

SOCIAL INCLUSION AND REPRESENTATION IN URBAN BODIES

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ABSTRACT

Democratic Decentralisation, as ensured by the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992, paves the way for the greater Social Inclusion and more representation of people in urban local bodies. This Social Inclusion is being realized in every strata of society i.e., from caste to class, men to women, youngsters to elders and employees to unemployed. Representation of various stake-holders in urban local bodies brings about political consciousness among urban people, thereby ensuring political empowerment, which in turn, leads to social and economic empowerment by utilization of resources at their door steps. It is in this context of changing socio-political-economic scenario, this article examines probable obstacles as well as measures to be taken to realize complete social inclusion and also having deep sight at the tendencies of people's representation in urban local bodies.

KEYWORDS: Democratic decentralization, social inclusion, 74th Constitutional Amendment Act.

Introduction

Democratic Decentralization ensures the people's participation in political and administrative processes and thus, strengthens democracy at the grass-root level. In India democratic decentralization, particularly in urban areas, is realized by urban local self governments through "which urban people think, decide and act for their own socio-economic interests." The provisions of the 74th constitutional Amendment Act of 1992 regarding the reservation of seats for the weaker sections of the society in proportion to their population and in a rotation manner within the framework of a competitive multiparty system ensure social inclusion in urban bodies. However, apart from the advantages which the Act has ushered, there are also certain areas of concern, which, when come to the implementation of the Act in its true spirit. Hence, this Article aims at analyzing of as to whether the implementation of these reservation provisions bringing the desired results of social inclusion, if not what are hindrances for it, and also the study suggests the measures to be taken with respect to the social inclusion in urban local bodies through people's representation.

Objective of the Study

Article 243 T constitutionally guarantees representation of people from scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, women and other backward classes in urban local bodies, thereby paving the way for social inclusion. It is with respect to this aspect, this article examines:

- To study the level of social inclusion in GHMC elections.
- To study the proportion of representation of SC, ST and Women etc. in pre and post era GHMC elections of 74th constitutional Amendment Act of 1992.
- To trace out some hindrances to social inclusion.

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Research Methodology

This Article is based on deductive method approach with secondary data which is extracted from magazines, newspapers and government official websites. By comparing the data of 1986, 2009 and 2016 GHMC elections conclusions have been drawn regarding representation of people from different sections of society such as SCs, STs and Women.

Limitations of the Study

- The very research is based on secondary data rather primary data.
- The study is concerned with only one municipal corporation.
- With the particular case of Hyderabad Corporation the findings are generalized to all urban bodies. So that the findings may be incongruence with the fact findings of other urban bodies.

Constitution of Urban Bodies

“In order to provide for a common frame work for urban local bodies and help to strengthen the functioning of the bodies as effective democratic units of self government, parliament enacted the constitution (74th Amendment) Act, 1992 (known as Nagarpalika Act) relating to municipalities in 1992. The Act received the assent of the president on 20 April 1993. The Government of India notified 1st June 1993 as the date from which the said Act came into force”

The Act has added part IX - A to the constitution of India. It is entitled as ‘the municipalities’ and consists of provisions from 243P to 243-ZG. The Act provides for the constitution of three types of municipalities in every state.

- Nagar Panchayat for a transitional area
- A Municipal Council for smaller urban area.
- A Municipal Corporation for larger urban area.

While articles 243G, 243R and 243S are concerned with the constitution and composition of municipalities and ward committees, article 243T is concerned with the reservation of seats in them. Article 243T provides for the reservation of seats for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in every municipality in proportion of their population to the total population in the municipal area. Further, it provides for the reservation of not less than one-third of the total number of seats for women. And the state legislature may provide the manner of reservation of offices of chairpersons in the municipalities for the SCs, the STs and the women. It may also make any provision for reservation of seats in any municipality or offices of chairpersons in municipalities in favor of backward classes. Thus, the Act ensures that the opinion of the entire cross section of society is at the table, when the process of policy formulation is underway, and also facilitates the support of all sections of the society in making the plan a success and distribution of the fruits of development equitably among all sections of society.

History of Hyderabad Municipal Corporation

The city of Hyderabad was built in 1591. For the first time, municipality elections for it were held in 1934. In 1951 Secundrabad Municipality was conferred corporation status. Later both Hyderabad and Secundrabad municipalities were merged to form Municipal Corporation of Hyderabad (MCH) to which elections were held in 1964. Finally, in 2007, MCH was transformed into Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation, with the area of 650 km² and with 150 Divisions to which elections were held in 2009 under the Government of Andhra Pradesh and 2016 election to GHMC was held under the Government of Telangana due to bifurcation of State of Andhra Pradesh.

Table showing the age wise contestants of GHMC elections held in 2009 & 2016

Age Group	Number of Contestants	
	2009	2016
21-24	71	124
25-30	227	489
31-40	511	1375
41-50	352	581
51-60	116	338
61-70	28	54
71-80	5	8
Total	1310	2969

Source: Eenadu daily news paper dated 17th November, 2009.

Deccan Chronicle daily news paper dated 18th January, 18 2016.

- It is noticed that there are 71 contestants below the age of 25 years in 2009 and 124 contestants in 2016.
- 62% of total contestants are below the age of 40 years in 2009 and 67% of total contestants are below the age of 40 years in 2016.

It clearly indicates that the youth actively participate in corporation elections.

Table Showing Seats allotted for different sections of the society in the elections of Hyderabad Municipal Corporation & GHMC.

Category	Year		
	(a)1986 (Total 100 seats)	(b) 2009 (Total 150 seats)	(c) 2016 (Total 150 seats)
Women	18	50	75
BC	NA	50	50
OC	NA	86	88
SC	12	12	10
ST	3	2	02

Source:

- 4th December, 1st & 12th page of Hyderabad District edition of Eenadu daily news paper.
- October 29, 2009, page no. 2 of Hyderabad District edition of Eenadu daily news paper.
- GOMS NO 25 dated 08-01-2016 Municipal Administration and Urban Development Dept. of Telangana state.

It can be deduced from the table that:

- In 1986 seats allotted for women were 18% of total seats while in 2009 it was enormously increased to 33% which is a welcome trend. There will be gender equality as well as healthy representation of women when 50% reservations for women are implemented in urban bodies it was realized in the 2016 elections.
- With 33% of seats BCs are also given proper representation in Hyderabad Municipal Corporation in the year 2009 and 2016.
- Seats allotted for SCs in 1986 and in 2009 were equal but increase in percent of total seats was not found, at the same time in 2016 Seats allotted for SCs are decreased from 12 to 10 seats.
- Comparing seats allotted for STs in 2009 with 1986 was decreased.

It is hereby concluded that all the echelons of the society i.e. youth, SCs, STs, BCs, Women were given respective say in urban bodies thereby creating conducive environment for social inclusion. But, it is found that there are several hindrances to social inclusion in urban bodies.

Hindrances to Social Inclusion

- Frequent silence of state governments over the conducting of timely elections prevents people from realizing the spirit of democratic decentralization in urban bodies. It is evidenced that elections of Hyderabad Municipal Corporation are being held almost once in a decade.
- The rotation system of reservation of seats dethrones the successful incumbent of the concerned constituency. It hampers the continuous accessibility of previous contestants to be participated in next elections.
- On behalf of women representatives their husbands and relatives influence the activities of that constituency. It negates the initiative capacity of women and thus, prevents socio-economic-political empowerment of women which is the against the spirit of social inclusion.
- Elites of the society and party politics are major hindrances to social inclusion. The elites of the society influence the social system, while party politics nominate the candidates based on their caste, class and economic status. And political hereditary also makes the social inclusively confines to few sections of the society.
- Illiteracy of the people is also great barrier to social inclusion as it prevents people from realising their political and constitutional rights. Thus, make them abstaining from contesting of elections. It is inconsistent with the provisions of the 74th constitutional and Act of 1992.

- Surveys on category wise population of concerned municipality corporation are not realistic. This does not permit concerned state legislatures to reserve the seats for different sections scientifically. Some categories gain, some categories lose the seats. It is inconsistent with the constitutional right of the people. It was clearly evident when the row over surveys surfaced during 2002 election of Hyderabad Municipal Corporation.

To remove the aforesaid hindrances some measures are needed to be taken.

Measures to be taken for Optimum Social Inclusion

- There should be timely conduct of elections for every 5 years as that of parliament and state legislatures and the spirit of federalism exercised at union and state levels shall also be exercised at local level.
- Rotation system of reservation of seats shall be frozen for 2 to 3 terms continuously.
- No relatives of the women representatives shall be entertained in official business of the local bodies.
- There shall be checks to political hereditary and public shall think over this while casting their votes. Media and NGOs shall aware the people regarding this aspect.
- Literacy rate should be increased to 100% for political empowerment of the people.
- There shall be scientific approach while reserving seats to different sections of the society as per their proportion to the total population.
- Today, around one third population lives in the cities of which youth is a major part. Youth have to actively participate in urban local government elections to realize optimum social inclusion.

Conclusion

Urban people realize the benefits of democratic decentralization through urban local governments. The constitutional guarantee by the 74th constitutional Amendment Act of 1992, for the reservation of seats in urban local bodies brings the marginalized sections of the society into mainstream politics there by paving the way for their politico-socio-economic development. As the urban local bodies are in a transitional phase, there exist some hindrances to social inclusion and more representation that need to be addressed by taking proper measures so that it ensures the support of all sections of the society in making the plan a success and distribution of the fruits of development equitably among all sections of the society.

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