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Political empowerment of women in Jammu and Kashmir: A study with special reference to rural women in Poonch district

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Abstract

Empowerment of the women is necessary for any democracy; it gave equality to the women of the country. The present study is shows that political awareness among the rural women in Jammu and Kashmir. The study is based on primary data, which is collected through proper questionnaire. According to this study the political awareness among rural women is not much better, and women faced a lot of obstacles like education, health, social practices, early marriage, lack of grab opportunities, domestic violence and armed conflicts and militancy in the study area. The opinion of the respondents about political awareness and the reservation of the 73rd and 74th amendment act. It found that majority of the respondents were unaware about the amendments and reservations. It also found that respondents have lack of access basic education which became hurdle in their life to grab equality between male and female.

Keywords: Democracy, empowerment, political awareness, and amendment

Introduction

Political empowerment of women is an important societal process for development and Progress. Participation of women in politics is an indicator of their status around the world. Women continue to be underrepresented in positions of power [1]. The report contains a lot of information about the political empowerment of women in political participation. Women's engagement in politics is significant for securing women's legitimate place in society, allowing them to decide their fate, and for the creation of genuine and durable democracy. This will not only improve their personal qualities but will also pave the road for their social and economic development. Many societal issues will be solved because of their participation in public life (Nisha, 2018) [2]. It means the presence of a political system that encourages women to participate and control the political decision-making process (Ghosh, 1956) [3].

Political empowerment is, therefore, a “progress as well as goals, which means redistribution of powers”, “between states, sections, castes, creeds, gender or individuals”. “Women’s can become empowered through organized mass movement, which can change the basic power relations”. Women had to implement a proper strategy and plan for the development (Rakesh, 2012) [4]. Gender equality and women's empowerment are both human rights that are required for comprehensive, equitable, and long-term development. To protect democracy, women must actively participate in government and politics [5].

Literature Review

Mohiuddin (2018) [6] “Women in Jammu and Kashmir: Political empowerment and participation “Women are an essential component of the global social structure. Although women make up nearly half of the world's population, they have always been discriminated against, oppressed, and introverted by society, and they rarely make their presence felt in India's and Jammu and Kashmir's constitutions, which are based on the principle of equality and guarantee equality before the law and equal participation to all citizens. Jammu and Kashmir is a state where women have always battled to make their presence felt and their voices heard. Jammu and Kashmir is a state that granted women equal political rights before independence in 1944. However, women in Jammu and Kashmir continue to fight for

political equality. Although the state is led by a woman, there are few women in Jammu and Kashmir at the decision-making levels of public life. Voting is the only activity in which Jammu and Kashmir women participate in big numbers. Numerous factors influence women's political empowerment in Jammu and Kashmir, including political volatility, political parties' failure to produce female candidates, dynastic rule, patriarchal society, and so on.

Nisha & Vezhaveenthan (2018) [7]

“Political Empowerment and Participation of Women in India” in this paper that Women's political empowerment is an important societal process for development and advancement. Women's status is determined by their political participation and empowerment on a global scale. Women continue to be underrepresented in positions of power. The purpose of this research is to investigate the obstacles, statistical data, and comparisons with other nations, and the empowerment of women in Indian politics. The descriptive research method is used in the research article. The study's findings suggest that a variety of reasons, including economic, religious, social, and cultural issues, contributed to women's low political engagement in the country. Women's participation in politics is gradually increasing but not dramatically expanding, according to statistics on women's participation in politics in India from 1952 to 2014. However, women should be made aware of the importance of participating in politics with courage. Women's political participation is on the rise, according to research. The study's findings on political empowerment and women's participation in politics are significant. Women's engagement in politics is critical for securing women's legitimate place in society, allowing them to decide their fate, and for the creation of genuine and durable democracy. This will not only improve their personal qualities but will also pave the road for their social and economic advancement. Many societal issues will be solved as a result of their participation in public life.

Sarwer (2017) [8] “Women empowerment”

Issues and challenges in Jammu and Kashmir” In his article, he explains the problem and the hurdles that women faced like, domestic abuse, societal practices, armed conflict, and militancy in the state are all making women victims. They have not only been subjected to savage humiliation and harassment, but they have also been subjected to traumatic situations that have left them mentally unwell. The violence in Jammu and Kashmir has seized women's rights and put them in danger. Nobody realized how many mothers became widows while also being responsible for their children's upbringing. The researcher based her findings on secondary data and concluded that women in many parts of Jammu and Kashmir continue to face issues and challenges related to education, health, domestic violence, politics, declining sex ratios, state violence, dowry harassment, eve-

teasing, unequal wage, child labor, and female feticide and infanticide, among other things. To address these concerns, the central government, state governments, and non-governmental organizations should collaborate to empower women in Jammu and Kashmir. The current study highlights government efforts and describes existing policies for women's empowerment in the region.

Jabbar & Jothiramalingam (2017) [9] “Political Participation of Women in Jammu and Kashmir an Overview “Women are an essential section of social association all over the world. Women face a lot of socio-political ill-treatment, harassment and are driven out of mainstream politics. Even before independence Indian women had the right to vote. The Indian Constitution is based on the principle of equality and guarantees equality before the law and equal participation to all its citizens. However, like the other States of India, the position of women in the State of Jammu and Kashmir remained inferior. Women have participated in socio-political movements since the 1930s. Women in Kashmir have played a prominent role in the political process. But when we see the political awareness of women in Jammu and Kashmir it has declined due to various reasons. In this context the present study analyses the Political participation of Women in Jammu and Kashmir.

Objective of the study

1. To study the political awareness among rural women in Jammu and Kashmir.
2. To study the problems faced by rural women due to lack of political awareness.

Methodology

The present study attempts to describe the study area’s brief information besides the research procedures adopted for collecting and analyzing the data to achieve the specific objective of the study. Research techniques are the important avenues for collecting, classifying, analyzing, and interpreting the data from the field. Moreover, the methods and techniques of the research are by the nature of the study. The research work has been investigated using both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. The selection of study area constituted of eleven blocks of poonch district out of two have been selected for present study. These two blocks are remotely located and bounded by the line of control (LOC). It consists of 45 villages and 36 panchayats. In these two blocks, only 25 villages were selected for the present study. The numbers and distribution of respondents taken from the selected villages have been given in table 4.7.

Distribution of sample within the blocks

The distribution of samples within the selected blocks is based on the percentage method. Whereas the percentage has been calculated based on the total rural women in the selected blocks.

Table 1: Distribution of sample within the blocks

Block	Population total no. of households)	Percentage of total population (40,383)	Number of respondents from each blocks
Mankote	24314	60.2%	181
Lassana	16069	39.8%	119
Total	40383	100%	300

Source: Primary Data

Hence, from Mankote 181 respondents and Lassana 119 respondents were selected for this study.

Distribution of Sample within the Villages

The distribution of samples within the selected Villages is based on the percentage method. Whereas the percentage

has been calculated based on the total rural women population in the selected Villages.

Table 2: Distribution of sample within the villages

Blocks	Village	Total Population	Female Population	Sample from Village
Mankote	Balnoi	2425	1076	8
	Uchhad	3585	1630	12
	Kasblari	4164	1923	14
	Narol	1613	912	8
	ChakBnola	1242	809	6
	Kalaban	3808	1903	14
	Gursai	11136	6204	47
	Salwah	6456	3026	22
	Jughal	579	239	2
	Thera	5653	2568	19
	Chajjla	6558	2821	19
Sagra	2311	1203	10	
	Total		24314	181
Lassana	Kalai	1224	1098	8
	Seri Khawaja	3557	2123	15
	Naraian	1420	640	5
	Nabna	1668	755	5
	Bachawali	1368	802	6
	Forst Block	437	213	2
	Phagla	3460	1621	12
	Dodi	2879	1293	10
	MohariBachai	4606	2204	16
	Dundak	1820	876	7
	Sanai	5821	2671	20
	Samote	740	381	3
	Pamrote	3070	1392	10
	Total		16069	119

Source: Computed by researcher

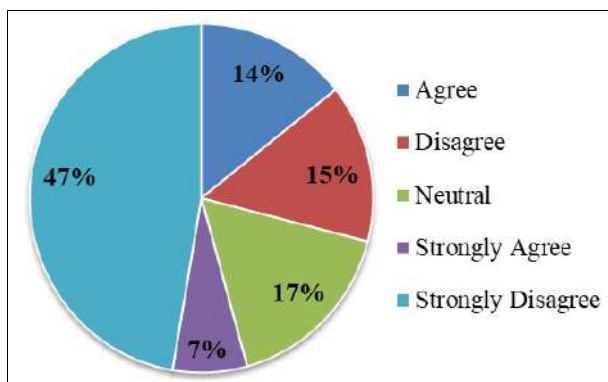
Selection of Sample within the Villages

A random sampling method has been used for the present study. The respondents were selected from 25 villages of Mankote and Lassana Block of Poonch district. Random sampling technique was used in this study because house number was not given to some villages.

strongly disagreed with that opinion; followed by 17% neutral, 14% Agreed, and 15% women disagreed, while only 14% agreed with that opinion. It shows that most of the respondents were not well aware of the awareness of constitutional rights and responsibilities. The main reason is the low level of education and lack of awareness campaigns.

Result and Discussions

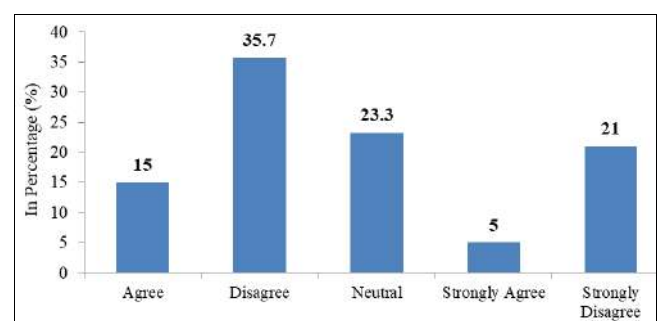
This section of the study discusses the respondents’ political awareness in the study area.



Sources: Primary Data

Fig 1: Awareness about the constitutional rights, duties and responsibilities of rural women

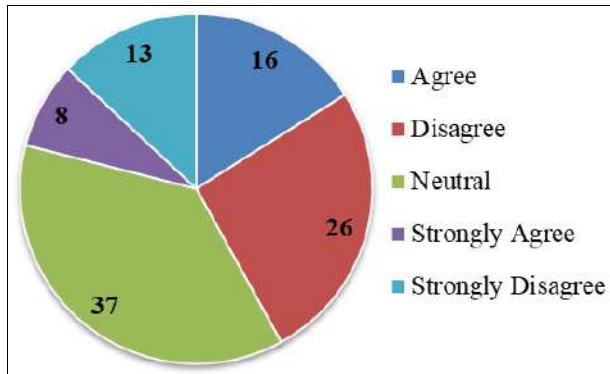
Figure (1) depict the awareness of women's constitutional rights and responsibilities. The majority, 47% of women,



Sources: Primary Data

Fig 2: Awareness about the reservation for rural women in local level elections provided in panchayati raj Act 1989

Figure (2) shows the awareness about the reservation for rural women in the local level election in Panchayati Raj Act 1989. It depicts that only 5% of respondents strongly agreed, 15% agreed, and 23.3% were neutral, while 35.7% disagreed and 21% strongly disagreed in the study area. The result depicts that the awareness of the Panchayati raj Act 1989 is not good because many of the respondents don't aware of this act.



Sources: Primary Data

Fig 3: Awareness of the 73rd amendment act among rural women

Figure (3) shows awareness of the 73rd constitutional amendment act among rural women. It shows that 37% of respondents replied neutral, 26% disagreed, and 13% strongly disagreed about awareness. In comparison, only 16% agree, and 8% of respondents found in the study area strongly agree with the awareness of the 73rd constitutional amendment. The result of the above figure shows that rural women are not aware about the 73rd amendment act. The main reason behind this is the low level of education, lack of awareness campaigns and living in far-flung areas.

Table 3: Awareness of the plans and projects executed at the block level among rural women

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	61	20.3
Disagree	62	20.7
Neutral	89	29.7
Strongly Agree	39	13.0
Strongly Disagree	49	16.3
Total	300	100.0

Sources: Primary Data

The government of India runs several plans and projects to develop rural areas in the country. Table (3) shows respondents' awareness of the plans and projects executed at the block level. It depicts that the majority, 29.7%, replied neutral, 20.7% of respondents disagree, and 16.3% strongly disagree, while 20.3% are aware of plans and projects and 13% strongly agree about it. The analysis of the above table shows that 33% of respondents were aware about the plan and projects for rural developments. It shows that the awareness level of rural plans and projects is good as compared to other awareness levels. The analysis shows that rural women are in a transformative phase and moving toward education.

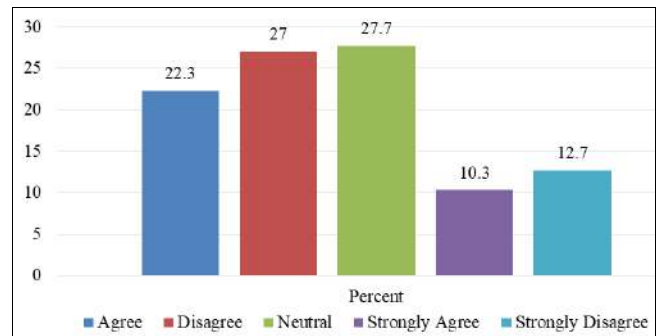
Table 4: Awareness of the child development program respondents

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	68	22.7
Disagree	63	21.0
Neutral	67	22.3
Strongly Agree	27	9.0
Strongly Disagree	75	25.0
Total	300	100.0

Sources: Primary Data

Table (4) shows the respondents' opinions about awareness

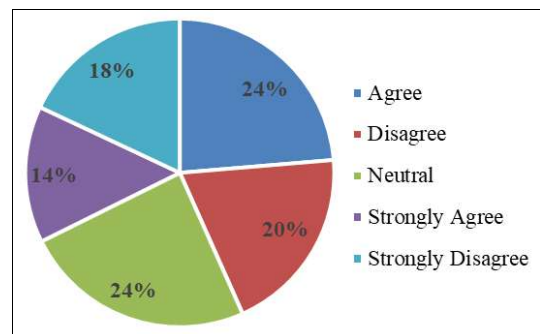
of the child development programme in the study area. It shows that 22.7% of respondents agreed, and 9% of respondents strongly agreed, while 21% of respondents disagreed and 25% strongly disagreed about that in the study area. 22.3% of respondents opted for neutral.



Sources: Primary Data

Fig 4: Awareness of any NGO/institutions/ organization which is trying to help respondents in the study area

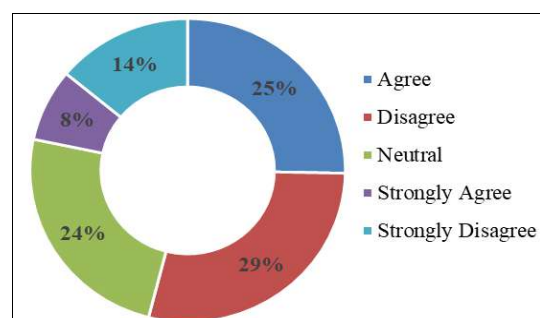
There are many NGOs/ Institutions/ Organizations working in rural India to develop rural women. Figure (4.6) shows the awareness among respondents about NGOs/ Institutions/Organizations trying to help rural women. It shows that 22.3% agreed, 10.3% strongly agreed, 27% disagreed, 12.7% strongly disagreed, and 27.7% said neutrally.



Sources: Primary Data

Fig 5: Awareness about Reservation 73rd and 74th amendment act among respondents in the study area

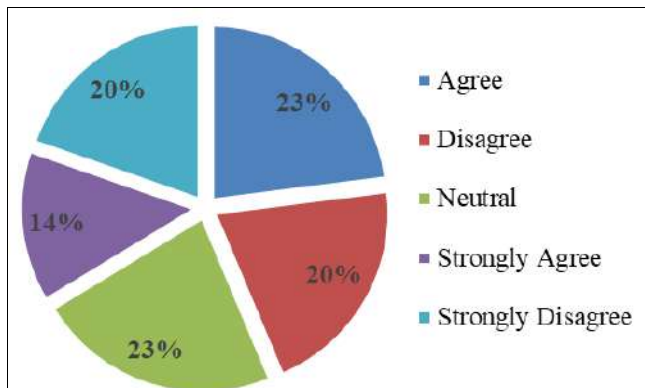
Figure (5) shows the opinion of the respondents about awareness of the 73rd and 74th amendment act. It depicts that 24% of the respondents agree, 14% strongly agree, 20% of the respondents disagree, and 18% strongly disagree in the study area.



Sources: Primary Data

Fig 6: Awareness of the centrally sponsored schemes among respondents in the study area

Figure (6) shows the respondent’s perception of awareness about the centrally sponsored schemes in the study area. It depicts that the majority, 25% of the respondents agree, 8% strongly agree, and 24% are neutral, while 29% of the respondents disagree, 14% strongly disagree in the study area.



Sources: Primary Data

Fig 7: Awareness of poverty alleviation programmes among respondents in the study area.

The Government of India runs programmes for poverty alleviation in the country. Figure (7) shows awareness among respondents about poverty alleviation programmes in the study area. 23% of the respondents agree, 14% of the respondents strongly agree, and 23% of respondents are neutral, while 20% of each respondent disagree and strongly disagree in the study area.

Finding from the Political Awareness of the Local Women

- The descriptive analysis of this study depicts the awareness of women's constitutional rights and responsibilities. The majority, 47% of women, strongly disagreed with that opinion; followed by 17% neutral, 14% Agreed, and 15% women disagreed, while only 14% agreed with that opinion. Rural women were dissatisfied or disagreed due to the lack of political awareness and education. Rural women are not aware of their constitutional rights, duties, and responsibilities.
- The present study shows the awareness about the reservation for rural women in the local level election in Panchayati Raj Act 1989. It depicts that only 5% of respondents strongly agreed, 15% agreed, and 23.3% were neutral, while 35.7% disagreed and 21% strongly disagreed in the study area. The result shows that the awareness of Panchayati raj Act 1989 is not good because many of the respondents don't aware of this act.
- The finding of this study shows awareness of the 73rd constitutional amendment act among rural women. It shows that 37% of respondents replied neutral, 26% disagreed, and 13% strongly disagreed about awareness. In comparison, only 16% agree, and 8% of respondents found in the study area strongly agree with the awareness of the 73rd constitutional amendment.
- The descriptive analysis of this study shows that rural women are not aware of the 73rd amendment act. The main reason behind this is the low level of education, lack of awareness campaigns and living in far-flung

- areas. Rural women are not properly aware of the 73rd constitutional amendment act.
- The study shows the respondents' awareness of the plans and projects executed at the block level. It depicts that the majority, 29.7%, replied neutral, 20.7% of respondents disagree, and 16.3% strongly disagree, while 20.3% are aware of plans and projects and 13% strongly agree about it.
- The analysis of the study shows that 33% of respondents were aware of the plan and projects for rural developments. It shows that the awareness level of rural plans and projects is good as compared to other awareness levels. The analysis of shows that rural women are in a transformative phase and moving toward education.
- The present study shows the respondents' opinions about awareness of the child development programme in the study area. It shows that 22.7% of respondents agreed, and 9% of respondents strongly agreed, while 21% of respondents disagreed and 25% strongly disagreed about that in the study area. 22.3% of respondents opted for neutral.
- The present study shows NGOs/ Institutions/ Organizations working in rural India to develop rural women. The analysis shows the awareness among respondents about NGOs/ Institutions/Organizations trying to help rural women. It shows that 22.3% agreed, 10.3% strongly agreed, 27% disagreed, 12.7% strongly disagreed, and 27.7% said neutrally.
- The present study analysis shows the opinion of the respondents about awareness about the reservation of the 73rd and 74th amendment act. It depicts that 24% of the respondents agree, 14% strongly agree, 20% of the respondents disagree, and 18% strongly disagree in the study area.
- The present study shows that most of the respondents disagree it shows that the respondents are not aware of the reservation of 73rd and 74th amendment act. Rural women are not properly aware of the reservation policy and reservation benefits at the grass-root level in the state of Jammu and Kashmir.
- The descriptive analysis shows the respondent’s perception of awareness about the centrally sponsored schemes in the study area. It depicts that the majority, 25% of the respondents agree, 8% strongly agree, and 24% are neutral, while 29% of the respondents disagree, 14% strongly disagree in the study area.
- The Government of India runs programmes for poverty alleviation in the country. The present study shows awareness among respondents about poverty alleviation programmes in the study area. 23% of the respondents agree, 14% of the respondents strongly agree, and 23% of respondents are neutral, while 20% of each respondent disagree and strongly disagree in the study area.

Conclusion

The present study is concluded that the rural women political empowerment is a very crucial concerned, rural women of the study area have always faced many challenges and problems related to education, health, political awareness, gross root politics etc. The awareness status of rural women is not much better in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The study found that the long-term

gains in education and awareness opportunities would contribute to the total political empowerment of rural women in Jammu and Kashmir by reducing all these problems and difficulties. There is a need to improve the betterment of political empowerment of rural women through the government policies and programmes, better education, and innovative awareness programmes.

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