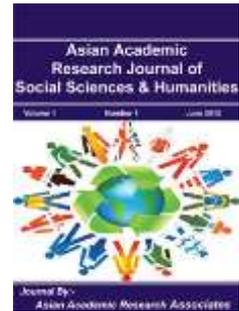




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ROLE OF PRIs IN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: A STUDY OF SIRSA DISTRICT

DR. RAJBIR SINGH DALAL *

* Associate Prof.
CDLU, Sirsa, Haryana

ABSTRACT

No doubt women empowerment is the most debated issue of the day around the globe. Accordingly, various steps both curative and preventive have been taken to empower them including the democratic decentralization process which provides ample opportunities to them to participate in their political set up. The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts, 1993 are vital in this direction by which women are given at least one third of the seats in the PRIs and ULBs. Thus the PRIs proved instrumental for empowerment of rural women who are the most marginalized and exploited in the society. As 4 elections have been conducted for these bodies so far under the 73rd CAA, 1993, hence a modest attempt has been made in the present paper to assess the impact of PRIs on women empowerment in the state of Haryana in general and Sirsa district in particular. Haryana is the fastest growing state in Indian Union having the second highest per capita income, GSDP rate and a total export of Rs. 48,530 crore in 2010-11. According to Economic Survey of 2011-12, the planned investment rate in the state is highest and it has finalized the investment of Rs. 59,000 crore since 2005 and that of Rs. 96,000 crore is in pipeline. The State government has taken many steps in the last four and half decades to improve the status and position of women including their health, education, economic independence, gender parity and political empowerment. No doubt, women have marked their presence in all walks of life but the results are not up to the expectations due to the socio-cultural constraints, lack of awareness, ignorance, their economic dependency on males etc. Though education has succeeded to some extent to empower them and educated and young women are coming forward for PRIs and their preference is Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad as compared to Gram Panchayat. Thus at this level their participation is mere quantitative, not the qualitative one which needs to be addressed at the earliest. A sincere attempt in this regard has been made in the Bibipur village of district Jind where the first all women meeting of the gram sabha on female feticide was held on 18/06/2012. Around 225 women of the village participated in it, including some women officials of the district administration and resolved to prevent any incident of female feticide in the village. Such steps need to be followed by the other areas in the state.