

Gender and Bureaucracy with Special reference to Status of women and their political participation in J & K

Hilal Ahma Mir, ER. GULZAR AHMAD DAR, ABDUL QUYOOM DAR, JUNAID RAFIQ, ER. WIKAS YOUNIS, TAHSEEN QADRI

*Department of Political Science
Faculty of Arts
BHAGWANT UNIVERSITY AJMER*

Abstract

Political participation has a broader concept. It includes not only, those political activities that go by the name of political participation in the western democracies but also some new modes of participation which have not been institutionalized but have some bearing on the political process. Protest activists directed against the existing regime or activities aimed at subverting or over throwing the system it may be cited as examples. Define political participation in a broader context, Myron Weiner says: "the concept of political participation refers to any voluntary action, episodic or continuous, employing legitimate or illegitimate methods intended in influencing the choice of public policies, the administration of public affairs or choice of political leaders". In today's changed global context, women constitute an important segment of political life. Thus an analysis of the role of women in politics throws light on a complex problem of political participation. Of all these aspects of relationship between women and politics, it is women's political participation that has received the most sustained attention from political scientists.

Introduction:

Gender neutrality in the bureaucracy comes from the 'The feminist case against bureaucracy'. Ferguson (1984) utilizes Foucault's work to make her case against bureaucracy. Foucault perceives the institutions of modern administered life as tyrannical and views the bureaucracy as a totalitarian system, finding women less embedded in the linguistic and institutional structures of the bureaucratic society and consequently, less indoctrinated into its practices. Ferguson argues that a Weberian bureaucracy is therefore by definition a masculine one. The main point of her feminization of bureaucracy argument is that the political consequences of male dominance, ensures that women learn the role of the subordinate, and this role can become self-perpetuating. According to Gary and Barbara Yunker, Valian states that gender stereotyping stems from entrenched cultural beliefs that have been inculcated in men and women since their birth. Therefore, in the workplace, men are celebrated for their accomplishments in work, while women's work is given little credit. Because of gender stereotyping, "masculine" qualities, such as leadership and assertiveness, are powerful tools men can use to be promoted. On the other hand, "feminine" qualities are detrimental to women's success in the working place. Thus, according to the male viewpoint, women are not as dedicated as men in their jobs, because they are diverted by their family responsibilities. Literature shows that "public organizations with larger proportions of women and/or minorities in decision-making roles are more likely to produce outcomes compatible with the interests of women and/or minorities than similar organizations with fewer women and/or minorities". The United Nations had concluded that there is no society where women enjoy same opportunities as men, but women often experience a 'glass-ceiling'. Glass ceiling effects can permeate an entire corporation, creating a macho culture that is hostile to the advancement of women. This culture is so pernicious that experts now refer to a phenomenon known as "glass walls" that prevent women from advancing beyond middle management: "the vast majority of women are not able to even 'peep' through the glass ceiling and instead are excluded by 'glass walls,' because they are channeled, tracked and trapped in staff jobs that do not lead to the executive suite or provide visibility to decision makers".

Status of women in Kashmir:

The society of Jammu and Kashmir is diverse and multicultural in nature. Its socio-economic setup and political developments have also been defined and shaped by varying indigenous and exogenous factors and forces such as conflict, political instability, civil unrest and natural disasters. Culturally, it is a predominantly patriarchal society, despite the fact that the woman's place is somehow respected. But the prevailing cultural environment significantly affects both the role of women and management as a whole. Without this, it will be difficult to explain it to those who have little or no knowledge of the barriers women face in the public sphere. This cultural environment has included what has been described in the literature as a "glass ceiling" for women. Although state governments from time to time have attempted to alter the woman's place in public life, their efforts have not yielded much fruit because of the persistence of the cultural environment. The cultural environment projects the male over the female; and this projection affects the decision on who is to be educated in the family, especially among those with meagre resources. From this perspective, women were and, in some cases, are still considered inferior to men, and were and are encouraged to take charge of the home while the men attend school. Thus, although women's right to work was fully recognized in traditional society through customary laws, this right was limited to domestic chores, which limitation continued to undermine their ability to gain formal sector employment (Manuh, 1994). Most women in the state of Jammu and Kashmir face myriad gender-related problems and, as a consequence, are uniquely placed to bear the brunt of gender imbalances. In this cultural environment they are effectively under the control or authority of men (initially their fathers or other male members of their family, and their husbands) for much of their lives, although they may gain in status and influence with age. Women's decision making role in Kashmir is thus constrained in both private and public spheres. Where women do exercise political power in the traditional arrangement, however, it is largely in parallel structures or by influencing male authorities.

What we have today in Kashmir is a society where cultural patterns and traditions continue to favour and promote male dominance, creating a masculine society and a significant power distance, which continues to affect women in both public and private. The reality of the existence of gender inequalities is a fundamental dynamic in the overall hierarchical structures of relationships that characterize all the political, economic and social processes.

Women and Bureaucracy in J&K: A Background Analysis

The status of women is not homogenous throughout the social and economic fabric of Jammu & Kashmir; there exists wide range diversity on the status and role of women, but generally it has been observed in Jammu & Kashmir those women's rights to inheritance, education, employment, and political rights, are considerably lower compared to that of men. The social construction in Jammu & Kashmir is predominantly patriarchal. Consequently, the sense of worth of women, determined by their own perceptions and those of others, is lower compared to of a man's sense of self-worth. Women are seen to succumb to subordination, which is dictated by the forces of patriarchy across classes, regions, and the rural/urban divide. Additionally women are provided with limited opportunities to create choices that allow them to change the realities of their lives. Public sphere activities in Jammu & Kashmir are predominantly male and the Jammu & Kashmir state Administration is governed by male actors. Women are not tried in the considered/responsible field positions like the Deputy Commissioner, secretary interior, secretary of establishment, secretary of commerce and chief secretary are rarely offered to them. They inevitably get stereotyped and get posted to relatively unimportant positions like women's welfare, co-operatives etc.

Administration is one of the most important instruments available to the Government to achieve the goals of the nation. In the present study, the term administration refers to public administration that includes the management of affairs of Government at all levels- national, state and local. In Jammu and Kashmir, Government services are divided into All India Services, Kashmir Administrative Services and State Services. In the present research, the study is on women administrators of All India Services - Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Police Service (IPS) and Kashmir Administrative Services (KAS). Kashmir bureaucratic organization is not a gender neutral; the women in the organization are not a professional neutral but are sexualized by their gender. They are not rewarded for their competence or expertise, but are stereotyped and allowed to have limited access to excel in the bureaucracy. They have a glass ceiling, beyond which they cannot rise. Women are excluded from the power equation. This sort of discrimination not only ensures that women do not have powerful, successful career like their male counterparts, but also de-motivates and disillusiones the women about future success in their career. There is a gender disparity in the administrative set up of Jammu And Kashmir State. Even

though the number of women getting into the services increased over the years, then stereotype ideas of considering women as inferior to men is not changed. So, creating equal opportunities for men and women will not result automatically in gender equity as they have different degrees of embodiment due to gender role ideology.

Administrative structure of state

The overall state bureaucracy of J&K consists of a total of 580 male and female officers, from the rural as well as urban areas of the state of Jammu & Kashmir and other parts of the country too. These officers belong to three different bureaucratic levels i.e. senior, middle and junior, with the corresponding income categories and experience spans. Most of the bureaucrats in J&K belong to the rural areas; have settled down in the urban areas, long back. The actual ratio of urban bureaucrats to rural bureaucrats in J&K bureaucracy is 1: 4. In Jammu and Kashmir women have made slow progress toward expanding their numbers in the higher reaches of state administration, although they are not yet proportionately represented in top-level positions in state. In Jammu and Kashmir administrative structure, Out of total number of 26 Ministers of State of Jammu and Kashmir only two are women. Thus showing the grim picture of women's participation in political representation. Similarly, out of 107 listed IAS officers in J&K only 9 are females. Out of 393 listed KAS officers in J&K only 45 are females. Out of 19 members of Service Selection Board 2 are females. Out of 24 Vigilance Commissioners only one is lady although she has been nominated twice. We have 22 Deputy Commissioners and 2 divisional commissioners in the state and at present we have three females supervising a district. 32 STs in Kashmir Administrative Services and only 5 are women. 39 SCs in Kashmir Administrative Services and only 2 are women. Out of the total 28 Chief Secretaries of J&K till date, nobody is female. In State Accountability Commission, State Human Rights Commission, State Information Commission, none is a female. Out of 8 administrative Secretaries of J&K nobody ever is female. In District Srinagar again we have had 35 Deputy Commissioners till date and nobody is a female. Till date we have had 25 Divisional Commissioners in Jammu and only one has been female. At present there are 9 members of Public Service Commission and none is a women. No Vice Chancellor, no registrar of any University of Jammu and Kashmir has ever been a Woman.

Statistics from the General Administration Department (GAD) of Jammu and Kashmir shows that there are more number of men in senior scale positions (management level) as that of women, despite the fact that there are more women than men at the lower levels of the service. It clearly shows that women are more underrepresented as one moves up the ladder of responsibility in the bureaucracy to the managerial and executive ranks, and overrepresented in the lower echelons. It is also evident from these above quoted figures the upper echelons of the bureaucracy continue to be dominated by males. No woman has ever occupied the position of the top most bureaucratic head of general administration department of state J&K. Many social and cultural factors account for the exclusion or marginalization of women from managerial positions. Key among these are the culturally traditional domestic roles assigned to them, whereby they are made responsible for the home, which affects their rights from childhood, through upbringing and socialization. Right from the start, then, fewer girls than boys have access to education, and are more likely to drop out of school; they are not supported to continue to higher levels of education that would enable them to compete for managerial positions because they are socialized to take care of the home. This affects the number of females who attain higher education and the opportunity to enter the public service

Conclusion:

In Jammu and Kashmir state administration, women continue to gravitate to the lower levels of the public sphere despite the apparent opportunity for women to enter the most senior roles in public life, a mass breakthrough of what is frequently termed the 'glass ceiling', that is access to the most senior jobs of all, making policy and managing the civil service, seems elusive as ever for women." women are provided with limited opportunities to create choices that allow them to change the realities of their lives. Public sphere activities in Jammu & Kashmir are predominantly male and the Jammu & Kashmir state Administration is governed by male actors. Women are not tried in the considered/ responsible field positions like the Deputy Commissioner, secretary interior, secretary of establishment, secretary of commerce and chief secretary are rarely offered to them. They inevitably get stereotyped and get posted to relatively unimportant positions like women's welfare, co-operatives etc. What we have today in Kashmir is a society where cultural patterns and traditions continue to favour and promote male dominance, creating a masculine society and a significant power distance, which continues to affect women in both public and private. The reality of the existence of gender inequalities is a

fundamental dynamic in the overall hierarchical structures of relationships that characterize all the political, economic and social processes. Kashmir bureaucratic organization is not a gender neutral; the women in the organization are not a professional neutral but are sexualized by their gender. They are not rewarded for their competence or expertise, but are stereotyped and allowed to have limited access to excel in the bureaucracy. They have a glass ceiling, beyond which they cannot rise. Women are excluded from the power equation. This sort of discrimination not only ensures that women do not have powerful, successful career like their male counterparts, but also de-motivates and disillusion the women about future success in their career. There is a gender disparity in the administrative set up of Jammu And Kashmir State. Even though the number of women getting into the services increased over the years, then stereotype ideas of considering women as inferior to men is not changed. So, creating equal opportunities for men and women will not result automatically in gender equity as they have different degrees of embodiment due to gender role ideology. The breakthrough for women of J&K to the upper levels of the bureaucracy thus continues to be a mirage.

