



## **Extend of Political Involvement of Women in Gaon Panchayat specially in Golaghat Constituency: A Study**

**Dr. Bulbuli Boruah**

Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science  
H. P. B. Girls' College, Golaghat- 785621, Assam, India

### **Abstract:**

Throughout the world, the power relations that shape social, Political, economic and cultural lives prevent women from participating fully in all areas of their lives, whether it's in the home, or in the public arena. Women, who constitute half of the human population have been denied their due share in politics not only India but in the whole world. The present paper will focus the impact of Political Involvement of Women in Gaon Panchayat specially in Golaghat Constituency.

**Keywords:** Extend, Political Involvement, Women, Gaon Panchayat, Golaghat Constituency.

### **Introduction:**

While women are dedicated efforts to challenge the statuesque have allowed more women to reach positions of power in recent years. New Zealand was the first country to give women the right to vote in 1893 (Source: Women Suffrage).

In the parliamentary democratic system, the first requisite character is people's active participation in politics. It provides legitimacy to social system. It is a propelling force for a social system to move on. Without active participation of the people in politics no success can be assured.

### **Objective of the Study:**

The very objectives of the study are-

1. To study the idea of Political Involvement of Women.
2. To analyse the impact of political involvement of women in Gaon Panchayat specially in Golaghat Constituency.

### **Research Methodology:**

The paper is principally based on secondary sources which are collected from books, journals, articles, Government reports, newspapers and website relevant to the study.

### **Idea of Political Participation:**

The term political participation covers all kinds of activities which involve the people in shaping and influencing of political decision making process and in the selection of their rulers, casting of votes on elections making of organized demands on the political system, participation in political movements, conferences, discussions, strikes and demonstrations, communication with the representatives and other political leaders, involvement in political communication etc, all form part of political participation.



In the words of Heinz Eulau, “Political Participation in the involvement of masses in the decision-making process or policy-formulation” (U.R.Dhai, 1999, ‘Comparative Politics and a Government’, p.189).

Women, in many societies, are often restricted to the role inside the houses those of wife and mother. While major changes have occurred in the status of women in some parts of the world in recent decades, norms that restrict women to the home are still powerful in defining the activities that are deemed appropriate for women and they exclude political life, which by its nature takes place in a public forum.

The influence of home centered norms that women are restricted to non-western countries. The norm that ‘ Women’s place is in the Home’ prevailed in western societies well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century and, as this article will demonstrate, it still bears significant influence. In so far as this norm accepted, it has n inhibiting effect on women’s participation in politics.

Now, it has been realizing that the goal of development cannot be achieved without full and active participation of women in various activities of nation building. To have real development of a nation, women should be treated equally with men. In a developing country with democratic system of government like India, a perfect regime of social justice is said to be one in which both man and women have fair opportunity in decision make process. Truth spirit of democracy cannot be achieved unless there is equality in all section of people.

### **Extend of Political Involvement of Women in India:**

In India, gender equality is enshrined in our constitution and there is plethora of legislation both in central and state government which aims not only to ensure that there is no discrimination against women but also make special provision for the protection of their lives, rights and empowerment.

To redress the low level of participation by women in deliberate bodies the Government of India, in 1992, amended the Constitution (73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> amendments) that would reserve a 33% of seats in the Panchayat (local Governments) including the Chairpersonship of these local bodies for women.

Like other state, assam government enacted Assam Panchayati Raj Act,1994 to implement the noble ideas of 73<sup>rd</sup> amendment after a long period of 7 years passing of Assam Panchayati raj, act 1994 election was held in the month of December 2001 and recently in the month of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2007 and 24<sup>th</sup> January 2008.

As per the 21 zilla Parishad where 117 women members were elected. Among 2148 AP members, 1246 women members were elected. In 2153 GPs, 7851 women members were elected. In all PRIs: 9241 women members elected in Assam in 2001. Thus, the rural women in Assam have availed opportunity to become politically empowered. (Data all collected from annual journal NEST).

In Golaghat Constituency the recent Panchayat election was held in 31<sup>st</sup> December 2007 for GPs, 2 AP aqnd IZP. The pictures of women members elected in the Panchayat in Golaghat Constituency is shown in the table

Year	GPs	APs	ZPs	Total
2007	9 out of 25	10 out of 25	1 out of 4	20 out of 54



(Source: NIC, Office of the Deputy Commissioner, Golaghat)

The act has transferred 29 subjects to the PRIs. Thus, it revealed that women representatives are getting power of decision making in these 29 subjects and hence they are on the high way of empowerment. To examine to what extent the women become empowered? And to what extent they can participate in the decision making, implementation and monitoring of the rural development programs? 30 women from 5(five) Gaon Panchayat of Golaghat Constituency have been selected and interviewed for the purpose. Among them 20 women are GPs members, 5 women are GPs president, 2 women are GPs vice-president, 3 women are APs member. To have proper information numbers of questions are placed before them.

To ascertain the extent of devolution of power to panchayat by the 73<sup>rd</sup> amendment of the following question is asked to the respondents.

*“Do you enjoy 29 powers those devoluted to the Panchayat units by 73<sup>rd</sup> amendment act?”*

The responses of the respondents regarding to the above-mentioned question have been stated in tabular form

Respondent	Answer		Total
	Yes	No	
G.P Member	-	20 (100%)	20 (100%)
G.P. President	5 (100%)	-	5 (100%)
G.P. Vice President	1(50%)	1(50%)	2(100%)
A.P. member	2(66.67%)	1(33.33%)	3(100%)
Total	8	22	30
Percentage	26.67%	73.33%	100%

From the above table it becomes clear that devolution of power has not yet been found that all Panchayat representatives do not get the opportunity to excise the power. The administrative Department like Education Dept., Agriculture Dept., Minor Irrigation Department, public Health Dept.;Dept. of Industries etc. is not willing to transfer the power of the hands of the local bodies. To know the extent of their share in the decision-making process the following question is placed before the women respondents.

*“Do you takepart in the decision-making process?”*

To the question the respondents have answered in “Yes” or “No”.

Varying responses of the respondents regarding the above-mentioned question have been stated in tabular form.

Respondent	Answer		Total
	Yes	No	
G.P Member	7(35%)	13(65%)	20 (100%)
G.P. President	5 (100%)	-	5 (100%)
G.P. Vice President	1(50%)	1(50%)	2(100%)
A.P. member	2(66.67%)	1(33.33%)	3(100%)
Total	15	15	30
Percentage	50%	50%	100%



From the above table it becomes clear that 50% of the respondents have answered in positive that they are getting the right share in the process of decision making. However, 50% of the respondents viewed that they are not given right weight-ages in the time of decision making. To them, even the beneficiary lists are finally prepared ignoring their will.

To ascertain the domination of the male members the following question is asked to the respondents at the time of interview.

*“Do the male members try to suppress your instinct at the time of taking decision making?”*

The varying responses of the respondents regarding the above question have been stated in tabular form

Respondent	Answer		Total
	Yes	No	
G.P Member	10(50%)	10(50%)	20 (100%)
G.P. President	3(60%)	2(40%)	5 (100%)
G.P. Vice President	1(50%)	1(50%)	2(100%)
A.P. member	1(33.33%)	2(66.67%)	3(100%)
Total	15	15	30
Percentage	50%	50%	100%

From the above table, it becomes clear that 50% of the respondents reported that their male counterpart tries to exert influences over their instincts at the time of taking important decisions.

To confirm the difficulties faced by the women member due to their physical weakness the following question is asked to respondents.

*“Do you face any difficulty due to second sex determination in the society?”*

Regarding this question the respondents answered “Yes” or “No” or “Do not know”.

Varying responses of the respondents regarding the above-mentioned question have been stated in the tabular form.

Respondent	Answer			Total
	No	Yes	No Responses	
G.P Member	7(35%)	11(55%)	2(10%)	20 (100%)
G.P. President	2(40%)	3(60%)	-	5 (100%)
G.P. Vice President	1(50%)	1(50%)	-	2(100%)
A.P. member	1(33.33%)	2(66.67%)	-	3(100%)
Total	11	17	2	30
Percentage	36.67%	56.67%	6.66%	100%

(Source: data obtained through field study).

From the above table, it becomes clear that 56.67% of the respondents expressed their opinion that they have faced some problems due to second sex determination in the society. Our social system doesn't allow the women to walk alone at any time and at any place. Therefore, they have to take help of their husbands or brothers or sons even to go to the block headquarters or to attend meeting generally which are organized at remote places. 36.67% of the respondents



expressed their views that did not get any trouble due to the second sex determination in the society and only 6.66% of the respondents did not give any response to the question.

The 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment of the constitution of India paves the way for the political empowerment of the women in the general and rural in particulars. However, the survey of the political empowerment of the women representatives of different local bodies making pictures clear that the women are still lagging behind to a great extent. The survey has brought to light many obstacles on the path of empowerment of women in both the political and economic fields. According to the respondents, the PRI has not yet entrusted with the powers as the 73<sup>rd</sup> amendment desired. Hence, the present Government of Assam must work with further transparency to have the devolution of power in the spirit of the amendment of the constitution of India so that the women members can enjoy the power.

The decision-making power is the soul of the democratic working of the local bodies. The study reveals that not all women representatives but only the influential women can take share in the process of decision making. Hence the women have to come forward to take active participation in the process.

The India social system does not allow the equal freedom to women in all walks of life as man is always considered as more powerful both physically and mentally. The respondents reveal the difficulties that they have faced in their own life. However, the outlook has to be changed and they should be given equal participation in all levels of development activities. Moreover, the intra-structural improvement can minimize difficulties of women.

The study also reveals that the women representatives face difficulties in decision making and implementation of the rural development programmes which affect them from the power hungry bureaucrats. Respective BDOs are not willing to delegate the power of decision making and implementations of the programmes to the elected also do the same thing. Therefore, there is the need of unified effort of common people of members of the PRIs against the influence of the selfish and power-crazy bureaucracies.

Keeping in view the above constraints the following suggestions are forwarded to accelerate the extent of women participation in policies.

The time has come to inculcate an attitude in the minds of the genders that participation of women in politics is as essential as of male. Because the service of women as is necessary in family is also necessary for the society.

The existing women political leaders have to shoulder the onerous responsibility to overcome the control of politics by influential political leaders aiming at increased participations of women in local politics.

For sustainable development and working for elimination of poverty and grievances and discrimination relating to sex, caste, lifestyle, class race, ethnicity etc. the leadership of women is to be fortified by realizing the agenda of people.

It should be an endeavor on the part of the state as well as the society to find out means for providing economic independence and freedom from family interference to enhance the women's participation in politics.

The state and the political parties have to create an atmosphere in the society so that the women in general feel secured while performing political works.



Rural women should be made more conscious about the rights and privileges for the purpose awareness camps, workshop should be held frequently in the rural areas. Apart from the political parties and the state should take up training programmes for making the citizens politically conscious.

The state and the political parties should find out some ways and means to change the conservative attitude of the society encouragement of women for greater participation in politics.

The gap between the party leader and the voter should be minimized. The party leaders should co-operate with the rural women along with men.

The NGOs should come forward with full commitment to create an atmosphere for increase of political awareness on the part of the women. In spite of being the member of NGOs they should be inspired to take active participation in the politics.

The government should take initiative to impart compulsory education to the rural women in true sense of the term. So that they will be able to discharge their rights and duties properly.

### **Conclusion:**

In view of the fact that, the Quota system providing 33% reservation of women in local bodies has been recognized and accepted. This quota system should also be introduced within the political parties in order to encourage the women for participation. The creation of an atmosphere conducive to full exercise of civil and political rights by the women is highly essential. In this respect the media, associations, political party and the society have a very crucial role to play to augment the participation of women in politics

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