

FACTORS INFLUENCING POLITICAL PARTICIPATION, AMONG SCHEDULED CASTES' WOMEN OF UNNAO- U.P.

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Abstract

The political awareness refers to one's knowledge about government policies and functioning of various political parties, awareness of current political issues and knowledge of organizational working and consequences of each party's victory in the elections for the country. Political awareness is said to be a pre-requisite of political development. Politically aware citizens make democracy work. After all, citizens should keep themselves posted about the political events taking place around them. The political participation is the actualization of the political awareness in behavioral terms. The participation of the people in matters related to politics and also their role and standard of loyalty are related to political development in the country. There are many forms of participation and democracy is the form of Government which encourages maximum political participation. The participation does not mean mere exercise of political rights, like Franchise, by the people. It means their active involvement which in a real manner influences the decision making activity of the Government. It refers to those voluntary activities by which members of a society share in the election of rulers, directly or indirectly, in the formation of public policy. Various activities regarding politics i.e. voting discussion, decision, voting preference, voting Pattern of family members, source of motivation for voting, use of conveyance on election day, views about Caste-meetings and follow their directives, and political satisfaction etc.

Keywords: *Political participation, awareness, democracy, voting discussion.*



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Objective: To determine the Factors influencing Political participation, among Scheduled Castes' Women in rural and remote areas in Uttar Pradesh.

Limitations of the study

The samples are taken only from the rural and remote areas.

Significance of the Study

This Study makes a vital contribution to know about the voting behavior and the factors that are responsible for the unawareness and political participation of rural women in UP .

A standardized measurement tool: The contribution of this research was a unique questionnaire to measure the political participation and awareness among rural scheduled castes'women in Uttar Pradesh. There is no published work citing the availability of such contextual instrument. Such instrument will give a direction for other contextual

academic researchers (India based) to further work on the instrument and make it valid by testing it in different parts of India.

Discussion and Findings: After the statistical analysis of (i) Extent & determinants of political Awareness, (ii) Extent & determinants of Political participation, among the selected Scheduled Castes', Women; the researcher come to their views (opinions/attitudes) about politics. Low awareness and participation among Scheduled Castes' women is attributed to their views about politics. Earlier field studies : such as Trivedi (1969), Sachchidananda (1974), Patwardhan (1963), Malik (1979), Lynch (1969), Kamble (1973), Jha (1973), Goyal (1978), Ghose (1994) etc; have shown the feelings of political in activity of S.C.s' women is mainly due to their accepted family roles & illiteracy among them. They generally leave the "Rough & dirty" world of politics to their husbands and men folks.

The respondents were asked "whether women should take interest in politics, or not." Their responses and collected field data are shown in table 1 .

Table No. 1 : The views (Opinions) of the Sampled women respondents about their Interests to take active part in Politics

S. No.	Whether women should take Interest in politics	Number	Percentage
1.	Yes	234	78.00
2.	No	66	22.00
	Grand Total	300	100.00

The primary figures of the above table shows that 234(78%) i.e. Three Fourth respondents are of the opinion that women should take interest politics. Only about one-fourth 66(22%) hold the commonly held view that women should not take interest in politics, but leave it for menfolk.

"Whether political activity among women can raise their social and economic status in India?" This is the second question, the researcher has asked to the respondents. The responses/views are shown in table 2 :

Table No. 2 : The Responses/views of the Sampled Scheduled Castes’ womenas to whether political activism can raise women’s socio/Economic status

S.No.	Whether Activism Raises Women’s Status	Number of respondents	Percentage
1.	Yes	168	56.00
2.	No	48	16.00
3.	Cannot say	84	28.00
	Grand Total	300	100.00

It is obviously clear from the facts & figures collected from survey that more than half i.e. 168(56%) respondents agree with the view that women’s political activism can help in raising even socio-economic status. However, one-fourth of them i.e 84(28%) respondents are undecided and can not support or reject this view.

“Whether women’s place is in the four walls of household and hence they should leave politics and related matters for men-folk?” This is the third question, asked to the respondents . Their views (opinions) of the respondents are shown in the following table 3.

Table 3 : The views of the Sampled women as to whether women’s place is confined to the Four Walls of the Household

S. No.	Whether women’s place is confined to Four walls	Number of respondents	Percentage
1.	Yes	72	24.00
2.	No	168	56.00
3.	Can not say	60	20.00
	Grand Total	300	100.00

It may be clearly observed from the figures/percentage of the above table that a little more than half of the S.C. women respondents do not agree with the view that the place of women is confined to the four walls of household, and hence, they should leave politics and related matters for men-folk. However, one-fourth respondent’s agree with such a view and remaining One-Fourth are un-decided i.e. cannot say.

It is generally held that women in India are still dependent on men. Whether they should consult their husbands or fathers, while taking decision about exercising their franchise or not? This is the fourth question which was asked to the respondents to reply. Their views are shown in the following table i.e. in Table 4

Table 4 : The views/opinions of the Sampled women as to whether women should consult their husbands/fathers for voting

S. No.	Whether women should Consult their husbands/fathers	Number of respondents	Percentage
1.	Yes	78	26.00
2.	No	222	74.00
3.	Can't say/undecided	--	00.00
Grand Total		300	100.00

From the analysis of the figures of the above table that three-fourth i.e. 222(74%) of the respondents are not of the view (opinion) for consulting or taking advice of their husbands/fathers for giving vote to a particular candidate or political party. However, one-fourth respondents are in favour of consulting them. It is note worthy that None is undecided. Lastly, the researcher has asked the views of their respondents regarding 30 percent reservation or seats for women in panchayats and other elected local bodies/Institutions including Lok Sabha. The views/responses are shown in the table.

Table 5 : The views/opinions of the respondents about 30 percent Reservation for women in local Elective Bodies/Institutions

S. No.	The views/opinions of the respondents about 30% reservation for women	Number of respondents	Percentage
1.	Yes	132	44.00
2.	No	24	8.00
3.	Can't say	144	48.00
Grand Total		300	100.00

It is absolutly clear from the analysis of data indicated in the above table that nearly half of the respondents i.e. 144(48%) out of 300, are not in a position to give their views/opinions on this issue of 30% reservation for women in local Elective Bodies; as it will not matter or make any difference to them. A little less than half i.e 132(44%) agree for 30 percent reservation for women in elective bodies and want that this policy should be strictly followed by the government. The following table shows the percentage distribution of the respondents regarding various decisions.

Various activities regarding politics i.e. voting discussion, decision, voting preference, voting Pattern of family members, source of motivation for voting, use of conveyance on

election day, views about Caste-meetings and follow their directives, and political satisfaction etc. at a glance

Table 6: Distribution of the Sample according to categories of caste

S.No.	Caste	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Jatav	260	86.67
2.	Dhobi	10	3.33
3.	Dhanuk	5	1.67
4.	Balmiki	20	6.66
5.	Koli	1	0.33
6.	Kumhar	2	0.67
7.	Others (Bhat, Nat etc.)	2	0.67
Grand Total		300	100.00

The figures of above table shows that out of 300 scheduled Castes’ women respondents 260(86.67%) were chosen Jatavas, 10(3.33%) Dhobies, 5(1.67%), Dhanuks, 20(6.66%) Balmiki, 2(0.67%) Kumhars 1(0.33%) Koli and remaining 2(0.67%) others like Bhat & Nat. The data focuses that amongst the Sample of 300 Scheduled Castes’ women, the Jatavs are in majority.

Table 7 : The Distribution of the Sample according to the Size of Family

S.No.	Family size (No. of persons in the family)	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Upto 5 members	144	48.00
2.	6 - 9	132	44.00
3.	9 and above members	24	8.00
Grand Total		300	100.00

The figures of above table shows that the size of respondent’s families out of 300 families, 144(48.00%) families have upto 5 members, 132(44.00%) families have 6 to 9 members and 24(8.00%) families have 9 and more than it, members in their families. The researcher has also calculated the “Average No. of persons per Family” among the Surveyed families of respondents i.e. 6.51 meaning the average is 7 persons per family.

Hypothetically decided dependent variables & determinants for the investigation purpose; on which the all tables from 8 show the distribution of the sample according to age of respondents.

Table 8 : Distribution of the sample, according to Age

Age – Group	Number	Percentage
Upto 25 years	108	36.00
26 – 44 years	138	46.00
45 and above	54	18.00
Grand Total	300	100.00

Conclusion: Scheduled castes’ women have acquired significant extent of political awareness and have started participating in political activities, though their extent of political participation is still low. We can’t say that scheduled castes’ women still constitute an apolitical stratum and they do not seem to lag behind high castes’ women. This is a healthy sign for our democracy.

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