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### EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN THROUGH EDUCATION

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*“There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless condition of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly only with one wing”. – Swami Vivekananda.*

#### ABSTRACT

**E**ducation is an effective instrument of socio-economic and political development. Education is a



*gateway to information, opportunities and empowerment. It is the most important instrument of women empowerment. It enables women to act in response to the challenges, to deal with their traditional role and change their life. Education enables women to understand their social and legal rights, become economically*

*independent, acquire a voice in the affairs of the family and the community. Women constitute half of the world's population and they play a major role in the formation of our new generation.*

*In this explore the political empowerment through education. Education plays a key role in both preparing women for taking up roles of leadership in the public sphere. The objective of this paper to present Political Empowerment of Women through Education.*

#### KEYWORDS :

- 1.Importance of education
- 2.Women position in Vedic period.
- 3.Women voting Participation in General Elections.
- 4.Women role in Parliament and legislatures.
- 5.Women Position in Local Bodies

**INTRODUCTION:**

Women empowerment as a concept was introduced at the International Women's Conference at Nairobi in 1985. The conference defined empowerment as a re-distribution of social power and control of resources in favour of women. Thus women empowerment means enabling of women to hold legitimate positions of authority and to influence others. At individual level, empowerment is building confidence, capacity of understanding and development of personal skills. Empowerment of the women in any sphere plays an important role in moulding the social, political and economic life of all the village communities. In the Indian context the political participation of women and ultimately their political empowerment has become a focal point with the enactment of several Acts. Empowerment can also be understood as the changing of situation which has been marginalized women, especially poor women in patriarchal society.

In this connection, education plays a key role in both preparing women for taking up roles of leadership in the public sphere. In other words, education is the means by which we come to understand and make sense of political life and to understand the specific nature of how political systems operate. At the same time, the educative process enables us to take up roles on the basis of how we understand ourselves within the political system. As such, education can be considered co-constitutive, as its structure, processes and outcomes effect and construct identities.

It is real that the Language or discourses are key resources through which social and political capital operate, as language and discourses have symbolic power.

In India, the post-independence period has seen many positive steps to improve the socio-economic status of women. Women themselves have become keenly aware of their rights and are spearheading movements across the country against all sorts of social evils. This consciousness is largely due to an increase in women's literacy although they have miles and miles to go. The most significant landmark in the journey is the historic 73rd and 74th Constitution Amendment Acts, 1992 by the centre and its ratification by the states. These Constitution Amendment Acts reserved one-third seats for women in the Panchayati Raj and Municipal bodies. This not only bestowed a right of participation of women in the decision-making process, both at the rural and urban local bodies of the country but also helped to facilitate the emergence of a cadre of young and talented leadership for active participation in the political process. In this historical context an attempt has been made here to examine the multi-dimensional facets of the participation of women in Indian politics.

**HISTORICAL LEGACY:**

In the Vedic period, women were relatively more independent and were allowed to participate in the socio-economic and political activities. In this age women have equal educational opportunities. Later on, towards the end of the early Vedic period and the beginning of the later Vedic period their position began to decline. This situation continued for centuries and further deteriorated in the mediaeval period. As a result of the plight status of the women, the social reformers started a powerful movement to improve the position of women. Several reform societies and religious organizations worked hard to spread education among women, to encourage widow-remarriage, to prevent child marriage etc. The movement for the liberation of women received a great stimulus from the rise of the nationalist movement in the Twentieth Century.

The story of how women in India came to be first represented in legislatures in the 1920's is in itself quite instructive. But despite the fact that at this time there was no mass based women's suffrage movement in India, each of the Indian provincial legislatures voted to make it possible within a short span of time for women to be represented at par with men without much fuss. But later in 1930 when a

meeting of representative women organizations drafted a memorandum demanding immediate acceptance of adult franchise without gender discrimination, it was turned down by the British government. The same demand received a totally different response from the Indian leaders. Mahatma Gandhi Played a Crucial role in creating a favourable atmosphere for women's participation in the freedom struggle by insisting that the struggle for women's equality was an integral part of the movement for Swaraj. However, the decades following independence witnessed a remarkable decline in women's involvement in politics. For instance in the 1952 elections the Congress Party had only 14 women members elected to parliament. In the first Lok Sabha Women Constituted no more than 4.4 (22) per cent of the total strength. This was at a time when there were thousands of outstanding women all over the country with the experience of the freedom movement behind them. Their long years of involvement in social and political work, running educational institutions and so on would have given them the requisite training and experience to be effective parliamentarians.

Participation of women is an integral part of democratic process and strengthening the quality of civic life. As they are half the population, must be in decision-making in all socio-economic and political organizations.

### **WOMEN AND VOTING:**

Since 1951 women have been participating in the formal channel of politics as voters, as party workers, as candidates contesting various elections, and as legislators and ministers involved in deliberations and policy making. Only a few women have been able to occupy decision-making positions, because most of the women were illiterates.

Voting is the most important and basic means by which citizens are assimilated into the political process and learn how to exercise power. When India decided to conduct the biggest experiment of democracy by granting adult franchise, millions of men and women participated in the political process for the first time in the history of the nation. It is disappointing that during the initial stages enough care was not taken to compile the data and statistics pertaining to women.

In the very first election, thousands of women were left out, as their names were not properly registered. The reason for this can be traced to the traditions of a land in which a women is known mainly by her relation to a man-father, husband or son. In the first election (1952) 37.1 per cent of women were utilized their votes. Later the per cent age of women voting participation was increased in 1957-39.6, 1962-46.6, 1967-55.5, 1971-49.15, 1977-54.91, 1980-51.29, 1984-68.17, 1996-53.41, 1998-58.02, 2004-53, 2009-55.

Places showing greater mobilization of women are socially, politically and economically less backward. Again factors like exposure to western influence, a cosmopolitan cultural outlook, industrial base and urban character play religion, consciousness etc, and awareness about women's issues. The close relationship between literacy and voting is generally accepted. The most common belief regarding women's voting pattern is that women vote according to the choice of the family's male members.

Political parties have now started giving some attention to women and their votes, but the inclusion of some issues in their manifestos and declarations of schemes, not backed by a firm commitment and a definite plan of implementation, has failed to make any impact, though voting is the first step towards assimilation in the political system, in itself it is not sufficient. It requires the least motivation and initiative, and more so with women for whom the election day is a break from daily drudgery. Very often it strengthens the authority of the traditional elite, and women remain more or less on the periphery of the political arena.

## WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT:

The number of women contestants in parliamentary elections has not increased significantly over the years. Political parties are still reluctant to field women candidates. The high cost of election campaigning is a deterrent to women candidates.

The total number of women members which was 22 in the first Lok Sabha. It has increased to 27 in the Second Lok Sabha. It is unfortunate here to note that it has further increased only to 39 in the year 1996. It is increased in 2004 election only to 45 members. In 2009 election 59 members and 2014 election it is increased 61 members. Moreover, the number of women MPs has ranged between 19 in the sixth Lok Sabha and 61 in the Sixteenth Lok Sabha which constitutes 3.4 per cent and 11 per cent respectively of the total number of seats in the house. Similarly the representation of women in the Rajya Sabha has ranged from 14 to 29 which is 5.8 per cent to 11.8 per cent of the total strength of the house. From 1976 onwards, the percentage of women has been well over 9.8 per cent except in 1993 when it declined to 7.3 per cent. The representation of women in parliament which has never touched the figure of 61 in the Lok Sabha and 30 in the Rajya Sabha is far from satisfactory, especially when we compare it with other countries of the world: Finland (3%), Norway(35.8%), Sweden(3.5%), Denmark(33%), Netherlands(29.3%), Ireland(33.8%), Cuba(21%) and Germany(20.5%).

Women representation stands at mere 44 in the Lok Sabha in 2004. In the General elections to the fourteenth Lok Sabha held 2004, even in many states where the woman out numbers in Lok Sabha is quite less.

Moreover, there is also very little women representation in the party organizations which to a great extent contribute to the lack of their participation in the process of policy-making. Thus there is a need for gender equality at the level of the party organization also. In India political parties tend to give few tickets to women for the parliamentary elections.

Some studies of parliamentary participation indicate that women members participate more actively in women's issues like health, welfare, atrocities against women, crimes like dowry and violations of human rights. This participation is confined to the more articulate women. In issues of defence, finance, politics et., their participation is relatively limited, because they are educated.

Women Ministers are often given welfare oriented portfolios-women and child development, culture and youth. Science and technology, finance, defence, foreign relations are rarely allotted to women, though women have demonstrated their ability to handle such portfolios. The maximum numbers of women at decision making levels have been in the welfare and development oriented sectors or human resource development which includes education, culture, women and child development.

Monitoring the increase in the participation of women at all levels of decision making is essential. Updating of data and preparation of reports on women in administration and management is vital. Women also need to be better represented in the public sector undertaking especially at decision making levels.

The pattern of representation of women in the legislative assemblies of the states is puzzling. Kerala with its high literacy rate and a matrilineal tradition, has only a few women legislatures; in fact, the number is slightly less than in Rajasthan, where female literacy is low and where there are many restrictions on women. Similarly, Manipur, where women play a dominant role in both the family and the community, did not produce a women legislator unit 1990. Nagaland and the other North-eastern states which have less repressive cultures for women have similarly low levels of women's representation.

In contrast, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh, with their low education levels and

repressive cultural norms for women, have sent a relatively larger proportion of women to the Lok Sabha and elected relatively more female members of legislative assemblies.

There have been women Chief Ministers, too such as Sucheta Kripalani (UP), Nandini Satpathy (Orissa), Shashikala Kakodkar (Goa), and Mayavathi (UP), Rabri Devi (Bihar), Sheila Dekshith (Delhi) and Jayalalitha (Tamil Nadu) earlier. In recent times Jayalalitha (Tamil Nadu), Vasundhara Raje (Rajasthan), Mamata Banerjee (West Bengal), Anandiben Patel (Gujarat), Mehbooba Mufti (Jammu & Kashmir) they were elected as a Chief Ministers. It has to be noted that most of them were pushed to the top position by the forces of party politics and contemporary state politics.

The 74th Amendment to the Indian Constitution, has served as a major breakthrough towards ensuring women's equal access and increased participation in local government. The Constitution Act, 1992 aims at constitutional guarantees to safeguard the interests of Urban Local Self Governments to enable them to function as effective democratic and self governing institutions at the grass root level. This Amendment provides for reservation of 33.33 per cent of elected seats for women at level of local government in urban and rural areas. There is also a one-third reservation for women on posts of chairpersons of these local bodies. Statistics on women's participation in the electoral process are not very encouraging. The need to strengthen women's participation and leadership is constantly emphasized by various institutions, including All India Institute of Local Self Government which is actively involved in capacity building for women elected members at city level.

Rural leadership has assumed great significance in the context of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. The Amendment has provided new roles and responsibilities to the local bodies. The newly elected members have a Herculean task before them. Today, rural women were participating at grassroot politics effectively. There are many instances at grassroot levels in Karnataka, Rajasthan, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and other states where women have fought bravely against corruption, alcoholism and other social evils, and have worked for the development of the community. West Bengal's first all-women gram panchayat in Kultikri has also performed well in spite of the many problems it faces.

### CONCLUSION:

The idea of reserving seats for women in parliament and state legislatures are needed for their empowerment. The local self governing institutions under the 73rd and 74th Constitution Amendment Acts women were given one-third of the seats in these bodies which too were being dominated by men till then. Now there is a sense of involvement as well as commitment among the women on the issues related to them. It is achieved only with educational awareness.

However, the participation of women at the decision making process have been very low. They are not adequately represented in the parliament and the in the state legislatures. The present national level indications are also not encouraging for the future of political empowerment of women unless the pending Constitution Amendment bill providing one-third reservation of seats in parliament and state Legislatures is passed. It is only possible through women's education and their political knowledge will get equal opportunity with men in all spheres.

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