

Participation of women in local self govt. Of bargarh municipality

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Simply stated political participation is the process by which people take part in the affairs of the polity. So far political participation of women are concerned it is the degree of sharing of power and value attached to them in the society. Participation of women in state craft is not a new one as evident from the matriarchal nature of Indus Civilisation, ¹ participation of Maitreyi, Kunti etc. in the Royal Parishada. ² In the Christian era also the examples of Razia, Noorzahan, Naiki Devi, Laxmi Bai etc. can be cited. However, the 73rd amendment Act, 1992 of the Indian Constitution provided wide



scale power to women in political affairs at local self-govt. In this context the participation of women in Bargarh Municipality possessed importance of its own.

Bargarh originally called “Bhagharkotta” in the Banda inscription of Rastrakuta King Parachakrashalya in 11th C.A.D., was named as Bargarh from the time of Balaram Dev, the 1st Chauhan King of Sambalpur. ³ Narayan Singh the last Chauhan King granted Bargarh as Maufi or free hold to two Brahmin brothers Krushna Dash and Narayan Dash son of Balmiki Dash who was killed in action by the Gond rebels. The present town of Bargarh is managed by a municipal which was established in 1951. ⁴ Before it Bargarh municipality was managed by the sanitation committee. With the growth of population sanitation committee was changed to Union Board by the Sambalpur District self-govt. rule made by Late Bodhiram Dubey – Minister of Education and self-govt. The Union Board constituted a sub-committee to produce a report on the different aspects of the town. The report was accepted by the govt. in 1951 as a result of which Bargarh Municipality came into being. At the time of establishment the total population of the municipality was 9197 and consisted of 15 Wards. The present municipal council consists of 17 Wards and 51, 209 people ⁵ out of which 1/3rd are reserved for the women. The Housing and Urban Development Dept. Govt. of Orissa by its Letter No. 18974 dt.20.05.1988 included Ambapali & Brahmachari to Bargarh Municipality. Parakshit Satpathy was the 1st Chairman of the council. Its 1st election was held in 1954 and Dinabandhu Kar was the Chairman. Of course official record says Sri Nanda Kishore Sharma was the 1st elected Chairman ⁶ The other Chairmen were Shankhamani Mahapatra, Sadananda Panigrahi, Jadumani Pradhan, K.C. Mahapatra, Jugal Prasad Singh, Jambobati Dalai. The participation of women in the

equality and freedom enjoyed by women in the shaping and

political affairs of Bargarh Municipality is praise worthy. They have not only been elected as Councilors but have also occupied the seat of Chairman, Vice-Chairman etc. However in the initial stage they were not given opportunities to participate. After the passing of 73rd Amendment Act, 1992 their number increased. Many women like Sheeta Sharma, Jambobati Dalai, Shakuntala Maharana, Umarani Surjal, Urmila Mallik, Pritikana Mazundar, Pratima Hota, Padmavati Kuanr. Parvati Nanda etc. have successfully elected and played their role in the council. In the last council, Devaki Sahu was the Vice Chairman. Previous to it Prtikana Mazundar was the Asst. Vice-Chairman. The present Chairman of the Council is a lady. She is Jambobati Dalai. The women participants of the Council have done a number of developmental works on different fields like Devt. and construction of roads, spread of education, supply of drinking water, cleanliness etc. During the present council, when a lady is the Chairman outstanding devt. in some fields like roads, drainage, etc. are going on.

If we open the pages of women participation in Bargarh municipality we can find that the participation of women in the council solely depends upon the attitude of the political parties, political base and awareness of the families, educational status and financial status etc. Women in the age group of above 30 and below 50 are mostly taking interest in politics of the council. So far municipal area is concern Brahmins and Kulita castes people have dominated the political affairs. However this scenario is changing due to the system of reservation by 73rd Amendment Act. So far the educational qualification of the women, participating in the affairs of the municipal council, most of them are below graduation level. Even few of them are not up to the standard. In the 1st stage ladies from higher income group were participating in the council. Of course this tendency is changing very speedily. Above all the participation of women in the council indicate that women have equal inclination like male people to have their rights in power politics of local self govt.

References

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