ABSTRACT

Three main aspects related to women’s status i.e. social, economic and political have been the central concern of our study. To examine social aspects we have selected sex ratio, education, health, violence against women and marital status of women. For analyzing economic aspect we have selected work participation rate of women in organized or unorganized sector. To assess the political aspect we have identified the political participation of women in local bodies.

To study the “Status of Women in Haryana” we have selected four villages from Sonepat District on random basis. These four villages are Barwasni and Lehrara from Sonepat block, Bhalgarh and Rasoi from Rai block respectively.

The findings of our study revealed that assessment of work that they perform as a housewife, 94.7 percent women felt that their work was considered non-productive (See table 6c.20). They are not remunerated for domestic work. The views of dalit and non-dalit women were found to be not much different in this respect either. In fact 83.6 percent stated that there is a lack of recognizing domestic work as a productive work. About 68.7 percent also admitted that their domestic work does not add to any respect to them in the society. Women belonging to non-dalit category felt this to be the case (i.e. 88.4 percent) more than the dalits (i.e. 40.9 percent). Paradoxically the excessive domestic work had made them more dependent on their male counter parts. About 74.5 percent expressed their views on this matter suggesting that their involvement in domestic work has increased their dependency. In this respect the opinions of dalit and non-dalit women showed remarkable contrast while 93.3 percent non-dalit women felt that it had increased their dependency on male folk whereas 49.1 percent of dalit felt that it had increased their dependency on male folk.

Our findings revealed that the concept of property entitlement of girls was not dominant in their mind as it was reported that only 32.9 percent had positive attitude while 67.13 percent had negative attitude about it. Majority of non-dalit women (i.e. 84.4) have negative attitude about claiming property for girls. This was so primarily due to the fact that the bonds of family reciprocal ties has an overwhelming consideration on this matter. So far as dalit women’s response on this matter was concerned 43.4 percent had negative attitude on this issue. Since, dalits are mostly landless and therefore the question of their
being recognized as co-parceners have no relevance. Still they had positive attitude about having a share in parental property.

The findings of our study revealed high degree of political awareness among women about having the voters identity card. It was paramount among dalits (i.e. 95.1 percent) and non-dalit (i.e. 95.7 percent). Only about 5 percent of the respondents admitted that they could not get their voter cards made.

Paradoxically it was noticed that the unmarried young girl who had attained 18 years of age and above were not enthusiastic about getting their voters identity card made. It was considered against the customs and the prevailing belief of the people. Since the girls migrate to other village after marriage and hence, the native village for them is not considered their permanent place of residence. Therefore they are not encouraged by their family members to get their daughter’s voters identity card made. This is yet another nuanced idea about keeping the younger electorate away from the mainstreams of village politics.

It is clear from the data collected from the field that the participation of women in politics has yet not become a popular idiom of expressing their opinion. One of the reasons, for the lack of enthusiasm by women in politics is due to the century old discrimination that they faced in course of their life. Another fact that acts as deterrent is their being over burden with work in rural areas. Handful of women admitted that they had some time to involve themselves actively in mobilizing support of the villagers in favour of the candidate.

Thus, it can safely be concluded that the traditions and institutional bottlenecks, still dominate the mindset of people in rural Haryana. One of the collateral advantages of all the factors mentioned above suggest that they consider their political identity through sarpanch and panch. One third reservation of women is presumed to be one of the remarkable feature of women participation in politics. Back home also, they have lifted the tag of sarpanch pati (husband) and are now being recognized as an active agents of change. Ghanshyam Shah, while alluding to the nature of dalit politics, the dilemma and challenges that it faces in contemporary India deals with three different aspects of politics that include-identity assertion, discourse therein and collective action.

Based on the findings of our study following observations are worth recording here: First, the persistence of gender based inequality may change if women’s agency and organizations work for increasing the entitlement over property rights and social justice.
Even their economic freedom alone will not improve condition unless educational transformation, ownership rights, political participation and organized protest finds a democratic base in the family and society. **Second,** women’s empowerment not only positively influences the women but visiting disparities among women across caste and class lines whereby malnutrition, hunger, child mortality rate, life expectancy, improve. For this a positive dialogue involving women of all class and caste categories along with men have to join win the social campaign for development with gender justice for a better society. **Third,** the question of women identity, assertion and individuality has to find favour with social and political organisations – The implementing agencies directed for the welfare of women in improving their social security through education, food and nutrition and aspects of social justice. Without proactive approach all the policies, schemes and welfare activities will remain confined to papers only. **Lastly,** women’s agency and their mobilization for active involvement in participatory role both in economic and political field on the question of gender based inequality, gender budgeting, empowerment through economic entitlement may go a long way in providing them conducive social, economic and political base for removing the unjust order and their wellbeing for social development.