

Empowerment of Women through Panchayat Raj Institution: A Case Study of Ujjain District of Madhya Pradesh

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Abstract

Empowerment of women is essentially the process of up liftment of economic, social and political status of women, ones regarded as traditionally underprivileged in the society. It involves the process wherein in women can participate in decision making without the fear of oppression, exploitation, apprehension and discrimination. It is constitutional platform which allows women to stand up to men, to raise their voice on issues of development and thus, providing them an identity in an orthodox male dominated socio-political set up. The main focus of this paper is to unfold the dynamism of the process whereby women empowerment is achieved through women participation in the Panchayat Raj Institution. The study is based on primary data collected from different villages of Ujjain District of Madhya Pradesh. The present study attempts to analyze how political participation of women in Panchayati Raj Institutions has transformed the subordinate position of women to the main stream. How this group has been able to claim and acquire a legitimate share in the power structure.

Keywords: *Empowerment of women, Panchayati Raj Institutions, Local Self Government, Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh, Gram Sabha, Gram Panchayat, Constitution of India.*

Introduction

Women empowerment is becoming an increasingly popular term in today's context. Although women constitute one half of the population, they continued to be subjugated, unequal in socio-economic and political status. Women have been struggling for self-respect and autonomy since independence. It was in the mid 1980's through various women movements, the issue of 'women empowerment' came into spotlight. Women participation in political processes 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 practices, the nature and content of debates in the legislature and