

Women In Contemporary India

Issues, Realities And Perspective

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Bhama	123
Kamal	133
jit Singh	149
na Babuta	165
Mehar Chand	176
esh Pandey	184
ਵੀਰਪਾਲ ਕੌਰ	192
ਨਛੱਤਰ ਸਿੰਘ	212
ਮਨਦੀਪ ਰਾਨੀ	222
ਲੀਮਚੰਦ	234
ਸਦਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਲੀਮਚੰਦ	241

WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS: PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

Dr. Dajinder Kaur & Dr. Jagmeet Singh*

Through the ages, there had been a struggle in different parts of the world for getting political rights for the oppressed section of society including women. By exercising this right, an individual feels that he/she has become the master not only of his/her own fate but also of the fate of his/her fellow beings. Participation helps the individual to be effective and it associates him/her with the political system. The higher the rate and levels of political participation, the more varied are its forms and the healthier is the democratic system. Particularly in a society, where certain groups are traditionally behind the others, where they can be categorized as a 'weaker section' or as 'disadvantaged groups' wider participation and mobilization at higher and higher levels would be necessary for its uplift for the democratic system¹.

Women constitute slightly more than half of the world population. Their contribution to the social and economic development of societies is also more than half as compared to that of men by virtue of their dual roles in the productive and reproductive spheres. Yet their participation in formal political structures and processes, where decisions regarding the use of societal resources generated by both men and women are made, remains insignificant.

Women's participation in political process is important for strengthening democracy and for their struggle against marginalization, trivialization and oppression. Emergence of women as a strong group would change the prevailing political practices, the nature and the content of debates in the Legislative bodies. The

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