

A Study of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Women of Ananthapuramu District Women Empowerment through Panchayat Raj

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Abstract – The development in the seventy-third Constitutional Amendment of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), based on Independence provisions on the vulnerable sections reservations of women in particular. Various studies were mentioned to explain, on the contrary, the influence of the constitutional amendment on the empowerment of women in the 73rd constitutional amendment of 1993. True, reservations for women in PRIs have provided enormous opportunities for the advancement of women, especially women in the disadvantaged sectors. But a lot of hurdles and problems exist. Ensuring that the actual power levers are generally still in male hands, has the entrenched patriarchal system and thinking, the rigorous caste division and endemic discrimination in rural life, vast female illiteracy and female dependency on men. Research has shown that a few countries in the south and west are far more advanced than those of the north and those of the east. Bihar has offered 50 percent quota for women in PRIs and has created a big impact on empowerment, however not very good in terms of other factors. The obstacles, as mentioned before, must be eliminated urgently to provide genuine empowerment to women.

Keywords – Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, Women, Empowerment, Panchayat Raj

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INTRODUCTION

Democracy assures empowerment and the involvement of all sectors of society via Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs). Greater equality between men and women is the cornerstone to women's effective involvement in democracy. Many programmes to provide equal chances in education, employment and to better the economic condition of women have been carried out by the Central and state governments. As a consequence, throughout the last two decades women's standing in India has seen many transformation. Mahatma Gandhi said after independence is announced, 'There can be no redemption of the nation until the women of India participates in public life. The ideal of decentralization never could be accomplished. I would not be able to use the Swaraj that these women did not contribute fully.' (Usha, 1999). Gender inequality is a serious problem and India has taken on a number of intervention programmes in partnership with different governments to empower them in the genuine sense. Empowering women is the process by which women are strengthened in a dignified and well-recognized life's economic, social and political standing within society. One of the main interventions utilised by women advocates of

empowerment is to enable women to get involved in the process of policy decision-making via panchayati raj (PRIs). The seventy-third constitutional modification is a major milestone for two reasons: one. it has promoted the empowerment of local women and b. The quota of panchayat seats for women offers 33% (one third of the total number). This legislation also allows for the reserved seats in proportion to their population for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs). Its same proportions (one third) have been designated for women to serve as Chairpersons of Panchayats. At now, the women's reservation quota at PRI level is fixed at 50%.

Women Empowerment

The notion of empowerment is juridical in its history around the middle of the 17th century. It thereafter started to be used more generally with an infinite, meaning "to let or to allow." The movement for civil rights, seeking political strength for its supporters, started in its current usage. It is the beginning of the debate on human development and became prominent around 1980. This notion of empowering its connection with feminist discourse shaped the concept of women's empowerment for a long time.

But these notions have not yet been fully defined and distinguished from substantially comparable ideas. Empowerment is described as the power to empower individuals, i.e. autonomy, to take decisions. However, the dictionary definition is that the empowerment "is the empowering of a person or a group of individuals in a certain circumstances. This term has been utilised frequently by the feminist movement with virtually any specific definition and boundaries. In this idea is integrated a particular ambiguity and subjectivity as it extends beyond women's material health, latter being just one of the results of the long empowering process.

Conceptualizing Empowerment

The empowerment of women is a flow rather than a stock variable, and the well-being of the former is a required but inadequate condition, i.e. the well-being of individuals, including the acquisition of resources, autonomy and agency. These are paths which reflect the extension of skills in a manner that promotes change in the lives of persons. It is defined by Kabeer(2005) as a process by which people refused to make choices develop the capacity to do so. The following components might be stated to enable one to obtain power, authority and influence on individuals, institutions or society;

- Access to knowledge and resources for the right decision.
- A variety of possibilities is available from which decisions may be made (not only yes/no, either/or).
- The power for self-determination.
- the capacity to make collective decisions more aggressive
- Positive thoughts about change ability / Ability to develop abilities to improve personal or collective power.

Political Empowerment

Women's equality is hampered across most of the globe via historic disparities in power of decision-making and access to women's resources, rights and rights. Women still do not have rights, either by law or by tradition, to own land and heritage, receive credit, attend and remain at school in many nations. Gain revenue and work without prejudice at work. In the decision-making process at all levels of home and public affairs, women are still severely underrepresented.

Social Empowerment of Women

The socioeconomic empowerment of women requires action to enhance women's health, reducing maternal deaths, in particular in communities with no decent medical facilities. It is necessary to develop a

programme to monitor the propagation of sexually transmitted illnesses such as HIV/AIDS and infections/communicable illnesses such as TB. Women suffer significant risk of malnutrition, and so care must be paid at all phases of their life cycle to address the nutritional demands of women. The situation of the women in disadvantaged groups in the nation is substantial. They're the most used lot. The social activist should watch for and aid women from weaker groups in the legal struggle to seek justice in their atrocity. Projects to support women victims of marital abuse, abandoned and involved in sexual activity have to be implemented.

Education and Women Empowerment

Education is a strong instrument of social change. Therefore, extra emphasis must be made to education for women. In the school system, greater access to education for women must be provided. There is a need to improve gender awareness. The dropout rate of females must be monitored, and remedial steps to control dropout rates should be done.

Empowerment of women in India

The idea of empowerment is derived from power. It is cloaked when there is no or insufficient existence. Empowering women would help them to confront any tough scenario and to engage in development activities by enabling their children to be economically independent and autonomous. They must have a positive respect. The empowered women should be allowed to take part in the decision-making process. In India, a work has been undertaken on the defence of women's rights and legal rights by the Human Resource Development Ministry (MHRD) and the National Commission for Wives (NCW). The 73rd & 74th amendments (1993) on the Indian constitution have given women particular privileges to retain a seat (33%), compared to the HRD report of March 2002 showing that Sweden is 42.7% in parliament, Danish 38%, Finland 36% and Iceland 34.9% in parliament. The New Panchayat Raj contribution "s in India is at least part of women's empowerment in the village.

Barriers to Empowerment

Although it is evident that there may be numerous advantages from collective action, it is worth noting that membership in meaningful vindication groups will need continued effort. Women who are poor are busy. They not only invest a great deal of time and effort in order to meet families' demands, but also confront factors that hinder physical mobility such as tight authoritarian control of the husband, violence at home, societal expectations of mothers and insecure neighbourhood contexts. Under these circumstances, participation is full with barriers and only a few will be able to participate.

To overcome some of the obstacles to empowerment, the activities of three different actors are necessary: grassroots and feminist groups to engage and work with marginalised women who need support; women in development and international institutions who can provide the necessary funding for projects and programmes that are empowering; and women who contribute theoretically in academic circles.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Aparajita Sarangi and Gitanjali Mishra (2013) In this research the link of women's socio-economic position towards political engagement in tribal and non-tribal regions of Odisha is re-examined. Furthermore, it proposes appropriate policy-making strategies to ensure women's effective involvement.

Artatrana Gochhayat (2013) attempted to understand and understand the amount of women's engagement in the functioning and election process of the Panchayats. Samples of 125 women in Dhenkanal District of Odisha were from 5 grammes of Panchayats of Hindol Block. The research was done soon after the general elections of Panchayat in February 2012 in March-April. The results of the research show that women's engagement in the running of the Panchayats, as well as in the election process, is not sufficient. Some respondents do not even know the names of political parties and voted to identify political party insignia. Most women are very politically apathetic.

Ashok Kumar H., and H. M. Mohan Kumari (2014) The structure and functions of Panchayat raj Institutions are presented in their article. It also emphasises the socioeconomic composition and involvement of elected members in the decision-making process in PRIs. According to the authors there are many and various barriers that limit the effective involvement of women in Panchayat Raj institutions (PRIs). Such considerations will assist us to propose realistic strategies of overcoming some of the restrictions on the involvement of women. It is vital not only to enact laws and acts on policy concerns, but also to figure out how such laws and acts may be implemented efficiently.

Jayshree Mangubhai et. al. (2009) In their investigation, it was discovered that the Panchayat elections could only be won by Dalit women one third. All of them supported the women's access to Panchayat through both personal factors such as education, social experience, motivating their communities and others to develop, prior performance on Panchayats, the skills for political negotiation or external factors including the support for families, good relations with other village communities, economic stability and family policy contacts. But the writers may be challenged and conquered by dominating forces rather quickly, due to their poor social, educational, economic and gender position. The research also shows that the

Panchayat election process covers the majority of Dalit women's strong patriarchal control over and the exercise of their rights.

Mahanta and Sinha (2007) In their investigation political workers observed that women are influenced by their techniques. In the case of the Schedule Tribe and Schedule Caste, women do not apply for a Panchayat election on their own, while certain other elements, such as pressures by their husbands, sons, other family members, the village or the pressure of the political parties, are responsible for it. Caste violence controls women's involvement in Panchayat Raj (PRI) elections in some areas. Societal constraints, conventional women's notions, women's involvement. The duty of the household also reduces women's mobility.

Patnaik (2005) Finding in the running of four grammes Panchayats in Orissa's Dhenkanal district, elected representatives belonging to the weaker classes should examine the degree to which numerical representation has succeeded in the real exercise of power by such sectors.

Pramod Kumar Ray (2015) He concentrates on the "Women's empowerment" Scenario in the Panchayat raj in his work and reveals information on the ongoing inequality between the sexes in the local state bodies. The author finds that the granting of women's reservation in Panchayati Raj Institution resulted in major improvements in rural women's status including empowerment, self-confidence, political knowledge and identity confirmation. Mere positive action via laws is not going to fix the issue; the hour has to be a barrier-free environment.

Ram Babu, AN Panda (2015) Panchayat Raj is not a new phenomena in the nation in their research. Its reference back over 1000 years in history. In the belief that it would lead to improved governance, and create a political space for disadvantaged sectors of the society, including Schedule Castes, Schedule Tribe and Women, the 73rd constitutional amendment has traditionally been seen as good governance. Women are vital to the larger context of the government in any nation in their engagement in mainstream political activities.

Rashmi Srivastava (2011) He stresses the fact that the numerical strength of women in the decision-making bodies causes considerable difficulties in his article "Minority representation of a political majority group: women in an Indian Democratic process." The author points out that the low representation of women in their lists of candidates for parliamentary and state parliamentary elections by various political parties is not just an indicator of their lower political status but also demonstrates the subordinate position of women in society and the failure to recognise their right and ability to participate in the work of the

country. The survey shows that in India, elected women represent just 10% of the total number of seats, but women make up around 50% of the overall population.

Sreekumar S.S.(2014) In his paper, Raj's representatives of Panchayat Institutions in the Andaman and Nicobar Institutes dealt with capacity-building activities. There were presented capacity development activities on the area of the Island both from the Government and NGOs. It has been noted that most women's electors are not completely aware of different components of decentralized government.

Viswanathan S. (2008) In his work on "Representatives of Panchayat Dalit women: Tamil Nadu Experience" he believes that there can be no greater weapon than grassroots institutions to deal with economic inequalities and social injustice. The author states that Gram Sabha's frequent meetings and concerns about women, SC and ST, are of great assistance in the construction of a 'inclusive society with inclusive progress.' The author said that the most glorious accomplishment of the PRIs in the state of Tamil Nadu was that, because to the opposition of cast forces, the state apparatus failed to organise polls in four villages, for 10 years.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To look at the socioeconomic and educational backgrounds of the women in the sample.
- To investigate the disparities in empowerment levels among women from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the research region.
- To examine the evolving pattern of women leadership as a consequence of one-third of political seats in PRIs being reserved for women.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this research, the approach of Community organisation is employed. The community organising approach is utilised to meet the objectives of community development. Community organisations see the following elements as significant. It's them;

- a) Democratic procedures
- b) Voluntary cooperation
- c) Self-help
- d) Development of leadership
- e) Educational aspects.

Sampling: The number of electors in rural local bodies in Ananthapuramu is 12,491. Of them, 5,762 representing 46.13% are males, while the remaining 6,729 representing 53.87% are females. The district is composed of 508 representing (4.07% of the total members) from the Scheduled Tribe and 2,108 (16.88% of the total representatives). 359 of the Scheduled Tribe's 70.67 per cent are women, and 1,356 of those of the Scheduled Caste, of whom 64.33 are women. In the current research, a simple random sample procedure used 15 per cent of the Scheduled Tribe and Scheduled Caste women's representatives. All 5 income divisions of the district and all 3 levels of the PRIs will be covered with due care. Therefore, the sample is made up of 203 SC women and 54 representatives of ST women. The total sample in Ananthapuramu District is 257 women from scheduled caste and scheduled tribes.

Study Area: Historically, the district of Ananthapuramu was a drought-prone region forever. Compared to Neighbouring districts of Kurnool, Kadapa and Chittoor in the region of Rayalaseema, the district is likewise socially and economically underdeveloped. Geographically, the District of Ananthapuramu is the biggest district in the state with an area of 19,000 km². Since 1959, Raj institutions have been active in Ananthapuramu district. The Panchayat Raj institutions in the district operate according to Andhra Pradesh Panchayat Raj Act of 1994 after execution of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act.

Sources of Data: In view of the research goals, the data from primary and secondary sources are gathered. The important statistics are: I the awareness and behaviour of the women's elected representatives at different levels of the PRIs and (ii) the social and economic empowerment levels of women. The sample of elected representatives of ST and SC women at the levels ZP, MP and GP will be individually presented to each of us for their ideas and thoughts. Secondary data will be obtained from books, magazines, periodicals, newspapers and official PRI documents including different committee reports, and the Acts on PRIs in AP. In addition, the data from Zilla Parishad Ananthapuramu and from three Mandal Parishads and Gram Panchayats' offices in Ananthapuramu District will be gathered. Data from this office will be gathered as well.

Analysis of Data: Data analysis Manually and with the aid of a computer, the obtained data were processed and examined. The primary and secondary data were both tabulated to systematically analyse the influence of PRI members of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe women on socio-economic and policy development. In the use of statistics methods such as averages, growth rate, percentage, etc., data obtained from diverse sources were analysed and derived.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the effect of the reservation policy on women at the PRIs was a mixed one. Most women are first timers and are bound by the circumstances of the past. Overnight, however, you can't anticipate miraculous. In addition to the poor performance of women, there are numerous problems other than their own, such as corruption and unexpected bureaucracy. Women have proved their acceptability by the majority, despite their efforts to overcome the many obstacles. Experience reveals that women can lead people provided time, support, money, training and human freedom are available.

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