



POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT OF DALIT WOMEN

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Abstract

This article reveals the Political Participation and Empowerment of Dalit Women. In 1993, the Parliament of India passed the 73rd and 74th Amendments, which reformed the structure of the government in 1994. All states have allocated 33 percent to women, families, and tribals. This provision helps marginalized women participate in decision-making by providing equal opportunities to participate in local government activities as per the 73rd Amendment; Dalits participate in Panchayat Raja decisions, planning, and implementation. However, the Participation of Dalit women among local government candidates is limited, mainly due to caste barriers. Women's participation in open politics significantly impacts the governance of any country. The Concept of Political Participation and Empowerment, Empowerment Theory, Relating Political Participation and Empowerment, Historical Background of Women, Emerging identity of Dalit women, Women and Ambedkar Movement, Rights of the Dalits, The Concept of Dalit, Empowerment of Dalit Women, Political Empowerment of Dalit Women through Panchayat Raj Institutions.

Introduction

The Concept of Political Participation and Empowerment

The roots of political Participation trace back to the ancient Roman and Greek governments that followed the principles of direct democracy. These small states and their peoples functioned as direct democracies. As the population grew and the country expanded, the desire to restore proper democratic structures and processes grew.

Political participation is an important concept in political science and has been defined by researchers in various ways. It can be defined as the act of people trying to influence government and politics. Milbrath and Goel argue that this definition needs to be narrower because it includes cultural activities and infrastructure.¹ Ways to understand its scope: (1) the materials or types of materials used, (2) how they are intended to be used. At first glance, this is a broad definition, but since power is the goal, it can be considered a narrow definition. There are other definitions of political participation, which we will analyze below².

Empowerment Theory

Shakti has entered the vocabulary of development over the past thirty years and continues to provide power from various sources, as the only policy of the ruling party in India is to deny the rights of Dalit women. Because of clan ties, this disability is invisible to

the powerful and sometimes even the Dalit. According to Kabir's argument, previous critiques of empowerment focused on misogyny and powerless portrayals of Dalit women, building on this earlier work. There is no absolute power because the least powerful can resist, destroy and change their circumstances.³

In this sense, Dalit women, despite being identified as powerless, have the power and capacity to protest, change and rebuild. Kabir said that the word Shakti should be understood as the word Shakti.⁴ He writes that one way of thinking about power is that as a choice, empowerment is "rights given to the powerless. For Kabir, Empowerment means change.

Relating Political Participation and Empowerment

In her article, Kabir discusses gender equality and women's empowerment, the concept of women's empowerment, and the relationship between indicators for these goals and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for education, employment, and adoption.⁵ Women's Empowerment Kabir reiterated that political participation is one of the key tools to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment. Political involvement of Dalit women allows them to develop decision-making skills and thereby learn to resist power structures to exercise their political rights. This method is effective.

As defined by Singh and Titi⁶, empowerment factors are defined as two determinants of political participation.

- Involve everyone, especially women and youth, in the decision-making process.
- Local autonomy, Independence from local decision-making, and participation in broader democratic processes for representative governance.

The Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) was developed in 1995 by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). It measures political Participation and decision-making, economic Participation, and resource management. Additionally, political participation is a driver of empowerment, so political Participation and Empowerment are linked, and each has "primary outcomes."

Historical Background of Women

Although women make up half of the country's population, their participation in political life is higher than that of men. Many psychological, social, and physical factors prevent women from actively participating in politics, including government and state politics. A democratic society develops when the energies of the common people are diverted to non-political activities. Since Independence, India has guaranteed equality and constitutional rights through various laws and policies. These rights should be directly related to the country's development of women's policy. The question of women's participation in politics is integral to the general status of women in society, but despite their power, women have no role in the political process.⁷

This movement is based on the premise that if women are not equally represented in different societies and at varying levels of decision-making, genuine democracy and people's participation in governance and development can become problematic. This has been

achieved without women's full and active participation in the development process and in setting goals, which is not fully guaranteed. Parliamentary democracies have a majority and exclude fifty percent of women; the ideals of society, justice, freedom, and equality cannot be seen within the framework of socialism, equality, and democracy.⁸.

Emerging identity of Dalit women

Dalits also faced difficulties in adapting to the changing times and society in 1848; Savitribai Phule and Jyot Rao Phule participated in the educational reforms of Dalit women and discussed their issues and problems. He began teaching testimonies to women in general at a time when the upper class dominated the education system, girls' schools, and the homes they built were damaged. Punishment became the foundation of Ambedkar's movement. After Independence in the 1960s and 1970s, Dalit women's movements began to challenge caste and gender discrimination, forming many women's associations. Some are the National Dalit Women's Association, Dalit Women's Model of India, Maharashtra Dalit Women's Federation, Republican Party of India, Bahujan Mahila Sansthan Mahila Wing, Vikas Vanchit Dalit Mahila Council.⁹. It stands for Dalit women and issues that oppress regions, cultures, and people. The needs of Dalit women vary from place to place. The needs of rural women are very different from those of urban women.

Women and Ambedkar Movement

From the days of Nayak and the Indian diaspora, feminine implantation was central to medicine. Ambedkar involved women in all his educational activities. Many women participated in the Great Satyagraha. The temple movement gave him the courage to criticize Hindu society. Dr. Ambedkar actively studied Hindu literature. Welcome and focus on intelligence and behavior and psychology¹⁰.

Manu made several laws regarding women, including:

- Even at home, a girl, young woman, and older woman should not do anything alone.
- Not every day. A woman sacrifices herself and goes to hell if she does.
- Explain that the three women, the child, and the servant have no property and that the property they bought is theirs.
- Drinking alcohol, killing women, Sudras, Vaishnavas, Chhatras, and infidels.

Based on these principles, Ambedkar argued that Manu was largely responsible for the decline of Hindu women. As India's first Attorney General and Chairman of the Organizing Committee of the Legislative Assembly¹¹, she recognized the need to reform the laws of Hindu society and free women from ancient slavery, exploitation, and oppression. Dr. Ambedkar has clearly defined and implemented four principles along with women's empowerment.

- The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955.
- The Hindu Succession Act, 1956.
- The Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956.
- The Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956.

Doctor Ambedkar was concerned about the women in the family and society as he aimed to reform and reform the Hindu community from scratch. Tried to address issues related to girl marriage, widow remarriages, Hindu Settlement Agreement, adoption reforms, marriage and inheritance laws¹².

Rights of the Dalits

The Constitution of India guarantees equal rights to all the people living in the country irrespective of caste, origin, color, religion, sex, etc. Articles 15 and 16 prohibit the authorities from discriminating based on "caste," religion, belief, etc. Article 17 of the Constitution states, "Wasting is abolished and the practice prohibited. Unreasonable use of disability is punishable." We advise on a wide range of legal issues considering the needs of Dalit women and the harassment faced by society, legislature, and government institutions. Under Section 376, the offense is punishable with imprisonment for seven to ten years or imprisonment for life.

But some laws have been passed to protect the human rights of Dalits. In 1955, the Prevention of Crime and Civil Rights Act of 1976 was passed to combat discrimination against T.S./SCs in schools, colleges, and other institutions. The Torture Act was enacted in 1989 to prevent torture, further exploitation, and discrimination. Violation of this rule will be detected and punished.

The Concept of Dalit

The word Dalit came in 1973. 'Dalit' is derived from the Sanskrit word 'dal,' which means 'broken, broken or destroyed, crushed, shattered, wrecked.'¹³ In this sense, Dalit refers to the caste and class of a particular social group using the word Dalit as the official language of the ethnic group. Children are known by many names and are called untouchables, untouchables, or unknown and unorganized classes The crowd¹⁴.

Today, the term "Dalit" is used to describe this identity as a political movement of collective action that represents a fundamental change in the structure and condition of society.¹⁵ They constitute one-fifth of India's population but control less than 5% of the country's resources they are the most Dalit in Indian society and the lowest castes in Indian society. Dalits live below the Official Poverty Line (PPL) and have a low level of education (62%). Many of the Dalit are homeless workers. The survey revealed that more than 10% of households in Dal have clean water, electricity, and sanitation facilities. Mahatma Phule was the first person to recognize Dali's struggle and bring it to the attention of the Indian government. Ambedkar, the founder, and leader of the Dalit movement, introduced it to the country. Dalit thought led by Ambedkar marked the beginning of a new campaign.¹⁶.

Empowerment of Dalit Women

Women's equality is a cornerstone of the Indian Constitution, a fundamental right, and a specific objective of the social system. Social change is a complex process that affects different groups of women differently, So knowing the status of women is not easy because

political power in this country has long been dominated by those who refuse to oppress themselves, regardless of the level of oppression. This clearly shows the level of inequality in society; the country's leaders also ignored the Dalit women, making no effort to improve their social, economic, and political status. However, they play an important role in developing social policies and programs for women.¹⁷.

The following shows the flow of empowerment.

- Social Empowerment
- Economic Empowerment
- Political Empowerment

Social Empowerment: This includes health, education, clean water, sanitation, nutrition, environment, violence against women, girls' rights, science, technology, etc. **Economic Empowerment:** These include poverty alleviation, property rights, women's agriculture, micro-credit, women and economic development, etc.

This approach to women's empowerment helps reduce discrimination and gender inequality and empowers women to make decisions and advocate for equality. It clearly emphasizes the need for women's social, economic, and political empowerment.¹⁸.

Political Empowerment of Dalit Women through Panchayat Raj Institutions

Since India's Independence, women's participation in rural development has been important in addressing women's issues, needs, and gender equality. When Panchayat Raj was established in 1953, few women participated in the local government system. The Balwant Roy and Ashok Mehta Committee provided a unique platform for women to participate in society's decision-making process. After the 73rd Amendment, reserving 33% of seats in panchayat bodies allowed women to participate more in these local bodies.¹⁹. But Dalits cannot make decisions in local governance for many reasons like ignorance, poverty, ignorance, and insecurity. Prevents people from speaking, speaking and taking political roles as representatives of municipal activities²⁰. Women have no autonomy or autonomy in the family.

The question now is how Dalits can effectively participate in the citizenship department offered by Panchayat Raj, which holds one-third of the seats in the district. If women do not present their ideas and problems to society, they may lose their identity, which slows down social development. Real progress cannot be achieved without the Dalit's participation in the national development process.²¹.

Mahipal (2004)²² Many women S.C. panchayat leaders faced the problem of cooperation from government officials and members of the gram panchayat elite/ruling class. However, the movement of women and marginalized groups in local government raised public and political awareness.

S.N.Chaudhary (2004)²³ In his article "Panchayats under Dalit and Tribal Leaders," has attempted to understand the nature and leadership style of Dalits and tribals in Madhya Pradesh. The results revealed that most of the Muhi and ex-panchayat members of the Sehore

and Betul districts were between 25 and 44 years of age and were uneducated and engaged in agriculture.

Gopal Guru (1995)²⁴ Dalits Speak Differently, an attempt to present the Dalit issue in women's discourse, the author opined that Dalits, who are part of society, need a unique and independent approach. Social class, which determines actual perceptions, is an important factor that renders non-Dalit women's perceptions of Dalit women's issues unreliable (as we see in the interviews with Dalit women).

Joshi R.P and G.S. Narwani (2005)²⁵ Panchayat Raj in India: A good study of various issues of the Panchayat Raj system and its potential role in public participation in decision making. The authors argue that panchayat Raj institutions are the most effective and appropriate means of implementing basic democracy in governance.

Dhaka, Sunita and Rajbir S. Dhaka (2005)²⁶ Dalit Women in Panchayat Raj on the Structure and Behavior of Dalit Communities and Its Impact on Political Participation in the Re-enactment of the 73rd Amendment. Key aspects of empowerment of women, tribals, and tribals, especially Dalits, who have 10% seats in panchayat raj institutions, are planned. Despite constitutional guarantees,

Satyanarayana. A, (2005)²⁷ Genealogical history and the plight of Dalits are explored several times in his book Dalits and Upper Castes (2005). It describes their struggle and relationship with land, water, and production needs and allows us to understand family and class relations. He begins by discussing the importance of dance in the Indian context. Here the author tries to explain how Dalit people are discriminated against the upper-class people.

Jodhka. Suriender.S (2006)²⁸ Their book Composition and Democracy: Protest and Dalit Identities in Rural Punjab attempted to discuss the relationship between caste and politics and caste and the rights of the Dalit.

Dalit Leadership in Panchayats: A Comparative Study of Four States, **Narendra Kumar and Manoj Rai (2006)²⁹** Attempt to examine new approaches to Dalit and village leadership and how these processes have generally affected Dalits. And it helped abused women, especially local authorities, to get proper legal powers and effective interventions to prevent it.

Sinha, Niroj (2007)³⁰ Women's Empowerment: Political Participation. The author describes the status of women in India and states that Indian democracy is more than 50 years old, but the concept of democracy does not work exclusively for women. India. He said there is no role for women in politics.

Smitha K.C (2007)³¹ This paper examines the socio-economic characteristics of women's organizations and their impact on women's success in leadership positions in Andhra Pradesh. The author examines how socio-economic issues can prevent the presentation of problems socio-economic in official forums or the proper development of all aspects of life. The analysis revealed many misconceptions about women in leadership positions based on socio-economic characteristics related to age, occupation, family income, land ownership, and employment 'Study.

In **Yashoda T (2007)**³², this empirical study focuses on women's activities, knowledge of officials, and their role in panchayat raj institutions. The political scene developed after the conservative system introduced by the Karnataka government allowed rural women to join local political parties.

Limbadri. R, (2007)³³ This article is based on the extensive experience of Indira, president of Dalit Navipet Mandal in Nizamabad, Andhra Pradesh. Combining documentary evidence with other empirical findings, she examines how marginalized people remain marginalized despite constitutional protections in racially dominant societies.

Patil's (2008)³⁴ The article on the empowerment of tribal women in three villages of Kolhapur district, Maharashtra, shows that relations between tribals and tribal women in Maharashtra have been growing. All the women in the Gram Panchayat have rendered special services in various ways.

Santhosh Kumar's (2008)³⁵ A study measuring productivity in rural workplaces shows regional differences in trends. Effective or ineffective leadership of women and marginalized communities results from cultural, socio-economic, gender, caste, and class factors.

Dalits: In Search of a Common Destiny (2009) by Thorat Sukhdeo (2009)³⁶ It is a comprehensive book examining the plight of Dalits in the most developed countries. It is a deliberate attempt by the author to provide background information on population growth, regional trends, gender, and urban patterns.

Judge Paramjit. S and Gurpreet Bal (2009)³⁷ The article 'Mapping Dalits' focuses on the Punjab government's research on the rural-urban divide. Four dimensions of education, empowerment, migration, and entrepreneurship are explored to explain the dynamic nature of Dalits.

Sharma Anjouri (2010)³⁸ Dalit Women in India: Anatomy of Gender and Gender seeks to show the vulnerability of the Dalit across India and the status of Dalit women worldwide. The poorest people in the developing world live in India, where women are Dalit by sex and gender, and women live worse than men.

Jain Nisha (2010)³⁹ Female Slavery in India: A Pastoral Approach This article examines patriarchy in India. Exclusion and disrespect for women run deep in Indian society. In 1974, interest in women's issues began to grow in India. The International Decade was observed in 1975 after the report of the Indian Commission on the Status of Women:

Sachidanda (20013)⁴⁰ Found that despite many challenges, such as lack of funds, insecurity, opposition to older people, facilities, and community resistance, they fulfilled their duty to wait. But your situation is good; Women belonging to tribal communities are encouraged to organize themselves, promoting society's respect and awareness of women's rights and the agenda of tribal communities.

Summary

Direct political Participation of Dalits through local authorities leads to realizing fundamental and other human rights. Employment plays a key role in addressing women's

issues at the highest levels; lower-caste women are barred from public spaces because of their gender. This exclusion makes it difficult for these women to represent their community and voice their opinions, and society often ignores or does not respect their rights. Legal and political reforms in India reflect these ideas through the constitutional provisions of panchayat raj institutions, which ensure the representation of the social groups of the region, including the Dalit and especially the downtrodden women.

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