their active political involvement in the rural local government. The situation regarding women's empowerment has undoubtedly changed drastically as a result of this, but it appears that it will take some time to fully benefit from the reforms.

It has been discovered that the elected officials feel educated and empowered by their new positions. Their new status is a source of satisfaction. They have also conveyed the idea that they are pleased to assist their fellow ladies in the community by introducing them to the several programs that the federal and state governments have started. There seems to be an understanding that it will take some time to bring about significant reforms that will transform the male perspective, even though in certain instances their male counterparts have denied them their legitimate voice in questions of policy framing.

The elected representatives' perception that their election has given them more negotiating leverage is another significant conclusion. In a debate, women are typically not on an equal basis with males. In a negotiation, man is better able to force or obtain agreements on his own terms. However, the perception of an elected official with the ability to make decisions on behalf of the people has altered the status of women representatives in intra-household negotiations. In household matters, bargaining is important, particularly when it comes to decision-making and operation. As a result, representatives now have more negotiating leverage thanks to political empowerment.

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