

Women Empowerment: A Study with Reference to Political Participation in Chittoor District

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ABSTRACT:

In General gender plays a major role in today's competing world, why because women are becoming strong in all the areas. Women are neglected in the past but, now-a-days there is an appreciable ways of women inclusion and Empowerment in most neglected areas like politics,business,marine etc.This paper will lead us to understand the political participation and inclusion in Chittoor district.

Introduction

Social Inclusion is the very complex system of problems known as social exclusion, the converse of social exclusion, is affirmative action to change the circumstances and habits that lead to or have led to social exclusion. A variety of factors prevent women inclusion in the socio-Economic and political process. it is therefore, realized that the progress of Women.

Women's participation in the he government and can raise the political process is critical both to the strengthening of democratic traditions and to their struggle against oppression. Political activism for women, as for other underprivileged groups, is integral to social reformation. The momentum therefore requires considerable strengthening and acceleration.

Participation of women in politics may influence the government and act as process of social transformation. Collective involvement of women in politics can shake all the departments of the government can raise the question against gender blindness.

Indian women's participation in politics has not been a sudden incident but a gradual process. This participation weakened the bondage of tradition and developed among them the equality of leadership and they were identified outside the family and domestic life.

This Study is an attempt to explore and analyze the role of women in Local Self Government. The study would also focus on the fact that presence of women in political institutions would bring about the progress of women which enables them to be included in the main stream. Equal opportunity & powers to women will empower a woman.

Methodology

The geographical area of the study is restricted to Chittoor of Andhra Pradesh state. All the women representatives in grama Panchayats, talukas and Zillah Panchayats of the district are the focus of attention in the study.

The primary data is collected, through interview schedules, from women representatives. The secondary data is gathered from volumes, articles, government sources and different libraries. A total of 82 women

representatives were interviewed in the district, the study is partially diagnostic and partially analytical in nature.

Objectives

The major objectives of this study are to explore and analyze the various dimensions of the political participation of women in local governments. The study also aims at analyzing certain pertinent issues relating to empowerment of women through political process. However the specific objectives of the study are:

- To analyze the factors influencing women entry into politics,
- To analyze factors influencing on the decision making process,
- To find out the various obstacles to the entry of women into politics,
- To analyze the participation of women in decision making process, and
- To suggest remedies for more inclusion of women in local governance.

As Analysis of findings

Entry into politics

Various factors influenced the entry of women into local-Self Governments. Of course, the reservation of seats to women is an important factor which led to the entry of women to governance. The self-interest, family influence, party pressure and request from the local voters are the other reasons identified by the Researcher. The information gathered in connection with this is given in Table 1.

TABLE1: REASONS FOR ENTRY INTO POLITICS

Sl. No	Local Self Governments	Self Interest	family	Political party	Local voters	Total
1	Gramapanchayats	08 (25.00)	06 (18.75)	14 (43.75)	04 (12.50)	32 (100.00)
2	Taluka Panchayats	12 (50.00)	02 (8.33)	08 (33.34)	02 (8.33)	24 (100.00)
3	Zillah Panchayats	02 (20.00)	01 (10.00)	05 (50.00)	02 (20.00)	10 (100.00)
4	Urban Local-Self Governments	04 (25.00)	03 (18.75)	07 (43.75)	02 (12.50)	16 (100.00)
	Total	26 (31.71)	12 (14.63)	34 (41.46)	10 (12.20)	82 (100.00)

It can be learnt from the above data that 26(31.71%) members entered in to the arena out of Self-interest. family members motivated 12 members to enter in to politics. a meager 10 (12.20%) are influenced by local voters. as high as 34 (41.46%) representatives were motivated by political party to enter the field of politics. It can be noted that at Gram Panchayats level out of 32 members 14 are influenced by the party, at Zillah Panchayats level out of 10 members are influenced by the political party to enter into local governance.

Decision-Making

Being new entrants to politics, women were less aware and informed about the process of local politics. This acted as major obstacle to their effective role in decision-making. The decisions are taken by the women members are related to their age and education. the data with reference to Age and decision-making is given in table -2

TABLE-2: AGE AND DECISION- MAKING

Sl.No (01)	Age groups (02)	Family (03)	Party (04)	Local voters (05)	Elected members (06)	Total (07)
1	21-34	01	04	02	02	09
2	35-44	04	11	05	08	28
3	45-54	02	10	04	06	22
4	55-and above	03	09	06	05	23
	Total	10 (12.20)	34 (41.47)	17 (20.73)	21 (25.060)	82 (100.00)

The respondents were asked about the factors which influence them on decision-making. Influence by family, party, local voters and other elected members were four categories set by the researcher. It can be seen from the above data that out of total 82 members interviewed in the district a high as 34 (41.47%) members are influenced by the party to which they belong in taking the decisions. a very low, i.e., only 10 members are influenced by the family while taking the decisions. it also found in all the age groups categories party influence plays a vital role in decision-making.

TABLE-3: EDUCATION AND DECISION –MAKING

Sl. no	Education	Family	Party	Local voters	Elected members	Total
1	Illiterate	-	-	-	--	-
2	Literate	-	02	01	01	04
3	Primary	02	05	02	04	13
4	SSC	04	11	02	08	25
5	Intermediate	07	14	04	03	28
6	Degree+	02	06	01	03	12
	Total	15 (18.29)	38 (46.34)	10 (12.20)	19 (23.17)	82 (100.00)

The relationship between education and decision-making as revealed in the above table-3 makes us to understand that, irrespective of the level of education, women members are influenced by various factors in decision-making. Out of the 82 members, 38 (46.34%) members base their decisions on the influence by their political party. a very low of 10 members are influenced by the local voters in decision-making.

Perceptions about obstacles

The women representatives are scarce in the political arena. it is with the implementation of the 73rd and 74th Constitutional amendment, the induction of women into representative roles became compulsory. in fact we took 45 years to provide representation to a reasonably good number of women in the political institutions at the grass root level. the views of the representatives regarding the obstacles for their entry into politics include lack of awareness, lack of opportunity, lack of finance and lack of family support. the perceptions of the representatives regarding the obstacles are given in table-4.

TABLE-4 RESPONDENTS PERCEPTION ABOUT OBSTACLES

Sl. No	Local Self Governments	Lack of Awareness	Lack of opportunity	Lack of Finance	Lack of family support	Total
1	Gramapanchayats	05	17	06	04	32
2	Taluka Panchayats	02	15	04	03	24
3	Zillah Panchayats	01	04	03	02	10
4	Urban Local-Self Governments	04	06	03	03	16
	Total	12 (14.63)	42 (51.22)	16 (19.52)	12 (14.63)	82 (100.00)

It is understood from the table that the respondents who identified lack of opportunity as the obstacles constitute majority in all the four levels of the Local self governments. The number of respondents who feel that the lack of opportunity as the obstacles are highest in grama Panchayats followed by Taluk Panchayats. nearly 42 (51.22%) members are of the view that lack of opportunity prevents women from entering into politics. lack of opportunity is followed by lack of finance.16 can be now inferred that, women representation in the political field is scarce due to lack of opportunity.

Participation in Decision-Making

Participation in decision-making is necessary for the success of democracy. Greater participation in the process of decision making is a good sign and vice versa. The role of women members in decision making is analyzed in Table-5.

TABLE-5: MEMBERS PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING

Sl. No (01)	Local Self Governments (02)	Party views (03)	Good decisions (04)	Collective Decisions (05)	Total (06)
1	Gramapanchayats	06 (18.75)	18 (56.25)	08 (25.00)	32 (100.00)
2	Taluka Panchayats	07 (29.17)	12 (50.00)	05 (20.83)	24 (100.00)
3	Zilla Panchayats	02 (20.00)	06 (60.00)	02 (20.00)	10 (100.00)

4	Urban Local-Self Governments	04 (25.00)	09 (56.25)	03 (18.75)	16 (100.00)
	Total	19 (23.17)	45 (54.88)	18 (21.95)	82 (100.00)

The above figures reveal that 54.88% of the respondents support good decisions. at all levels of local self governments more than 50% of the respondents support good decisions. Only 23.17% of the respondents support party views. it can be observed that 21.95% of the respondents support collective decision. Here it can be noted that modern democracy is more party oriented. Thus, the views of the majority party prevail in decision-making. in spite of this fact more number of respondents support good decisions irrespective of the party to which they belong.

Suggestions to improve participation

Many suggestions, during the field survey, were made by women members to facilitate better performance in Panchayatraj. Thus suggestions pointed out by members include training, awareness, separate funds, visit to successful Panchayats etc. the data with respect to suggestions is analyzed, for convenience, in Table -6

TABLE6: SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE WOMEN PARTICIPATION

Sl. No (01)	Local self Government (02)	Training (03)	Awareness (04)	Separate Funds (05)	Visit to other Panchayats (06)	Total Interviewed (07)
1	Gramapanchayats	32 (100.00)	32 (100.00)	16 (50.00)	11 (34.38)	32 (100.00)
2	Taluka Panchayats	24 (100.00)	24 (100.00)	06 (25.00)	09 (37.50)	24 (100.00)
3	Zilla Panchayats	10 (100.00)	10 (100.00)	08 (80)	-	10 (100.00)
4	Urban Local-Self Governments	16 (100.00)	16 (100.00)	07 (43.75)	04 (25.00)	16
	Total	82 (100.00)	82 (100.00)	37 (45.12)	24 (29.27)	82 (100.00)

At all levels of Local self Governments, the women representatives unequivocally emphasized the need to provide training and to generate awareness to facilitate better participation and performance. Only 45.12% of the respondents stressed on the need for separate funds for better participation. 24 members out of 82 were of the opinion that, it is better to visit other successful Panchayats Raj Institutions for experience sharing.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the author feels that the recommendation if implemented with all fairness and faith will go a long way in strengthening and encouraging

Participation of women in local self governments and their inclusion in the political process. Hence, the need of the hour is to enhance women participation, women empowerment and their inclusion which may bring about change in political culture, promote sincerity and discourages criminalization of politics.

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