

Status of women in Panchayati Raj Institutions of Rajasthan

(with special reference to Barmer district)

MANGILAL

Research Scholar

(Political Science Department)

Jai Narain Vyas University Jodhpur, Rajasthan

Abstract : -

Even after the independence of the country, no special importance was given to women in the Panchayati Raj Institutions. When we think about the questions of women's freedom, their participation in politics and their coming ahead in the society or their equality with men, then a pathetic condition of women in the society emerges. Women and men have equal rights in the Indian Constitution. Women have also been provided compulsory participation in the decentralization of power by the Panchayati Raj system. Participation should not only be formal but active. Rural women panchayat representatives are also constantly striving in the efficient discharge of their role while battling with constant problems. Their path is still difficult, but through Panchayati Raj Institutions, rural women have made their place important. The awareness among rural women is gradually increasing. According to the time and circumstances, there is a need to study continuously on the problems faced by women leadership in Panchayati Raj Institutions. Presented research paper The status of women in Panchayati Raj Institutions was studied with special reference to Barmer district of Rajasthan state.

Key words : - Panchayati Raj Institutions, Women Leadership, Male-dominated Culture, Political Inexperience, Illiteracy and Women Empowerment.

Introduction : -

Democracy has been decentralized to the rural people through the Panchayati Raj system and by the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, compulsory participation of rural women has been ensured in the Panchayati Raj system. Indian society has been narrow and conservative since its inception regarding the entry of women in politics, so the political role of women in the rural environment is more challenging. Today, efforts are being made all over the world to bring women to the level of equality before men. The country of India has also done important work in improving the status of women and increasing the status of opportunities in the role of a democratic and advocate of equality.

"The measure of progress of any country can be that what is the status of women in that country ?"

- Margaret Cousins

Women constitute a major part of the Indian rural population. Rural women have got an opportunity to show their potential in the decentralized governance system through Panchayati Raj Institutions. Women Panchayat representatives struggling between responsibility and constraints are constantly trying to complete the works of rural development at home and outside, even after almost 25 years of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, the problems in front of rural women panchayat representatives have not reduced.

Panchayati Raj Institutions and Women's Reservation in Rajasthan : -

Rajasthan is the largest state in India by area. Rajasthan became a province of India on 30 March 1949, in which the powerful princely states of the erstwhile Rajputana merged. According to the 2011 census, the total population of Rajasthan is 6.86 crore, of which 3.55 crore are males and 3.29 crore are females, which constitute almost half of the population. In today's changing nature of society, when men come out of their homes for jobs, it is natural for women to bear the responsibility of bearing the family expenses in their absence.

Rajasthan is the first state in India to implement Panchayati Raj Institutions after independence. Where on 2 October 1959 in Nagaur district, the then Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru lit the lamp of modern three-tier Panchayati Raj Institutions. Today the Panchayati Raj Institutions are implemented as a constitutional body in Part 9 of the Constitution of India, embracing the ideology of liberty, equality, justice and fraternity. According to the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act 1992, according to Part 9 Article 243D of the Constitution of India, one-third of all posts in Panchayati Raj Institutions for women in all categories (including seats reserved for women belonging to SC / ST category) will be reserved.

Problems of Women Leadership in Panchayati Raj Institutions : -

There are still many problems in the matter of women's leadership in the Panchayati Raj system. These include mainly poverty, lack of education and awareness, patriarchal nature of society, lack of financial resources and independence, and lack of awareness about political rights, inexperience of politics, which hinders women's ability to make independent decisions. Apart from this, the weak economic condition of women, lack of time in doing Panchayat works amidst busyness in earning a living and household chores, caste system, purdah system, conservative social environment, male dominated social mentality and male members of the family to do their own work. Problems like the tendency of people to work, incidents of harassment at some places, etc. are the major obstacles in carrying out the functions of the Panchayat.

The problems faced by women in the Panchayati Raj Institutions of Barmer district of Rajasthan state can be clarified under the following points :-

- 1. Male dominated culture :-** The Panchayati Raj Institutions of Rajasthan are dominated by the male dominated culture. Even today the men of some families do not allow their women to work in the panchayats because according to them the place of women is in the boundary wall of the house, not in going out of the house to do the panchayati of the people. In most of the Panchayati Raj Institutions of Barmer district, all the works of women representatives are performed by their husband, father, father-in-law or brother. They are silenced by saying that you women's job is to cook and take care of the children. Women's public representatives only sign and their presence is recorded, although now this situation has started improving a bit and it will take time to be completely improved.
- 2. Weak socioeconomic status of women :-** In districts like Barmer of Rajasthan, women still have to fight for their rights because women here are still socially and economically backward. Due to being in the chains of slavery for centuries, many evils, superstitions in the society and narrowed the place of women in our social system. Due to the prevalent purdah system, sati system, child marriage and old customs prevalent in the society, Panchayati Raj is not able to participate fully in the institutions. Rural women of Barmer district, especially women from weaker sections, have to do agricultural work or labor for the maintenance of their family, due to which their condition in Panchayati Raj Institutions is very pathetic.
- 3. Illiteracy :-** Illiteracy is the root of all problems. Due to lack of education in rural areas, it is difficult for women representatives to lead due to lack of education. Due to illiteracy the real role of most of the women is played by other members of their family. According to the 2011 census, the total literacy rate of Rajasthan is 66.10%, out of which the total literacy rate of females is only 52.10%. In terms of literacy, Barmer district comes at number 29 in Rajasthan, where the literacy rate is 56.50%, while the female literacy rate is only 40.60%. So it is natural that it is easy to mislead uneducated women.
- 4. Political inexperience :-** In the Indian Constitution, women were also given political rights equal to men, yet there was a women's participation committee in political matters. Due to the women's reservation system in the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, women's direct participation in politics has been ensured. Due to the reservation system, many women have been elected in Panchayati Raj Institutions. Those who are playing political participation for the first time who are mostly illiterate or lack knowledge and political experience. Due to which women have to depend on men for every small task. Women of Barmer district are ignorant of administrative rules and political procedures. They lack political experience. Therefore, women public representatives should be given proper training.
- 5. Lack of self-confidence :-** The best way to move forward in life is to believe in yourself. Women generally lack self-confidence, they become victims of exploitation, malnutrition and social violence easily. Weaknesses like lack of confidence, apathy, dependence, conformity and lack of organization are found in their behavior, which are being taken advantage of by government officials and influential people. Due to lack of self-confidence in Barmer district of Rajasthan, women public representatives are not able to intervene properly in immoral acts like corruption.

Remedial measures :-

For women leadership development, it is most important that the Panchayats should be empowered because weak Panchayats cannot empower women, so it is necessary to strengthen the position of Panchayats. Most of the panchayats do not have any specific revenue of their own. There is also lack of decentralization of justice administration and police administration, so instead of looking at Panchayati Raj as a vehicle of development, we should look at development as the vehicle of development of Panchayati Raj, only then real women empowerment will be possible and Panchayati Raj Development of women leadership will be possible in the polity. Along with this, social awareness programs to change the male mindset in the society, social harmony programs to remove caste system, complete literacy programs to remove illiteracy, various training programs to remove political inexperience, etc. should be run. Along with organizing awareness programs to instill confidence in women, their confidence should be increased through personal contact.

Panchayati Raj Institutions as Women Empowerment :-

Studies and reports on Panchayati Raj Institutions in different parts of Rajasthan show the performance and experience of women. This not only reflects their identity, recognition, trust, performance and effective participation, but the role of Panchayati Raj Institutions has emerged as a vehicle of political empowerment of women. The progress made so far shows that Panchayati Raj Institutions have played an important role in matters of consciousness, awareness, self-confidence, aspirations, participation, Panchayat and external leadership, Panchayats and their impact on themselves in rural India. The quality of governance has also improved with the participation of women in the political process and political institutions. Their participation is more in the issues related to the upgradation of civil society, food security, energy security, management of natural institutions, protection of the environment, economic and social life because they are directly related to women and they are powerful means of women empowerment.

Conclusion : -

Rural women led development is most important for the development of rural India. Political empowerment of women is essential for sustainable development, transparent and accountable government and administration in all walks of life. In the context of women's reservation, steps have been taken in the direction of empowering women by Panchayati Raj institutions, government and non-government organizations and other related institutions, but only active participation of women can play a major role in solving their problems. In the midst of responsibility and constraints, rural women are constantly moving towards a strong role in the decentralization of power. Participation of women in Panchayati Raj system has given participation to rural women in development processes, decision making process. and strengthening democratic alliances.

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