

# Rural Women Empowerment Through Political Participation and its Social Impact -A case study of District Gwalior (Madhya Pradesh)

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## ABSTRACT

*In order to achieve positive developmental outcomes and well-being of life, empowerment is very important that in turn lies in the doing and being what one value and have reason to value i.e. agency. Empowerment makes a powerful point for enhancing the agency of the individual in order to enable them to be an imperative agent of their well-being and self development. The concept of empowerment itself is very complex. The agency of women, her autonomy and women's empowerment are the idea used on a wide scale in developmental literature and approach of capability. However still there exists substantial ambiguity in conceptualization of the above mentioned ideas. While well-being of women and women's agency is sufficiently differentiated from each other, there seems to be a big overlap between the two factors that are agency and empowerment and between other two that are agency and autonomy. The present paper evaluates different conceptions of these ideas to distinguishably mark the overlapping zones and varying features of mentioned concepts of Gwalior- district.*

**KEYWORDS:** Women, Empowerment, Well-Being, Autonomy, Panchayat Gwalior District.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

For sustainable development of society rural women play a catalytic role in order to achieve the transformational economic, social and environmental changes. At all levels of decision making and the involvement of women and their active participation on equal terms with men on political basis is essential to the achieve the equality, democracy, peace and rural development also in the decision making process. their point of view and experiences should be included. The leadership and role of rural women in mending policies, laws, programs and strategies on the issues affecting their lives. At local and national level, it is possible only when rural women shows political participation. Political empowerment guides rural women to claim their various rights such as right to land, opportunities, leadership and choices to their participation in shaping policies, laws, programs and regulations. The political participation of rural women and their empowerment is not only important for the strengthening a nations democracy, their fight against the marginalization, trivialization and oppression but also way to their socio-economic aspect of development. Rural women's are not having the awareness of their rights like legal and political rights, so they do not participate in political events of their communities and also in the elections. Rural women are under represented in different institutions, leadership and governance and they barely have decision making power. The seventy third constitutional amendment enact (1993) have formulated the setting Panchayati Raj system in three-tier basis in rural area's with the sole objective that revolutionary step in India as a local self government unit because of powerful, capable and energetic panchayats. The Gram Panchayats, Janpad Panchayats and Jila Panchayat at Tehsil or Block level and at District levels respectively has given the power to the rural people that would have elected representatives regularly. A decisive role in delivering services and planning development is played by these representatives as per the local needs and conditions. There was another revolutionary step that the one third seats for women were reserved, which was later on increased to fifty percent from 2009-10 by Government of Madhya Pradesh. the first state in the country which conducted the Panchayat Elections was Madhya Pradesh with the implementation of three-tier Panchayat Raj system in May-June 1994. Fifth Panchayat Election was conducted in 2014-15 successfully in the state. The following mentioned members were elected through electoral process for five years as 360487 Panch (Ward member), 6774 Janpad Panchayat members, 847 Jila Panchayat members and 22604 Sarpanch or gram pradhan. Due to pandemic (Covid-19) and some political reasons, the sixth Panchayat election had got postponed. It is proposed to possibly conduct in mid 2021. District Gwalior is located in the Northern part of Madhya Pradesh. According to census (2011) data, the total population of Gwalior District is 2032036 having 46.3% percent of only female population. Gwalior district has historical association with its Industrial, cultural and political background. At present stage Gwalior district have 566 in habitant village along with 298 Gram Panchayats. Women plays an important role in the rural area of the district in the rural economy as entrepreneurs, wage earners and farmers. They also do take responsibility for the well-being

of their family members including food preparation, children's care, care of elders and livestock, and they also play an important role in the force work of agricultural practices. They suffer from immense poverty, they also suffer from overdependence on agricultural input and less productivity in terms of economy. Most of the women are indulged in least income workplaces of unorganised and unrecognised sectors, agriculture or other relatable activities. Studies have shown a direct correlations between enhancing the women labour force participation and a increase in G.D.P. It is evident that the women participation in electoral process, women's leadership quality and their decision making power will surely contribute to enhance the growth and development of the district via its involvement in various sectors.

## 2. OBJECTIVE

- (i) To ascertain the Rural Women's political involvement of in Panchayat elections at various levels.
- (ii) To recommend feasible solutions for political participation and empowerment of rural women in order to enhance their benefaction for the development of Socio-Economic factors of the district.

## 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The presented study is mainly descriptive in nature. This proposed research paper is grounded on secondary data and information compiled from State Election Commission and Panchayat elections reports of Madhya Pradesh, Bhopal. This journal mostly focused on political participation of rural women and their empowerment and its effects on society. As per the report of Fifth Panchayat Election (2014-15) Madhya Pradesh Election Commission, there are around 13 Jila Panchayat members, 100 Janpad Panchayat members 4301 Panch (Ward member) and 256 Sarpanch (Pradhan), and elected from District Gwalior. There are 7 Jila Panchayat members, 52 Janpad Panchayat members 2247 Panch (Ward member) and 130 Sarpanch (Pradhan) only elected from the female category.

By giving political empowerment to rural women, they can think and scrutinize the current status of women and recognize the social norms and limitations, which are big challenges in their success that enables themselves to participate and make feasible changes in making of women friendly policies, programmes, laws, regulations, and decision making process. They launch impactful measures to use their caliber for the Social as well as economic development and play vital role in increasing the G.D.P. The women representative leaders as Sarpanch member, Janpad Panchayat and member Jila Panchayat contributes in the development of village via various committees which include development committee, finance committee and planning committee with the government officials collaboration. They will also play active role in establishment of village roads connected to cities, intramural roads, facilities of drinking water, play grounds, Schools, Dispensaries, Toilets, and Anganwadi centres. They also concentrated on management of water resource and issues related to environment.

**Table: Representation of Rural Women in 5<sup>th</sup> Panchayat Election District Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh (2014-2015).**

S.No.	Representative post	Total Seats	Female Representative	Percentage
1.	Panch(Ward member)	4301	2247	52.24
2.	Sarpanch(Pradhan)	256	130	50.78
3.	Janpad member panchayat	100	52	52.00
4.	Jila member panchayat	13	07	53.84
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4670</b>	<b>2436</b>	<b>52.16</b>

Source: Madhya Pradesh Election Commission Panchayat Election Report (2014-2015).

## 4.FINDINGS

Dearth of education, dearth of political knowledge, gender norm and social limitations, less involvement in process of decision making in household and other area are very big barrier in the way of political participation of Rural Women and their empowerment. Enormous capability of Rural women may show great contribution to socio-economic development and increase in G.D.P., if the hurdles with respect to equality are inscribed.

We have seen so many scenarios where because of Panchayat reservation policy, precise women got elected in to the program. But they merely act as their male family member's mouth-piece, so we have derived a fact

that many women representative as a proxy candidate in terms of their political participation . They have not provided services to the coterie as per their will, capability and at ground reality. Rural Women representatives suffer from many hurdles and obstacles that are, lack of education, poor skills, poor productivity, weak working conditions, constrained social protection, underrate and disordered work, societal customs and attributes and low participation process of decision making at various level. All these hurdles ad obstacles can be vanished by taking certain measures in order to enhance political empowerment of rural women and increase their involvement in the various political programs and processes. These measures may be as:

- ❖ Give them awareness about the legal and political rights of Rural women and also about electoral and political system, via education and facilitate their participation and involvement in various training projects.
- ❖ Eradication of various social and traditional norms like caste, gender, religion and sexuality, disability can play a great role for more involvement in political programs and other societal projects.
- ❖ To ensure the proficiency, Rural women can be inspired to enhance political participation of women and ingress to political processes related to elections and political occasions by organising seminars, training projects and skill development projects.
- ❖ Women safety should be prioritized. Women safety may be achieved by involvement of various steps, operations and polices which help to reduce violence on gender basis . Women safety is only reached when there is safe space for women, autonomy from poverty, financial certainty and freedom and dignity.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Indian women have take hold of significant march in every discipline of venture including various schemes from the past few decennium and mostly in the past few years . Still there is a lot to be achieved. Rural Women's political involvement and empowerment has given enough space for the building their self- belief, evolve leadership capabilities and make them aware about their legal and political rights. Adolescent girls and other women also gets aware of their rights and provisions for the future via Women leadership . In order to ensure better approach for socio-economic development of the district – Gwalior, various steps related to female literacy and female education, positive health care, acknowledgement of their position and political empowerment should be continued . The rural women are Immensely capable to come up with to increase G.D.P. of the state as well as country if constrains to equality are solved.

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