

Disadvantaged Groups in Panchayati Raj Institutions and Reservation

By -

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Abstract:

Being a vast country India frequently identified as subcontinent, faces some living problems even at 21st centuries. Most importantly, the progress, equality among it's people's social strata is now in forefront. The main variables are SCs, STs and Women, their progress and participation in politics and administrative activities and decision making is a may be as best practical through Reservation Policies taken by not only the Central Government but by State Legislatures also. Now, this policy and system is identified as golden route for the all round progress of future India.

Key Words:

Democratic festivals, women empowerment, gender discrimination, gender gap, Gram Sabha, gram Sansad, domestic violence, gender based society, domestic violence, physical violence, mental torture, mental violence, pollisabha, decision making activity, Maoist- affected areas, industrialisation, deforestation, forestation.

Introduction

Panchayat as an institution in India had played a great role at the village level to make the concept of local self government in practical from the time of the cholas to the recent times. Major portion of Indian population live in village and pastoral area and as a natural fact, there is the closer relation between good governance and village panchayat. We may rethink the concept of 'sarvodaya', 'village self Reliance' through the 'Gram Swaraj' in this study. But, a huge number of people from SCs, STs, women and even weaker sections of our society are far from the blessings of village panchayats. But gradually, various types of government initiative, provisions committees and even Constitutional Amendment laws have also been passed to make a practical bridge now between weaker sections/ marginalised people and the threshold of village panchayat. Now, in our present days all types of marginalised people are related to the panchayats directly or indirectly too. As a result of the government initiatives, even in the rural India there is a new 'political Dawn' to the weaker section and marginalised people who are the as important like other sections of 'Indian subcontinent'.

Gender Discrimination & Rural Development In India

It is very clear that among all the disadvantaged groups, Indian women appear to be more disadvantaged than the Indian men as a natural phenomenon. The report of Global Gender Gap of 2007 (GGGI 2008) remarks Indian women 114 out of 128 countries, this report of 2007 had used a composite index of economic participation, political empowerment, health issues, educational status and other survival issues. This report places India under the states of Sri Lanka and Bangladesh very mysteriously.

Sex ratio of a society is a very interesting indicator of gender discrimination. The Census of 2011 in India, there was 940 females against of 1000 male members. There has only been a slight improvement as compared to the 2001 census when the ratio was 933 women per 1000 males. Having no surprising, higher rates of maternal mortality are more characteristics of rural and backward caste women. Literacy rate in India is 74.04 per cent and among males and it is 82.14 per cent in comparison to women's literacy rate is much lower at 65.46 per cent. Differences from various aspects in the status of women among the various states of India seen to impact on the status of their participation in panchayats.

But after the reservation safeguards to the women these democratic base of them; indeed; around 80 per cent of all the women who are elected from the reserved seats. This safeguards has also

motivated and side by side make interested women to contest and participate Panchayat elections and democratic festivals of rural India now.

Infrastructural Constraints In Indian Context

There is a very interesting fact into the provision of reservation process for women in the three tier Panchayat Raj institution election procedure, one constraint has been introduced by the mandatory rotation of seats among the constituencies from one election to the next. In most states a woman cannot be re-elected from the same seat, once her five year term expires. This system denies a woman the chance to nurse her area of constituency. Some States have the norms of two child criterion for contesting elections. This makes it impossible for women with more than two children to stand for election contest. While this is applicable to both men and women, it is particularly detrimental for women since most of them do not have any control over reproductive decision. Now in Indian political atmosphere, strong opinion against this provision is going very fastly, and as a result of growing opinion against it, many of the states which had already introduced it are revoking it.

There is also another system to the women's participation is the abuse of no confidence motions, a practice that is rampant to unset women, dethrone and elected on the reserved seats. Kerala Himachal Pradesh stipulate that only a woman will be replace an woman if the vacant post is reserved for women only. But various states in India are not enjoying the same safeguards, giving rise to the assurance of tenure to political families, with women representatives who are surrogates of their husbands or relatives who cannot stand for election contest due to have reservation norms.

Reality of Participation In Decision Making Events

Reservation, representation and participation all these are different dimension of Democratic world. Representation is more easy than participation because participation may have some hostile and changing issues. Sufficient reservation, proper representation do not influence all the time proper representation although in this issue social factors may play a crucial role. specially some states like Himachal Pradesh and Chhattisgarh have passed excellent provisions in the quorum requirements in 'gram sabha' to secure the all round presence of women

Though so many states have taken steps to ensure the participation of women to the decision making process and programme at the panchayat level but its fruits may not be visible with a massive rates. In briefing the characteristics of this environment palaniswamy (2014:04) points to two key characteristics:

First,

The governance environment in which elected women work is clouded by sum of iniquity local power relations, gender differentials, caste based divisions. In this environment it is crucial to get success for reservation best political representatives.

Second,

Still now the local self govt is being dominated by so called local elite groups and families even at 21st centuries.

It is true that there are many causes, where women representatives taking special care ICDs centres, Self Help Groups, pipeline water networking extension program, in spite of having various types of odds sum of them trying to extend the integrated rural development programme (IRD). women representatives are very much interested about the project of 'strengthening Gender Response of Panchayatin Rajasthan initiated by PRIA(The Times of India, 5th January 2012).

However, such success stories are few and far between social constraints include the following:

- (a) the societal ordering of patriarchy leads to not only tokenism but surrogate representation also.
- (b) the living of illiteracy is legendary cause which deprives women to participate in the decision making programme at village level panchayat.
- (c) low caste position combined with cast oppression and patriarchy.
- (d) domestic violence , physical violence and torture are also a negative ki factor in this discussion.

But there is increasing concern about violence perpetrated on elected women representatives.

Bottom categories of people in the social hierarchy treated dalits as untouchables and outcastes. Historically they have been subjected to economic, social, political and cultural exploitation by the time of century after century. Dr. B R Ambedkar called attention on the constituent assembly for a drastic change and finally became successful on paper almost 75 per cent of the dalit were then landless or near to landless. So, the attachment to land of the landless dalits was became a Moto to the government as a step of development of the dalits and as a result of this attitude in West Bengal in 1977 left government provided Patta land to them.

In Indian constitution under the article 243 D the constitutional amendment has mandated that seats will be reserved for SC at all levels of panchayats in proportion to the number of dolits in the particular area, as result of this constitutional step out of these one third will be reserved for women, According to prevalent law, the preservation sheets mandated by the constitution has been 15per cent in educational institutions and others. We know that the state of Punjab holds the highest number of dalits of its population. And Uttar Pradesh, West bengal, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh also have a huge number of dalits. These seats account for 53.6 per cent of the dalit population in the country. Now, the seats have adopted the constituency proportion of 15 per cent for reservation rather than the proportion of dalit residing in the any Panchayat areas .

Decision Making and Dalits in PRIs.

"Providing reservation for these advantaged communities is one set of Institutional mechanism that seek to empower the dalits"¹. The man , mainly responsible for the text of the Constitution, Dr. B . R Ambedkar, met this criticism with a sharp reply for the reservation of the Dolits in the PRIs: " I hold that this village Republics have been the rumination of India. I am there fore surprised that those who condemn provincialism and communalism should come true or as champions of the village. What is the village but a sink of localism a den of ignorance, narrow mindedness and communalism? I am glad that the draft constitution has discarded the village and adopted the individual as its unit."²

Some communities also positively recommended about the participation in the decision making programs of the doughnuts. The Asoka Mehta committee report(GoI1978a:91)had argued that development likely to take place in the socio- economic structure of the country during the next decade will determine that future role of the panchayatiraj institutions, specially with reference to the weaker sections."³

STs and Panchayat

Tribal people covered near about 8.2 percent of individuals total population spreading through out the country except for Punjab and Haryana. Ninety per cent of the total tribal people is present at North-Eastern Hilly areas. So the north - eastern hilly areas are considered as very backward as its developmental index. Fifth schedule and sixth schedule have passed for the development for the tribal people and side by side safe guarding their economy customs and institution too.

A special known as Panchayat extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) have been passed in 1996 to provide them a chance to come near to the local self government"⁴. This act. extended to the tribal areas of Nine Indian states nearly Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan. By this act, that Gram Sabha of the forest areas are in doubt specially with some powers related to the following:

1. Protection and extension of village markets.
- 2 Enforcement of prohibition.
3. To stop allination of Land of the forest people.
4. Ownership of minor forest products.
5. Establishment of control over money laundering to STs.

In an interview the district collector insted that his office compiled with all legal provisions governing land acquisitions. "... for an public hearings there is a protest...but we go by the act"⁵.

summary from a report by Anon Sethi, in The Hindu, 15 th January 2012.

The Tribal Affairs Minister has mentioned that the "slow and trady implementation went 'against our professed adherence to law"⁶.

Women & Panchayat

We know from the vedic literature that Indian women were an important figures in 'samiti' which was a democratic in its nature. By gradually, their status have been decreased at political field. As a result of the fact that our society is now not working equally to its developing journey. They have some

obstacles in this work but many of which have been solved. Already, the strong element in this fact is one-third reservation system for women at all the three tier Panchayat Raj Institutions. Now, they are the shining star at village level local self government programmes through village panchayats .

CONCLUSION

Reservation system provides a positive impact on the disadvantaged groups for participating at the decision making programs of Panchayat Raj institutions in India. The motto of Indian constitution was to provide a proper justice to the deprived and marginalised people who have been suffered historically very worst. In this journey, the reservation system is a successful milestone even having no hesitation , now our marginalised people and even forest people are enjoying adequate and protected representation and participation. This blessings of constitutional safe guards replaced them at the threshold of a new economic social cultural educational and political Dawn.

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