

The Impact of Women's Leadership in Panchayati Raj Institutions: Some of the Insights on Indian Rural Governance

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Abstract : India is a nation of villages. Traditionally, women had enjoyed a high social status in India. Our mythology, folklore and history are full of women who were epitomes of virtue, wisdom, power, and position. The important concern about their entry into the politics is of great importance all over the world. Women have performed excellently in social, economic and political sphere. However, the fact remains that despite constituting half of the population their representation among elected post continue to remain negligible in Panchayati Raj Institutions. Women in India suffered from many social economic handicaps such as illiteracy, economically dependent, social customs, traditions and rituals that are the main causes of their inactive participation in local governance. There is still widespread patriarchal outlook in the villages and the lack of experience on the part of women leadership are some of the major issues of debate. The implementation of the 73rd Amendment Act of the Indian Constitution in 1992 reserved 1/3 rd of the seats for women empowerment. It was a major step to encourage them to take part in the village politics. This kind of revolution was the beginning of women leadership in villages. The paper intends to study the role and importance of women leadership in Panchayati Raj Institutions in India. The paper is divided into four sections. First section deals with the introduction by taking into account the available research on this particular subject. Second section talks about the role played by women leadership in these institutions after the passing of 73rd Amendment Act. Third section deals with some of the critical insights of the study by discussing the problems faced by the active women's leadership at the grassroots. Finally, the paper concludes with policy suggestions.

Keywords : women, leadership, grassroots, Panchayati Raj

Conference Title : ICRSD 2016 : International Conference on Rural Sociology and Development

Conference Location : Tokyo, Japan

Conference Dates : May 26-27, 2016