



A STUDY OF POLITICAL AWARENESS AMONG SCHEDULED CASTES' WOMEN IN LUCKNOW DISTRICT OF U.P.

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Abstract

After independence, the political scene in our country has changes. The new political culture has brought lower sections into the domain of politics. The question which now arises is that of the extent of political awareness and political participation among scheduled castes, particularly the women among these castes. Regarding the extent of political participation among scheduled castes' women, 18.0 percent each exhibit high and medium levels, 56.0 percent show low level of political participation and remaining 8.0 percent don't participate at all. As compared to political awareness, participation seems to be less, but the fact remains that scheduled castes' women and the Indian women in general don't get much opportunity for political participation, except for voting on election day. Even the turn out during the elections in Uttar Pradesh is quite low as compared to many other states. Keeping in mind their traditional apolitical nature, it can safely be said that they have started participation in political affairs and this may increase with the increase in their level of education and mass media exposure. As regards the determinants of political participation among scheduled castes' women, age, family size and membership of political parties, are found 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. , we can conclude that 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 a political stratum and they do not seem to lag behind high castes' women. This is a healthy sign for our democracy.

Keywords: *Political Participation, Scheduled castes', Political Stratum, Voting Behavior.*



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Introduction:

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.

Mr. Agrawal S.C.³ (1972:11) has stated that : "As compared to political awareness, Political participation seems to be less; but the fact remains that the Scheduled Castes' Women and Indian women in general don't get much opportunity for political participation except for voting on election day." **Professor Mehta P.K.**⁴ (1977:3) has also stated that "Today except at a value level, it is difficult to sustain a proposition that in democracies, people actually do display high rate of political participation and interest, except in general elections." **Prof. Khan**⁵ (1979:13) has also given this result after his Empirical study based on 500 muslim's women respondents. **Prof. Yogesh Atal**⁶ (1969:18) has stated that "the people from lower and high income groups have higher political awareness, participation and political efficacy. Hence the sense of political awareness and efficacy are highly significant & Correlated." The researcher has also got the same result in his investigation. **Prof. Kamt A.R.**⁷ (**The Economic and political Weekly : Vol. 16' 1991 p.31**) has also written that the membership of political parties increases one's level of political participation. The following table focuses on the membership of political parties and political participation.

DESIGN:

There are two types of research methodology in social sciences: Empirical and Normative. Empirical deals with realistic attempts to analyse and interpret the real behaviour of social animals and Normative method directs that what should be done by a researcher? In this method some standards are established to evaluate the research work. The research works are also classified in to three Categories : Fundamental or pure research Applied/ Behavioural research and Action research. As the study is concerned with describing the POLITICAL AWARENESS AMONG SCHEDULED CASTES' WOMEN IN LUCKNOW DISTRICT OF U.P." as part of the wider social system and is also focused on finding out the possible association between the two sets of variables the study may be identified with the descriptive design. Regarding to the nature of the study EXPLORATORY research design is opted for the purpose.

The researcher has chosen one Block from each Tehsil, Ten villages from each Block; having scheduled castes' majority, 5 scheduled castes' families from each village and 2 S/c women from each family were selected. Lucknow is a Tehsil/Block in the Lucknow District of Uttar Pradesh. According to Census 2011 information the sub-district code of Lucknow block is 00821. There are about 205 villages in Lucknow block, one hundred fifty (150) scheduled castes' women are made target, by using "Purposive Random Sampling Method.

District-wise demographics of Lucknow UP (2011 Census)

District	Population			Sex Ratio	Literacy Rate		
	Male	Female	Total		Male	Female	Total
Lucknow	2,394,476	2,195,362	4,589,838	917	82.56%	71.54%	77.29%

Sub-District	Number of Villages
<u>Bakshi Ka Talab</u>	207
<u>Lucknow</u>	205
<u>Malihabad</u>	185
<u>Mohanlalganj</u>	225

Scheduled caste population in the district is 776502(21.29 %) , in which Pasi (334,398), Chamar and jatavs (229,704) and Rawat (47,396) are included.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY :

The main 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 scheduled Castes' female respondents.
- (3) To determine the extent of political participation among the scheduled castes' female respondents.
- (4) To find out the determinants of political awareness among scheduled Castes' Women.
- (5) To ascertain the views of Scheduled Castes' women about politics.

Hypothesis:

- (1) The extent of political awareness among the scheduled castes' women is low.
- (2) Caste is the main determinant of Political awareness among the scheduled castes' women?

- (3) The constitutional provisions are in favor of empowerment of Scheduled Caste's Women, respondents regarding the politics.

Discussion, conclusions and results:

Table No. 1 : Socio-economic distribution of respondents (frequency and percentage)

1	Age-Group	<u>Upto 25 yrs.</u> 54(36.00)	<u>26-44 yrs.</u> 69(46.00)	<u>45 yrs. & above</u> 27(18.00)	--	Total 150(100.00)
2	Education	<u>Illiterate</u> 27(18.00)	<u>Upto Intermediate</u> 30(20.00)	<u>Graduate/PG</u> 63(42.00)	<u>Wellleducated/ professional</u> 30(20.00)	Total 150(100.00)
4	Occupation	<u>Domestic</u> 24(16.00)	<u>Labour</u> 36(24.00)	<u>Service</u> 27(18.00)	<u>Others</u> 63(42.00)	Total 150(100.00)
5	Marital Status	<u>Un-married</u> 45(30.00)	<u>Married</u> 96(64.00)	<u>Others</u> 09(06.00)	--	Total 150(100.00)
6	Income (Rs. Monthly)	<u>Below 3000</u> 30(20.00)	<u>3000-6000</u> 45(30.00)	<u>6000-9000</u> 160(40.00)	<u>9000 & above</u> 15(10.00)	Total 150(100.00)

Table No. 2 : The views (Opinions) of the Sampled women respondents about their Interests to take active part in Politics and to caste vote without failure.

S. No	Whether women should take Interest in politics	Number(frequencies)	PERCENTAGE
1.	Yes	132	88.00
2.	No	18	12.00
Grand Total		150	100.00

Table No. 3 : Factors affecting their awareness and political behavior :

S. No	Affecting factors	Number(frequencies)	PERCENTAGE
1.	Discussion during door to door meetings.	15	10.00
2.	Speech of party leader(Specially Sushri	15	10.00
3	Mayavati and BSP leaders)	06	04.00
4.	Media (Television, Newspaper etc)	12 30	08.00
5.	Others (such as advise of	09	20.00
6	elders of family, caste leaders,	18	06.00
7.	husband etc)	45	12.00
8.	Both reason 1 and 2		30.00
	Both reason 2 and 3		
	Reasons 2,3 and 4		
	All the four mentioned reasons		
	Total	150	100.00

The primary figures of the above tables shows that 132(88%) i.e. Three Fourth respondents are of the opinion that women should participate in politics and should caste vote during elections, without failure . Only about one-fourth 18(12%) hold the commonly held view that women should not take interest in politics. 111(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.

Discussion during door to door meetings, Speech of party leader(Specially Sushri Mayavati and BSP leaders), Media (Television, Newspaper etc), Others (such as advise of elders of family, caste leaders, husband etc), are the main reasons which affect their awareness and political participation. Social lag with high castes and upper classes ,and the competitive feelings to stand in society also affect their political awareness.

All the four mentioned reasons 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.

In addition to constitutional safeguards and several legislative measures to abolish untouchability practices, 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 in spite of all legal safeguard and welfare schemes for their socio-economic and political upliftment, the progress is said to be much below expectations. After all, Thus, we can conclude that 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.

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