

Women Political Empowerment Through Panchayati Raj Institution with Special Reference to Article 243D(3) in Odola Panchayat Under Udalguri District

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Abstract:

Panchayati Raj Institution is a grass root level democracy in India. India follows Democratic centralization which means the division of power between the centre and the state. 73rd Amendment introduced Panchayati raj institution in India. Women empowerment means the upgradation of women in all the spheres which are related to political, social and economic. Panchayati Raj Institutions provide the opportunity to the rural masses to involve themselves from grass-root level to achieve all the national challenges. The political participation of women in panchayati raj institution ensured 33 percent for women. In this paper researcher tries to highlighted about the political awareness and involvement score of udalguri district in PRIs. This paper is based on the both primary and secondary data source.

Keywords: Panchayati Raj Institutions, women participation, democratic centralization, grass root level.

Introduction:

Panchayati Raj institution was introduced in India in 1959. In 1993 panchayati raj institution came into force according to the 73rd Amendment act. It was uncertain journey of Panchayat. Panchayati raj institutions works as the grass roots level of democracy. It is a unit of the decentralized democratized government which has been considered as an instrument of socio-economic transformation in the rural areas. Involvement of people at the grass root level is most important for the growth of socio-economic development. In the panchayat decentralization of the power is a empowering people which is involving them in the decision making process. Article 243D clause (3) of the Constitution of India introduced through the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act which provides that one- third of the total number of seats and offices of the chairpersons in PRIs at each level shall be reserved for women to be allotted to the different constituencies in a panchayat. Plitical power is the strongest weapon to empower women, but in the sector of politics that women all over world are lagging behind men. The equal participation of women in political life plays an important role in the general process of women empowerment. In Assam women's political representation in Lok sabha and vidhan sabha is very low and voting behaviour almost 82 percent.¹

Objective of the study:

1. To understand Article 234D clause (3) of panchayat
2. To analysis about the power and function of panchayat
3. To analysis the issues of political empowerment of women in Odola Panchayat under Udalguri district.
4. To analysis the status of women's political empowerment in Odola Panchayat Udalguri district.

Article 243D clause (3):

Panchayati raj institutions are included in the part IX of the Indian Constitution. Article 243D of the Indian constitution indicate the reservation of seats. Article 243D clause (3) indicates that seats are reserved for one-third number of seats reserved for women and such seats may be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a panchayat.² It also included the seats reserved for women who are belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Functions of panchayati raj institution:

Panchayati raj institutions is a system of governance in which gram panchayats are the basic units of administration in India. It is a three-tier system of Panchayat raj in India. The states of Goa, Jammu and Kashmir, Mizoram, Meghalaya,

¹ Islam Shariful ,” Political Empowerment of Women: A Contemporary Study of Assam”ISSN:2319-7064

² Part IX of the Indian Constitution, <https://www.mea.gov.in>

Nagaland and Sikkim have two tier panchayats one at the village level and the second one at the Zila or District level. Rest of the other states panchayati raj institution is a three tier system first at village level, second at the block or janapad level, third at the zila or district level.

Village is the basic unit of panchayati raj institution. It is known as the revenue unit. Every panchayat elects a president and a vice president. In some states it is elected directly gram sabha either through the show of hands or through secret ballot paper or in the other state the mode of election is indirect. Village panchayat have two types of functions which are: Mandatory function and Discretionary function.

Mandatory functions are related with the Sanitation, conservancy and drainage, prevention of public nuisances, drinking water, construction and maintenance of village roads, repair or construction of public buildings. Preparation of annual budget and development plans, poverty alleviation programme etc. On the other hand Discretionary functions are related with the agriculture, animal husbandry and dairy development, minor irrigation, small scale industries rural development programmes, education cultural affairs and heritage , public health etc.

Block is the second level of local self government in rural India. In Assam it is known as Anchalik Panchayat , in Andhra Pradesh it is known as Mandal Parishad, Bihar

, odisha, west Bengal Tripura it is known as Panchayat Samit . Different states has been named differently. In this level **Pradhan** elected by the electoral college which consists of all the members of the village panchayat. The main functions of this level of panchayat is to co-ordinate the activities of the various panchayats within its jurisdiction. Block level panchayat supervises the work of the

panchayats and scrutinizes their budgets. It is also responsible of the preparing and implementing plans for the development of agriculture, animal husbandry, small scale and cottage industries, rural health etc.

Most of the states district level panchayat is known as Zila parishad and some states it is known as district panchayat. The Chairman of the zila parishad is elected among its members. Block level activities falling within zila parishad jurisdiction. In certain states zila parishad approves the budget of the block levels. The zila parishad also advice to the govt. with regard to the implementation of the various development schemes. It also responsible for the maintenance of primary and secondary schools, hospital, dispensaries. It also promoted local industries and art.³

Methodology

This research paper based on both primary and secondary data source. Secondary data comprised of the Article, Newspaper, Journal, Thesis and other resources. The researcher has collected data from the villagers through the method of interview and when that time the researcher has used the non-probability sampling type snow balling method.

Discussion:

Udalguri district was formed on 14 june 2004 after bifurcating from darrang district. There are 804 villages 11 blocks 224 panchyats in the district out of which the researcher has chosen a panchayat named odala panchayat.. This panchayat has a population of 3916 male and 3837 female as of 2011 census. The panchayat is made up of five communities- bodo, rabha, nepali, santhali and adivasi where bodo is the majority. The researcher has found that though bodo being the majority there is no such dominating attitude but decision making is collectively done accepting everyone's idea and opinions.

Sl.no	Occupation of Respondents	Age	Sex	Number	Percentage
1.	Farmer	25-35	Male	4	30%
2.	Government employee	25-35	Female	1	10%
3.	Housewife	30-60	Female	4	30%
4.	Daily Labourer	20-35	Female	2	15%
5.	Business	35-55	Male	2	15%

The researcher findings on the table indicate that large numbers of male respondents are farmer and female respondents are housewives and some are government

³ Dutta, Lahimi "Panchayati Raj- Three Tier System in India", Kurushetra January 2014

employee, Daily labourer, Businessman. The researcher has found that women around 40- 60 age from odala panchayat lacks education and political awareness. Women with no knowledge of their constituency or any political activities majority of women are kept out of the political sphere. The societal expectation that men should take the lead in all decisions has been accepted by women. The

women from Odala Panchayat are mostly housewife and daily labourers so the status they have at meetings or in field of public activities are they just maintain the public figure without much influence . However the upcoming generation women are motivated to take a political stance to address their issues like domestic violence, child marriage, witch hunting, lower pay etc. because they are aware of their rights as they are educated. They also actively took part in political campaigns being conscious of the political rights, they began to determined to have active political participation starting from the grass root level. Women also took stand in meetings raising their voice which is accepted by the society at present. They have even referred to the current era as the ‘era of women.

Conclusion:

Panchayati raj institution is the bedrock of democracy at grass root level. Panchayati raj institutions has always been seen as a way to promote good governance and the 73rd constitutional amendment was passed in the hopes that it would promote better governance and give marginalized group of population such as women and members of the SCs and STs access to the political process. Women has also learned to be politically aware about their eights as they are given 1/3rd reservation of seats at panchayat, their zeal to past of politics has risen. Before the percentage of women in political actuates were only 4- 5% but new with reservation it has come up to 20- 40%. The growth of women and establishment of a society that values equality between the sexes depend on their empowerment in domains, but particularly in politics. But for this women need to be educated to get a detailed idea on governance. It is only by implementing appropriate actions and steps for their issues like low literacy , politically unconsciousness unequal pay, domestic violence are resolved through their active participation in politics. Women’s empowerment won’t be attainable unless they receive adequate political representation.

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