

FIFTY PERCENT POLITICAL RESERVATION AMONG WOMEN IN LSG - A STUDY AMONG MUSLIM WOMEN IN THIRUVANANTHAPURAM DISTRICT

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Abstract

The 73rd constitutional amendment symbolized one of the drastic changes in the history or epochs. The 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments offered 33 percent reservation quota for women political representation in the local self Govt bodies at the urban and rural level(Sundar, 2012). This quota system is to enhance the status of women in the mainstream society. The political participation as a symbol of women empowerment is regarded as a key driver of the social and economic empowerment of women. Today thanks to this thousands of women contest in the elections, and get themselves elected in each five years which brings out the impact of the reservation system, which indicates the impact of the reservation system. The quota system has enabled women to enter into the public and political arena. The reservation bill passed by Rajya Sabha the upper house of the parliament in 2010. Kerala Govt also passed the bill approving reservation from 33 percent to 50 percent. But in Lok Sabha the Women political reservation bill has not been passed yet. The present study examines the opinion about fifty percentage political reservation among the Muslim women political representatives in Thiruvananthapuram District

Key words: Political Participation, Fifty percentage political reservation, Muslim women

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1. Introduction

The 73rd constitutional act of Indian constitution passed in 1992 by the Narasimha Rao government came into force on April 24, 1993. It opened new stage for entering into the mainstream politics and society and it also gave a constitutional status to establish democracy at the grass root level as in the state level or national level. The reservation system tries to increase women's participation and reserve one third of the seats for women in local bodies. In 2009, the Cabinet of India enhanced the reservation for women in local bodies from one third to 50%. It definitely opened a new world for women's empowerment at grass root level. Sooner than later Kerala has announced 50 % reservation for women in local bodies. Bihar, Utharakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh have 50% reservation for women. Bihar is the first state to implement the fifty percentage reservation. Here the paper tries to analyse the opinion of Muslim women about fifty percentage reservation policy in the LSG and their awareness and attitude about it after they became as a member in the Local Self Govt Bodies.

2. Objectives of the Study

This present study examines the opinion of the Muslim women representation about the fifty percent reservation in the Local Self Govt Bodies in Thiruvananthapuram District. It examines the respondents' awareness about the reservation policy and the level of satisfaction in the same. It also tries to analyse whether contest the future election without reservation. In short, it is intended to burning out the attitudes and opinions of Muslim women representatives in the LSG in Thiruvananthapuram District towards the reservation policy and political participation in the Local self govt bodies.

3. Methodology

Primary data were collected from Local self Govt Bodies in Thiruvananthapuram district by interviewing elected Muslimwomen political members. Secondary data were collected from various textbooks, articles, Journals and Election Commission reports etc.

4. Source of Information about Fifty Percent Reservation

Most of the women have a great apathy towards politics .The male-dominated society, its patriarchal nature, together with lack of education and lack of awareness of the society are the reasons for the backwardness of women in the mainstream or politics. Newly-elected members are not aware about the political processes and types of reservation. Most of them have attained the knowledge about reservation from political parties. Almost all of them had no chance to know about politics from the society. Therefore they did not get any opportunity to perceive unbiased knowledge about politics and political parties.

Table No. 1

Respondent's Source of information about fifty percentage reservation

Awareness of source of information	Frequency	Percentage
Television	17	20.2
Radio	10	12.0
Newspaper	32	38.0
Political Party	25	29.8
Total	84	100

Approximately all are using media which is helpful for day to day political processes. Half of the respondents had their first experience in the field of politics and half of them were re-elected in the same constituency. Any way after having as a member, the respondents got the training from the ministry of LSG (KILA). After getting training from such an institution, they became aware about politics and the reservation policy, especially fifty percentage reservations in the LSG.

The present table shows that majority of them that is 38.0 percent, got the information about the fifty percent reservation from Newspaper, 29.8 percent got awareness from the political party, 20.2 percent from the Television. Very less percent got an awareness about the reservation policy by Radio.

5. Level of Satisfaction and Fifty percentage Reservation

Fifty Percent Reservation opened a new venue for women to take part in politics. Women became almost satisfied and it partially fulfilled their dreams. The respondents have revealed, that their life had changed socially and politically than before. However, here a very less percent is not satisfied with reservation. They argue that this quota system would help only the privileged women, and the under-privileged would only be side-lined. Anyway, nowadays millions of women are part of every sphere of the society and politics. Anyhow women are very happy to handle their daily duties as members in the LSG.

The table bringing out the level satisfaction about the fifty percent reservation among the Muslim women in Thiruvananthapuram district. 78.5 percent respondents are fully satisfied with the reservation policy. 16.7 percent of the respondents are to 'somewhat extent satisfied' with the reservation policy. A less percentage is never satisfied with the reservation system.

Table No. 2

Respondent's satisfaction with fifty percentage reservation

Level of Satisfaction	Frequency	Percentage
Fully	66	78.5
Some what	14	16.7
Not at all	4	4.8
Total	84	100

6. Revolution of respondent's life

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment has served as the institutional innovation towards ensuring equal access to and enhanced participation of rural women in the comprehensive development through the participation in the LSGat grassroots level. Here it is attempted to highlight dynamics of the opportunities envisioned and outcomes realized; and the challenging realities encountered in the exercise of empowerment of rural women (Nijwm 2013). Political participation encompasses a wide range of political activities and commitments, ranging from the simple act of voting to wide political activism and involvement in political process (Palmer, 1976). The present table analyzes the changes in the lives of the Muslim women representatives.

Analyzing the respondents experience after entering into politics, 97.6 percent of respondents revealed that, their status had changed a lot in the family and also in the public sphere. 2.4 percent of the respondents said that they did not experience the changes after entering into the political field as a member. Majority of respondents reported that they were getting more social freedom and political awareness after entering into the political

Table No.3

Changes in lives after entry into political participation

Changes in the respondents' life	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	82	97.6
No	2	2.4
Total	84	100

stream as a members. Compared to their early period, their occurred perceptible changes in all sphere of their lives after they became members.

7. Have any experience from the reservation in general

In the general context reservation system provides only benefit for womenfolk in the society. It gives a platform for performing their duties as a politician. Women have gained public space like men in the male-dominated society from the reservation quota.

Table No .4

Have any experience from the reservation in general

Benefit from reservation	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	81	96.4
No	3	3.6
Total	84	100

Majority of the respondents (96.4percent) have revealed that they had obtained benefit or good from the women reservation. They reported that the fifty percentage reservation has provided an opportunity to cross the threshold as a member in LSG. Women political reservation (fifty percentage reservation) heralded an entry for women especially Muslim women who participated without any support of political parties.

3.6 percent women respondents replied 'No' to this question, because their reply was that they didn't get any benefit from the reservation in the general context.

Moreover, without women reservation in politics no women could get an entry into the political field. Political reservation really ensured women participation.

8. Benefit from the reservation system among women representatives in LSG

The women reservation bill was introduced by the Deve Gowda Govt. in 1996 and it was passed by the upper house in 2010. After that, the women participation in the LSG has increased very drastically. The same provision helped the Muslim women also in equal measure. Their representation has registered an increase.

The table 5 depicts of the Muslim women representatives have experienced getting any benefit from the reservation policy in the LSG. 77.8 percent respondents reported that they experienced getting benefit to a great extent. 20.2 percent of the respondents reported

Table No.5

**The percentage of respondents' belief if they have any benefit
from reservation to women**

Benefit of women	Frequency	Percentage
To a great extent	65	77.8
Some extent	17	20.2
Not at all	1	2.0
Total	84	100%

that they got benefit to some extent and very 2.0 percentage said that they did not get any benefit at all.

9. Level of capability for stand next election (without reservation)

Reservation is not a means to cure the polity of its ills. It is a step for coming into the mainstream. It is a necessary intervention to improve the conditions of the grossly under-represented. Majority of the Muslim women representatives were in politics due to the fifty percent reservation. So here, their capacity level for fulfilling the future commitments in governance is examined.

Table No.6

**Percentage of respondents' proficiency as a candidate to stand by
without reservation (general election)**

Level of ability for contest to general seat	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	68	81.0
No	16	19.0
Total	84	100

81.0 percent of the respondents have expressed the opinion that they were capable to compete without reservation in the coming election. 19.0 percent respondents said they had no capacity or determination to take part in any election without reservation. A few of them revealed that they won't contest in any other elections they had not shown any confidence for competing in the next tenure as a candidate without reservation.

10. Opinion about fifty percent reservation implementing in the Lok Sabha

108th constitution amendment bill or women reservation bill is a pending bill; it has not been passed yet in the legislative bodies at the Lok Sabha. In the Lok Sabha the assent about the reservation policy got delayed from the Govt due to the lack of the political consent from the various parties. It is not easy to implement women reservation in the Lok Sabha. Thanks to the 14 years of women struggle, now women reservation has been passed only in the Rajya Sabha (73rd and 74th constitution amendment). Today in the local self Govt bodies' women reservation has been enhanced from 33.33 percent to 50 percent. Therefore the Lok Sabha should also implement the same provision of women reservation quota for encouraging women political participation.

Table No.7

Percentage of respondents' opinion about reservation (50%) for women in Lok Sabha

Agreement of women reservation in the Lok Sabha	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	80	95.2
No	4	4.8
Total	84	100

While considering the members of the LSG almost all of them, 95.2 percent of the respondents reported 'YES' and very few of them reported 'No' about the women political reservation in the Lok Sabha.

11. Perspective about fifty percentage reservation

Before the reservation policy the political field was the monopoly of the male group. Today the women entered into the political field due to the women political reservation. Therefore women politician number had increased more than fifty percent in the LSG. Most of the political parties were opposed to women reservation. Furthermore the opponent's argument was that, reservation will not lead the right person in the political sector. The quota system helps only in the elite group of people in the mainstream society or politics. Majority of the political parties have no interest to promote women political participation. However, today millions of women are part of our political system due to the women political reservation.

Table No.8

Percentage of respondent's opinion about 50% reservation politics

Opinion about 50% reservation	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	70	83.3
Agree	12	14.3
Disagree	2	2.4
Total	84	100

The current table shows that the percent of respondents' opinion about the reservation policy. As a member of LSG, majority of the respondent (83.3 percent) strongly agree for reservation policy. 14.3 percent of the respondents only agree with the statement.

But the respondents had reasons for their disagreement with the reservation system, because such reservations alone not send the right leaders from the society to politics. A very less percent (2.4) of respondents disagree with the statement. Because respondents has various opinion about the reservation and the real leadership or disagreement. Moreover, Political representation opened a new world to a good number of Muslim women. They had never been exposed to such a field. Fifty percent reservation has provided platform for women especially Muslim women to participate in the politics.

12. Major reasons for the women not coming in the mainstream politics

There are several reasons standing in the way of women political entry. Social, economic, cultural and political factors prevent them from political participation. The nature of politics is an important factor for the inclusion or exclusion of women politics. Male domination of politics is a major hindrance for women's political participation. Often male-dominated political parties have a male perspective on issues of national importance, more often than not women viewpoint is often ignored and not reflected in the politics of their parties. Usually women are not elected to the positions of power within party structures because of gender biases of male leadership.

Here out of the total respondents majority of them accepted reservation and also they were able to manage or hold the position as a member of LSG. All members agreed to the reservation policy but generally women face various problem in the field of politics such as male hegemony, discrimination as a women, domestic responsibilities etc. Major reasons standing in the way of their smooth functioning are negligence of political parties and their reluctance to provide party ticket to women for coming into mainstream politics.

For most of the women representatives, had no previous experience in the political field, so the women were not able to perform well in some fields of decision making process. In such cases their involvement was affected or questioned at least in the initial stage of their political career.

Table No. 9

Reasons for women are facing various problems in the political field

Reason for major problems of women in the political field	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of previous experience	20	23.8
Reluctance to take major responsibilities	5	6.0
Fear to take or chief decisions	8	9.5
Lack of professional attitudes	6	7.1
Unwilling's to provide seat for women who enter into the politics	45	53.6
Total	84	100

Majority of them reported that (53.6 percent) attitude of political parties who stand in the way of women politicians. 23.8 percentage of respondents' revealed that lack of previous experience affected them in the initial stages for doing their political responsibilities. Some of them have pointed out that lack professional attitudes, and also fear which hold them back from shouldering major responsibilities. Again it is noted that a few percent of the respondents are free from such problems while in politics.

13. Conclusion

The present study brings out with the attitude and opinion about the fifty percent reservation in the LSG. The paper has analyzed the awareness of Muslim women representatives about the reservation policy after implementing it in the LSG. Analysis of the data revealed to what extent the respondents attained satisfaction from the reservation policy as a member of political party, especially Muslim women. They hold the political power as a tool of confidence and self-respect like their male counterpart. They were satisfied with the reservation policy system. The study points out that no political parties have any interest to women representation in the political field. Finally women have realized

that, without women political reservation, they may not be able to enter into the political arena. They have felt that many changes have happened in family as well as public life after entering into political process. A many respondents have the confidence to contest in the next election without reservation quota. However the respondents have pointed out that some problems are their regarding the decision making process related with administration and managing of various funding systems due to the lack of previous experience in respective fields. So almost all major decisions are taken by the political parties. However the Muslim women representatives do exhibit confidence because of their increased political status in their private and public life.

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