



ENDOWMENT OF MEDIA IN POLITICAL EMPOWERMEN OF WOMEN

Mr. Vijay B. Khairnar

Asst. Professor in Political Science

Late M. D. Sisode College of Arts and Commerce

Nardana, Dist. Dhule (MS.)

vjaykhairnar2015@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION:

Human history moving from Stone Age to mental age is now in digital age where media is its most promising tool. It is supposed to mirror of the world. Public opinion is called the currency of democracy. Media platforms are increasingly becoming the primary basis for public discussion and opinion formation. It is a medium where people have been able to debate and communicate on topics ranging from topics of daily life to issues of national importance. The media are no longer a simple means of connecting with friends and family. Instead, it has been transformed into a means of political activity and of building new political dialogues. Media is also considered a better analytical method because it allows for time and cost-effective data collection and analysis with less human efforts than traditional methods of polling.

Media exposes the flaws in the democracy system and helps in making the system more accountable, responsive and citizen friendly. It has three important responsibilities in a democracy. First it keeps a close watch on the ruling parties. Second is to provide reliable information to the society on important social and political issues of the day and third is to highlight only unbiased facts.

Unity in diversity is the foundation of Indian society. But one thing it is infamous for social inequality which has given birth to weaker sections of society which is as diverse as Indian society itself, women, scheduled caste, scheduled tribes, children, poor, landless farmers etc., who have faced socio-economic and political discrimination in hands of dominating sections since antiquity. And their fight for rights and access to justice is almost as old as the discrimination against the weaker sections. There is no doubt that efforts for empowerment of weaker sections in the society is made in terms of policies, infrastructure and different sources of mass media. These functionaries have proved fruits in the form of awareness of rights and demand of rights. Media is one of the infrastructures among these policies and practice for the upliftment of weaker sections. For overcoming the political deprivation of these weaker



sections especially, women in the society, media has played significant role towards the empowerment of women in politics. (Prof. Jagan Shankar, 2016).

This research paper aims to investigate the endowment of media in political empowerment of women with reference to Indian women politicians.

Political Position of Women in India:

In order to understand and evaluate the level, concept, feelings, etc. of any civilization and culture, it is necessary to know the general condition of women in that civilization and culture, their rights, self-respect and logic. If the status of women in the society is high, they get various right, respect and prestige in the society, they have commendable achievements in various fine arts, and then the level of culture of that society will be superior. The condition of women in ancient India was better than in the modern era.

There is no clear or figurative description of the political status of women anywhere in the Vedic Period. Nowhere is the mention of Ragini similar to a male king. So it is clear that women in the Vedic society did not have equal opportunities as men in the political field. She was not active in politics in this era. But in the Rigveda period, depiction of different forms of women is found. There is also mention of women in the form of preacher and speech in Rigveda. Such authority is in the context of saying of Vedvani or good things.

Indian society tended to straitjacket elite women into domestic rules denying their entry into the political sphere. But despite, these women played indirect and direct roles in the exercise of political power. The ancient Indian text Arthashastra acknowledges women's political agency. In the Mahabharata, Draupadi played an active role in the debate to decide whether the Pandwas was to go to war or not. In the ancient Tamil Sangam poetry we see the evidence of women Ambassador, Advisors and even bodyguards and home guard under Chola rules. Centuries later in Mughal India we see evidence of wives and mothers of Nawaz, playing a prominent role in politics. For instance, Babur considered the founder of the Mughal Dynasty in India was taught in the lesson of war and diplomatic affairs by his grandmother Daulat Begam. And in the 19th century when the British annexed the kingdom of Awadh, while Nawab Wajid Alid Sahd left the Calcutta, it was his wife Begum Hazrat Mahal chose to stay on and challenged the British. But even though women played an unofficial role in policy making and diplomacy, they were rarely given official opportunities in political realm. This changed with the birth of media in and women's public participation in Indian's first debate on law and its reforms related to the age of consent and child marriage. (The Swaddle, 2020)

The nationalist movement in India too inspired women to participate in political movement especially after the agitations against the partition of Bengal in 1905. This enable nationalist



women like Sarojini Naidu, Herabai Tata and Mehtan Lam to build a push for women to participate in Indian politics. The British in third decade of 20th century gave right to vote for women. But after the drafting of Indian constitution in 1947, that all women could vote and the journey of women in political movement started.

In April 1993, through the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments, one-third of the seats in Panchayats and Municipal bodies were guaranteed to women. The 74th Constitutional amendment act did such a work of giving new opportunities to women by giving one-third reservation at all level of Panchayati Raj institutions, the importance of which has been accepted not only at the national level but also at the world level. (Anupama,2005)

Politics and Media:

There was time when printed media like newspaper was the initiated means for public communication and major political parties in the country and abroad assessed their political ideology by displaying their roles and contribution for building a nation. Technology later started to give more art forms of communication and mass media that might effect on the mindset of people and the voters. Radio broadcasting was the innovative technological form of communication being applied by the politicians. Even today, the prime minister of India apply broadcasting technology in sharing his '*Man ki Baat*', the president of U.S. in the midst of 20th century used broadcasting and telecasting media as a stage for political realm. Political leader like Indira Gandhi during her rule used to deliver her speech on Television and broadcasting systems of media. Now days, blogs, twitter, internet media, multimedia etc. are playing significant role in delivering the political ideologies to its citizens and voters. News channels on Television and other sources of media contribute great to pre-exhibit the electoral scenario and public opinions, what they are called as Exit Poll.

According to Cilli Miranda (2015), 'while being influenced by politics, media is focused on a wide massive programs that include heated political debates, where the men are the dominating actors.' The view of Miranda shows two dimensions like contribution of media in political development in the country as well as male dominating practices in political debates during the television show. Therefore, it becomes necessary to promote and inspire women to put their views in the political system or to raise questions for the ruling party.

The Media Rendering Empowerment for Women's Politics:

Throughout history we have witnessed women politicians revered by many but scrutinized by many more. But prejudice could not silence all of them. From Marie Antoinette to Queen Elizabeth, women across the world have often held the political scepter firmly in their hands whenever needed. India has also seen such influential female politician from time to time.



Their schemes and political traits have been appreciated by many and criticized by many more. However, their contribution in the development of Indian society and politics cannot be overlooked. In one of the articles from 'The Hindu' newspaper by Rebecca Rose (Oct., 2022), that there were 24 women MPs in India's first Parliament of Lok Sabha; formed in the year 1952. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur from Himachal Pradesh became the first minister of Health. Her political personality along with the role she performed was first ever published in the printed media when she launched BCG vaccination program in association with WHO. Her photo with the delegation of W. H. O. was at the front page of almost all newspapers. This brought her attention in the eyes of majority Indian readers. The another female politician during the government of Nehru, 1958-64, was Tarkeshwari Sinha, deputy finance minister; highlighted in media during the period for the economic policy she brought for children like small saving schemes. Her scheme of saving is observed to be continued even today. Her appeal for women regarding saving was the highlight for both printed and electronic media. Media those focused on the functioning and practices of women politicians were quite admirable.

The first women Prime Minister of India and the then broadcasting minister, Indira Gandhi played significant role in shaping India's politics. The then media brought her roles before the people that left her impression in the minds of the people. It is not possible to forget a member of parliament like Geeta Mukharjee, who made famous speeches regarding women's reservation bill in the parliament session and played an important role in political life. Because of Indian media like newspaper, television, live show from the parliament and other media of communication she was brought to a close look to the public. During August 1999, Geeta Mukharjee was the face of television and news channels as she actively led the march session and dharna movements for the women reservation bill. Therefore, the then Prime Minister Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee with respect said her 'the bold Bengali Lioness.'

The straightforward speeches of Late Smt. Sushma Swaraj, Sumitra Mahajan, UPA president Sonia Gandhi, Mayavati, Jai Lalita broadcasted on television and interview sessions during the news or parliamentary sessions have introduced themselves and that lead their political career also.

To conclude, it can be stated that though the above mentioned women politicians have been the voices and faces of media in their contemporary political times, there are many faces yet to be viewed or read by the people of India. Therefore, promoting and practicing gender equality in the media is necessity for every democratic society, as it affects the growth of women involvement in all life areas, especially politics. Media should be careful in keeping themselves away from the gender language, the false presentation of female politician's character. It is a



responsibility of all kind of media like written, visual and other social platforms like twitter, blogs, Facebook etc. to discriminate traditional meaning of male and female and their role in society.

References:

1. Shankar, Jagan. (2016). Empowerment of Weaker Sections: Challenges and Remedies. *One day National Seminar in Sociology and Social Work Shikaripua*, 17 October 2016.
2. Dr. Kamala. (1996). Women in Rigveda. *Nirmal Publications*, New Delhi, p. 92
3. Swaddle. (2020). *Why are there so few women in politics?*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2DhPE0ATVpM>.
4. Kurukshetra. (2001). Women and Panchayati Raj. *Kurukshetra*, May, 2001, p. 13.
5. Singh, Anupama. (2005). Bharatiya Rajniti me Mahilaonki Bhumika. *Unbplished PhD thesis, Dr. Rammanohar Lohia Avadh University, Faizabad*, 2005, p. 110.
6. Cilli, Miranda (2015). Media and its role in political empowerment of women. *Proceeding of SOCIOINT15=2ND International Conference on Education, Social Science and Humanities*, June, 2015, p. 747.
7. <https://www.thehindu.com/data/looking-back-at-the-contributions-of-indian>.