

Women as Protagonist in Indian Politics

Dr. Deepak S. Vede

Head, Department of History, SaraswatiMandir Night College ofCommerce and Arts, Pune-02

Abstract:

The constitution brought legal equality between women. Although the constitutional provisions allowed women to enter the male-dominated political field in the relative calm of the domestic sphere, women's involvement in government was not very important. It concludes that women's participation is important as well as a prerequisite of simple justice and a required condition for human existence. This can be done not only by increasing the numbers, but also by ensuring women leaders recognize the challenges and address them effectively. Accepting equality and faith in their capacity would improve the political situation considerably.

Keywords:

Gender equality; Political Participation; Reservation; Women Empowerment, Challenges, India. Women: Empowerment and the Feminist Jurisprudence.

Introduction:

Women have been severely affected in all their manifestations because of the ability of women to challenge subordination. The leaders of pre- and post-independent India paid lip service to the uplifting of women in different walks of life, even rightful representation in the legislatures, both central and state, which has prevented women from enjoying their place of pride in the centers of power, administration and leadership in political parties. Woman empowerment has also been at the center of all discourses at the international level about women's issues, but in any political system women have very little participation compared to men from developed countries to developing countries. There is no doubt that in the Indian Constitution the principle of gender equality is enshrined. The Indian Constitution offers full opportunities for women to engage effectively in politics and provides a framework for them. However, it is regrettable that decades since independence women's involvement in politics has declined. The state and society seem to be lagging in providing them with long overdue political reservations. Late on, for almost a decade and a half, the Women's Reservation Bill became a political ball. In and outside the Building, it has often sparked heated debates. Initially the HD Deve Gowda-led United Front Government drawn up the legislation on the reservation of a 1/2 seat in parliament and State legislatures for women. On 12 September 1996, the Bill was launched at the Lok Sabha. Even though it has repeatedly been tabled in Parliament, because of a lack of political support the draft could not be adopted. Whereas our Constitution and other legislative acts and several Commissions on women have from time to time been working towards achieving the goal of gender equality, the efforts to emancipate women in education, economics and especially politics have been planned over the decades following the Index and have not achieved the desired result. This paper discusses empowerment of women by their participation in politics. The need to empower women – both politically and economically – emerged in order to achieve women's subjugation and subordination and affirmative discrimination against women in general. The purpose of this paper is to promote the Women's Political Reservation Bill and to support this. The aim is also to stimulate efforts to end corruption, crime and political communications, to enforce strict funding ceilings for election campaigns and to raise awareness in society in order to promote the values of gender equality and equality between men and women. For these purposes the present paper is heavily focused on United Nations reporting, international standards and conventions, Indian Constitutional provisions and other legislative enactments which provide for favorable legislation which gives special rights to women, government

reporting by India, the NGOs and the important papers of modern jurists who have greatly contributed jurisprudence to evolution.

Indian History of Political Participation Women have a long history of exploitation and suffering in India, however. Women were victims of violent acts and were discriminated against, abused and tortured in different ways – physically and mentally not just in the men's community but also within the four walls of the family – disrupting the balance of society. In **ancient India**, women in every sphere of life enjoyed equal status with men. Rig-Veda Hymn XXI celebrates women's values far greater than men. In the philosophy of Ardhanari-Swara itself the portrayal of the head of God as half the man and half the woman depict the Vedic tale of women's equal. The Shakti-cult also focuses on a woman's destructive strength and superiority. But with the Smritis particularly Manusmriti, the status of women began to decline. There has been a desire to limit women's rights and religious privileges. Women came in the same lines as the Shudras. Apart from their ownership rights their status continued to deteriorate. Among warrior classes Sati became common. Strictly, women Situated in their home's four walls. In the period Smriti restrained the freedom of the woman, as can be seen in her well-known dictum: 'The women deserves no independence.' Historical analyzes of the position of women in ancient India therefore indicate that women are not equal to men. They were subordinated to men. The situation changed the worst during the **eleventh century** when Muslims invaded India.

Review of literature:

India's ranking in the number of women in parliament appointed or elected as of January 1 indicates that the role of women in political empowerment' It ranks at the Lower House of Parliament at 148 from 193, with just 11.48 percent women. Since 2015 the number of heads of state leaders has declined from 19 to 17. The advance is low (Sundström et al.; Bystydzienski). Indian women are relatively powerless and have less status than men. Women in India take part in elections, compete for government offices and lower levels of political parties. Around 59 of the 543 MPs meant that Lok Sabha was 11% female (Ganesamurthy). Indira Ghandhi was one of India's best and 14 years of service. Several states currently have female chief ministers and leaders, more years' leader, etc. Only 12% of members of parliament elected are women. In terms of political participation, India ranks 9th in the global gender gap report.

Since women have numerous social and political needs and perspectives, it is necessary for women to engage in government in order to integrate all social perspectives into policies and decision-making processes. Women regularly engage in household and community work and are therefore well informed of real problems faced by ordinary citizens. This gives them insights and perspectives that can play a part in sustainable development overall. (Saxena), women make up just 21% of the national parliament. In view of the costs associated with elections, a lack of financial resources will restrict participation. Women should be helping to resolve obstacles to politics without financing or imposing restrictions or campaigns on spending (Bessell)

In 2008, there was a bill for women's reservations or the constitutional Amendment No 104th which states clearly that women have a reservation of 33 % for participation. These reserves or quota have brought about quantitative improvements, made women represented in local governments easier and needed to be celebrated as a significant achievement in women's empowerment. In local governments, women's success stories demonstrate the qualitative shifts that are happening. Incrementalism will make qualitative progress in women's political and governance performances possible. It would provide a way to create a sense of gender equality (Damodaran and Neupane)

The involvement of women in Indian politics is socio-cultural, religious and economic. The lack of economic opportunities is one of the main barriers stopping women from becoming more involved in politics. Therefore, promoting women's access to economic opportunities is crucial to the growth of women's political participation. The involvement of women in political life depends largely on their access to jobs which not only gives them material

independence, but also certain professional skills and greater self-assurance. There is also a clear relationship and effect on the participation of women in politics in access to production methods and finances (Iwanaga)

Objectives of the Study

The goal of the present study is to examine the lack of legislation concerning women's political participation in the present scenario and, by meeting the objectives, try to establish the definition of women's empowerment:

1. To examine women's fair access to policymaking in order to take part in the empowerment process.
2. To contribute to the removal of legal deficiencies to improve the legal system designed to remove all types of discrimination against women.
3. Propose steps to build alliances to help the women's platform in order to reach higher levels of energy and engagement.

Methodology

The present work depends heavily on United Nations reports, international standards and conventions, reports by the government of India, NGOs and major work by modern lawyers who have greatly contributed to feminist case law and studies' evolution and growth. Various Jalandhar, Delhi and Phillaur libraries will be funded. The paper looks at different clauses on the constitution and other legislative acts that include special protections and advantageous regulations for women's benefits. It also investigates the absence of law in actual cases and its numerous defects.

Significant Universal Norms and Regional Treaties

Many globally agreed principles and standards exists on leadership and women's political participation, since United Nations Women's policies on women's participation and leadership are informed by a history of global women's participation commitments. The support for women's rights began with the founding charter of the United Nations.

In 1979, an international Bill of Rights for Women was adopted by the General Assembly and contained commitments under Article 7 on Political and Public Life, and Article 8 on representation upholding the right of women's participation in public life.

The **Convention for the Elimination of All Types of Discrimination against** women which was also referred to as International Bill of Rights for Women, incorporated obligations on political and public life pursuant to Article 7 and Article 8 on representation upholding the rights of women to participate in public life, was adopted by the General Assembly in 1979.

At the 1995 conference, **Commonwealth Heads of Government** adopted the Action Plan on Gender and Growth that the Member States took to step up women's involvement in policy making at all levels. The **Commonwealth Ministers of Women's Affairs** recommended that by **2005** Member States reach a target of at least 30% for women in the political and public sector in 1996.

United Nations Resolution 2003 on women's participation laid down the need for the Member States to take steps including: tracking progress in the field of women's representation; ensuring that family and careers are reconciled on a par with men and women; develop training programs and frameworks that promote and increase women's (women's) capacity to cast informed votes at free and fair elections; foster young people's participation, especially women, in civil society organisations; develop programs to educate and train women and girls to use the media and information.

A **UN Government-wide Action Plan (UN SWAP) on Gender Equality and Empowering Women** was adopted at a meeting of the **United Nations Chief Executive Board of Coordination (CEB) on 13 April 2012** and implemented through the United Nations system.

A case for women in India's political reservation

In India, a mixture of community perspectives and the viewpoint of a tolerant society emerges in the legislative constitutional system. The Indian Constitution provides for the right of adults to engage in politics and provides a full structure for women. However, it is regrettable that, due to a variety of cultural, social and political constraints, women could not make substantial use of constitutional provisions.

The statistics of the elections indicate that the same number of men and women have been voting in polling stations for the last two decades. Nevertheless, just a fraction of the corresponding number of men files their nomination papers in every election, which is national of the State. In all the previous elections, the number of candidates winning was less than Eleven in the parliament. Different circumstances also occur in the State Legislatures. So, it is obvious that women are so few to win that they have a negligible proportion in the legislative body. Several women's seats were not proportionate to the population's strength. In more than six decades, there has been no variation. Thus, politics has shown that it is very receptive to women and is still the male domain where the entry of women is severely restricted.

Status current from global level to national level of women's political participation

Today, no doubt, the percentage of women as voters is rising dramatically. Women are nearly equal to men in their engagement as voters. But women's (as a whole) political engagement does not balance males and thus they also cannot reach a share equal to men who must vote. At any level of participation, politics is dominated by men and women are not considered a big part of policy. Women are much underrepresented in legislative bodies as policymakers and decision-makers. Women have requested more space in legislative bodies, but most of the world's nations have struggled to provide women with due space and representatives in their political system. Thus, leadership and women's participation in the policy fields are often undermined from the local to the international levels. Women in public services, academia, political offices or private sector are often underrepresented in leadership roles. Despite their skills and abilities as leaders and their right to engage in democratic governance on the same footing as men, this sort of situation prevails.

Just a few countries, such as Germany, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland, have women movement with men equally. Women are taking big strides in the decision-making process in these countries. In industrialized countries such as Western Europe and North America, the participation of women in parliament remains limited and comparatively minor. Statistics (2010) show that the global total of women's members in both houses combined is 19.1 per cent. In the upper house it is 19.3 % and in the lower house 18.2 %. Just 21.4 percent of the national parliamentarians were women as of 1 October 2013, a slow rise from the 2010 percentage. As at 1 October 2013, at international level only 37 states have women parliamentarians in person or lower houses who are less than 10 percent. Just eight women served as Heads of State and 11 as Heads of State in 1 October 2013. Just 17 percent, with a plurality of social sectors including health and education, of government ministers were female as of January 2012. However, there are major regional variations.

Discussions

In its capacity as a welfare state, India is committed to the well-being and prosperity of its citizens and vulnerable. Although there has been a series of attempts to achieve the goal of gender equality, the Indian Constitution and various other lawmaking acts and various commissions formed for women from time to time have refused due rights for women and they continue in practice to be the victims of male domination. In fact, violations of women's rights continue. Women lack position and influence and are often shown among the weak. This meant that the planning attempts to emancipate women educationally and economically and particularly politically have not yielded the desired results in the decades after the independence of women. As a result, women have been poorly involved in political life.

Conclusion:

Of course, the lack of laws (constitutional provisions) and policies maintaining the position of dignity and equality for women needs to be eliminated, because they are insufficient to combat the challenge of injustice. Educational, economic and political freedom of women is of paramount importance in the empowerment of women and the transformation of their de-jure equality into de-facto equality. This can lead to women's complete growth. Only by profitable job opportunities will this objective of economic independence and women's empowerment be accomplished. Women's earning work, especially in more rewarding jobs, would obviously play a role in improving the status of women in society. The economic empowerment follows political empowerment immediately, which is why it is very clear that women's socioeconomic situation can only change, if they are also part of the governing process.

References:

1. Khanna, M. (2009). POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN INDIA. *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, 70(1), 55-64. Retrieved February 9, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41856495>
2. Chadha, Anuradha, Political Participation of Women: A Case Study in India (May 25, 2014). OIDA International Journal of Sustainable Development, Vol. 07, No. 02, pp. 91-108, 2014, Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2441693>
3. Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by General Assembly on 10 December 1948.
4. Burrell, Barbara (2004). Women and political Participation: a reference handbook. Santa Barbara (California): ABC-CLIO, Inc.
5. Singh, J.P. (2000). Indian Democracy and Empowerment of Women. *The India Journal of Public administration*. XLVI (4). 617-630.
6. Srivastava, Rashmi (2000), Empowerment of Women Through Political Participation, with special reference to Madhya Pradesh. In Niroj Sinha (ed), *Women in Indian Politics: Empowerment of Women Through Political Participation* (PP. 195-217). New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House.
7. Gandhi, M.K. (1982). *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* Vol. VXIV (pp.165). Ahmedabad: Navajivan Mudranalaya.
8. Tracing the Path of the Struggle, Long March of Women. *Third World Resurgence* Issue, No. 61- 62, Penamp, Sep-Oct 1995.
9. Kamath, Jyotsna, "Gandhi and Status of Women", Excerpts from a lecture given at the Gandhi Peace Foundation, December/1998, available
10. Inter-Parliamentary Union. 1 October 2013, Women in National Parliaments: World Average. <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm>.
11. Inter-Parliamentary Union, 1 October 2013, Women in National Parliaments: World Classification. [Http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/arc/classif011013.htm](http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/arc/classif011013.htm)
12. Inter-Parliamentary Union, 1 October 2013, Women in National Parliaments: World Classification. [Http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm](http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm) (Last assessed 17 October 2013)
13. Chaudhary, VKS (2002). *The Ivory Tower 51 years of the Supreme Court of India*. New Delhi: Universal Law Publishing Co. Pvt. Ltd.
14. Gandhi, M.K. (1982). *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* Vol. VXIV (pp.165). Ahmedabad: Navajivan Mudranalaya.
15. Tracing the Path of the Struggle, Long March of Women. *Third World Resurgence* Issue, No. 61- 62, Penamp, Sep-Oct 1995.
16. Kamath, Jyotsna, "Gandhi and Status of Women", Excerpts from a lecture given at the Gandhi Peace Foundation, December/1998, available at <http://www.kamat.com/mmgandhi/gwomen.htm> (Last assessed 14 March 2013)

17. Austin, Granville. Cornerstone of a Nation (Indian Constitution), p. 75, as quoted by J.S. Pandey (2004): Constitutional Law of India, Central Law Agency, Allahabad, p. 350.
18. Krishnaswamy, P (2010). V. R. Krishna Iyer: A Living Legend. Delhi: Universal Law Publishing Co. pp. 245
19. Matthai.Raichel (23 December 2006), "political Status of Indian Women: Progress since independence", Mainstream Weekly, XLV (01). Retrieved from <http://www.mainstreamweekly.net/article105.html> Last assessed 22 October 2013)