



# Local Self Government: Representation of Women in Different States of India

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Date of Submission: 22-02-2021

Date of Acceptance: 06-03-2021

## ABSTRACT

Women's participation at the grass root level plays an important role. From the period of Ancient to Post-Independence period women were dominated by certain cultural and traditional customs. India is a democratic country and having protective laws for the safety of women. The policies and different Acts provided opportunities for women to overcome from social and cultural constraints. 73<sup>rd</sup> CAA provided 33 percent reservation and almost all the states implemented in a similar way and the representation of women in different states increased through quota. The present paper focused on representation of women in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and the data collected from secondary sources like books, articles, dissertation and internet.

**KEYWORDS:** Local Self Government, Women's Participation, Different Acts for Women, Representation of Women in Panchayats

## I. INTRODUCTION

The local-self government is not of new phenomenon in the country but had its root in Ancient Indian Institutions when the villages were little republics governed by their Panchayats. But during the British Period could not join politics due to patriarchal set. The British almost destroyed these ancient republics as well as the involvement of women in politics. The British were of the opinion that "vote of women" would be premature in the Indian Society and continue to enforce pardah and prohibition against women's education (Bhanukumar, 2016). Women have very low participation in government process which should have to special concern for democracy and without changing that true democracy can never be achieved. It has been wifely experienced that governance structures which do not provide participation of women, often suffer from the state intervention which are neither inclusive nor democratic. Traditional culture, male domination in

political parties and traditional political structure are some factors that became hurdle for the participation of women (Reena, 2016).

## Different Acts for Women:

During the women decade, the women were promised for introducing various development schemes and reforms at policy level so that the socio-economic status of women could be improved significantly. The Government of India had also framed various social legislations and passed several Acts in the past for raising the legal and social status of women. The major reforms in the direction were Special marriage Act, 1954, The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, The Hindu Succession Act, 1955, The Hindu Adoption and Maintenance, 1956, The Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women & Girls, 1956, Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971, The Comprehensive Family Court Act, 1984, Maternity Benefit Act (Mehta, 2002). Domestic Violence Act, 2005, Muslim Women (Protection of rights on divorce) Act, The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition Act 1986, The Hindu Women's Right to Property Act 1937 etc ([www.legalservicesindia.com](http://www.legalservicesindia.com))

The dire of need today to remove the disparity between women's formal political equality and their meaningful exercise of political power, 2001 was the year of "Empowerment of Women" and was celebrated all over the world. Empowerment includes overall development in terms of education, employment, legislative powers, decision-making power, health and awareness (Simmi & Vijay, 2014).

## Women & 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act (CAA)

The 73<sup>rd</sup> CAA passed in the Parliament of India in April 1993, providing 33 percent reservation in all tiers panchayat structure for all rural women. The Act has provided a definite space for women to participate in Panchayat politics and



to involve in local political decision making process. Establishing quotas for women's representation at different levels of governance has been a strategic tactic in achieving this goal in many countries. The Constitution (73<sup>rd</sup> CAA), enacted in 1992, calls for the reservation of a minimum of one-third of seats for women within all of India's locally elected governance bodies commonly referred to as Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). In 2009, the government of India approved a 50 percent reservation for women in PRIs and many states have passed similar legislation (Reena & Sushil, 2016)

#### Representation of women in different states

Through the quota system for local women, the vast of the illiterate and poor women, have come to occupy the seats of PRIs. In March, 2013, 1364154 lakh women elected in PRIs and it was 46.7 percent of the total elected representatives and Jharkhand 58.6 percent, Uttarakhand 56.1 percent, Chhattisgarh 54.5 percent, Kerala 51.9 percent, Madhya Pradesh 50.5 percent, Himachal Pradesh 50.1 percent, Bihar and Rajasthan 50 percent women were elected (Pawan, 2016).

#### Number of Elected Women Representatives (EWRs) in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in the country, State/Union Territory-wise

Table.1

State/UTs	Total PRI Representation	Total EWRs
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	858	306
Andhra Pradesh	156050	78,025
Arunachal Pradesh	9383	3,658
Assam	26754	14,609
Bihar	136573	71,046
Chhattisgarh	170465	93,392
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	147	47
Daman & Diu	192	92
Goa	1555	571
Gujarat	144080	71,988
Haryana	70035	29,499
Himachal Pradesh	28723	14,398
Jammu & Kashmir	39850	13,224
Jharkhand	59638	30,757
Karnataka	101954	51,030
Kerala	18372	9,630
Ladakh	NA	NA
Lakshadweep	110	41
Madhya Pradesh	392981	19,6490
Maharashtra	240635	128677
Manipur	1736	880
Odisha	107487	56,627
Pondicherry	NA	NA
Punjab	100312	41,922
Rajasthan	126271	64,802
Sikkim	1153	580
Tamil Nadu	106450	56,407
Telangana	103468	52,096
Tripura	6646	3,006
Uttar Pradesh	913417	30,4538
Uttarakhand	62796	35,177
West Bengal	59229	30,458
<b>Total</b>	<b>3187320</b>	<b>1453973</b>

Source: <https://pib.gov.in>PressReleaseIframePage>



The perception of a highest proportions of women representatives of PRIs were that the excessive domination of men and rich segment of people in every activities, meetings, decision-making processes in performing different social economic and welfare activities (Mehta, 2002). In the last 20 years no doubt Panchayati Raj has increased women participation in rural local bodies but on the other side these institutions have been facing a lot of problems and not become effective institutions. To overcome those impediments to ensure good governance the centre and the state governments made some recommendations through different committees (Pawan, 2016).

## II. CONCLUSION

The Representation of women in different states shows that the women are participating in the PRIs with strong enthusiasm. Their participation in decision-making increased after the introduction of 73<sup>rd</sup> CAA and the different Acts and policies were framed for the improvement socio-economic status of women. The women are not fully empowered until and unless social and cultural taboos not removed from the society. The people should change their attitude towards women and positive changes can be seen in the attitude of women.

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