

NAME: - AJIT RANJAN

SUPERVISOR: - PROF. SHAHID ASHRAF

DEPT. OF ECONOMICS, JAMIA MILLIA ISLAMIA, NEW DELHI.

CO-SUPERVISOR:- PROF.S.N MISHRA,

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, NEW DELHI.

CENTRE: - DR. K.R NARAYANAN CENTRE FOR DALIT AND MINORITIES STUDIES,

JAMIA MILLIA ISLAMIA, NEW DELHI.

TITLE OF THESIS: - COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL SELF GOVERNMENT: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF DALIT AND MUSLIMS IN NORTH BIHAR

ABSTRACT

The demand for taking governance and administration to the grass root level, providing transparency and the right to information concerning the affairs of the state is taking a global concern. The underlying idea behind democratic decentralization is to widen the area of democracy by granting both democracy and autonomy to the lower level. It seeks to vest in the institutions of local government large power through various measures so that they may be developed into “the tiny fountain heads of democracy” or a “multi form democracy”. As part of the strategy to decentralize, the community participation is visualized as a means of social transformation of culturally and economically diverse and hierarchical groups of people into a more democratic and egalitarian framework. Participation concept has acquired varied meanings over a period of time – at one end of the spectrum it could mean just a nominal membership in a group, and at the other end it could imply having an effective voice in the decision-making process.

Community participation is used broadly to refer to the roles of the members of the community who participates in their general welfare for the accomplishment of desired objectives. In community participation, the member of the particular community comes together under a common platform, with a

unitary views and approaches, so that the desired objectives can be attained more smoothly and with concise approach. The issue and roles of the community participation came into more focus after the Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992, which gave the local self government a constitutional status and legality. This thesis attempts to understand the nature and extent of participation of Dalit and Muslim communities in the decision making process at the grassroot level.

The functioning of the village Panchayat which existed before the independence period was not truly democratic in functioning. It consisted mainly of the elders of the village who played an important role in determining and enforcing the rules and codes of conducts. The colonial authorities introduced the element of local self government but these were not able to function effectively due to lack of true democratic orientation and limited powers. It is only after independence that experiments with democratic decentralization could be undertaken. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment act was finally passed, on the basis of Balwant Rai Mehta Committee recommendations, which enabled the introduction of Panchayati Raj Institutions in the country.

The thesis titled 'Community Participation in Local-Self Government: A Comparative Study of Dalit and Muslim in North Bihar' attempts a micro-level study focusing on the political participation of Dalits and Muslims in the Gram Sabha and the various committees formed under it in the two Panchayats. The two selected Panchayats are in the Vaishali district, whose proximity to the capital Patna makes them prone to the influence of political consciousness. For analyzing the participation of Scheduled Castes and Muslims, 150 respondents were chosen from each of the selected Panchayat. The study was conducted with the help of structured questionnaire and personal interviews of 300 respondents. Leaders of political parties, caste organizations and activists were also interviewed. Apart from political affiliation the nature of the participation of Scheduled Castes in the Panchayats as well as in the committees were analyzed on the basis of gender, age, education and income of the respondents.