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**A STUDY ON PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES OF WOMEN PARTICIPATION AND
EMPOWERMENT IN GRASSROOT POLITICS**

Aftab Uddin Ahmed Assistant Professor of Political Science Pramathesh Barua College, Gauripur
(Assam)

Abstract

The Panchayati Raj Institutions introduced proper representation and proper participation from all marginalized section of society, specially the participation of women who are belonging to weaker sections of the society because women in Panchayats constitute the basic buildings of democracy and this democracy achieved complete active participation of women in grass root level politics and it means the reconstruction of India from the below, but the journey of political participation of women is not smooth, they face a various problems in the village Panchayat. They play an important role in determining the destiny of a nation but if we look back to our society we can observe very few women took active participation in local politics due to the limitation of being a woman in a patriarchal society. Then Women were not allowed to raise their voice in the family because of the stereotypical approach towards women and thereby the women found difficult to speak with courage in front of their male counterpart. Though women were very much active in their household job but they were made to have a negligible involvement in the decision making process in the local politics on account of their low socio-economic status as well as society's stereotypical attitude towards women that they are weaker, emotionally charged, having fixed gender roles and are bound to live within their cocoon. The present study is highlighted in this paper the development of grassroot level politics from independence for the marginalised sections and specially women in 73rd constitutional amendment. The paper focuses on the various issues and problems that against participation and empowerment of women in grassroot politics.

Keywords: Women, Empowerment, Political Participation, Panchayati Raj Institutions, Democracy.

I. Introduction

Democracy implies equal for all human beings both men and women. The UN observed that women constitute "world largest excluded category". For the attainment of real democratic spirit shall be ensured better political participation. "In the struggle for gender justice", Usha Narayanan argues, "Political participation constitutes the first and foremost steps in the direction". Equal treatment to women in political life to be effective and meaningful should start from the grassroots level because the reconstruction of women empowerment in India from the below. To provide practice and training in the decision-making process, the rural local self-democratic institutions are the ideal structures to begin with. One of the main aims of the 73rd constitutional amendment act is to accomplish this purpose. The question of political empowerment of women in rural India has assumed considerable significance presently because of the 73rd constitutional amendment act. This amendment provides reservation of seats and posts of chairperson for women in all rural local level democratic institutions in the countryside known as Panchayats. This is a historic step of far reaching implications and important image on the political process in rural India.

"As long as women of India", declared Mahatma Gandhi in 1925, "do not take part in public life there can be no salvation for the country". He further declared, "as long as...women do not come to public life and purify... we are not likely to attain swaraj". "Ever if we did", he added, "it would have no use for that kind of swaraj to which women have not made their full contribution" (Narayanan, 1999).

The word Panchayati Raj in India signifies the system of rural local self-government. It has been set-up to build democracy at the grass root level. This act first introduced P V Narashima Rao in the Lok Sabha in September, 1991. This bill finally established as the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 and came into force on 24 April, 1993.



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प्रशासकीय भवनम्, मौदा मार्गस्य, रामटेकम् – 441106, जि. नागपुरम्.
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