
Women Participation in Politics 33 percent Reservation to Women in

Local Bodies – A case study of Ranga Reddy District

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Introduction

Political participation is closely involved with the concept of power, because politics is a study of an exercise in power, any political participation means participation into exercise of power, the power to effectively influence decision-making process and policies, which bring about the social changes. Hence political participation is much more than a physical participation in the formal institutions, and structures, though physical participation in formal political institutions is very much necessary for its self and as a means for influence decisions. All political systems, regardless of ideology or form routinely deny women formal political status. This appears to be a global phenomenon. Women are not in a position to enjoy the human rights in view of several constraints. The major obstacle to women's full participation in politics is nearly universal social attitude that has valued women as mothers and wives. According to the U.N.O document on women's development (1985) women's role in the political process has virtually remained unchanged.

In India, since independence broad based political participation of women has been severely limited due to various traditional factors such as caste, religion, fundamental attitude and family status.

In the last five decades the gender issue is occupying space in the intellectual discourses. Global bodies like the United Nations Organization also focused upon the divergent issues concerning women. It is significant to mention that the world women's

conference held at Nairobi laid special emphasis on women's political participation. It recommended the urgent need to achieve true equality of women, through sharing of political power on equal terms to that of men, the 4th world women's conference which was held at Beijing and the Beijing + 5 conference also identified 12 critical areas concerning the development of women. It also highlighted that the true and genuine participation of women cannot be achieved without their control and share of material resources.

The constitution of India has granted equal rights of participation in all walks of life and guarantees political equality of women through Article – 15. It prohibits any kind of discrimination and empowers the state to make any special provisions for women and children, even in violation of the fundamental obligation of non-discrimination among citizens on the basis of sex. The number of women voters in India, since Independence has risen to half the electoral but women numbers still account for only 8% of the national legislature. Even today there are only 45 women in Lok Sabha in 545 member lower house. The right to equality of women which was guaranteed by the constitutions is not translated into reality in respect of women. The legal and constitutional equality remained a distance ideal due to the historical, cultural and socio, economic factors. It is realized that women's political equality in terms of empowerment cannot be achieved without reservations, keeping this objective in mind few efforts were made towards women empowerment during 1960's.

Origin of the research problem

Historically, the question of reservation of seats for women in legislation for the first time came up in India during the debate of the constituent Assembly. At that time women members of the assembly opposed reservations and went to Jawaharlal Nehru who was one of the members of the constituent assembly and asserted that they could stand on their own legs and did not need the reservation. The Balwanth Roy Mehta Committee on the status of women which submitted its report in 1974 had favoured reservation for women at the lower level and urged all political parties to field at least 15 percent of women candidates in the grass root democratic bodies. The Ashok Mehta Committee which was appointed in 1978 has recommended the constitution of a committee with all the women members of the three tier Panchayats which would take decision on priorities and choices in welfare and development programs meant for women and children.

In the light of the recommendations of the committee on the status of women as well as the resolutions of Nairobi conference and campaign by civil society organizations, intellectuals and progressive political leaders all the political parties felt the necessity of the strengthening of the Panchayati Raj institutions rendered support and 64th Constitutional Amendment bill on Local Govts was introduced in parliament in 1989 by Rajiv Gandhi Govt. In the year 1991, the Govt of India led by P.V. Narasimha Rao made another attempt in this direction and the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendment bill was introduced in the parliament seeking to provide reservation for women in Panchayati Raj institutions. This bill was passed in parliament in 1992 and

resulted in 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments. Within a year, all the states passed their own acts in conformity to the Amended Constitutional Provisions.

Provisions on 73rd Constitutional Amendment

The 73rd constitutional amendment which were incorporated in part – IX of the constitution, provide for a uniform three tier system below the state level, they envisaged the establishment of Gramsabha and direct elections of the members of Panchayats at all levels.

Provision is made to establish a state Finance Commission and Election Commission for urban and rural Local Bodies. These amendments Acts created space for women in political participation and decision making at gross root level by providing 1/3 of the seats reserved in all over the country. As per the clause (2) and (3) of Article 243 (d) not less than three seats meant for direct elections of members are to be reserved for women. There should be reservation for women in these seats allotted to scheduled caste and scheduled tribes. Not less than one third of the S.C and S.T seats may be reserved for women in proportion to the total population of the area. Not less than one third of the total number of seats for the office of the chair person at each level would be reserved for women. Thus women reservation in Panchayati Raj institutions to the extent of not less than one third finds place in the constitution. According to the constitutional 243 (c), 243(g) seats reserved for women may be allotted one the basis of rotation.

Historical background of women's reservation in Andhra Pradesh

Andhra Pradesh is one of the first state to implement Panchayati Raj System as recommended by Balwanth Roy Mehta Committee. As a result, the Andhra Pradesh Panchayati Samithi and Zilla Parishad Act, 1959 was enacted and three tier system of Panchayati Raj had been established in all the District of A.P. This act provided reservation of one seat for women in Gram Panchayati if the total strength was nine or more. Similarly two women were to be included in the Zilla Parishad under the state Panchayati Act. Subsequently Vengal Rao committee and Narsimham committee were appointed to study the functioning of these bodies. But no significant attempts however, made to act on these suggestions.

Telugu Desam party which had come to power in 1983 had, promised in its election manifesto that it would work for the revitalization of Panchayati Raj institutions and bring the administration close to the people. To keep its promise, the A.P Panchayati Raj Act of 1986 was enacted. This Act provides 9 percent reservation for women in Panchayati Raj institutions.

Andhra Pradesh State Assembly ratified the 73rd and 74th amendmment Act in 1994. Accordingly 1/3 seats were reserved for women in all Panchayati Raj institutions of Panchayati Raj System. It includes village Panchayati Mandals and Zilla Parishads. One third seats were also reserved for women candidates within the S.C, S.T and Backward Class categories.

Interdisciplinary relevance. The topic itself is interdisciplinary relevance topic which covers socio, economic, political background of p women, estimates the different kinds of empowerment of women in all these levels. women political participaion is not only a interdisciplinary, it is very relevent to present day society.

Review of Research and Development in the subject

Lot of literature is available in the field of women, and their socio, economic, cultural development and especially on political awareness of women.

Vijay Kaushik in his book "Women's Movements and Human Rights " deeply discussed on equal rights of women, how to remove inequalities and in 16th chapter detailed discussion on political awareness of women, voting percentage of women participation in politics.

Women leader Malladi Subbamma in her book "Women in changing society" (1994) strongly criticized the Hindu religion as it treated women as slave, which denied Education, knowledge and equal status in Indian society.

Saritha Thakur Joshi in her book "Women and Development the changing scenario" suggested certain measures to improve the quality of women life. Rajana Kumari, Anju Dubay in their book "Women Parliamentarians" were deeply discussed the women participation in politics and women parliamentarians.

Significance of the study

Women participation in politics, 33 percent reservation to women in Local Bodies has its own importance, purpose and value. It has both theoretical as well as practical utility.

It provides valuable assistance to general public, women leaders, professional and research education. This is useful to all the women and men politicians, the research Scholars in the field.

Objectives of the research

The main objectives of the study of women participation in politics of 33 percent reservation to women in Local Bodies- A Case study of Ranga Reddy District are as follows:

- * To study the socio, economic and political background of the women representatives at Local Bodies.
- * To explore the different patterns in the background characteristics of the respondents vis-à-vis awareness, some of the vital issues concerning women and their social status and their position in a democratic polity in general as well as grass root Political Institutions in particular.
- * To examine the nature of political participation and their experiences.
- * To study the problems associated with their functioning.
- * It is also proposed to suggest measures for capacity building.

Methodology: The present research is envisaged to study the women participation in politics 33 percent reservation to women in Local Bodies – A case study of Ranga Reddy District.

The study will be conducted on the basis of empirical research method by 4 Mandals of Ranga Reddy District of Andhra Pradesh.

The Primary Data will be collected through structural Questionnaire after having responses from pilot study. It is also decided to meet different women like general women, women who are actively participated in politics Sarpanches, Mandal Parishad Presidents etc. to share their experiences.

The secondary data will be collected from published works in the form of Books, Articles, and Reports etc.

Conclusion : Political participation is closely involveor with the concept of power because politics is a study of an exercise in power any political participation means participation into exercise of power the power to effectively influence decision making process and policies.

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