

# Political Empowerment of Women

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## Abstract

Empowerment means different things to different people. As such it becomes important to clarify the term and provide a proper definition. Empowerment stands for the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, influence control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives. According to the country report of Government of India presented at fourth world conference on woman at Beijing, 'Empowerment means working form a portion of enforced powerlessness to one of power. It would promote woman's inherent strength and positive self image'. (Chauhan, S.S.S, and bansal, Gamey; 2002: 10). According to Keller and Mb-ewe, empowerment is a "process where by women become able to organize themselves to increase their own-reliance, to assert their independent right to make choice and to control resources which will assist in challenging and eliminating their own sub ordination,(Sugana,B;2002:3). According to KiranDevendra, empowerment of woman meant equipping woman to be economically independent, self-reliant, have a positive self-esteem to enable them to face any difficult situation and they should be able to participate in developmental activities and in the process of decision making" (Ibid). Empowerment lends moral legitimacy and the principal of social justice to the objective of human development. It means that women gain autonomy, are able to set their own agenda and are fully involved in the economic political and social decision- making process. (Rao.D.P.and Rao, D.B:6)

**Keywords:** Empowerment, Woman, Economically, Independent, Self-Reliant.  
**Introduction**

Women, who constitute roughly 50 percent of the total population, receive only a small share of the developmental opportunity.

They were often excluded. from better job, from participation system and from adequate health care. The United Nations Human Development Report (1993) asserts that no country treats its woman as well as it treats its men (UNDP; 1993: 135). Despite their vast numerical strength, women occupied a marginalized position in society because of several socio-economic constraints. This inhibited the effective participation of women in political processes and the institutional structure of democracy. According to the document on Women's Development (1985) women's role in political structure had remained unchanged, despite the rapid growth of informal activity by them (Mishra, Sweta, 1997; 16). A broad- based political participation of women was severely limited due to the hexus of traditional factor, such as caste, religion, class feudal attitudes and family status. As a result. women were let on the periphery at political.

In Islam women has right so they can live their life with peace and dignity and Shine like sun and moon . Women are not inferior to men in any aspect of life . Mohammad Ayub beautifully explained the condition of women in his work Titled' Muslim Mahilyen Aur Samajik Parivartan ' . According to Mohammed Ayub , In recent time Muslim women started working and getting there employment but their situation is not very satisfactory. He believes that the reason behind this is that women did not get social acceptability to work and to participate freely in social activities in many societies .

We all know that from the beginning of society , men and women worked as two wheels of the same vehicle . It has also seen that women faced physical and mental stress also . They have the responsibility of the family , the children and that is why sometimes women did not get time for themselves . There are examples that some times they are not allowed to work and if they work , they don't get a good salary , so her life is not easy and she has to maintain the balance with family , children , family members, neighbours and the society also.

Accordingly in order to improve their status and to ensure their participation, different steps/measures were initiated by the Government which has made the decentralized system / more democratic.

The benefits of marriage come with a lot of responsibilities. The marital obligations towards the spouse ,towards the family, towards the children and towards the marital

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house are an inseparable part of the Indian marriage . In family law maintenance is often used as a synonym for spousal support or alimony and the term is in fact replacing alimony .Traditionally , alimony was solely the right of the wife to be supported by the husband . In Orr vs. Orr <sup>1</sup> , the US Supreme Court held that an Alabama statute <sup>2</sup> that provided that only husbands could be required to pay alimony violated the equal protection clause of the fourteenth amendment . Under current law alimony maybe payment by either the wife or the husband in support of the other <sup>3</sup>

The award of spousal maintenance is generally determined based on all or some of the following guidelines :the recipient's : financial needs the pair's ability to pay : the age and the health of the parties : the standard of living of the recipients became accustomed to during the marriage : the length the marriage : each party's ability to earn and be self – supporting : and the recipient's non monetary contributions to the marriage . <sup>4</sup>

Spousal maintenance may be temporary or permanent . The parties generally may adjust its amount at a future date by returning to court and reassessing the relevant criteria at that time . In some states the parties may forever waive their right to spousal maintenance by written agreement .<sup>5</sup>

In Australia 'The Family Law Act sets out in Section 72 the basic responsibility of one party of a marriage to contribute to the support of the other , and section 75 ( 2 ) sets out the elements to be taken into consideration when apportioning spousal maintenance . These matters range from the nature of the parties' marriage , their post - marriage relationships , their financial situations and prospects for employment and any parental obligations to children of the marriage . The most significant and relevant case law of recent years regarding spousal maintainance has therefore been those cases in which maintainance has been granted -..... the supreme court of Canada in Moge v. Moge case .'<sup>6</sup>

In Ireland<sup>7</sup> , maintenance can be split into two , spousal and child . Maintenance refers to what amount of money one spouse pays to the other either for that spouse or dependent children or both . Children are now potentially dependent until they are 23.

## Women Empowerment: National Attempts

With the down of Independence and the adoption of the Republican Constitution, several legal measures were taken by parliament and the Government of India, which improved the status of women. The chapter on Directive principles of state policy makes special provisions for improving women's status. These directive s are mentioned in Article 39(a), 39(d), 39(c), and 42 of the constitution. All these provisions clearly indicate that women obtained legal section for most of their demands.

Some of the other initiative in this direction were set up an exclusive department of women and child development in 1983; setting up of Women Development corporation in Women Empowerment: Grassroot Initiatives - The most significant landmark in this direction was the passing of 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> constitution Amendment Acts, 1992. These Acts provided one-third reservation of seats for human in the rural and urban local bodies i.e., the Panchayati Raj Institution and municipal bodies. It further provides that not less than one -third (including the number of seats reserved for women belonging to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes) of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in panchayat shall be reserved for women and such seats may be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a panchayat /municipality (Arts 243d(3) and 2431(3). The acts also provide that not less than one-third of such reserved seats shall be reserved for SC and ST women as the case may be.

"Local self government must be the basis of any true system of democracy. We have got rather into the habit of thinking of democracy at the top and not so much below . Democracy at the top will not be a success unless it is build on the foundations from below ``. - Jawaharlal Nehru .

Panchayati Raj in India came as a very strong step in the direction of the different Democratic system and the development for rural area . When the community level program launched on October 2nd 1952 , it set the stage for Panchayati Raj as an organization .

## Innovation The Research Concept

In the beginning, it was a government program but by the passing of time it involved the rural people also for the development of rural area . In 1957 committee submitted the report and suggested for Panchayati Raj Balwant Rai Mehta committee played very important role in this regard .

Panchayati Raj system is a system which is having three tier design - having district level Zila Parishad , block level Panchayat Samiti and at village level it has Gram Sabha and village panchayat ,so we can say that Panchayat Raj system is a three tier structure .

If we go through the features of 73rd Amendment Act , we will find out that it has the features for straightening the gram sabha to maintain the organisation and functions of Panchayati Raj at three tier level .

The state which is having the population less than 20 lacs are exempted for the organising Panchayat Samiti at intermediate level .Direct elections of members , reservation of seats in Panchayati Raj for SC / ST and especially for women and women belonging to SC / ST .

So we can say that the 23rd amendment of Panchayati Raj in 1992 had played a very important role for the social , economical and of course the political development of women ,not only a very specific class but for all the classes of the country .

According to K K.Ghai the 11 schedule covers 29 portal subjects which are to be within the purview of the panchayat . All the subject came in the category of subject connected with Agriculture and Rural Development land health and improvement of irrigation animal husbandry social Forestry in fact almost everything important for social economic and cultural development of the rural people . In fact the entire 73rd amendment was governed by the objective of implementing the letter and spirit of article 40 Directive Principles of State Policy part 4 of the constitution which states , state shall take step to organise village panchayat and them which such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self government .a 73rd amendment act which require each state government to bring 29 subjects listed in the 11 schedule of the constitution within the free review of Panchayat Raj . The basic local unit of the Panchayati Raj ,the objective of empowering the village Panchayat as directed with the 73rd Amendment Act 1992 and the eleventh schedule that got enlisted in the constitution as a part of this important Constitution Amendment .

According to K K. Ghai more than 26% population of India lives in urban area and a trend towards rapid urbanization has been distinctly visible . There are about 2500 towns in India in each Municipal town , a unit of urban local government is at work . In big cities municipal corporations are at work and in other cities urban areas Municipal councils are at work for fast urbanizing areas which are currently and basically rural areas . Nagar Panchayat notified area committee and town area committee have been established . For cantonment cantonment boards have been established . Beside these some special Institutions like improvement trust , port trust , township and planning bodies , urban development Agencies and housing board have also been established .women are playing important role in Indian urban and rural (Panchayati Raj) system .

**Objective of the Study** To ensure the women empowerment to be effective, some effective steps have to be taken- These measure/steps are discussed below:-

1. First and foremost, in order to ensure effective participation and make women empowerment, it is very essential that the weaker sections are made aware of their responsibility as Panchayat and Municipal member.
2. Secondly, education as means of empowerment of women can bring about a positive attitudinal change. Education increase the economic, social and political opportunity available to women.
3. Thirdly, proper training becomes a must in order to make empowerment effective and really fruitful. It improve their competence and capabilities.
4. Fourthly, some minimum level of educational qualification should be mandatory for both men and women.

**Conclusion** No one can refuse the importance of women in society . There is no doubt that the importance of women in shaping the society, weather it is political ,social

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,economical , moral , ethical or any aspect , women always played an important role in shaping the society in a good , positive and creative form .

women always worked together with men since the beginning of society . In different societies and religion and in different times the condition of women was different and by the passing of time it changed also .

InIslam , women has many rights . It is written in Holy Quran that men and women both have rights and duties and it is also said that a women with virtue and talent is the most valuable in the world .

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