

LOCAL SELF GOVERNMENT

COURSE -424

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20 MARKS

WOMEN LEADERSHIP

Women's leadership may be used both for support by an agency and as a control device by the law-makers. Leadership may be direct or definition of people's leadership often becomes irrelevant due to lack indirect, formal or informal; it may be political, social or administrative in nature. Women's leadership in Panchayat Raj institutions may take many forms. It refers to all those activities which show the women's involvement in the processes and administration, that is, leadership in policy formulation and programme planning, implementation and evaluation of policies and programmes meant for development target groups. In developing societies the traditional of time, initiative, and resources of the citizen who fails to show the necessary enthusiasm or cooperation towards governmental programmes meant for their benefit. The state not only plays the key role in attempts at socio-economic transformation and modernization but also in promoting, leadership. Panchayat Raj and community development programmes were introduced mainly so solicit women leadership in the development administration of the government.

Concept of Leadership:

Leadership as has been generally understood can be defined as a special kind of 'soft power' where essential in the concept of power is the role of 'purpose'. That is, leaders exercise power for some purpose, and the purpose itself can vary

widely according to context. Clarity of the purpose becomes important because it is a shared domain between leaders and others, and linked to questions of motivation.

Women's Leadership for Strengthen Democracy:

Being in a formal position of 'power' is not always equivalent to being a leader. The 73rd amendment has brought many women into Panchayati Raj institutions. Some of these have been termed as proxies of their respective husbands—'pati pradhans'. 'Leadership' implies 'empowerment'. Empowerment has been generally understood as a process through which existing power relations can be challenged; as a way of gaining and controlling informational resources. At times, empowerment is confused with being in a formal position of power. The study of leadership by women in different situations could help to shift attention towards processes that allow the emergence of leadership qualities, and the manner in which 'power' can be used to strengthen democracy and social equity.

Globally, there are 37 States in which women account for less than 10 per cent of parliamentarians in single or lower houses, as of December 2014. In India, only 21.9 per cent of national parliamentarians were female as of 1 December 2014, a slow increase from 11.3 per cent in 1995. As of January 2015, 10 women served as Head of State and 15 served as Head of Government. Rwanda had the highest number of women parliamentarians worldwide. Women there have won 63.8 per cent of seats in the lower house.

Women's Leadership in Local Bodies:

Political parties in Maharashtra will immediately after the 73rd Amendment. have to nominate 130,734 women in local bodies during elections, now that the state cabinet has approved increasing the women's leadership quota from 33% to 50%

- The Maharashtra cabinet has approved reservation of half the seats in local self-government bodies for women leadership. Although a bill to reserve 33% of seats for women in Parliament.
- A 33% quota for women in local bodies already exists, their representation must increase. There are many grassroots party workers who will now get a chance to be elected.
- The local bodies include the gram panchayat (GP), panchayat samiti (PS) and zilla parishad (ZP), municipal corporations and municipal councils across Maharashtra.
- Parties will have to identify and give candidature to a record 130,734 women in local bodies during the elections. They will also have to nominate nearly 1,859 women candidates in elections to 169 municipal councils slated for September 2011. About 980 women candidates have to be nominated during elections to the 33 zilla parishads slated for February-March 2012.
- The State Election Commission is implementing the Kranti Jyoti scheme to make women representatives competent to handle governance.
- Even before the 73rd Amendment, which made 33% reservation for women mandatory in the country, women in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra had been contesting elections and participating in panchayats. The oldest known all-women panchayat that held office was in Nimbut village in Pune district of Maharashtra (1963-68).
- Karnataka had 25% reservation for its two-tier panchayati raj system in 1987 that was replaced by the constitutionally mandated 33% in 1993.
- Three states -- Orissa, West Bengal and Maharashtra -- conducted elections with 33% reservation for women
- Bihar was the first state to offer 50% reservation for women in panchayats, in 2005, following which Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and

Rajasthan also announced 50% reservation, to be implemented in the next panchayat election in early-2010. Kerala recently announced 50% reservation for women in panchayats and other local bodies.

- In most other states, women's representation is around 36.87% of the 28.18 lakh elected panchayat representatives.

Limitation in Women Leadership:

A constitutional provision is only a necessary step which should be followed by effective measures for women's upliftment. Women representatives lack this aspect of qualitative leadership.

- Overburdened with family responsibilities.
- Introversion due to the lack of communication skills.
- Women representatives have some individual weaknesses in leadership: Poor socio-economic background with which the women have come into the system and poor capacity building.
- Patriarchal system indirectly controls and directs their participation.
- Illiteracy and low education levels of the majority of the women elected to the PRIs
- To make women's leadership in society and politics a reality, enormous work remains to be done, given their present socio-economic conditions.
- Effective leadership in PRIs has failed due to misuse and manipulation by the local power-brokers. It has been observed that women are invited only to complete the quorum.
- Ignorance of women about their rights and procedures and about their potential and responsibilities has kept them far behind men in the local bodies.
- Male family members and also leaders from the caste group/community come in the way of the affairs of the Panchayats.
- Indifferent attitude and behaviour of officials working in the system.

- Misguidance by the local bureaucracy.
- Apprehension of no-confidence motion by the other elected members of the system.
- Mounting pressure from the political party which has vested interests in the gender reservation for positions in the PR system.
- Undue interference by the husband (post sarpanches) of women representatives, treating them as mere dummies.
- Widespread use of corrupt practices among the male members and local bureaucrats.'

` It is clear that mere reservation is not enough because a woman leadership lacks qualitative participation due to both internal and external factors. Woman's empowerment is not something which can be handed over to women only. This is a process which involves sincerity, earnestness and capacity and capability on the part of both men and women. It is a challenging task in village India as even today she cannot take any independent decision. She feels subordinate to her husband and even to her son.

REMEDIES FOR WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP:

- Most of the women in rural areas feel inferior to male members of family/Panchayats. This attitude needs to change to make women as part and parcel of the family as well as Panchayats. They should retain their confidence level.'
- Women hailing from SC and ST categories may find it difficult to mix with representatives of general categories. To cope with this problem, it is necessary to inculcate confidence among them and to bring attitudinal changes through training in the psyche of the upper classes.

- In Indian villages, girls remain dependent upon the father, brother or cousin and this very feeling continues in their married life. We must give capacity building training to girls in schools to be independent.
- The programmes of free universal education upto the age of 14 should be vigorously implemented. The courses of studies should inculcate the values of gender equality, self-respect, courage, independence etc. which would help to develop the personalities of girls/ women.
- In all kinds of public participation, the primary responsibilities of women for looking after home and children always come in the way; unless arrangements are made for child care and other domestic responsibilities, sustained participation of women in the public sphere is not possible.
- Women representatives in PRIs must be trained in the art and science of decision-making so that they are not influenced by extraneous factors. They must develop leadership qualities. They should discuss among other women and take their opinion. All women members of Panchayats and other executive bodies must be trained and empowered to exercise their authority.
- Particular attention must be paid for special orientation camps for the rural elite to the development of inter-personal communication skills among the community leaders.
- The women leadership must be mutually able to communicate in order to be able to exchange ideas. They should be given proper training in the working of the politico-administrative institutions.
- Elected women representatives of three tiers should meet once in three months and formulate integrated plans. In this way, they would be more participative while deliberating on important issues.'

- Women MLAs and MPs should visit frequently the elected representatives of PRIs to solve the problems faced by the rural women members. They should encourage them to take decisions independently.

CONCLUSION & SUGGESTIONS

In the end, it can conclude that leadership for women in PRIs is a good step but it should be supplemented with effective measures that ensure the qualitative aspect of women's leadership. Women's expectations and hopes for a greener, cleaner, responsive and representative politics have gone up. They will send out more clearly and energetically the message of women's empowerment and social development. There is a need to empower rural women to enhance their quality of leadership. The awakening of women in India towards a society where justice and brotherhood prevail can best be achieved by woman-to-woman contact. The cultural patterns of Indian society are such that social progress among women can be promoted effectively through the medium of personal relationship among them. It is women who can inspire confidence and offer stimulus for social change especially among their sisters in the rural areas. Hence, effective leadership among women must come from the ranks of women themselves. Their qualitative leadership can be achieved through training besides of course the literacy educational programmes. So women should be aware and improve the quality of their leadership in the political system is needed for strengthening the Indian democracy.

