

**EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN REPRESENTATIVES
THROUGH URBAN GOVERNANCE: A STUDY OF
URBAN LOCAL BODIES IN HARYANA**

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Abstract

Women play significant role in the governance and development of the Nation. The role of women in governance not only to improve their status but also to strength the women empowerment. Women are the part of project planning, implementation, monitoring and maintenance but they are not effectively participating in theses aspects, because they are not aware about their empowerment, their social and political rights and the function of urban governance. The urban governance (urban local bodies) cannot be strengthened without the participation of women representatives. So it is very significant to study the empowerment of women through urban governance.

The present study “Empowerment of Women Representatives through Urban Governance” conducted on the sample of 20 women representatives from Sonapat District and Jind District of Haryana. The main objective of the paper is the empowerment of women representatives through urban local bodies and what kind of problems and obstacle faced by women representatives in urban governance related to their empowerment. Paper also considers the remedial measures initiated by urban local bodies and the government for the empowerment of women.

Keywords:

Participation;
Urban Governance;
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1. Introduction

Historically, women's role is biological reproduction and restricted participation in the main stream of Social, Economic, Political and Administrative process. The role of the women in development is related to the goal of socio-economic development. Without political development women cannot achieve equality. Women's empowerment fundamentally is the process of uplift the status of women like economic status, social status and political status of women. It create an environment in society wherein women can take breaths without the fear of domination, utilization, anxiety, inequality and the general feeling of harassment which goes with being women in a traditionally male dominated structure.ⁱ

The Government of India makes and implemented the policy for women. This policy was called "The National Policy for the Empowerment, 2001". The main purpose or objectives of this policy is about the overall development of the women in nation and in society.

1.1 Goals and Objectives

The objectives of this policy include:

- "Creating an environment through positive economic and social policies for full development of women
- The de-jure and de-facto enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedom by women on equal basis with men in all spheres- political, economic, social, cultural and civil.
- Equal access to participation and decision making of women in social, political, and economic life of the nation.
- Equal access to women to health care, quality education at all levels, career and vocational guidance, employment, equal remuneration, occupational health and safety, social security and public office etc.
- Strengthening legal system
- Changing societal attitudes and community practices by active participation and involvement of both men and women.
- Mainstreaming a gender perspective
- Elimination of discrimination of violence against women
- Strengthening partnerships with civil society"ⁱⁱ

2. The 74th Constitution Amendment Act, 1992

The 74th Constitution Amendment Act, 1992, play very significant role in the emergence and empowerment of women in political field. It provides constitutional status to urban local bodies (ULBs) in India. The Act also provides 33 percent reservation to elected seats for women in ULBs. This Act has given an opportunity to women to effectively participate in the development of the nation and in the development of governance at the local level.ⁱⁱⁱ

2.1 Reservation of Seats

The 74th Constitutional Amendments Act provides reservation of one third of the seats in urban local bodies for women.

- Seats are reserved for Scheduled Castes (SCs)
- Scheduled Tribes (STs)
- Other Back Ward Categories (OBCs)
- Women

3. Profile of Haryana

Haryana is one of the leading states in the North India. Haryana was the integral part of the erstwhile Punjab Province. On 1st November, 1966, it becomes an independent state under the Punjab Reorganization Act, 1966, and Chandigarh is the capital of the state.^{iv}

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF HARYANA Divisions, Sub-Divisions, Districts, Tahsils, Sub-Tahsils and Blocks in Haryana

Divisions	4
Districts	22
Sub-Divisions	58
Tahsils	80
Sub-Tahsils	50
Blocks	125

Statistical Abstract of Haryana 2013-2014

There are 4 divisions which have been sub divided into 22 Districts, 57 Sub Divisions, 78 Tehsils, 50 Sub Tehsils, 124 Blocks, 6841 Villages, 154 Towns and 81 Municipalities.^v

BASIC STATISTICS OF HARYANA

1.	Area	44,212 sq k.m
	Division	4
	District	21
	Sub Division	58
	Tehsil	80
	Sub-Tehsil	50
	Blocks	125
	Towns	154
	Villages	6,841
2.	Population	253.51 lakh
	Males	134.95 lakh
	Females	118.56 lakh
	Urban Population	88.42 lakh (34.88%)
3.	Density	573 per sq k.m
	Urban	4475 per sq k.m
4.	Literacy Rate	75.6%
	Males	84.1%
	Female	65.9%
	Urban	83.1%
5.	Sex Ratio	873

Source: Statistical Abstract of Haryana 2011

3.1 Women in Haryana

There is a gender preference for the male child over the female child. This aspect is well evident from the unequal sex ratio which prevailed not only in Punjab but all over Haryana (and continues till date), primarily due to the practice of female infanticide. The son in the family is treated as an asset and this is evident from the local sayings. The popular local saying goes:

- “Meehn aur Bettya te koon dhappya sai” (who can be satisfied without rains and sons).
- “Chora Mure nirbhag ka, Chori mere bhagwan ki” (the son of an unfortunate dies and the daughter of a fortunate dies).

The status of women in Haryana is not satisfactory because they are not considered equivalent to men. She cannot take decision regarding her education, health marriage, economic freedom. Women are part of the family but they do not take part in the family decision and are not even allowed to give any suggestion. They cover their faces with the purda (Ghunghat). They are restricted to go outside the village for higher education.^{vi}

In the recent years, due to the Green Revolution, education and social mobility, social life has been on a transitional phase. Education is spreading fast among women especially in urban belts and educated women are increasingly taking to gainful employment. There is a marked change in the occupational pattern and the shift is towards non-traditional occupations. But these changes are more prominent and rapid in urban areas whereas the life of women still centers on traditional occupations. The Haryana state has been implementing various schemes for the socio-economic and political development of women. But the declining sex ratio in the state is of particular concern.^{vii}

3.2 Urban Local Bodies in Haryana

In Haryana there are ten Municipal Corporation that is Faridabad, Gurgaon, Ambala, Hisar, Panipat, Karnal, Panchkula, Yummunanagar, Sonapat and Rohtak, 18 Municipal Council and 53 Municipal Committee in Haryana. In total 81 urban local bodies in the state.^{viii}

3.3 Women Representatives in Urban Governance

Women's role in urban governance is one of the most important questions for consideration in the movement for their political and all over (social, economic, cultural, administrative etc.) empowerment. Women constituting nearly half of the population of the country but their participation in urban governance, affairs and in decision making is very low, they are not aware or participate effectively and actively in the urban governance, except

the only two or three women representatives (those are aware the total working of urban governance). Without the effective participation of women's we are not achieve the socio-economic and political development of the nation. Reservation for women in urban local government is only increasing the number of women elected in the elections, but it not improves their active participation in the urban governance. Powers and functions of women representatives are used by their husbands and male family members. It is important that women representatives in urban local bodies develop their capacities to play their meaningful and rightful roles in the development of the urban governance and their process. For strengthen the urban local government it is important that women representatives play their meaningful role more effectively and participate actively in the municipal affairs.

3.4 Problems and Obstacles

Due to the traditional patter of our local society there is a number hurdles/problem in the way of effective participation of elected women in urban local bodies.

- Lack of political interest.
- Women representatives are lack of confidence in public speaking.
- Family responsibilities.
- Families are not satisfied with their participation.
- Husbands perform all the municipal functions of the elected women representatives.
- Public are not faith on women leadership capability.
- Lack of political awareness and political experience.
- Political interference in the functioning of ULBs
- Lack of training in urban development issues and municipal administration.
- Lack of knowledge about municipal acts and rules and regulations.
- Male dominance in decision-making at party level.
- No experience about urban development issues

4. Objective of the Study

The main objective of the paper is the empowerment of women representatives through urban local bodies and what kind of problems and obstacle faced by women representatives in urban governance related to their empowerment. Paper also considers the remedial measures initiated by urban local bodies and the government for the empowerment of women.

5. Significance of the Study

Women representatives are an important part of the urban local bodies. Urban governance cannot be strengthened without empowering the elected women representative. So it is very significant to study the women empowerment through urban governance.

6. Research Methodology

The study was conducted in the two district of Haryana i.e. Sonapat District and Jind District. The 20 women representatives from Sonapat District and Jind District of Haryana were selected. An interview schedule was used to collect the primary data. Sonapat District was divided in 30 wards and District Jind divided in 31 wards. As our study were selected only women representatives from of these two Districts. Secondary data was collected from various government records and other sources.

Table No 1 Awareness Levels of Women Representatives about Urban local bodies

Sr. No	Awareness	Respondent say YES / NO	Percentage %
1.	Are you aware of your powers and functions	13/ 7	65/ 35%
2.	Are you aware of the total working of ULBs	6/14	30/ 70%
3.	Are you aware about the role of MC	09/ 11	45/ 55%
4.	Are you aware about the Urban Development Programmes (UDP)	8/12	40/ 60%
5.	Are you aware about the sources of grants	6/ 14	30/ 70%

Source: *primary data*

Table 5 shows the awareness level of women representatives about the urban local bodies. Majority of the women representatives i.e. 65 percent have awareness about the powers and functions of the urban local bodies. But most of the women representatives were not aware about the total working of the urban local bodies and also women representatives were not aware about the role of a Municipal Councillors, urban development

programmes (UDP), sources of income of grants. So we found less awareness of the respondents about various issues of urban local bodies. They were only aware about the two or three function of the urban local bodies.

Table No 2 Participation level of Women Representatives in Urban Local Bodies

Sr. No	Participation	Always	Sometimes	Never
1.	Do you attend the meetings of the MCs	9 (45%)	7 (35%)	4 (20%)
2.	Do you actively participate in the meetings	9 (45%)	6 (30%)	5 (25%)
3.	Do you raised an issue in the meetings of MCs	10 (50%)	5 (25%)	5 (25%)
4.	How often local people approach you with their problems	5 (25%)	5 (25%)	10 (50%)
5.	Are you able to redress the grievances of the people	3 (15%)	6 (30%)	11 (55%)
6.	Do you depend upon your male family members to solve the problems of the people/ masses	11 (55%)	5 (25%)	4 (20%)
7.	How often the male members of the area approach you with the local problems	2 (10%)	5 (25%)	13 (65%)

The table 2 indicated the participation level of women representatives in urban local bodies. It shows the viewpoint of women representatives about the meetings, their participation in the meetings, raised issues in the meetings, local people approach them with their problems, they able to redress the grievances of the people, their dependence upon their male family members and the male members of the area approach them with the local problems. Majority of the women representatives were always attend the meetings of the MCs. They were actively participated in the meetings, most of the women representatives raised the issues related to their ward. Most of the women were speak in their own language that is Haryanwi. About the local people concern them or not, majority of the women opinion that local people of their area concern with their people meet their husband or male family members only. Their husband helps him to solve the problems of the local people. Most of the women representatives were depend upon their family or husband to solve or doing the work of their ward or people. And the last male members of their areas never approach them with their problems because they consult or meet their husband regarding the local problem.

Table No 3 the main hurdle in attending the meeting of the MCs

Sr. No.	Hurdle	No of Respondent	Percentage
1	Busy in domestic work	3	15%
2	Do not bother about meetings	3	15%
3	Dominating/bias attitude of the male	2	10%
4	Work done by their male members	7	35%
5	None of these	5	25%

The table 3 indicated or representing the problems or hurdle faced by women representatives in attending the meetings of the MCs. Majority of the women representatives were opinion that their husband help to do their work or they were only going important meetings of the MCs. 25 percent of women representatives were opinion that gone are the days when they face many difficulties in attending the meetings of the MCs. At present they never face any kind of difficulties in attending the meetings of the MCS.

Table No 4 the main problem in the development of your area

Sr. No	Main problem in the development of area	No of Responses	Percentage
1	Lack of public cooperation	5	25%
2	Lack of capable urban leaders	4	20%
3	Lack of MCs officials cooperation	4	20%
4	More political interference	7	35%

The table 3 shows the viewpoint of the women representatives regarding the main problem in the development of their areas. Majority of the respondent were felt that political interference was the main problems in the development of their areas. 25 percent were in favour of lack of public cooperation, 20 percent lack of capable urban leaders, and 20 percent were lack of MCs official's cooperation. They say that public as well as male members or officials were not faith on their efficiency.

Table No 5 Suggestion for development of your area

Sr. No	Suggestions	No of Respondent	Percentage
1	Mobilizing of people' participation	4	20%
2	Encourage local leadership (women)	12	60%
3	Spreading of education	4	20%
4	Drawing public consensus on general issues	-	-

The table represented the viewpoint of women representatives about the development of their areas or wards. Majority of the women representatives were felt that encourage the local leadership specially women leadership. Women were able to do more and more for the development of their area but lack of support of family, public, cooperatives and officials were not faith on their ability. And women were also not fully aware about their powers, functions and their role in MCs.

Table No 6 Opinion about the future empowerment of women in MCs

Sr. No.	Opinion about the future empowerment of women	No of Respondent	Percentage
1	Reservation with adequate representation in the MC.	2	10%
2	Awareness among public	5	25%
3	Improvement in the socio-economic status of women	4	20%
4	Change in mindset of society	3	15%
5	All of these	6	30%

The table 5 shows the opinion of the women representatives about the future empowerment of women in MCs. Majority of the women representatives were felt that reservation with adequate representation in MCs (10 percent), awareness among public (25 percent), improvement in the socio-economic status of women (20 percent), and change in mindset of society (15 percent) all of these (30 percent) were helpful to raise or uplift the women empowerment in MCs.

Table No 7 Measure do you suggest for improving the active participation of women in MCs

Sr. No	Suggestions	No of Respondent	Percentage
1	Spreading political education amongst women	2	10%
2	Reservation in MCs	2	10%
3	Awareness about their rights	2	10%
4	Training campus and orientation programmes	10	50%
5	All of these	4	20%

The table 6 shows the suggestions for improving the active participation of women representatives in MCs. Majority of the women representatives were felt that training is most important for improving the active participation of women in MCs. They were also felt that when they were entered into the urban governance they were totally blank and not able to perform their duties efficiently. So urban governance provides the training and some orientation programmes for improving the active and effective participation of the women representatives in MCs.

7. Major Finding

- The women representatives were aware about the powers and functions of the urban local bodies. But most of the women representatives were not aware about the total working of the urban local bodies and also were not aware about the role of a Municipal Councillors, urban development programmes (UDP), sources of income of grants. So we found less awareness of the respondents about various issues of urban local bodies. They were only aware about the two or three function of the urban local bodies.
- Majority of the women representatives were attend the meetings of the meetings, speaks in their own language, raise the issues related to development of their wards. Local people or male of the ward are rarely approach the women representatives, on the behalf of the women representatives local people of the ward or area were approach their husband or male family members.
- Majority of the women representatives were not using their powers and functions on the behalf of their husband use their functions and doing their work or they were only going important meetings of the urban local bodies.
- Majority of the women representatives were felt that main problem in the development of their area was more political interference by the politician
- Majority of the women representatives were felt that encourage the women leadership. Women are more capable and do more work for the development of their area. But the male members and public do not faith on their efficiency.
- Most of the women representatives were felt that change in the mindset of society and people were helpful and uplift the women empowerment in MCs.
- Majority of the women representatives were felt and opinion that training campus and orientation programmes helpful in improving and increasing the active participation of women in urban local bodies. When they were entered into the urban governance they were not aware about the working of

the urban local bodies and that's why they were depend upon their husband to do their work. So according to the women representatives training is must for understanding the role and procedure of urban governance.

8. Suggestion

For upliftment and improving the status of women in society there is need of take more steps. Create or generate more and more awareness among women regarding their rights and duties. There is also need to provide one month training programme to the elected women representatives to improve their capacity and encourage women representatives to perform their powers and functions effectively.

9. Conclusion

The success of the urban local bodies are depends on the elected representatives of urban areas. Women representatives are also the part of local bodies but they are not performs their duties effectively. They always remain behind their husband, sons or male members. They are not interested in politics. But through reservation government give a chance to women to take part in the government affairs. Women representation in urban governance lead the women empowerment and it can also helpful in encouraging the women to take initiatives related to their powers and functions. They are become more effective, impressive and capable leaders as like men. Their empowerment can be achieve when they take the opportunities and prove their potential and prove her as a good leader.

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