

Rights and Empowerment of Women: A Study of Gram Panchayats of Kamrup (Rural) District, Assam

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Introduction

The UN Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) seeks to ensure the enforcement of the human rights document on equal basis with men. It focuses on women's lives and experiences they have specifically because of their gender. CEDAW deals with rights including the rights to vote and stands for election, equal rights of education, protection from discrimination in the work place and equality before the law etc.

Human rights are those fundamental and natural rights which are essential for decent living and life of human being. Irrespective of class, creed, race, colour etc. every woman is a human being. But Gender based discrimination reflecting the ugly face and violation of human rights everywhere. The power of women is generally viewed in relation to the power of men. Men have been able to establish control over the material and social resources and the inequality between the sexes is basically an inequality in the access of material and social resources between them. It is this inequality that has led to assigning inferior position to women.

The 73rd Amendment of the Indian Constitution increased participation of women in the political institutions at the village, taluka and district level, whereas the 74th Constitutional Amendment provides for increased participation in Municipalities and Nagarapalikas in cities. It further provides for one third reservation of posts for Presidents and Vice-presidents in these political institutions. With the passing of 73rd constitutional amendment which provides for the 33 percent of the reservation of seats for women, millions of women are coming to politics at the grass root level. It is therefore, interesting to see how women participate in local politics that have been confined to domestic circles since long how they can enjoy their rights and fulfill their duties.

Statement of the Problem:

In keeping with the provisions of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, the Assam Panchayat Act, 1994 was enacted and it replaced the Assam Panchayati Raj Act, 1986. The Act provided for a three tier

panchayat system comprising of GP at the village level, AP at the block level and ZP at the district level. The Act provided for the constitution of a District Planning Committee to draw up the district plan. It also provided for the setting up of a State Election Commission and a State Finance Commission at the expiry of every five years.

The first Panchayat Election in terms of the Act of 1994 was held in December 2001. Accordingly, 2487 GPs, 203 APs and 21 ZPs had been constituted. However, after the creation of BTAD, the numbers of GPs, APs, and ZPs were reduced to 2223, 185 and 20 respectively. After the successful completion of the Panchayat representative tenure of five years, again elections were conducted in 2008. Currently again in February of 2013 new election was held.

The status of women in north-eastern region of India is slightly different in comparison to those living in the rest of the country. Then also fact is reflected in the comment of Dr. Justice Jitendra N. Bhatt who said that, although the rights are guaranteed equally to men and women, there are several ways in which the structure of the family and the existence of several inequitable social customs and practices serve to deprive women of these rights. Women are viewed as dependents within the family and faced severe restrictions on mobility, which further impede their ability to gain access to education, economic opportunities, to move freely and settle anywhere, to form unions or groups and so on, which are fundamental freedom under Indian Constitution.

Rationalisation of Study Area:-

The study area is Kamrup (Rural) District of Assam. There has 139 gram panchayats and 14 blocks are there in that area. The area is 3484 square kilometer. Total population of particular area is 1517202. The 5th largest rural population among the districts of Assam resides there, in number it is 1375188. The density of population per square kilometer is 436. (Source: Census Report 2011) In district wise sex ratio per 1000 male, reflecting significantly alarming numbers in Kamrup District among the district of Assam, which is 901, which is second least number among the district of Assam. (Source: Directorate of Census Report).

The infant mortality rate in rural area of Assam is 60 and it is very acute problem. The sixth largest victim of rape cases are found in Assam, in number it is 1437. Incidence of crime against women in number is 6844. (Source: Gender Statistics Assam 2008-2009). In District Wise study about Workforce participation of women in Kamrup Rural, 2001 is 15.76 percent whether in totality in Assam; it is higher than it, which is 22.15 percent. Marginal Female Workers in Kamrup District is 45.52 percent of total workers population but it is better in state scenario that is 11.12 percent. Area wise and sex wise number of Agricultural land holdings and area operated for all social groups as per agricultural census 2000-01 in Assam, in that study male holding with ownership is 2517666 while female holding only 2 and area (in hect) operated with owner is 250214.48

and women holding only 0.96 which is utmost alarming number. It reveals high level of gender discrimination in the distribution of property.

Total gram panchayat member in Kamrup District is 1319 among them 464 is female.

The study area has been selected on the basis that, it is adjacent to Guwahati metropolitan city, but infrastructure wise its remote parts remains very under develop. Again wide spread poverty and unemployment problem and underemployment problem is very acute over there. The backwardness also touches the lives of the women. Lack of quality education, lack of quality health services, lack of electricity etc. is also a bigger problem over there. Agriculture is the occupation of majority population of particular area.

Here the question arises, how do women, who have traditionally been compelled to confine to the domestic circles, work as the representatives of people and how they are working for the development of the people and how do the women representatives participate in the Panchayati Raj institution of local self governance? Whether the elected women representatives effectively participate in the functioning of the panchayats, are they aware of their rights and duties, do they regularly participate in the GP meetings, what kind of participation they have provided for the development of the GP, if they face any problem in effective participation, what is the level of enjoyment of their rights and aware about duties, how far their socio economic status effect in participation etc. are some of the questions which comes to mind for investigation.

In this connection a brief review of literature is conducted and mentioned in the following pages:

Review of Literature

In order to assess the impact of reservation and on the issue of women participation in politics, many studies have been conducted and studies are also in progress. Some of those studies are reported here.

D'LIMA (1983), found that women's participation was significantly related to education. Even if women from and economically well off group her participation would not be active. Further she points out that statutory representation for women is not an end in itself. It is expected to be a step in promoting women's participation in national life. Her study also reveals that women of upper caste, particularly of big land owners and politically influential persons tend to predominate in the positions reserved for local bodies.

Mazumdar (1986) and Prabhavati (1991), finds political participation affiliation and partisan consideration hindering women empowerment.

Goswami Atul, Sharma Archana (1995), found that most of the women representatives were quite vocal and enthusiastic, yet their knowledge regarding the duties and responsibilities of panchayat members was not

perfect. Most of the women representatives did not know anything about the duties and responsibilities of panchayat members and functionaries.

Tripathy (1996), highlights the need of training for the women elected representatives and creation of awareness among them about their rights and duties.

Tripathy (1996), highlights the role of women Sarpanches in village developments. The author states that they should be imparted training should be given information about their rights and duties. The constitutional amendment is not the only solution according to him.

Bhadauria (1997), discusses the status and states that the status of women is closely linked with their participation in decision making process. The extent of their participation is a measure of their empowerment. But the fact still exists that women participation in decision making at all levels whether local or national has been low.

Gupta (1998), expresses more educational facilities to be provided to rural women so that more participation may be sought in rural development programs through Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Giri (1998), states that participation of women in decision making process is an important step for women empowerment. She concludes that there is a need to have further study to examine how far government provisions have helped women to achieve empowerment.

Singh (1998), expresses on the basis of her study that there should be more participation of women in the development programs related to rural areas.

Jayaswal (1998), suggests to remove socio-economic inequalities for effective participation.

Kondreday (2000), states that women have failed to fully exploit the opportunity of reservation in a meaningful way. Thus, according to him there is a need of sensitization programme for raising the level of women awareness and states that the societies; conservative and fundamentalist attitude must go for the empowerment of women. If the women sit silently when public decisions are taken nothing benefit will emerge.

The National Commission on Women (2001), finds that women participation in politics had elevated the status of women inside and outside the family. Elected women representatives got weightage in the community.

Dash (2002), observed that a lot of women are coming to politics notwithstanding the fact that women politics have been a thrust on them, because of the magnitude of pressure exerted over them for the purpose. By

compulsorily coming to politics, the representatives are now creating an atmosphere where female mentality is getting socialized politically. Further he finds that women are gradually learning how to articulate their demands.

Hemalatha (2002), finds the women representatives of Karnataka have shown that they are capable of providing leadership if they are given time, support, resources, training and freedom from men.

Panda (2002), found women belonging to high socio-economic background make effective participation in politics.

Prasad et al (2004), finds that reservation of seats has resulted in development of political awareness among women - it has created an urge among women to become a part of mainstream political, economic and social life. Despite many social and cultural limitations, women have proved better leaders than their male counterparts.

Kondreday (2002), suggests organising sensitisation programmes to raise the level of awareness among women.

Jha(2004), said about the reasons why men folk do not support women in panchayat that according to them it will disturb the harmony of homes and family life, women will become targets of attacks by antisocial elements when they move out of their homes or go outside their villages for work, meetings and so on and male officers may dictate what is done or is not to be done, and proxy attendance of their male family members.

Chandra S. K. (2004), participation of women in decision making process could be enhanced many folds and the progress attained in a much shorter time span, again this process benefitting or liberates men more than it liberates women..

Jha(2004), democratic values have been eroded due to the reason that people have not been trained adequately in the art of democratic governance at the grassroot level institutions. Panchayats are not only taking decisions to solve the socio economic problems but also a training ground for the people in the art of decision making, which will help the nation to have more trained legislators for democratic government. The grass root level institutions have to be strengthened and rejuvenated to cope with the present requirements.

Although the women representatives want to work for the betterment of women, 67.5% of them do not have any specific scheme in mind for future action for the benefit of women, nor for any other purpose.

All the women representative in the panchayats studied, whether they joined it at their own will or under pressure, were full of zeal and enthusiasm to work for their fellow men and women. But their ignorance,

their age-old habit of confining themselves to domestic works, their natural docile character have made them passive member.

Research Gap

From the analysis of above study it is found that while some studies find that reservation has been a factor for the women to achieve empowerment, some still find the lack of ability on the part of women to fully exploit the opportunity. The results differ from form place to place and from individual to individual. The factors and situations differ from place to place and from state to state. Moreover very few studies do exist with regard to women participation in Assam. Therefore, a study needs to be undertaken to find answer of the questions raised above.

Methodology of Study

Area of study:

The study area is Kamrup (Rural) District of Assam. This area has 14 nos of Blocks and 139 nos of Gaon Panchayats. (Source: Census Report 2011)

Data sources:

Both primary and secondary data will be collected for the study from election of 2008 and 2013 of gram panchayats.

Universe of Study:

All the elected women representatives will constitute the universe of the present study. In 2013 election 93.28 percent elected representative are general category, 3.38 percent are SC and 3.34 percent ST and among them 38.28 percent are women, in numbers it is 8977. There are 20 Zilla parisad, 188 Anchalik Parisad and 2223 Gram Panchayats in Assam .(Source : pnrassam 2016)

Sampling Method:

A sample of 25% respondents from the said panchayats will be chosen.

Secondary data source:

This involves the collection and review of relevant documentation on the study. There is rich documentation in the university library, offices of the panchayats and rural development, DRDA office etc.

Data to be exploited would include:

- Unpublished reports/ records; the archives of opposition parties
- Published reports (research studies/ Case studies and so on);

- Meetings held in gaon panchayats and interviews;
- Newspaper articles, other media coverage;
- Information accessed through the Internet;
- Personal memoirs if any;
- Any other authentic available sources of information that are documented,
- Official Records of the Ministry of Panchayat and Rural Development

Tool for the collection of primary:

Interview schedule and focus group discussion technique will be used to collect primary data from respondents.

Analysis of Data:

In socio economic analysis of the women representatives of particular area, we got that maximum 34percent women belong to the group of 26-30 years, 10percent belong to the age group of 31-42 years, second highest 33 percent belong to the age group of 43-55 years, 20 percent belong to the age group of 56-65 years, significantly only 3 percent belong to the age group of more than the age of 65 years.

Table No: 1.1

Percentage distribution of respondents by age and level of participation

Hypothesis:-

The younger the age is relating to the level of participation level, it is expected that participation will be more regular and they are aware about their rights and duties

Age * Level_of_Participation Crosstabulation

		Level_of_Participation			Total
		Regular	Irregular	Few	
Age	26-30	16	8	10	34
		47.1%	23.5%	29.4%	100.0%
		16.0%	8.0%	10.0%	34.0%
	31-42	1	7	2	10

	10.0%	70.0%	20.0%	100.0%
	1.0%	7.0%	2.0%	10.0%
43-55	13	6	14	33
	39.4%	18.2%	42.4%	100.0%
	13.0%	6.0%	14.0%	33.0%
56-65	2	11	7	20
	10.0%	55.0%	35.0%	100.0%
	2.0%	11.0%	7.0%	20.0%
>65	0	2	1	3
	.0%	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%
	.0%	2.0%	1.0%	3.0%
Total	32	34	34	100
	32.0%	34.0%	34.0%	100.0%
	32.0%	34.0%	34.0%	100.0%

Above table depicted that among the members 32.0 percent is regular, 34.0 percent is irregular, 34.0 percent are few and maximum percentage of 47.1 who are regular in their activities and participation is belong to the category of 26-30 age group but it is shown in the picture that 29.4 percent of this age group is few in participation. But it is significant that, the percentage of irregular members are belong to the age group of 31-42 having 70.0 percent. May be several factors like house hold responsibility, child care, ignorance, lack of awareness, lack of sufficient mode of communication etc. can effect on the irregularity of the members. It is seems that 42.4 percent are few, who are belong to the age group of 43-55, and significantly the members belong to the category of more than 65 age having 0.0 percent regularity in their participation level. Accordingly it seems that the hypothesis is accepted by analyzing above data.

Table No: 1.2 Percentage distributions of respondents by age and reasons for lacking participation

Hypothesis: - The age is, related to realization of rights and performing their duties

Age * Reasons for lacking participation in the implementation of development programmes Crosstabulation

		Reasons_for_lacking_participation_in_the_implementation_of_level				Total
		busy in household works	lacking freedom from the family	better supervision capacity of men	no need to supervise	
Age	26-30	12	3	3	3	21
		57.1%	14.3%	14.3%	14.3%	100.0%
		20.3%	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%	35.6%
31-42	31-42	4	0	0	1	5
		80.0%	.0%	.0%	20.0%	100.0%
		6.8%	.0%	.0%	1.7%	8.5%
43-55	43-55	13	3	0	1	17
		76.5%	17.6%	.0%	5.9%	100.0%
		22.0%	5.1%	.0%	1.7%	28.8%
56-65	56-65	11	2	0	1	14
		78.6%	14.3%	.0%	7.1%	100.0%
		18.6%	3.4%	.0%	1.7%	23.7%
>65	>65	1	0	1	0	2
		50.0%	.0%	50.0%	.0%	100.0%
		1.7%	.0%	1.7%	.0%	3.4%
Total	Total	41	8	4	6	59
		69.5%	13.6%	6.8%	10.2%	100.0%

Age * Reasons for lacking participation in the implementation of development programmes Crosstabulation

		Reasons_for_lacking_participation_in_the_implementation_of_level				Total
		busy in household works	lacking freedom from the family	better supervision capacity of men	no need to supervise	
Age	26-30	12	3	3	3	21
		57.1%	14.3%	14.3%	14.3%	100.0%
		20.3%	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%	35.6%
31-42		4	0	0	1	5
		80.0%	.0%	.0%	20.0%	100.0%
		6.8%	.0%	.0%	1.7%	8.5%
43-55		13	3	0	1	17
		76.5%	17.6%	.0%	5.9%	100.0%
		22.0%	5.1%	.0%	1.7%	28.8%
56-65		11	2	0	1	14
		78.6%	14.3%	.0%	7.1%	100.0%
		18.6%	3.4%	.0%	1.7%	23.7%
>65		1	0	1	0	2
		50.0%	.0%	50.0%	.0%	100.0%
		1.7%	.0%	1.7%	.0%	3.4%
Total		41	8	4	6	59
		69.5%	13.6%	6.8%	10.2%	100.0%
		69.5%	13.6%	6.8%	10.2%	100.0%

Out of 100 respondent 59 has given the answer of this question. Out of which 69.5 percent are lacking in participation developmental work is due to busy in household work, 13.6 percent are lacking in participation

due to lacking freedom from family, 6.8 percent are thought that better supervision capacity of men and no need to supervise such things. In 1st category of 26-30 years 57.1percent busy in household work, in 2nd category also 80 percent busy in household work. In lacking freedom from the family maximum 17.6 percent are belong to the 43-55 years of age. Among them who thought that men has better supervision capacity 50 percent of them are belong to last category of above 65 years. Among them who thought no need to supervise the implementation of development works are maximum of 20 percent belong to the age group of 31-42. Therefore hypothesis is nullified.

In another variable of educational level of members, of the representatives, among the members maximum 40 percent are of 10th standard, next to it 28 percent are holding High School Living Certificate, 18 percent are Higher Secondary pass, 8 percent are graduate, 4 percent are LP School attainer, 1 percent holding post graduation and 1 percent holding Technical Education. It indicates that no illiterate members are there among member. But obviously only the education level doesn't depict the awareness level.

Table No: 1.3 Percentage distribution of respondents by members educational qualification and awareness about reservation policies

Hypothesis that:- The higher the education level is relating to the higher level of awareness about reservation policies and their rights

Members_education_qualification * Awareness_about_reservation_policies

Crosstabulation

		Awareness_about_reservation_policies		Total
		Yes	No	
Members_education_qualification	L P School	2	2	4
		50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
		2.6%	2.6%	5.1%
	10th standard	16	14	30
		53.3%	46.7%	100.0%
		20.5%	17.9%	38.5%
	High School Leaving Certificate	12	9	21
		57.1%	42.9%	100.0%
		15.4%	11.5%	26.9%

	Higher	11	5	16
	Secondary	68.8%	31.3%	100.0%
		14.1%	6.4%	20.5%
	Graduate	6	1	7
		85.7%	14.3%	100.0%
		7.7%	1.3%	9.0%
Total		47	31	78
		60.3%	39.7%	100.0%
		60.3%	39.7%	100.0%

By the observation of above table, it is clear that out of hundred respondent 60.3 percent are aware about reservation policies and 39.7 percent are unaware about it. Among the women of L P School qualification 50 percent are aware and 50 percent are unaware, than in 10th standard qualified women 53.3 percent are aware and 46.7 percent are unaware, in High School Leaving Certificate qualified women 57.1 percent are aware and 42.9 percent are unaware, in Higher Secondary qualified women 68.8 percent are aware and 31.3 percent are unaware, in Graduate women 85.7 percent are aware and 14.3 percent are unaware. The above table clearly depicted that qualification is highly related to the awareness about reservation policy and their rights. But it is depicted in other table that less number of highly qualified involves in grass root level, which has a negative impact on participation.

Table No: 1.4 Percentage distribution of respondents by members educational qualification and Extent of opportunities for expressing views and present problem

Hypothesis :-

The higher the qualification is higher the level of opportunities for expressing views and present problem realizing their rights

Members_education_qualification *

Extent_of_opportunities_for_expressing_views_and_present_problem

Crosstabulation

Extent_of_opportunities_for_expressing_views_and_present_pro	Total
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		blem		
		Yes	No	
Members_education_qualification	L P School"	3	1	4
		75.0%	25.0%	100.0%
		3.0%	1.0%	4.0%
	10th standard"	24	16	40
		60.0%	40.0%	100.0%
		24.0%	16.0%	40.0%
	High School Leaving Certificate"	19	9	28
		67.9%	32.1%	100.0%
		19.0%	9.0%	28.0%
	Higher Secondary	13	5	18
		72.2%	27.8%	100.0%
		13.0%	5.0%	18.0%
	"Graduate"	7	1	8
		87.5%	12.5%	100.0%
		7.0%	1.0%	8.0%
	Post Graduate"	0	1	1
		.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		.0%	1.0%	1.0%
	Technical Education	1	0	1
		100.0%	.0%	100.0%
		1.0%	.0%	1.0%
Total	67	33	100	
	67.0%	33.0%	100.0%	
	67.0%	33.0%	100.0%	

The above table analyses, that those members are up to the level of L.P.school, 75 percent of them are getting chances to express their views, and 25 percent are not getting chances, those members are up to the level of

10th standard, 60 percent of them are getting chances to express their views, and 40 percent are not getting chances, those members are up to the level of High School Leaving Certificate" , 67.9 percent of them are getting chances to express their views, and 32.1 percent are not getting chances, those members are up to the level of Higher Secondary, 72.2 percent of them are getting chances to express their views, and 27.8 percent are not getting chances, those members are up to the level of Graduate 87.5 percent of them are getting chances to express their views, and 12.5 percent are not getting chances, the member of post graduation level surprisingly 100 percent of that group are not have the opportunity to express their views, it may be due to their high qualification the parameter of opportunity to express their view is different from others . It is like pig's satisfaction and ... dissatisfaction. But woman of technical education is having 100 percent supports in matter of opportunity. Therefore above table indicate that hypothesis is partially accepted.

Table No: 1.5 Percentage distribution of respondents by members educational qualification and causes of domination

Hypothesis:-

If domination exists and violation of rights are their which are the cause influence in it

Members_education_qualification *

Person_dominating_in_the_meeting_of_village_panchayats Crosstabulation

Person_dominating_in_the_meeting_of_village_panchayats									
						prad	male		
						han	memb		
						s /	ers /		
				repr		mal	wome		
				esen		e	n	male	
				tatio		me	memb	membe	
				ns of		mbe	ers /	rs /	
				old		rs /	repres	general	
		wom	gra			wo	entatio	public /	
		men	m		genera	men	ns of	women	
	prad	male	mem	sabh	l	me	old	membe	
	han	memb	bers	a	public	mbe	gram	rs	Total

						rs	sabha / genera l public			
Members	LP	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	4
Education	School	25.0%	50.0%	.0%	.0%	25.0	.0%	.0%	.0%	100.0
Qualification	"					%				%
		1.0%	2.0%	.0%	.0%	1.0	.0%	.0%	.0%	4.0%
						%				%
	10th	2	18	3	4	5	2	1	5	40
	standa	5.0%	45.0%	7.5	10.0	12.5	5.0%	2.5%	12.5%	100.0
	rd"			%	%	%				%
		2.0%	18.0%	3.0	4.0	5.0	2.0%	1.0%	5.0%	40.0%
				%	%	%				%
	High	0	9	0	1	4	3	9	2	28
	School	.0%	32.1%	.0%	3.6	14.3	10.7	32.1%	7.1%	100.0
	Leavin				%	%	%			%
	g	.0%	9.0%	.0%	1.0	4.0	3.0%	9.0%	2.0%	28.0%
	Certifi				%	%				%
	cate"									
	Higher	2	8	2	0	2	2	2	0	18
	Secon	11.1%	44.4%	11.1	.0%	11.1	11.1	11.1%	.0%	100.0
	dary			%		%	%			%
		2.0%	8.0%	2.0	.0%	2.0	2.0%	2.0%	.0%	18.0%
				%		%				%
	"Grad	1	1	0	0	3	1	1	1	8

uate"	12.5%	12.5%	.0%	.0%	37.5%	12.5%	12.5%	12.5%	100.0%
	1.0%	1.0%	.0%	.0%	3.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	8.0%
Post	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Gradu	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	100.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	100.0%
ate"	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	1.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	1.0%
Techni	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
cal	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Educat	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	1.0%	1.0%
ion									
Total	6	38	5	5	16	8	13	9	100
	6.0%	38.0%	5.0%	5.0%	16.0%	8.0%	13.0%	9.0%	100.0%
	6.0%	38.0%	5.0%	5.0%	16.0%	8.0%	13.0%	9.0%	100.0%

The person dominating in meeting , in to LP school level, according to 25 percent it is pradhans, according to 25 percent it is general public , according to 50 percent it is male members who dominating the meeting.in 10th standerd level, according to 5 percent it is pradhan, according to 45 percent it is male members,12.5 percent it is general public,12.5 percent it is male members / general public / women members who dominating the meeting. In High School Leaving Certificate level, according to 32.1 percent it is male members,14.3 percent it is general public,32.6 percent it is male members / women members / representations of old gram sabha / general public ,10.7 percent it is pradhan / male members / women members who dominating the meeting. In Higher Secondary level, according to 11.1 percent it is prdhan, 44.4 percent it is male members, 11.1 it is women members,11.1 percent it is general public,,11.1 percent it is pradhans / male members / women members,11.1 percent it is pradhans / male members / women members who dominating the meeting. In Graduate level, according to 12.5 percent it is prdhan,12.5 percent it is male members, 37.5

percent it is general public,,12.5 percent it is pradhans / male members / women members,12.5 percent it is pradhans / male members / women members,12.5 percent it is male members / general public / women members who dominating the meeting. In Post Graduate level, according to 100 percent it is general public and in technical education levels it are 100 percent male members / general public / women members. Therefore maximum percentage express about male members of PRIs are more dominating according to some women. Educational level is not going related with dominating in meeting.

Conclusion

Gender disparity and inequality prevails basically in every aspect of life. Patriarchy is so deeply rooted in our society that goal of establishing a society based on gender justice is far way. It seems rights are no longer made for weaker section of the society. The above study shows that less than 50 percent of women are regularly participate in their activities. Highest numbers of women are overburdened or busy household works among the reasons of non participating regularly. Higher level of education is significantly related with awareness. Higher levels of education are also relatively related with expressing their views and present their problems in meetings. Male members are still holding dominating positions in the gram panchayats meetings.

Therefore It is the socio economic development which will help them effectively participate in the decision making process or in the process of empowerment. The reservation scenario helps the women to socialize politically or participate in collective work rather than traditional jobs(according to gender norms) which are only confined to their home, but the above scenario represents that political empowerment is not enough to address the socio economic aspects. A lot of awareness is to be done by the Government about their duties, responsibilities and rights. Again the consciousness of their existence in the society as equal gender is also very important in the process of empowerment. Then only the true sense of empowerment can be achieved.

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