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POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT OF BILLAVA WOMEN: A STUDY IN UDUPI TALUK, UDUPI DISTRICT

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Introduction :

Udupi district is connected by road and railway line. The National highway 66 (previously NH-17) is the main highway road of Udupi district. National highway 169A connects this district with Thirthahalli in Shivamogga district but it is very narrow at many places and only mini buses and mini lorries are allowed on Agumbe ghat through which this national highway 169A passes. The national highway 169 (previously NH 13) from Mangaluru to Shivamogga passes through Sanoor, Karkala, Bajagoli, Mudar of this district. There are few state highways(SH) built and maintained by Karnataka public works department (P.W.D.). Main District Roads (M.D.R) connect villages and towns of the district. Konkan Railway connects Udupi with Goa, Maharashtra and Kerala states. Nandikoor, Padubidre, Udupi, Barkur, Kundapura and Baindur are few railway stations on Konkan railway line. There are trains from Udupi to state capital Bengaluru, Mangaluru, Kasargod, Madgaon, Thane and Mumbai.

According to the 2011 census Udupi district has a population of 1,177,361, roughly equal to the nation of Timor-Leste or the US state of Rhode Island. This gives it a ranking of 403rd in India (out of a total of 640). The district has a population density of 304 inhabitants per square kilometre (790/sq mi). Its population growth rate over the decade 2001-2011 was 5.9%. Udupi has a sex ratio of 1093 females for every 1000 males, and a literacy rate of 86.29%. About 2The Billavas are first recorded in inscriptions dating from the fifteenth century AD but Amitav Ghosh notes that". This is merely an indication of their lack of social power; there is every reason to suppose that all the major Tuluva castes share an equally long history of settlement in the region". The earliest epigraphy for the Tuluva Bunt community dates to around 400 years earlier. Language: There is a complex linguistic environment in Tulu Nadu, which is the area of India to which the Billavas trace their origin.

Profile of Billavas:

The Billava dead are usually cremated, although burial occurs in some places, and there is a ritual pollution period observed at this time also. The Billava community is one of a few in India that practice posthumous marriage. Others that do so include the Badagas, Komatis and the Todas. Subgroups: All of the Tuluva castes who participate fully in Bhuta worship also have loose family groupings known as balis. These groups are also referred to as "septs", and are similar to the Brahmin gotras except that their membership is based on matrilineal rather than patrilineal descent. Iyer noted 16 balis within the Billava community and that some of these had further subdivisions. Prof. Thurston said of these exogamous Billava groups that "There is a popular belief that these are sub-divisions of the twenty balis which ought to exist according to the Aliya Santana system (inheritance of the female line)." Worship of Bhtas: The Billavas were among the many communities to be

excluded from the Hindu temples of Brahmins and they traditionally worship spirits in a practice known as Bhuta Kola. S. D. L. Alagodi wrote in 2006 of the South Canara population that "Among the Hindus, a little over ten per cent are Brahmins, and all the others, though nominally Hindus are really propitiators or worshippers of tutelary deities and Bhutas or demons." The venues for Bhuta Kola are temple structures called Bhutasthna or Garadi as well as numerous shrines. The officiators at worship are a subcaste of Billavas, known as Poojary (priest), and their practices are known as pooja.

Women and Political Participation:

The term 'political participation' has a very wide meaning. It is not only related to 'Right to Vote', but simultaneously relates to participation in: decision making process, political activism, political consciousness, etc. Women in India participate in voting, run for public offices and political parties at lower levels more than men. Political activism and voting are the strongest areas of women's political participation. To combat gender inequality in politics, the Indian Government has instituted reservations for seats in local governments. Women turnout during India's 2014 parliamentary general elections was 65.63 per cent, compared to 67.09 per cent turnout for men. India bags 20th rank from the bottom in terms of representation of women in Parliament. Women have held the posts of president and prime minister in India, as well as chief ministers of various states. Indian voters have elected women to numerous state legislative assemblies and national parliament for many decades.

The data clearly depicts women's interest in political participation in the study area. It reveals that 32 per cent of the respondents are having interest in political participation and 68 per cent of the respondents they are not interest in political participation. So above statement clearly depicts that majority 68 per cent of the respondents are not interest in political participation. They are all engage in day to day daily works; they are not ready to spend the times for political participation and issues.

The data on Participation in political Programme of Billava Women depicts the interest in participation in political parties. So just 24 per cent of the respondents are having interest in participation in political programmes and majority 76 per cent of the respondents are not interest and participation in political programmes. Above analysis we can clearly knows that majority 76 per cent of the respondents are not interest In participation in political programmes, they are losing confidence and trust about political programmes whichever assurance given by the political parties.

AWARENESS OF WOMEN ON POLITICAL PARTIES:

The Government of India directed state and local governments to promote equality by class and gender including equal pay and free legal aid, humane working conditions and maternity relief, rights to work and education, and raising the standard of living. Women were substantially involved in the Indian independence movement in the early 20th century and advocated for independence from Britain. Independence brought gender equity in the form of constitutional rights, but historically women's political participation has remained low. Awareness about political parties in Village level is also assessed. From the information we have collected the data reveals the awareness on the political parties working in the area. The questions about the information on political parties in village 98 per cent of the respondents are conscious about the importance of voting and 16 per cent of the respondents are not aware of the political parties in village level. From the above analysis we can agree that majority i.e. 84 per cent of the respondents are well aware of the political parties ruling in village level. In village level the political parties come across to resolve the problems of infrastructure of the community and how people are satisfied with them, so in Billava Community majority of the women have the knowledge on the functions of the political parties in grass route level. The data regarding the Participation of women in Gramasabhas indicate the ratio of respondent's participation in Gramasabhas. Majority 62 per cent of the respondents are interested to participate in gramasabhas, and 38 per cent of the respondents' have not participated in gramasabha held in village level. From the above analysis we can reveal that majority 62 per cent of the respondents either directly or indirectly involved in the gramasabhas.

The opinion on which party rules in the state at present is collected. The respondents seeking to know about political party reveal that majority i.e. 78 per cent the respondents are well aware of the political party ruling in Karnataka state. 22 per cent of the respondents are not having any information on the party that is ruling in Karnataka state. From the above analysis researcher can conclude that majority of the respondents are discussing the political issues in the state at present.

The information reveals about the knowledge that Billava Women have freedom to spend money for daily expenses. Majority 82 per cent of the respondents agree and happy to say that they have freedom to spend money for daily expenses. 18 per cent of the respondents don't have freedom to spend money. From the above

analysis we can say that majority 82 per cent of the Billava Women have freedom and rights to spend their income. Regarding the dress all the 100 per cent from the staff, problem reveals about to know Billava Women having freedom. So 34 per cent of the respondents disagree and don't have any freedom to wear choosing their own dress. And 66 per cent of the respondents having freedom to wear their own choosing dress. Majority i.e. 66 per cent of the respondents are having freedom to choose their dress. They have no need to ask permission with family members to wear or select any dress material to select.

The data on monthly income and economic status of the Billava Women is also studied in this survey. As per data 36 per cent of the respondents family income was 2000-3000 per month, and 36 per cent of the respondents family income was 4000-5000, 4 per cent of the families had the income of Rs 6000-7000 per month and 12 per cent of the Billava Women were earning Rs 8000-9000 per month, remaining 12 per cent of them had the income of Rs 10000-11000 per month. Here majority i.e. 72 per cent of the respondents have the income above Rs 2000 up to Rs 5000 family income. The information on freedom to participate in Panchayats shows that 60 per cent of the respondents have to freedom to participate in panchayath election and 40 per cent of the people have not freedom to participate in panchayath election. So the chart evidently shows that 60 per cent of the respondents have the freedom to participate in panchayath election.

To the question regarding the name of the current prime minister, the above data reveals to know the name of the current prime minister by Billava Women. Majority 82 per cent of the respondents know and aware about the name of current prime minister. 18 per cent of the respondents still don't know the name of prime minister of India. From the above analysis it is seen that majority 82 per cent of the respondents know the name of current prime minister, somehow they are in confused state because they The data reveals as our feeling of Billava Women about their status, 36 per cent of the Billava Women situation and status was much better. 54 per cent of the Billava Women's situation was better and 10 per cent of the Billava Women situation was bad, from the above analysis it is seen that majority i.e. 54 per cent of the Billava Women's status was 'better' They felt good enough in socio-economic condition, relationship with family members, they have the freedom to take right decision at any circumstances. The data Describe religious nature from the data. It describes the religious nature of Billava Women. Majority i.e. 68 per cent of the Billava Women have high religious sentiment. 10 per cent (5) of the Billava Women are somewhat religious nature. 22 per cent (11) of the Billava Women are not at all religious nature. Majorities i.e. 68 per cent of the respondents are very religious nature; they believe their family god and worship daily. Most of the Billava Women more faithful on Narayana guru, they often gave visit to temple's and worship. A per data 100 per cent of the Billava Women views about present government given opportunity for employment of women. 70 per cent of the respondents opined there is increased significantly in employment of women. 14 per cent of the respondents opined there are decreased in present government given opportunity for employment of women. 16 per cent of the respondents responded reminds the same. From the above analysis majority i.e. 70 per cent of the Billava Women feel that the employment opportunity is increased.

Conclusion

The in-depth study on Political Empowerment of Billava Women makes us know about backward class women in Udupi.

They were denied equal opportunities for many years. In addition to that they were the centre of several Social evils. As result women were secluded from political, Socio-economic and cultural activities which resulted in a serious setback to the community growth. Participation of women as voters is tremendously high. Keeping in mind about the high participation of women voters the political parties announced various favors and offers to women in the general elections. Billava Women are generally more concerned about the problems that unemployment and poverty. Billava Women do not have much interest in political activities. Billava community has established its own Temple. After the installation of the Kudroli Gokarnantheswara temple at Mangalore the decades have witnessed a steadily increasing awareness of the need to empower women through measure to increase social economic and political equity. Women studies analyzed the factor affecting of progress and development in a study result shows that women are empowering economically, socially and they also exposed to know about their rights.

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