



REVIEW OF RESEARCH

ISSN: 2249-894X

IMPACT FACTOR : 5.7631(UIF)

VOLUME - 13 | ISSUE - 8 | MAY - 2024



DALIT POLITICAL AWARENESS AND PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL DECENTRALIZED GOVERNANCE

Dr. Prakash Kattimani

**Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science,
Rani Channamma University, Belagavi.**

ABSTRACT :

People in general, and Dalits in particular, require a high level of political knowledge. There are numerous issues and topics in general, as well as Dalit individuals in particular. Human agency is expressed through participation. Cluster sampling is a strategy for eliciting data from various respondents based on the scope of the study and taking into account both inclusive and exclusive criteria. Elected Schedule Caste members number 1105, with scheduled Tribes numbering 912. The project will be carried out by ten elected individuals from each thaluka in the Belagavi district. The data from 140 samples was collected from 14 talukas.

People participate in political activities in an election system in order to influence decision-making processes and policies in order to achieve the desired socio-political transformation. Voting, running for office, and supporting candidates were all forms of political participation in the past. The focus is on a good governance agenda, which entails increasing people's influence, particularly poor and marginalised people like SCs, in larger decision-making processes, as well as increased government responsiveness to their voices.



KEY WORDS: Dalit, Political Participation, Constitutional Provisions, Local Government.

INTRODUCTION

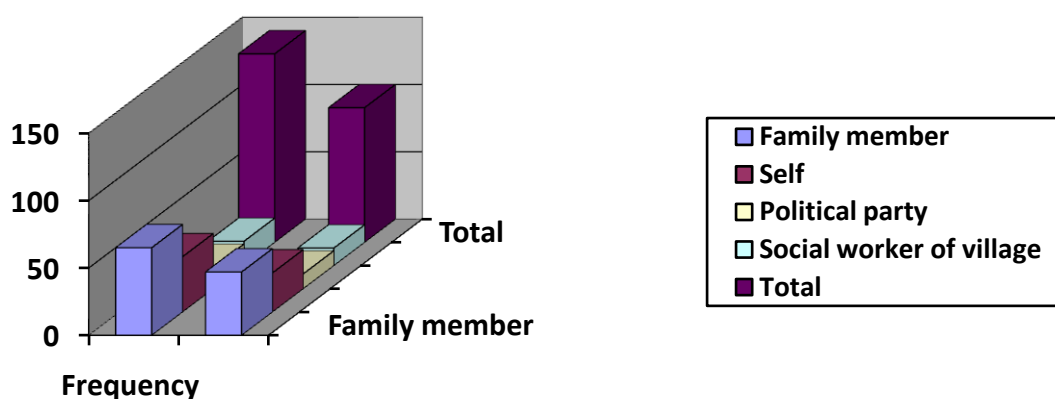
Panchayats were given constitutional validity as the third domain of self-governance in India by the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act (CAA) of 1992. It increased the space for people's representation and agency in governance, as well as bringing decision-making closer to them. The Act aimed to address the long-standing discrimination of impoverished, marginalised, and underrepresented individuals including women, scheduled tribes (STs), and scheduled castes (SCs). This Act, as well as subsequent State Acts on Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs), established mandatory measures for (a) seat reservation and (b) mandatory gramme sabha meetings, allowing SCs in villages to participate in political decision-making. This disadvantaged group of people is referred to as "scheduled castes" in administrative terms. It refers to the formal caste schedules that are related to laws. These lists are made to determine who is entitled to legal protection, access to welfare schemes, and reserved seats in higher education, legislature (both parliament and state assemblies), and local self-governance institutions, as well as reserved jobs in government employment and special financial assistance for businesses. This phrase is also found in the United States Constitution and different legislation.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PAPER:

1. To understand political reservations and identify the status of dalit people in regard to participation in local self government.
2. To know the culture of cooperative living for inclusive development of dalits.

METHODOLOGY:

Cluster sampling is a strategy for eliciting data from various respondents based on the scope of the study and taking into account both inclusive and exclusive criteria. Elected Schedule Caste members number 1105, with scheduled Tribes numbering 912. The project will be carried out by ten elected individuals from each thaluka in the Belagavi district. The data from 140 samples was collected from 14 talukas.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY:**Reasons for joining politics:**

The above chart shows that Reasons are for joining politics among the respondents. 47 percentage of the respondents joined the politics by the encouraged from their family members, 29 percentage of the respondents joined the politics by the self motivation, 13 percentage of the respondents joined the politics because of social workers of the respective village to participation in local government, and 11 percentage of the respondents joined the politics the political party. Dalit community people are understood that need to participation in local government for their grassroots' development.

Opinion regarding reservation of seats for Dalits:

Opinions	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	128	91
No	12	09
Total	140	100

The above table shows that opinion regarding reservation of seats for Dalits among the respondents. 91 percentage of the respondents felt that reservation of seats for Dalits needed to uplift the dalit community by the local government. Therefore recently dalits are participating in all the aspects in local government especially in gram panchayats.

Participation in panchayat activities:

Panchayat activities	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	86	61
Sometime	43	31
No	11	08
Total	140	100

The above table shows that Opinions on Opinions on participation in panchayat activities by the respondents. 61 percentage of the respondents said yes in connecting to participation in panchayat activities, 31 percentage of the respondents said sometime in connecting to participation in panchayat activities, and 8 percentage of the respondents said no in connecting to participation in panchayat activities. The research study found that most of the respondents satisfied with their participation in local government.

Cultural and Political Assertion:

The claim of distinct identity by SCs is not a new occurrence. Between the 10th and 16th centuries, the Bhakti movement was primarily a struggle against caste identities and untouchability. Recently, the Arya Samaj and Gandhi have attempted to address the issue of untouchability. For untouchables, Gandhi used the word "Harijan," which literally means "Children of God". Political awareness is linked to organised political assertion of SCs. They are seeking redress for their marginalised status in mainstream society through redistribution and acknowledgement. They are looking for resource redistribution to help them overcome their economic and social disadvantage. Their proclamation of dalit identity serves as a symbol of protest and mobilisation against discrimination based on ethnicity. Exclusionary citizenship identities have resulted from a lack of acknowledgment of their identity, rights, and entitlements, as well as a lack of resources that would allow them to otherwise assert their voice and demand rights and entitlements. The democratic political system is seen as a crucial institution for asserting individual rights.

Provisions for Political Participation of Dalits:

The Indian Constitution requires the government to provide equality, entitlement, and justice to all citizens. Discrimination such as untouchability is prohibited by the Constitution. In India, equality, entitlement, and social justice have become synonymous with the upliftment and empowerment of the marginalised individuals, namely the scheduled castes, due to the pervasive practice of caste-based discrimination and its long-term consequences (SCs). Part XVI of the Indian Constitution emphasises special provisions for specific classes. Many articles in Part III (Fundamental Rights), IV (Directive Principles of State Policy), IX, and IXA, as well as the fifth Schedule of the Constitution, show the Constitution's dedication to the issue. Reservations of seats in Parliament and state legislatures (Art 330, 332), as well as in institutions of local self-government such as panchayats and municipalities, were made to ensure political representation (Art 243D, 243T).

Constitutional Amendments & Panchayati Raj:

Part IX of the Indian Constitution provides for the reservation of elected positions in Panchayats across the country for the weaker sections. Following the 73rd Constitutional Amendments, states passed conformity legislation to include affirmative action protections for scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and women. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act and subsequent State Acts intended to reform unjust social institutions, policies, and programmes by allowing SCs to use the democratic space of constitutionally mandated PRIs. Affirmative action is expected to create a critical mass of local leadership from these groups, who will be active participants in strategic decision-making. The power concentration would now be altered via representation and participation in mandated local decision-making bodies. Issue-oriented groups or interest groups would arise throughout time.

Participation in Decision-Makings:

The involvement of Scheduled Castes as gram sabha members has been nominal and proxy. It's mostly due to two factors: first, current social realities and power dynamics; and second, a significant level of ignorance among SCs. They remain silent in meetings because they are unaware of their involvement in the creation of the village plan. The simplistic appeals for increased political participation of SCs in gram sabha generally overlook some ground realities, such as the timings of Gram Sabha meetings, problems of quorum and procedures adopted for finalising development plans

and projects, the quality of deliberations and manipulation of discussions by dominant groups, the helplessness of poor wage workers to lose a day's wage, illiteracy, and the quality of deliberations and manipulation of discussions by dominant groups. The progressive elements of the 73rd Amendment Acts will not be realised unless marginalised groups are given social urging and support. Unfortunately, with the exception of a few civil society initiatives, there is no institutional support system in place to encourage and support dalits' effective participation in gramm sabha meetings. Dalit involvement rose both quantitatively and qualitatively wherever civil society organisations conducted gramm sabha mobilisation drives.

DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS:

With an important aim of devolution of powers to panchayats, the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 attempted to remedy the long-standing marginalisation of SCs from political processes and decision-making. As elected representatives and gramm sabha members, it provided them with the opportunity and space to influence policies. Since then, fifteen years have gone under the new Panchayati Raj. It is critical to assess the state of dalit involvement in panchayats at this time in order to make panchayats more inclusive. Opinions on being a Dalit's leader you have to deal with additional Responsibilities. 47 percentage of the respondents felt that said yes being a Dalit's leader you have to deal with additional Responsibilities. Opinions on training is required for newly elected Dalit members by the respondents. 70 percentage of the respondents felt that training is required for newly elected Dalit members. Opinions on Through higher education true Dalit development can take place by the respondents. 54 percentage of the respondents said yes in regard to through higher education true Dalit development can take place in democratic society by local government. Local self government should held public awareness programme in the local government at least twice in a year, so people can know the presence in the decision making process and their rights and duties. A comprehensive capacity building and training policy has to be formulated with the involvement of dalits of local governments at the state level and adequate fund has to be earmarked in the state budget for the training and capacity building of local governments.

CONCLUSION:

The vulnerability of SCs in the hamlet contributes to their lack of confidence in participating in panchayats. Their sense of insecurity grows as a result of the lack of any organised structure within their group as a whole. The SC community in the village has a variety of dynamics. Though caste associations, membership in various organisations, and political party membership made it easier for them to enter politics, such forms of civil society did not truly encourage their independence. Political parties have not aided dalits at the local level, according to studies on dalit leadership in panchayats, particularly when uppercaste organisations fought them.

REFERENCES:

1. Aiyer Mani Shankar (2004): 'Towards Time bound Panchayati Raj: tenth anniversary Plan of Action' in D. Bandyopadhyay et al (Ed) New Issues in Panchayati Raj, New Delhi. Concept Publishing Company.
2. Bharati Sunita Reddy (2002): 'Dalit: A Term Asserting Unity' in Economic and Political Weekly, October.
3. Devakumar J (2007): 'Caste clashes and Dalit Rights Violations in Tamil Nadu', in Social Scientist, Volume. 35, Numbers. 11-12, November-December.
4. Jadhav Narendra (2004): 'Economic Policy and Social Justice: An Agenda for Future', in Bibek Debroy & D. Shyam Babu (Ed): The Dalit Question, New Delhi, Globus Books.
5. Kabeer Naila (2000): 'Social exclusion, Poverty and Discrimination: Towards an Analytical Framework,' in IDS Bulletin, Volume. 31, Number.4, October. P 86
6. Kaiser Ejaz (2008) Villagers Lynch Dalit Sarpanch, Hindustan Times Raipur, January 12.

7. Kumar Narender & Rai Manoj et al (2006): Dalit Leadership in Panchayats, New Delhi, Rawat Publications
8. Mander Harsh (2002): 'Status of Dalit and Agenda for State Intervention' in Ghanshyam Shah (Ed) Dalit and the State, New Delhi, Concept Publishing Company.
9. Pai Sudha (2001): 'Social Capital, Panchayats and Grass Roots Democracy: Politics of Dalit Assertion in Uttar Pradesh' in Economic and Political Weekly, February 24.
10. Palshikar Suhas (2007): 'Dalit Politics in the Nineties. Electoral Politics and Predicament before an Underprivileged Community', Indian journal of Social Work, Vol. 68, Issue.1, January.
11. Pant Mandakini. (2006). "Loktantra Mein Bhagidari ki Shiksha: Varsh 2005 Chunav Poorva Matdata Jagrukta Abhiyan ki Bhumika," Participation & Governance, Volume. 12, Number. 34 March.
12. Siga, Gandhi, (November 2014). Evolution of Panchayati Raj in India with Special Reference to Arunachal Pradesh, International Journal of Humanities & Social Science Studies, Vol-I, Issue-III, 225-240
13. Sivanna, N (1997) Role of Panchayats in Poverty Alleviation Programmes: A Study in the State of Karnataka. Journal of Rural Development, 16(4), 1997, Pp. 633-650.