

Bhagyalakshmi Madam

by Jayasri Rao

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WOMEN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP- ISSUES & SUGGESTIONS

E.P.S. BHAGYA LAKSHMI

ASST. PROFESSOR IN POLITICAL SCIENCE &
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION,

ST.ANN'S COLLEGE FOR WOMEN,

MALKAPURAM, VISAKHAPATNAM-11

ABSTRACT

Leadership is an ability of an individual to lead other individuals or organizations to achieve defined goals. In the word LEADERSHIP, there are 3 important components.

- Leader
- Situation
- Followers

What makes a man leader?-is an interesting question in the political science. The answer is explained in the form of 3 theories.

- Traits theory
- Situational theory
- Followers theory

Among all these theories, most of the research scholars concentrated on Traits theory.

Leadership is necessary to achieving objectives, motivating followers, changing the behavior of others and solve the conflicts among the individuals. This leadership play an important role particularly in political arena. Because political leadership is combined with power. Hence, It is the highest leadership

In India, in the aspect of political leadership, men dominated the entire scenario. Women represented below 10% in leadership position in the first 5 decades of independence. Illiteracy, domestic burden, health problems, character assassination and lack of reservations in state and union legislatures etc. are the causes for less political representation of women in leadership roles.

73rd & 74th amendment acts of Indian constitutions granted 33%

Reservations to women in rural & urban governance. They boosted women leadership. Still there are some issues in women political leadership like shadow power, no change in corruption and criminalization of politics and lack of continuity in political career etc. To solve these issues, 33 % reservations should be given to women at state and union legislatures. The women laws should be implemented properly. Women's health, education and employment should be given top priority. Domestic burden should be shared by men and gender decimation should be eradicated by agents of social change.



Introduction:

Leadership is an ability of an individual to lead other individuals or organizations to achieve defined goals. In the word LEADERSHIP, there are 3 important components.

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What makes a man leader?-is an interesting question in the political science. The answer is explained in the form of 3 theories.

- Traits theory
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Among all these theories, most of the research scholars concentrated on Traits theory. According to academicians, the following are the important traits or qualities of a leader.

- Intelligence
- Clear communication
- Patience
- Commanding power
- Healthy & attractive physical personality
- Emotional stability
- Inter personal skills
- Team work
- Hard work
- Punctuality
- Charisma
- Values
- Discipline &
- Dedication etc.

Leadership is necessary to achieving objectives, motivating followers, changing the behavior of others and solve the conflicts among the individuals. This leadership play an important role particularly in political arena. Because political leadership is combined with power. Hence, It is the highest leadership.

In India, in the aspect of political leadership, men dominated the entire scenario. Women represented below 10% in leadership position in the first 5 decades of independence. Slowly, because of 73rd & 74th amendment acts to Indian constitution, women leadership role in rural & urban governance has increased. In Andhra Pradesh 50% of the seats and in all other states 33% of seats are reserved for women in local self-Governments. That boosted women leadership at lower level. Their leadership is still less

than 12% in state and union level political positions. The following are the causes for backwardness of women in political Leadership:

- Illiteracy and lack of political awareness
- Domestic burden
- Health problems due to reproductive system
- Lack of family support to step into public life
- Character assassination
- Lack of reservations in state Assemblies & union Parliament
- Unable to co-ordinate family life & public life
- Criminalization of politics
- Gender discrimination &
- Lack of financial independence etc.

As a result, they are unable to perform political leadership role effectively. But if 48% of the population cannot represent their voice and cannot take part in decision making, there is no meaning to Democracy. Hence, their political leadership should be boosted. Reservations in local self-governments are given to achieve this boosting to women leadership.

The 30 years of women reservations at local self-governments brought the following positive changes in women political leadership.

- Women became a power group.
- Their participation in politics increased
- Their voting percentage and their membership in political parties are increased.
- Their social status has increased
- Many changes came in marriage system, family system and their role in economy.
- Women headed families increased.
- The number of single women are increased.
- Families are slowly ready to invest money on women's education.
- Women mobility has increased
- Families are becoming supportive for their political participation & public life.

In spite of the above positive changes, the following issues became more in Indian women political leadership:

- ❖ Shadow power
- ❖ No change in corruption, criminalization of politics & caste politics
- ❖ Lack of continuity in women leadership
- ❖ Women are not in a position to go ahead in political ladder.

Let us discuss the above issues. Everywhere, in the name of woman leader, either father or husband or son used to exercise power. The studies are saying that 85% of women political leaders are confined only to signature or thumb impression. Their power became shadow power or nominal power. Though, women political leadership was increased, there was no change in corruption, criminalization and caste politics. Women could not show any difference in political field. Moreover, the women political leaders are not in a position to continue their political career for a long period. After 5 years, 60% of women are going back and confine to

Domestic work by leaving political career. They unable to go ahead in political leadership ladder. That means, the women who performed political positions at local self-governments are not able to contest and win in the Assembly and the parliament elections.

The above issues should be addressed properly to make women political leadership successful and effective. Much research is going on the above issues. If following measures will be taken by political parties, society & people, the women can play an effective role as leaders.

- Proper leadership training should be given to women to make them effective leaders. NGOs and the Government training centers should concentrate on this immediately. Then women reservations will be fruitful.
- There should be 33% reservations in the state and the union legislatures. Then the women can continue their political carrier from bottom to top.
- Gender discrimination should be eradicated completely. The parents, teachers, religious heads, NGOs, media, political leaders and administrators should take lead to eradicate this discrimination. They have to change the attitude of people regarding gender discrimination
- Role of caste, money and muscle power should be controlled first. Electoral reforms should come in this direction & they must be implemented effectively. Then, ordinary women also can contest in the elections freely.
- NSS, NCC Adventure camps, self-defense courses etc. should made compulsory in education. So that the confidence , courage and awareness of women will be increased.
- There should be elections to students at college level. They promote women political participation. It is evident that most of the leaders are being emerged from educational institutions.
- Women laws should be implemented strictly. There should be a separate mechanism to implement these laws. Women police stations women task forces and mahila courts should work effectively to protect women's rights.
- From K.G. to P.G. free education should be available to women. More hostels, short stay homes should be constructed throughout the country.
- Women's health, particularly reproductive health should be given top priority. Nutritious food should be supplied to every women who is suffering from Anemia.
- There should be equal pay for equal work for women. Crèches should be made available to working women in all work sites and organizations.
- Employment opportunities should be increased to women.
- Domestic burden should be shared by male members of the family.
- Women should be recruited in top positions in all political parties
- All women organizations should come together and make women movement a strong movement.

Thus, many changes should come in our government and society to promote women political leadership. If women will become political leaders

and occupy higher positions, the progress of women will be achieved. Some sensitive issues like importance of individual Toilets, domestic violence and sexual harassment will be focused effectively. Because these issues should be understood by women more deeply rather than men. At this juncture, we have to remember Lord Bryce statement for the need of women leadership. That is -“The people who are away to politics are equally away to the benefits that come through politics”.

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