Political Empowerment and Autonomy of Women in India

Dhrijesh K Tiwari
Director
Central Statistics Office

28 March 2012, Dead Sea, Jordan
Some Facts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>1.21 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex ratio</td>
<td>941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy rate (7+)</td>
<td>65.5 % (Female) 82.1% (Male)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s mean age at marriage</td>
<td>20.7 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female headed households</td>
<td>11.1% (Rural) 10.9% (Urban)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life expectancy at birth</td>
<td>63.4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMR</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMR</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Constitutional Privileges for Women

- Equality before law
- The State not to discriminate on the ground of sex
- The State may make special provisions in favour of women and children
- Not less than one-third of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Panchayat/Municipality to be reserved for women
Special Initiatives for Women

➢ National Commission for Women
  o A statutory body set up in 1992
  o Specific mandate to study and monitor all matters relating to the constitutional and legal safeguards provided for women

➢ Reservations for women in local self-government
  o Participation in decision-making at local level
Special Initiatives for Women (2)

National Policy for the Empowerment of Women, 2001

- Creating conducive environment through positive economic and social policies
- Providing equal access to participation and decision-making
- Changing societal attitudes and community practices
The Administrative Structure

Country

National Government

28/7
State/Union Territory

State Government

640
District

Units of local self-administration (Panchayats)

5,924
Block

640,867
Village
# Position of Women in National Parliament

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Lower House</th>
<th>Upper House</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Seats</td>
<td>Seats held by women</td>
<td>Total Seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>544</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>544</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>545</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>544</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Position of Women in National Council of Ministers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Ministers</th>
<th>Number of Women Ministers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participation in National Elections

Women Electors (%)

- 1999: 47.73%
- 2004: 47.95%
- 2009: 47.73%

Voters (%)

- Women: 1999: 63.9%, 2004: 62.2%, 2009: 60.3%
- Men: 1999: 55.6%, 2004: 53.6%, 2009: 55.8%
# Participation in National Elections (2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Women</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Men</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contested</td>
<td>Elected</td>
<td>Winning Percentage</td>
<td>Contested</td>
<td>Elected</td>
<td>Winning Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>4859</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>5080</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>556</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>7514</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participation in Local Self-Administration

Number of elected representatives (2008-09):

- Gram Panchayats: 2,645,883
- Intermediate Panchayats: 156,794
- District Panchayats: 15,613

About 37% of these are women

Mandatory 50% reservation in many States
Women’s Autonomy

Participation in decision-making (%)

- Own health care: 62.2%
- Making major household purchases: 52.9%
- Purchasing daily household needs: 60.1%
- Visits to her family and relatives: 60.5%
- All four decisions: 31.6%
- None of the four decisions: 24.4%
- % with access to money: 59.6%
Women’s Autonomy (2)

Not involved in the four decisions-making (%)

- 15-19: 46.1%
- 20-24: 31.1%
- 25-29: 20.4%
- 30-39: 14.1%
- 40-49: 12.8%

- No Education: 22.7%
- < 5 years complete: 20.3%
- 5-7 years complete: 18.4%
- 12 or more years complete: 12.1%

Summary

- Insignificant presence in the National Parliament and the Council of Ministers
- Significant participation in General Elections
- The same position is reflected at the States’ level
- Very good participation in local self-administration
- Women’s autonomy – a lot remains to be seen at the macro level. Situation is better with certain background characteristics like age-
Issues in Measurement

- Election statistics – one of the finest examples of administrative-records-based statistics. However, gender sensitive sub-national data are difficult to obtain.

Women’s autonomy

- No dark areas in survey-based statistics.
- Respondent’s ‘autonomy’ at the time of interview.
- More cross sectional analysis – effect of education, asset holding, age-distribution, rural/urban background – will be helpful for targeted policy inventions.
Thanks

www.mospi.gov.in
dhrijesh@hotmail.com