



Institutional Inclusion of Women in Haryana: A Female Perspective on Local Governance Structure of Haryana

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Abstract

The modern world has witnessed the dawn of democratic institutions that have upheld the just and egalitarian fabric of society. Inclusivity and equality are the core principles of these democratic institutions that play an important role to advance the political participation of the marginalised communities. Haryana being the male dominant state has exclusively paved the way for woman in the governance structure of the state. However the presence of women in the political arena is more visible at the helm of panchayati raj institutions. Factors such as Patriarchy, social stigma and political culture have limited the participation of women in the affairs of state. Despite these factors, certain democratic institutions such as NGO's, NCW, Political parties and media are actively encouraging the women to become the active participants in the governance affairs of state. In this context, the primary objective of the study is to analyze the role of women in local level governance mechanism of Haryana. The nature of the study is analytical and primary data forms the base of this study. The data has been collected from Jind district of Haryana by means of simple random sampling technique.

Key Words: *Governance, Institution, Marginalization, Patriarchy*

1. Introduction

India being the largest democratic establishment on the globe has adopted the modern ideals in the form of constitutional ideals such as Liberty, Equality and Justice. India is also the home to diverse cultures and communities, but inequality persists at the larger scale in political terms among the groups/communities such as Women, SC's and ST's. Thus, to create a just and egalitarian state, the constitution makers have made bold initiatives to overcome the marginalization of backward communities. To run the affairs of state in a transparent and smooth manner, various institutions were created. The primary purpose of these institutions is to pave the way for equal participation and representation of all the sections of society in the affairs of society.

India also adopted the federal mechanism to run the affairs of state. India conducts elections at various levels (Lok Sabha Elections, State Assembly Elections and Local Level Elections) to elect the representative for the governance structure of the country. Election commission of India has been given the prime responsibility to conduct the free and fair election in the country. Other institutions such as Media and political parties have also played an important role to disseminate the relevant political knowledge and create a platform for the fair and equal representation of disadvantaged sections of society. In this context, 73rd and 74th amendment acts were passed to pave the way for women in local level governance structure by means of political reservation. Accordingly 33% of seats were reserved for women in the decision making process at the grass-root level. The sole purpose of this inclusive measure was to prevent the institutional exclusion of women in the decision making process at the local level.

2. Research Objectives

- To analyze the working of Local self governing institution in the state of Haryana.
- To compare the political participation of women and men in the PRI's.
- To analyze the role of women in the Panchayati Raj Institutions in Haryana.

3. Research Methodology

The present study intends to explore the role of PRI's in bringing the institutional inclusion of women in the local level governance structure. Thus, the nature of the study is analytical and comparative. The present study will offer an overview of role of women in PRI's by means of data collected from primary and secondary sources. The primary data has been collected from Jind district of Haryana by means of purposive random sampling. A total of 120 respondents were selected including both men and women at equal proportion. While as secondary sources of data has been collected from official government documents, newspapers, Journals and articles.

4. Conceptual Framework

Institutions are mechanisms which govern the behaviour of a set of individuals within a community. According to *Geoffrey M. Hodgson (2006)*, institutions are 'integrated systems of rules that structure social interactions'. Under a democratic set up like India, the political environment comprises three vital institutions namely; legislature, executive and judiciary. Political participation of all the sections of the society is an important aspect. However, the political participation has wide meaning. It is not only related to Right to vote, but simultaneously relates to the participation in decision making process and political consciousness and political activism. Women in India participate in voting, run for political offices at lower levels more than men. Political activism and voting are considered as strongest areas of women's political participation. Democratic country cannot progress if energies of its half population are concerned in the kitchen only (*Nagpal 2013*).

However, India ranks 20th from the bottom in terms of representation of women in parliament. Women in India have occupied higher offices including President, Prime Minister, Governor and Chief Ministers, but in minimal numbers. According to the figures from Election Commission of India, Women voter turnout in 2014 general elections was 65.63%, compared to 67.09% turnout for men. While as in 16 states of India more women voted than men. India being the federal state with devolved powers has witnessed minimal percentage of 10.9% women elected to national parliament in 2012. According to *Khanna (2009)*, constitutional reforms have required women to quit the relative stability of the domestic sphere in order to join the male-dominated political domain, the involvement of women in politics has been of little significance.

Considering the minimal presence in governance mechanism of country, India in 1994 has established reservations in 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments to reserve 33% of seats in local governments for women (*Kishwar 1996*). Also Women's Reservation Bill (108th amendment) has been introduced in the parliament to reserve 33% of Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha seats for women. However the bill is yet to be passed in the Lok Sabha and signed into the law. After the establishment of Women's reservations, their political participation went from 4-5% to 25-40% and gave millions of women the opportunity to serve as leaders in local government.

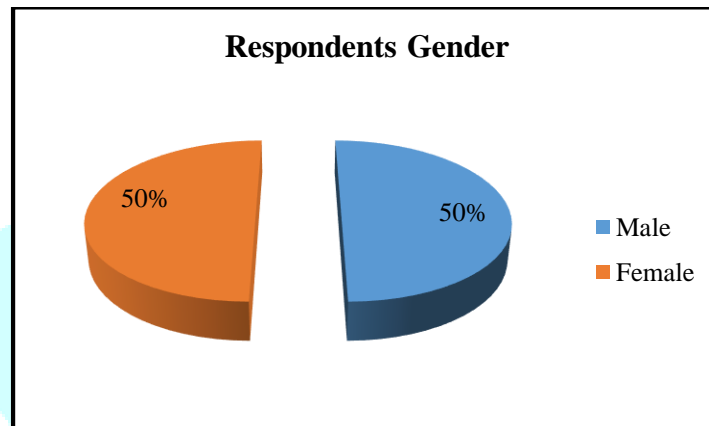
Even after more than sixty years of independence, the legislators of the country are not translating the de jure rights to de facto rights of women (*Chary 2012*). Thus, Inclusion of women in local governance structure of the country is an important aspect to deal with. The inclusion of women in governance structure through reservation is a major tool for empowering the women in political aspect. Political empowerment of women in the contemporary era is the need of hour to ensure inclusive growth (*Rai 2005*). While as their participation is considered as pre-requisite for their inclusive growth and sustainable development of the country. However, women need to be mobilized for participation at local level to redress the issues at grass level. Positive discrimination in the local level governance structure results in the creation of spaces for the better and effective participation by women as a group.

5. Data Interpretation and Data Analyses

Table 1: Sample Size of the Study

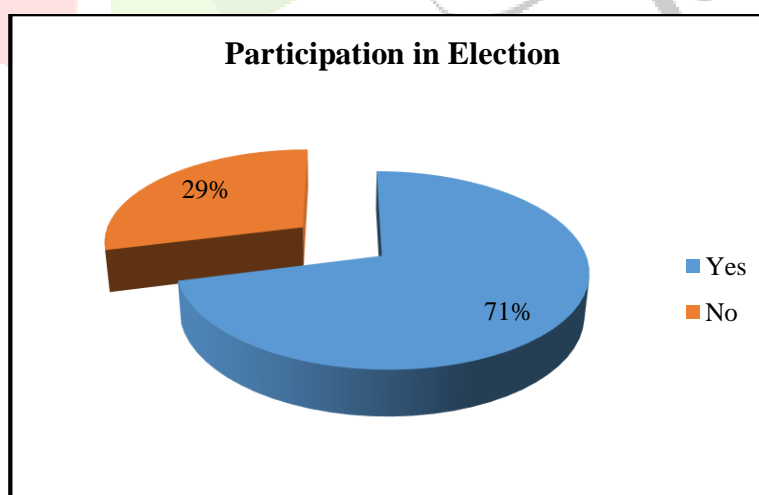
| S. No | Sample Size of Study | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------|----------------------|------------|----------------|
| 1 | Male | 60 | 50.00% |
| 2 | Female | 60 | 50.00% |
| Total | | 120 | 100% |

Diagram 1: Respondents Gender



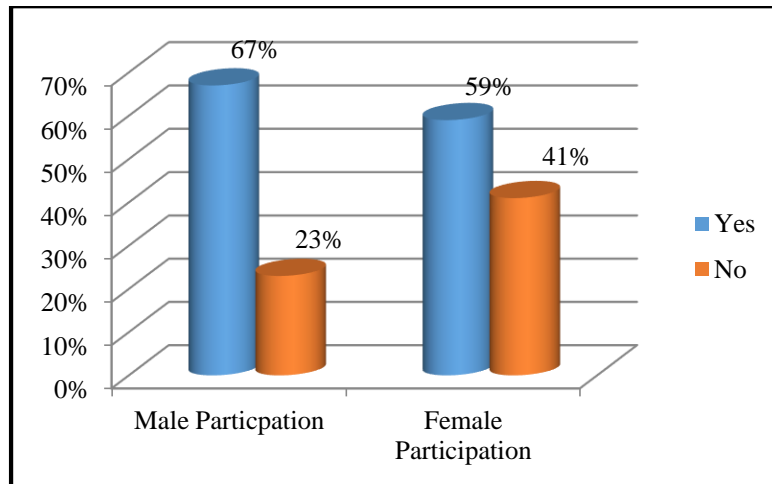
According to the data, the total sample size of the respondents is 120, while as male strength is 60 (50.00%) and females constitute 60 (50.00%) of total sample size. Thus, equal chance has been given to both the genders in the study and it would be quite impressive to analyze and compare the data based on the gender perspective.

Diagram 2: Participation in Election



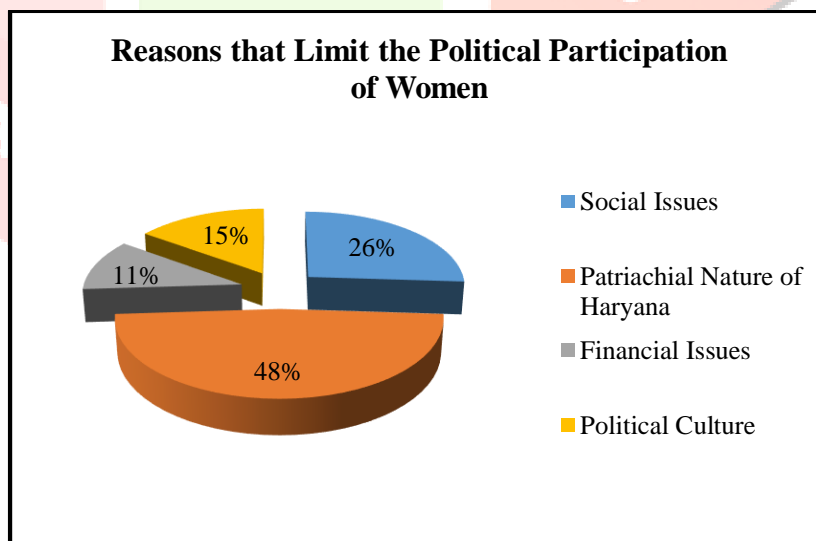
According to the data out of 120 respondents, 86 (71.00%) of respondents are participating in election process and 34 (29.00%) of respondents do not participate in election process. Thus, it can be inferred from the data that majority of the Haryana population is participating in electoral processes and the participation rate in Haryana elections is greater than the general participation rate in India.

Diagram 3: Gender Wise Political Participation



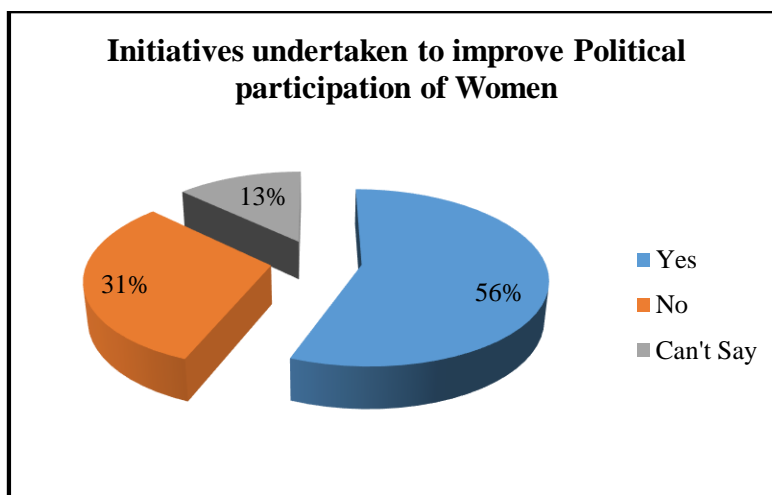
According to the data, 67% of male population is participating in elections and 23% of male populations do not participate in elections. In comparison to male population, female participation in election process is very less (59%) and 41% female populations do not participate in elections. Thus, it can be inferred from the data that, male population is actively participating in election process as compared to the female population. Therefore, female population has minimal presence in the governance structure of country as compared to the male population. However, there are certain inherent reasons that limit the participation of women in the electoral process of the country.

Diagram 4: Reasons that Limit the Political Participation of Women



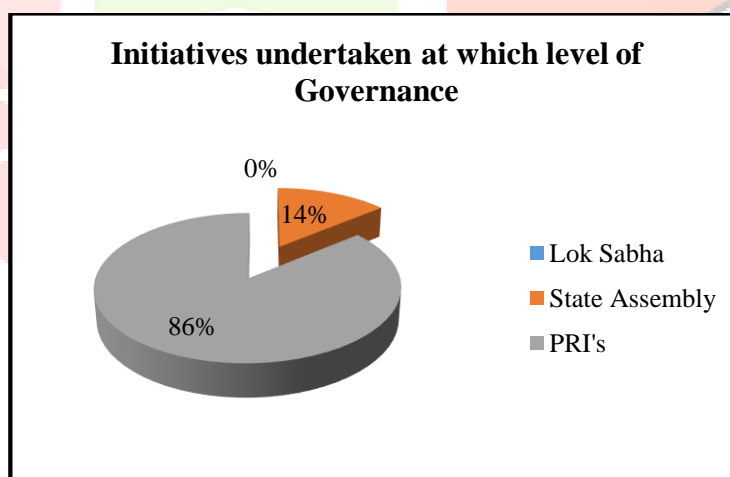
There are various reasons that limit the political participation of women in Haryana. According to the data, 26% of female population attributed social issues as a major reason and 48% of female population has cited patriarchal nature of Haryana society as a major reason that limits their political participation. While as 11% of female population cited financial issues as a reason and 15% of female population has cited political culture as a major reason that limit their participation in the political affairs of state. Thus, it can be inferred from the data that, female population of Haryana are facing two fold challenges; intrinsic (financial and patriarchy) and extrinsic (social issues and political culture).

Diagram 5: Initiatives undertaken to improve Political participation of Women

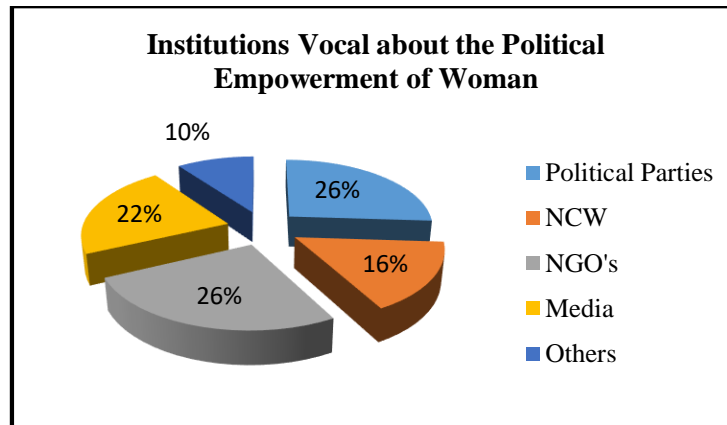


As per the above stated data, 56.00% of the respondents said that there were initiatives undertaken to improve the political participation of the women in Haryana, while as 31.00% of the people believe that no such initiatives have been taken that would improve the political participation of women. The remaining 13.00% responded can't say meaning that they were totally unaware about the initiatives brought in by the Haryana government. Thus it can be inferred that the political participation has seen a number of initiatives being taken to improve political participation of women, as 56.00% of the population has said yes to the improved participation levels in the Haryana.

Diagram 6: Initiatives undertaken at which level of Governance



As per the above stated data, 0% initiatives were undertaken at the Lok Sabha level to increase the levels of participation, whereas 14% the population responded that initiatives were undertaken at the state assembly level. The PRI's according to the population have seen 86% initiatives being undertaken. Thus it can be arrived at that the participatory level has seen a great increase at the PRI level as compared to the Lok Sabha and the State level.

Diagram 7: Institutions Vocal about the Political Empowerment of Woman

From the above stated data, the political parties that were vocal about the political empowerment of woman accounted for 26%, where as 16% population believes that National Commission for Woman is vocal about the political empowerment of woman. NGO's amount to 26% towards being vocal for the political empowerment of woman. Media being vital democratic institution is vocal about the political empowerment of woman account for 22%. Also, 10 % of the population believes that there are other institutions such as local government and state government are vocal about the political empowerment of woman. Thus it can be perceived that political parties and NGO's are more vocal as institutions for the political empowerment of the woman followed by the National Commission for Woman and then media which undoubtedly is referred as the fourth pillar of democracy. The remaining 10% population credited the other institutions being vocal about the political participation of woman.

6. Findings of the Study

The local self governing institutions in the state of Haryana have successfully seen an increased level of participation of the woman irrespective of the various levels of difficulties faced by the woman. There has developed a healthy rise in the participation of woman as various organisations have steered for their participation to pave way for their inclusivity. Thus a higher of participatory measures both at the state and PRI's have proven to be of great help in bringing woman to actively participate in the democratic process.

As far the political participation of woman and men in the PRI's is concerned, men are leading in the participation compared to the women. Men are taking part in greater numbers than woman because of their dominant social and political set up that allows them to play an active role in the electoral process. Woman lag behind men as far political participation is concerned because they are pushed back due to dominant social and patriarchal roles that differentiate between them.

In the state of Haryana, the level of participation of women is very low as compared to the National level; their participation in Lok Sabha & State level elections is not promising. At the local level women are proactive as their level of participation is much better. The woman participate with much enthusiasm

and freely, this is a promising beginning that at the grass root level of the democracy woman of Haryana are participating at much better levels.

Thus there is greater need to inculcate the idea of overall inclusiveness of woman in the various institutions across the state. In the state of Haryana participation level of woman have been very low as there is a dire need to bring in reforms that could lift the status of woman to give them equal opportunity to evolve out of the marginalization that has denied them their constitutional right. There need to overlook the issues like Patriarchal, social, domestic, education, illiteracy and bring in reforms that give woman a greater role. In this regard the various institutions need to bring in reforms in the society so that woman no longer face the alienation of being deprived of all the rights granted under the Constitution overlooking the odds faced by the woman in Haryana.

7. Conclusion

The political participation of woman is gaining momentum in the state of Haryana, as there are more institutional reforms are being introduced at the state level. The participation of woman has seen a greater rise as various institutions are getting more vocal about the inclusion of woman and to institutionalize their role in the participatory democracy. Haryana has witnessed increased participation of woman particularly at the local level bringing woman more towards exercising their constitutional rights. Woman are seen participating in lesser number than men, but the minimal level of participation is the result of long fought war against the Patriarchy and social issues witnessed by the woman. In a move to make institutional inclusion of woman a reality which was for long considered a myth, various institutions including media has played a vital role in pitching the concerns at the National and state level to collaborate on the idea of inclusivity.

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