

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND POLITICAL AWARENESS AMONG RURAL WOMEN OF DISTRICT MATHURA, U.P.

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Abstract

The Political participation is a state/condition to take active part in political activities, like: voting ; membership of any political party, Seeking information, discussion and proselytizing, attending election meetings, communicating with representatives, sharing in common association, Partaking, fellowship by an individual, a Caste, a class or a community for a common purpose”. In addition to constitutional safeguards and several legislative measures to abolish untouchability, and to bring them at par with other sections of India Society by providing educational facilities and reservations, in political, educational, social, economic and occupational spheres, which constitutes the biggest core of welfare schemes for the scheduled castes, the frame-work of welfare measures for them is continuously being enlarge, to atone for the painful legacy of the past, who have for centuries suffered the worst kind of inhuman treatment, nowhere else found in the world. Thus inspite of all legal safeguard and welfare schemes for their socio-economic and political upliftment, the progress is said to be much below expectations. But in the present investigation it has seen that more than 60% (182) respondents out of 300; agree with the view that women’s political Activism can help in raising even social status as well, political also. Hence and therefore, they are taking part in active politics with much interest now a day.

Keywords: Political Participation, Political Awareness, Political Activism, Female Participation.



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RESEARCH DESIGN: As we know that exploratory research design is used to know the causes of the study problem concerned and explanatory research design is used to explain the subject matter logically and systematically regarding behavioral aspects of the problem under study. To conduct any research through these research designs, a investigator uses available literature, informal interview, non participant observation to achieve and testify the objectives of the study problem. Randomly, 300 female respondents are selected for the study, from the interior rural part of district Mathura U.P.

The objectives of the present study are as follows:

- (1) To study the socio-economic conditions and backgrounds of the respondents.
- (2) To determine the extent of political awareness among the female respondents.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION: India is a democratic country in which the participation of women is essential, because they cover the range of about 48.9% of the total population of the nation. In real sense our democracy can only prosper by increasing adequate political awareness and political participation among them, Since the pre and post independence, we have been trying to bring them to participate in the national politics, but we could not achieve the fruitful results as yet. Since beginning every political party has been neglecting minorities and scheduled castes' women belonging to these classes. But Panchayati Raj Act-1993, has ascertained sufficient political consciousness, encouragement and motivation to the weaker sections of the society, especially, among the scheduled castes' women to participate in the local, state and central politics. So, to evaluate sociologically the researcher, has therefore, selected the problem related to political awareness and political participation among Scheduled castes' women in the state of Uttar Pradesh. In fact, the present study is related to the political awareness and political participation among scheduled castes' women of Agra district of Uttar Pradesh on which appropriate and enough subject matter is not available, because such type of study in political context has not been yet conducted from sociological view point. Therefore, the researcher has been selected Exploratory and Explanatory types of research design for the study purpose and for the clarity of the facts. At the time of survey the researcher has studied the position of political awareness among their 300 respondents. The following table focuses on the facts and figures collected from the field of study.

Table No. (1): Political Awareness

S.No.	Distribution of Political Awareness	Frequencies	Percentage
1.	Yes (Aware)	276	92.00
2.	No (Unaware)	24	8.00
3.	No response	--	0.00
4.	Neutral	--	0.00
Grand Total		300	100.00

The political awareness has been measured by seven questions amongst 300 Scheduled Castes' women respondents 376(92%) were found "Aware" politically and only 24(8.00%) respondents unaware. The following table shows the distribution of the awareness according to the age-group of the respondents :

Table No. (2) : Political Awareness on the basis of Age

Age-Group (in yrs)	Awareness (Frequencies)		Total
	Yes	No	
Up to 25	102(34.00)	6(2.00)	108(36.00)
26 to 44	120(40.00)	18(6.00)	138(46.00)
Above 45	54 (18.00)	00 (0.00)	54 (18.00)
TOTAL	276(92.00)	24(8.00)	300(100.00)

The figures of the above table shows that amongst 300 respondents, 276(92%) S.C. women were found politically aware; from which 102(34.00%) respondents upto 25 yrs. of age, 120(40%) of 26 to 44 yrs of age and 54(18.00%) of the age of 45 and above; only 24(8.00%) respondents were found politically unaware. The researcher has also tried to know the impact of mother's education on respondent's level of political participation. Table No. 4(7) shows data on this variable.

Table No. (3) : Education and Political awareness

Educational Level of Mother	Political Awareness (Frequencies)		Total
	Yes	No	
Illiterate	168(56.00)	18(6.00)	186(62.00)
Up to Primary	66(22.00)	--(0.00)	66(22.00)
Middle & above	42(14.00)	6(2.00)	48(16.00)
Grand Total	276(92.00)	24(8.00)	300(100.00)

It is evident from the above table that mother's education determine women's level of political awareness. The figures show that the level of awareness increases with the increase in mother's educational level. Amongst 300 Scheduled Castes' women respondents. 92% were found political aware only; 8% respondents were found unaware, politically. Whether political activity among women can raise their social and economic status in India"? This was the second question which the researcher asked to their respondents. The views of the respondents are shown in the following table:

Table No. (4): The views of the respondents as to “whether the political activism can raise women’s Socio-Economic Status?”

Whether activism can raises women’s Socio-economic Status	Frequencies of the respondents	Percentage
Yes	172	57.33
No	48	16.00
Can not say	80	26.67
Grand Total	300	100.00

It is obviously clear from the above table 5(13) that 172(57.33%) respondents has replied “Yes”, 48(16%) respondent’s replied “No” and 80(26.67%) respondents replied “can’t say” out of 300 respondents.

RESULTS : Age, marital status, size of family, education, parents’ education, family income and membership of political parties seem to be the significant determinants of political awareness. Awareness increases with the age and unmarried women exhibit more awareness. Awareness is more among those from medium family size and more educated. Parents’ education and family income also affect level of Scheduled Castes’ women. More the parents educated, higher s the level of political awareness. Similarly, the higher the family income, higher is the level of political awareness among scheduled castes’ women. Membership of political parties also increases one’s level of political awareness.

As regards the determinants of political participation among scheduled castes’ women, we find age, family size and membership of political parties as the significant determinants. Participation increases with the increase in the age. It also shows an increase with the increase in family size. Political participation is definitely more among those women who, are members of political parties. Contrary to political awareness, variables/attributes of marital status, education, parents’ education and family income do not contribute much to political participation among the S.Cs. selected women.

Selected scheduled castes’ women have given definite views about politics. More than three-fourth (78.0 percent) women are of the view that they should take interest in politics. However, only a little more than half (56.0 percent) have opined that political activism can raise women’s status. Almost the same proportion (56.0 percent) of women are of the view that women’s place is no more confined to the four walls of the household. Nearly three-

fourth respondents (74.0 percent) are of the view that women should not consult their fathers/husbands while exercising their franchise and thus should take independent decision. Surprisingly, 44.0 percent women hold that 30 percent reservation for women in elective bodies is not so effective for women upliftment in politics.

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