

CHAPTER – I

INTRODUCTION

Democracy applies to all individuals on an equal basis. In India, all citizens, irrespective of their backgrounds and categories are given certain rights, which enable them to render an effective contribution towards development of the nation. Women have been excluded from different walks of life and they are discriminated against in every society. The discriminatory treatment against women is high among the economically weaker sections of the society, as compared to wealthy upper caste families. Women are excluded from political participation as well. The United Nations, observes that for the attainment of true democratic spirit, political participation of women is regarded to be of utmost significance. Making provision of equal treatment to women in political participation is considered to be meaningful and effective and should begin from the grassroots level.

To perform their role effectively in the political sphere, it is vital for women to generate awareness and be informative in terms of various aspects. This includes, good decision making, conducting an analysis of the areas that need to be improved within the regions, and working to their best abilities towards promoting well-being of the communities and nation. One of the aims of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act is to accomplish this purpose. Because of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, the question of political empowerment of women in rural India has assumed considerable significance.

Political participation has been characterised as the civic duty. It is the sign of political health and the best method of ensuring that the methods and practices that are essential are not neglected. In every society, political power is monopolized by a few. The incumbents of political authority in every system are found to be keen in ensuring the political participation of the individuals. Therefore, by the involvement of individuals in the matters of state, political participation promotes stability and order by reinforcing the legitimacy of political authority. The term, political participation applies to all activities of the individuals that are different from the political system. Participation may be observed from two perspectives, i.e. intensity and width. Intensity is referred to how profoundly a person is involved in the issue and to what extent, he would go

towards the achievement of its objective. They also comprise of voluntary activities, which individuals are required to put into practice in the selection of rulers. Furthermore, voluntary activities are put into operation, directly or indirectly in the formulation of public policy.

The Constitution of India (Article 15) attempts to remove gender inequalities based religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth, and enshrining fundamental rights for all citizens. It is unfortunate that women have not substantially availed of the constitutional provisions. Women still have only de jure rather than de facto access to these rights. Forget about the gender parity at all levels, India fails to become a nation wherein women have proportional representation in legislation. Since independence, the Parliament hasn't seen a fair percentage of women members who can represent the almost half of the population of the nation. No one can deny the fact that greater participation of women in the political process would have positive impact on economic and social emancipation of women. Although of large number of women vote in the country, then too only a few of them reaches to the top level in political parties. On the other hand, in few cases women have held the posts of President and Prime Minister as well as Chief Ministers of various states in India, the country ranks 145th in terms of representation of women in Parliament.

In the 21st century, women are facing obstacles in their political participation worldwide. The socio-economic factors emerge as an obstacle to the advancement of women. According to the report of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2017 (The IPU is the international organization of Parliaments which was established in 1889), worldwide female representation rate is 23.6 per cent. This minimum representation shows that Women need long distance to achieve equality in politics. For the equal participation of women in policy-making to promote gender fair government efforts are being made to increase participation of women such as legislative measures. According to the famous philosopher Aristotle, "In the differences between sexes, men are considered better and more in nature, while women are underestimated". The gender quota is being implemented at a remarkable rate throughout the world. It is seen as an important policy measure to increase the reach of women in decision-making bodies. The basic purpose of the quota system is to promote participation in

women's government. In order to involve women in politics, in a political situation, the quota is applied temporarily until the barriers to women's political participation are removed. Many developing countries in the world have ensured quota at national or sub-national level so that gender can be ensured. In many developed countries, political parties have voluntarily adopted quota, women can be helpful in political empowerment.

Women will get empowerment in politics only if women get reservation in politics. Social barriers can also be overcome when the roots of women are raised and activated in politics. For the participation of the Women Organization, the Government of India has not taken any concrete steps. This change of political development is visible in the form of political power. Instead of women, the place is reserved for political parties. The political uplift of women is not the basis of women's economic status. Women have long waited for politics to come because the majority of parties do not give a chance to women in politics.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To identify the indicators and substantiate the existence of disparity and disadvantage women face in their political participation.
- To highlight the causes and barriers that limit women's political participation and its effect on women
- To identify the lacunance in the initiatives of the state and evolve strategies to enhance the involvement of women in all activities of the political process.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The sample size limited to Kannur district only. So generalization is not possible.
- The information given by the respondent may be based some of them might not be interested to give correct information
- Time constraints
- Cost constraints.

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