

73rd constitutional amendment: A milestone for Women Empowerment in Rural India

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"If a Woman is empowered, her children and her family will be better off. If families prosper the village prosper and eventually so does the whole country." Isabel Allende

Women constitute the half population of the country. The history is evident that the Women is always been given the Secondary importance in the male dominant cultured nation. Women potential have been curtailed within the four walls by engaging her in household chores. As a practice the women were not allowed to take part in the local election in panchayati raj institution eventough for a long time after the independence. It's a practice that majority of male members were fight the election in panchayati raj institution. After the completion of the electionone female member were nominated as a member. It's only a symbolic participation. The 73rd constitutional amendment act make it compulsory that minimum one third members of local self government institution were female. He believed that women could tap and use their capabilities, if they were properly educated. He believed in the self-respect and self-dignity of women and wanted no man to trample upon it, be it in the guise of protection or in the guise of reformation, he said. Socio-political rights(ideal to work, ideal to training, ideal to choose for themselves, and so forth) for the lassies were totally confined by the male individuals from the family. A portion of the evil practices against ladies has been disposed of by the receptive and extraordinary Indian individuals who speak more loudly for the unfair practices against ladies. Through the nonstop endeavors of the Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Britishers had to take out the evil routine with regards to Sati paratha. Afterward, different well known social reformers of India (Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Acharya Vinoba Bhave, Swami Vivekananda, and so on) likewise had raised their voices and buckled down for the upliftment of ladies in Indian culture. In India, the Widow Remarriage Act, 1856 was started by the constant endeavors of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar so as to improve the states of widows in the nation. Ladies strengthening is the better treatment of any huge or little issues identified with person, economy or condition. Few a years ago, the benefits of the lady's strengthening are turning out before us. Females are by and large progressively cognizant about their wellbeing, instruction, vocation, employment and obligations towards family, society, and nation. They are participating in each territory and demonstrating their extraordinary enthusiasm for each field.

The salient features of this act is as follows

Provisions for women in the 73rd amendment act:

1. The Act provides for the reservation of not less than one-third of the total number of seats for women (including the number of seats reserved for the SCs and STs).
2. Further not less than one-third of the total number of offices of chairpersons in the Panchayats at each level shall be reserved for women. This would be rotated amongdifferent Panchayats at each level.

Women empowerment through 73rd Amendment Act: Women's experience of being involved with the PRL has transformed many of them. They have gained a sense of empowerment by asserting control over resources, officials & most of all, by challenging men. They have become articulate & conscious of their power.

1. Political empowerment: The Act provides for the reservation of not less than one-third of the total number of seats for women. It is an attempt to ensure greater participation of women in election process directly and indirectly. It would be the nursery of creating women politicians for national politics. Even the participation of common women citizens in various activities such as attending Gram Sabha meeting, etc. has reportedly increased (68-78 percent).
2. Economic empowerment: Women are actively participating in rural development as per their capacity right from labourers to policy-makers. This empowers them economically and helps them in being independent.
3. Decision-making: The participation of women as elected as well as non-elected members is rising due to reservation for women. It acts as a pull factor for women to participate in meetings. They give their suggestions for various works and problems faced by them. This empowers them and enables them to take decisions in different spheres of life.
4. Raise in voice: Despite their low-literacy level, they have been able to tackle the political & bureaucratic system successfully. They have used their elected authority to address critical issues such as education, drinking water facilities, family planning facilities, hygiene & health, quality of healthcare & village development.
5. Empowerment of other women: Women are acting as an agent of change in the society and raising voice against injustice and atrocities. Women's role has led to a raise in voice by women against domestic violence and other atrocities. Women are being empowered to active participation and awareness of women about their rights and power.
6. Reduction in violence against women: Domestic violence has substantially declined due to women pradhan or sarpanch. These women representatives take pro-actively take up such violence. The victims also feel free to share their grievances to women representatives.

Some issues in women representation in PRIs

1. Illiteracy and low education levels of the majority of the women elected to the PR's.

2. Women are overburdened with family responsibilities.
3. Introversion due to the lack of communication skills.
4. Poor socio-economic background with which the women have come into the system and poor capacity building.
5. Male family members and also leaders from the caste group/community come in the way of the affairs of the Panchayats.
6. Indifferent attitude and behaviour of officials working in the system.
7. Misguidance by the local bureaucracy.
8. Mounting pressure from the political party which has vested interests in the gender reservation for positions in the PRI system.
9. Undue interference by the husband (post sarpanch) of women representatives, treating them as mere dummies.
10. Widespread use of corrupt practices among the male members and local bureaucrats.

With the establishment of PRIs in our country a woman gets an opportunity to prove her worth as a good administrator, decision-maker or a good leader. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 is a milestone in this regard. It provides women a chance to come forward. Government should encourage research and development in effective implementation of provisions of 73rd amendment.