

Executive Summary

An executive summary of the final report of work done on the minor research project of Ms. Florin Shelomith Soans, M.A., M.Phil., (PhD), Assistant Professor, Dept. Of Economics, St. Aloysius College (Autonomous), Mangalore entitled, **“Women Participation In Local Bodies: A Study In Dakshina Kannada District, Karnataka”**, vide UGC letter number **MRP (H) -0821/13-14/KAMA002/UGC-SWRO Dtd: 28.03.2014.**

Women’s equal participation in political life plays a pivotal role in the general process of the advancement of women. It is not only a demand for simple justice or democracy but can also be seen as a necessary condition for women’s interests to be taken into account. Without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women’s perspective at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved. Systematic integration of women augments the democratic basis, the efficiency and the quality of the activities of local government. If local government is to meet the needs of both women and men, it must build on the experiences of both women and men, through an equal representation at all levels and in all fields of decision-making, covering the wide range of responsibilities of local governments.

Women’s role in decision-making is one of the most important questions for consideration in the movement for their empowerment. Keeping in mind, the importance of women’s participation in decision-making, like the other government in the world, the government of India has initiated efforts to widen the scope of women for participation in the development process .As a strategy of affirmative action for providing the structural framework for women’s participation in political decision-making and provided an opportunity to bring women to the centre of local development and develop new grass-roots level leadership.

In this context, research on women role and analyzing their contribution to the local development as members of the local body becomes important. In the back drop of this research study is undertaken in Dakshina Kannada District of Karnataka State. The main purpose of this research study is to build a model to account or to measure the role of women in grassroots development. From the decentralization and from the

women study perspective research is more significant. The specific objectives of the study are as follows,

- To evaluate the role of women in grassroots level development.
- To analyze the status of women members in local bodies.
- To examine the participative level of women members in the local bodies.
- To analyze women member's efficiency in running local bodies in terms of grant utilization, cost reduction, effect in implementing different development programmes etc.
- To design a model to reevaluate the women participation in local bodies.

In this research methodology followed an attempt to analyze the leadership quality of the women representatives in the local bodies. 300 Sample women representatives of the local bodies from all the five taluka of Dakshina Kannada district were interviewed with a structured questionnaire. Simple statistical tools were used to analyze the data in addition to Likerts Scale which is used to analyze the qualitative data. The resrach results were presented in five chapters.

Decentralization in developing countries is an appropriate model to bring people in the main stream of economics. People participation is most important in the context of grass root level development. Indian decentralized development administration has a long history and after independent, with the world's largest democracy, decentralized approach is good for the local development. From the macro perspective following are the major observation with regards to decentralization and women role in local governance.

- Decentralized administration is playing important role in the local development
- Urban local bodies and PRIs in rural area provide immense scope for the people participation in development.
- Amendments and new status with assured grants for the local bodies strengthened them to involve in the local development activities.
- Recent debates on women reservation in the local bodies created more awareness of gender equity in the political level.

- Women membership in the local governance has increased in the recent years.

The research study undertaken in the Dakshina Kannada district shows that women are playing a crucial role in the local development. The major findings of the study are

- Women representative are more than 50.0 per cent in the study area.
- They assume important positions in the local administration such President of PRI
- Large number of them has the experience as members for more than one term
- They attend regularly the meeting of the local body
- Over the time they involve more in discussion in the meeting.
- They are advocating for gridding development programmes for the development of their constituency
- They are managing well with their household work income earning work and public services.
- Their awareness on public service has increased over the years.
- Their involvement in the public services helped them to empower and achieving better gender equity

Role of decentralization in promoting economic development has attracted considerable attention of economists. It is advocated that for improving efficiency in resource utilization and to achieve higher rate of growth of GDP. Decentralization would help to improve efficiency of delivering essential public services according to diverse preferences of localities. As a result the resources may be productively utilized and cost of supplying basic public services may be reduced. This also encourages effective people participation in the economic development programmes. All these processes go to promote economic development.

The functioning of these local bodies forms the decentralized form for the people to participate in the development activity. Evaluation of these local bodies both from managerial and economic dimensions would help to probe into the nature and effectiveness of the decentralization in India.

A major factor determining the socio economic status of women is concerned with education and occupation, which is different for those in developed and developing countries. Quality of leadership that they can provide for the local

development also becomes crucial. Their involvement in the local development administration is expected to reduce corruption and more prompt in public service distribution is expected. Therefore, role of women in local bodies has increased and their active participation would result in better development in the grass root level.

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