

SAARC Female Prime Ministers Policies For Women Empowerment In Their Region

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Abstract

This article aims to assess the perceptions and practical steps of All female Prime Ministers of SAARC Countries (Benazir Bhutto, Indra Gandhi, Sheikh Hasina Wajid, Begum Khalida Zia and Sirimavo Bandranaike etc), had taken for the betterment of women in their respective countries etc. The socio-economic and geographical approach will be applied in this research paper to gauge to progressive measures introduced by the female prime ministers of SAARC countries. The female prime ministers rose to such a high position due to dynastical family background. These female prime ministers are symbol of female empowerment and representation, and they are gender sensitive and gender conscious to promote the womenfolk in every walk of life. All of them had worked in the areas: health, education, and economic, political representation, control the violence etc. The mirror is placed among the SAARC female prime ministers that how they wore the gender lens to prove themselves as a dynamic leader and also worked by rejecting the orthodox traditions in a patriarchal society to empower their women in their regions. They had signed different international instruments i.e. CEDAW (Convention regarding the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women) 1979, Beijing Declaration 1995, in order to transform their national policies according to the principles of these documents. They were highly aware that SAARC region is less gender sensitive, and had taken various steps to promote the womenfolk in every walk of life. They had accepted all the national and international challenges to tread upon the path of modernization and progressiveness and to bring at par their women with men. Their progressive policies laid far-reaching imprints upon the sand of SAARC soil that they realized that nation cannot progress until and unless our women are supported to participate in national building activities.

Keywords: Women Empowerment, Modern World, Gender Policies, Female Prime Ministers.

تلخیص

اس مقالے میں بنیادی طور پر خواتین وزرائے اعظم مثلاً بے نظیر بھٹو، اندرا گاندھی، شیخ حسینہ واجد، بیگم خالدہ ضیاء اور سر اموندرانائیکے کی ان پالیسیوں کا تذکرہ کیا گیا ہے جو انہوں نے خواتین کے لئے اختیار کیں۔ اس مقالے میں سماجی، معاشی اور جغرافیائی رجحان کے حوالے سے سارک خواتین وزرائے اعظم کے کردار کا جائزہ لیا گیا ہے اور ان پالیسیوں کو خصوصی طور پر

مد نظر رکھا گیا ہے جو انہوں نے خواتین کی بہتری کے لئے اٹھائی ہیں۔ یہ خواتین وزرائے اعظم اپنے خاندانی پس منظر کی وجہ سے اس اعلیٰ مقام تک پہنچیں، یہ سارک خواتین وزرائے اعظم تمام سارک خواتین اور عالم النساء کی نمائندہ ہیں۔ یہ خواتین وزرائے اعظم خواتین کے مسائل کے حوالے سے بہت حساس ہیں اور خواتین کے مسائل سے بخوبی آگاہ بھی ہیں۔ انہوں نے جن شعبوں میں کام کیا ان میں تعلیم، معاشیات، سیاسی نمائندگی اور تشدد پر کنٹرول سر فہرست ہیں۔ اگر سارک خواتین وزرائے اعظم کا موازنہ کیا جائے کہ کیسے انہوں نے قدیم روایات کو پامال کرتے ہوئے اور مردوں کی اجارہ داری کو ختم کرتے ہوئے خواتین کو مختلف شعبہ جات زندگی میں ترقی دی۔ انہوں نے بین الاقوامی دستاویزات مثلاً سیدھا (۱۹۷۹ء) اور معاہدہ بیجنگ (۱۹۹۵ء) پر بھی دستخط کئے کہ اپنی قومی پالیسیوں کو انہی دستاویزات کے مطابق ڈھالا۔ انہوں نے تمام چیلنجز کا سامنا کیا کہ ریاست کو ترقی اور جدیدیت کی راہ پر گامزن کیا جائے۔ ان کی پالیسیاں دور رس نتائج لائیں اور انہوں نے سارک کی سر زمین پر نہ مٹنے والے نقوش چھوڑے اور انہوں نے اس بات کو محسوس کیا کہ جب خواتین کو مختلف شعبہ جات میں شامل نہیں کیا جائے گا اس وقت تک ملک ترقی نہیں کر سکتا۔

کلیدی الفاظ: باختیار خواتین، جدید دنیا، صنفی پالیسیاں، خواتین وزرائے اعظم

Introduction

The female Prime Ministers of SAARC region are the icon of female empowerment not only in their own region, but they also introduced policies regarding the empowerment of women in their respective countries. The geographical socio-economic approach will be applied in this research paper to analyze those practical policies which these female five prime ministers of their respective region introduced for womenfolk in different framework. All SAARC prime Ministers were conscious that in patriarchal society, the women's position is subordinate, and they are still confined within the four walls of the houses to fulfill their domestic responsibilities. These female SAARC prime ministers are gender conscious, gender blind and gender sensitive and realized the miserable plight of women. They transformed their policies according to the international instruments and UN charter and Human rights Declaration of 1948, CEDAW 1979 and Beijing Declaration 1995. They tried to improve the women's status in various sectors: health, education, economics, politics, and social mobilization and tried to provide the constitutional safeguards. They did legislation to curb all social evils which are discriminating between men and women and are source of exploitation of women in oriental culture. They realized that women enjoy subordinate position in male dominated society and are the victim of cruel clutches of customs. They addressed the issues of women trafficking, harassment, domestic violence, gang rape, forcible marriages, kidnapping, abduction, bride burning and dowry. Their far-reaching policies laid down the ineffaceable imprints on the sand of SAARC soil.

Literature Review

Amirta Basu, explores in book “Women empowerment, social mobilization and politics in Asia”, published by Research Institute established by UN for Social Development, in research work about female prime ministers of SAARC countries. There is a close relationship between political parties and social movements in order to organize women to participate in the party politics. Political Parties have increasingly directed their appeals at particular group, including women by addressing their distinctive interests and identities and by having women organize electoral campaigns. There is a strong relationship between women’s leadership and women’s representation in political parties. From Srimavo Bandaranaike to Chandrika Kumaratunga, Khaleda Zia, Sheikh Hasina, Indra Gandhi and Benazir Bhutto, South Asia has had the largest number of female head of any region in the world (Basu, 1999).

Benazir Bhutto Progressive Policies

Nuzhat Wafa (1988) signifies “Benazir Bhutto dynamic leadership and women empowerment, Benazir Bhutto (Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto daughter) became the first female Prime minister of Pakistan, and the first woman elected to head a Muslim country. During her election campaign, she voiced concerns over social issues of women, health and discrimination against women. She also announced plans to set up women’s police stations, courts and women’s development banks. She also promised to repeal controversial Hudood laws that curtailed the rights of women. However, during her two incomplete terms in office (1988–90 and 1993–96), Benazir Bhutto did not propose any legislation to improve welfare services for women. She was not able to repeal a single one of Zia-ul-Haq’s Islamisation laws. By virtue of the eighth constitutional amendment imposed by Zia-ul-Haq, these laws were protected both from ordinary legislative modification and from judicial review. The First Women Bank Ltd. (FWBL) was established in 1989 to address women’s financial needs. FWBL, a nationalized commercial bank, was given the role of a development finance institution, as well as of a social welfare organization. It operates 38 real-time online branches across the country, managed and run by women. MWD provided a credit line of Rs. 48 million to FWBL to finance small-scale credit schemes for disadvantaged women. The Social Action Programme launched in 1992/93 aimed at reducing gender disparities by improving women’s access to social services (Bhola, 1995).

Significance of Research Study

This research is of immense value that it is extracted from Ph.D. thesis “Female Prime Ministers of SAARC: A Critical Study”. The world is very much concerned regarding women empowerment and gender issues. The concept of female leadership is emerging

in the world .The global changings are effecting national and local boundaries. The constitutions of the countries aims to protect the weaker sections of society: women, children and minorities. The SAARC female Prime Ministers have proved themselves as a best administrators, leaders and Chief Executives. These female Prime Ministers introduced progressive policies of womenfolk by realizing and understanding their problems. Their policies were fruitful and laid positive impacts on women's life. They were aware that it is not easy to play a role as woman in our culture. In most of SAARC Countries customs dominates on law and religion. The women have to break the cruel clutches of male-dominated society. The certain areas: Education, health, political mobilization and economic empowerment are neglected areas for women. They not only did legislation and brought improvement in different areas, but also opened new avenues for women.

Objectives of Research and Research Questions

1. To explore the role of female Prime Ministers of SAARC countries as highly concerned about women empowerment in their particular regions.
2. To assess and analyze that what practical steps and measures have been taken by these SAARC female Prime Ministers in their respective countries for the women's progress in different sectors .
3. To find out those challenges that the SAARC female Prime Ministers overcame by turning revolutionary by breaking the orthodox traditions and social values to protect womenfolk through legislative policies in their respective countries .

The study addresses the following research questions:

- QNO.1:** What legislation has been done by these SAARC female Prime Ministers for the betterment and protection of womenfolk in their respective countries?
- QNO.2:** The womenfolk consists of more than half of the population of the country, they realized that their contribution is essential for nation- building activities.
- QNO.3:** What type of progressive policies have been introduced by these SAARC female Prime Ministers for betterment of women in every walk of life.

Methodology

In this research paper the descriptive research methodology is applied to understand the geographical and socio-economic approach of the female prime ministers. The different Prime Ministers belonging from the different regions by keeping in to consideration their socio-cultural values and prevalent economic condition tried to promoted women empowerment in their countries. Although SAARC Region is one, but every country's geographical, economic, political and social features are poles apart.

Data Collection

The data for research paper is collected from different sources. This paper is extracted from Ph.D. thesis “The Female Prime Ministers of SAARC: A Critical Study. “The other sources are different books, magazines, newspapers and speeches of these prime ministers on television, which are analyzed in this research paper. The autobiographies of these female Prime Ministers are the great source to express their vision about gender issues in their respective countries.

(a) **Benazir’s Bhutto: Her Perception and Policies for Women Empowerment**

Benazir Bhutto was called as “gender conscious “leader. She was very much concerned about the empowerment of women of Pakistan .She showed her concern for women’s for social and health issues. She established first Women Bank and first women police station in order to facilitate women for getting micro-credit scheme and lodging FIR (First Information Report) for occurred crimes. She fought against the black law of Hudood Ordinance 1979, and demanded to scrap out it. She fought against the honour killing that women of Pakistan is subject to brutal murder. She introduced the computer literacy programme because of highly of significance of IT (Information Technology).”She opened forty (40) women computer centers to equip them with the computer skill. Benazir Bhutto addressed the Women’s committee that the men and women ratio is in term of population is 48:52 .The future prosperity of Pakistan lies in the equivalent participation of women in various fields. Islam has given very unique position to women by giving them ample rights. Women’s progress fully coincides with Quranic Injunctions” (Wafa, 2000).

Benazir Bhutto was symbol of empowerment in modern world. Her presence as a political leader in a patriarchal society appeared both as a paradoxes and as denotative of a psychological revolution, where she represented democracy to the people of Pakistan and appeared to reverse the masculinisation of public space brought about the military regimes. She always endeavored to empower women in every walk of life. On International Women’s Day, she had always the mission and vision to ensure equality in all walk of life to enable women to play them due role in economic development of country. There are lot of challenges involved in the pursuit of gender equity and women’s emancipation. She said that the International Women’s Day fully realizes that women of the past proud, the women of present inspired and the women of the future envisioned .This day affords a unique and global opportunity to reassess our national strategies to inspire our women to channelize their energies in their struggle for equal rights. The male and female ratio in population is about 52:48% .The Pakistani government is embarked upon the policy to bring at par to women with men. She placed importance on social issues, health and discrimination against women (Skard, 2014).

I put my maximum efforts to topple down military dictator and restoring democracy in Pakistan. We are switching towards competitive market. I want to empower women by introducing micro-credit scheme for them. I addressed issue of domestic violence against women.

She wanted to wipe out gender discrimination in society by giving women an equivalent position. She faced multiple changes to introduce modern changes by rejecting the stereotype trends in the society. Her policies were beacon of light for the coming generation.

Benazir Bhutto stressed to promote gender equality, female literacy, narrowing down of gender gap, special protection for girl child, and safe motherhood programme in order to reduce the mortality rate. She attended the UN International Conference on Cairo on Population and Development held in September, 1994. She discussed the issues of family planning, high mother's mortality rate, genital mutilation, abortion and health issues related to mother in her own country. The plan of action adopted in Cairo Conference are included in the Millennium Development Goals of United Nations. She participated in the Beijing Conference 1995 and also highlighted the problems of womenfolk in her country. She also signed the Beijing Declaration in order to transform her policies for the betterment of womenfolk.

She was the member of the council of women world leaders. She proved herself at par with other female leaders to work for the womenfolk's betterment in her country. Benazir Bhutto said:

“Pakistan social fabric differs from other countries. My life is full of difficulties but I feel successful that I had broken the chains of old tradition by proving herself as a first female Prime Minister of Muslim world. The election results proved that woman can be elected as chief executive of the country. She is accepted as a leader of nation. I am highly thankful to people of Pakistan” (Bhutto, 1988).

Benazir Bhutto confronted lot of opposition on the part of ulemas and Islamic scholars that woman cannot become the head of the Islamic state. Often quoted Hadis is that Holy Prophet said “A nation cannot prosper, when women become the head of the Islamic polity” (Sahih Bukhari). She defended herself that Islamic history is throbbing with the numerous examples i.e. Hazrat Khadija was a businesswomen and Hazrat Ayesha was an eminent scholars, and she said Allah has given her such a supreme position.

(b) Indra Gandhi: Her Policies For Women's Empowerment

Indra Gandhi as a women leader was highly concerned regarding the plight of women in India. Females are victim of poverty, subordinate position and exploitation in the Indian

society. The gender discrimination is very common in India. There are lot of socio-economic and cultural problems the Indian women is still facing. She as a female prime minister wanted to uplift the status of women in every walk of life. The dowry, bride burning, domestic violence, women trafficking, harassment and poverty are common problems of Indian women. Prime Minister Indra Gandhi said women should upon the post for it she is best fitted. She justified her position as a prime minister of the India. There is no discrimination exists in the Indian constitution. She said:

“I don, t think as a woman in regard to this task. If a woman has the necessary qualifications for whatever profession, she should be allowed to work in that profession...I am not a feminist; I am a human being. I don, t think of myself as a woman when I do my job. According to the Indian Constitution, all citizens are equal, without distinction regarding sex, language or state. I am just an Indian citizen and the first servant of the country, deshvikar” (Aroge, 2011).

“The Indian constitution provides equal status to both men and women. The article, under right to equality, states: "Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any special provision for women and children" (Aroge, 2011). The directive principles of policy states that: The State shall, in particular, direct its policy towards securing— (a) that the citizens, men and women equally, have the right to an adequate means of livelihood.

Indra Gandhi adopted the humanistic or feminist view about the role of men and women in society. She was highly aware about the fact that our women have to perform double duties as compared to man. The women life is tougher as compared to man in India.

“We don, t want to be regarded as separate species. We are human beings. All we say is to treat us as normal human beings. There is no doubt that woman faces far greater resistance in coming up or tackling any job than a man would. It is to their credit that they have been able to overcome this resistance. In India as well as in developing countries as a whole, this has been achieved by and large with harmony and without any confrontation .Women do have to work much harder and longer. Many roles are expected from them-responsibility for running their homes in addition to whatever they do professionally ...both men and women are conditioned by man-oriented society. The women tend to accept the norms which men have made. They talk of equality but they really do not examine it closely. Women in India, in theory at least, always occupied an honoured position” (Kagzi, 2001).

Indra Gandhi said that old traditions and cultural values are preserved by women. She should accept the new changes of modern world .She should be dynamic to prepare her

role according to fast moving events. She is source of linkage between ancient and modern changes.

Indira Gandhi introduced a maternal friendly programme under the title Conditional Maternity Benefits (CBM), and Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY) for the sake of improvement of health standards of women. This scheme includes the cash incentives for the expecting mothers to improve their nutrition and health in order to produce the healthy generation. This scheme was implemented on October, 2010 in 53 districts in India. The major objective was that due to the element of poverty the womenfolk cannot get the proper nourishment, and due to which the health of mother and child gets effected. The women was given the amount through the Bank Accounts and Post Office Accounts when they were really found deserving according to survey report. This schemes was for those mothers who have attained the age of nineteen (19) and for two live births, because the element of family planning was also kept in to consideration. The scheme was federally controlled scheme and element of transparency was kept in to consideration.

Sheikh Hasina Wajid Policies for Women's Empowerment

Prime minister Sheikh Hasina Wajid played a pivotal role in empowering women in different sectors i.e. Education, economic fields, politics, vocational skills and computer literacy. She addressed the social issues of women confronted in Bangladesh such as harassment, women trafficking, violence, malnutrition, poverty and backwardness.

“She realized that Bangladeshi women is subject to domestic violence. She worked a lot for the controlling the domestic violence against women and children .The only laws are not sufficient to provide security to women against violence. The Bangladeshi women commit suicide after being raped and acid-throwing incident. A large numbers of women are abducted, trafficked and subjected to violence” (Gandhi, 1984).

She did legislation for the empowerment of women and enhancing women seats in Local Body System and Parliament. A large number of women contested the elections of Local Body System and were allocated the seats in local body system. Today, Bangladeshi women is occupying the key position as a Chief Executive, leader of opposition and speaker. As a woman politician she assured the organizers of the conference of working together in building women's leadership and for their empowerment in Asia (Waqas, 2004). She gave the highest attention towards the education of girls and also enhanced the budgetary allocation for girl's education. Her efforts were highly appreciated for the cause of girls by NGO, s and International Organization.

Sheikh Hasina Wajid introduced the laws favoring female equality in property and inheritance rights for women in Bangladesh. The Islamic parties have fully protested that women should get the equivalent share in the property, which is repugnant to the Islamic and Quranic Injunctions.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajid wanted the participation of women in the broad spectrum at national, provincial and state level. The increasing participation of women in political sphere, policy making and decision-making will improve the legislative process and enable the state to achieve the desired goal of high progress.

The priority of our government is to develop such an agenda for the betterment of women health, education and employment. Sheikh Hasina Wajid said the vision of the father of Bangladesh “Sonar Bangla” cannot be materialized without the involvement of women in all walks of life. The women leadership will bring in to limelight all the challenges and problems confronted to women and can represent them on political forum.

She declared national Developmental Policy in these words,

“We stand up for political and socio- economic empowerment of our rural women to ensure their access to food, services, resources, and reduce their poverty” (J. Lee, 1990).

She has launched various developmental schemes for women in business sector by providing them with soft loans and micro-credit schemes to initiate their business at small and medium level in order to empower themselves. She highly encouraged women to work in developmental works at local level to provide the redressal for the grievances of the masses. She has increased the Bangladeshi labour force from 24% to 36% in 2010. The top priority of her government is the MDG (Millennium Development Goals) to empower the Bangladeshi women in every sector. Awami League reserved seats for women in local government system to provide maximum political participation to women. On the same lines she enhanced women seats in administration, judiciary, army, foreign service and in other fields. She sent women in UN peace keeping force.

She introduced multiple health reforms for women. A healthy mother is essential for producing healthy child. She introduced the concept of “healthy mother, healthy child, health family and healthy nation. “As regard MDG 5 on maternal health, our success is on track and will be reached by 2015. The latest maternal mortality survey report 2010 indicates that our maternal mortality rate (MMR) dropped from 574 per 100 000 live births in 1990 to 194 per 100 000 live births in 2010 – a 66% reduction. To improve the situation further, we have introduced a maternal health voucher scheme which covers

274 000 poor pregnant women every year. It costs US\$ 25 per pregnancy and covers ante-natal checkups and medical tests. An additional cash incentive of US\$ 27 is given for child birth by a skilled provider. Its success calls for its expansion all over the country and in different parts of the world there exists inequities and uneven well-being. Moreover, there is urgent need for safe and effective family planning for about 215 million women of the world who lack it. In Bangladesh, although we have reduced our total fertility rate from 2.7 in 2007 to 2.47 now, and satisfactorily improved contraceptive acceptance rate, the rate of unmet family planning needs is still 18%. I hope the global community would continue their support to our effort to make population an asset instead of being a burden” (Derich & Flechbebburg, 2011). The ratio of mother mortality during pregnancy is 350000 every year in Bangladesh. WHO is working upon to improve the health standards of women? The UN MDG are laying positive effects upon women and children.

(c) **Khalida Zia’s Policies for Women’s Empowerment**

Begum Khaleda Zia was highly concerned for women empowerment and progress of women .She took lot of practical steps for the betterment of women in her country of Bangladesh .She was highly aware the problems of Bangladeshi women.

Begum Khaleda Zia introduced lot of policies for the female education. She provided free books and uniform for both girls and boys. She brought gender parity in the sector of education, and even the female students outnumber the boys students. She introduced free education for girls till class twelve. She also allocated the stipends for the girls education. She established the two new gender cadets colleges for girls, and apart from this three new polytechnic institutes for women were established. She established The Asian University for women in Chittagong with the collaboration of America. She wanted that the literacy rate should be minimized.

“She was highly concerned regarding the health of the women and infant and maternal mortality rate was also decreased due to sound health policies. The Family Planning Programme introduced and population growth was controlled by 1.47 %. The family planning is essential for the mother’s health and life. The maternal mortality rate should be minimized. The living standard of women is very poor still in the world. The gender discrimination should be wiped out in the educational and health sector. We have provide multiple facilities in educational and health sector” (Edwards & Roces, 2000).

She addressed the issue of violence within the home, s sphere and outside the domain of home. She did the legislation regarding the sale of acid and also about acid –throwing attacks upon the girls.

Begum Khaleda Zia signed the Beijing Declaration in 1995, in order to make Bangladeshi women empowered. She said that we want to renew our commitments to the advancement of women. I have sense of optimism that the age-old prejudices against women. The women should stand firm against all challenges, and they should overcome all barriers which are hurdle in the way of progress .We have sense of determination that the women are unshakable in the entire world. And have the door for economic and political opportunities for womenfolk. The 70% of women are poor. They don, t have employment, access to credit, administrative and political representation and equal wages. The issue of violence and discrimination is very high in all societies with women .The issue of women trafficking is the formidable challenge in Bangladesh.

(d) Bandranaike Policies for Women's Empowerment

Bandaranaike was very sensitive person and wanted to introduce very progressive policies for the betterment of women. She was interested to improve the lot of rural women's plight. She allocated the major chunk of budget for the betterment of women's education and health sector. She was a social worker, and was highly aware regarding the basic problems of womenfolk in Srilanka. She wanted to empower the Srilankan women in every walk of life .She addressed the issue of domestic violence in Srilanka. She was highly aware that politics is volatile and risky in Srilanka, and women even men are reluctant to participate in politics due to security reasons. Despite of this, she supported the women to take part in elections at local, national and international level. She was knowing that Srilanka is an agrarian country, and more than 85% people are affiliated to agriculture sector, and even most of the women are working in fields of coconut, pineapple and tea. She was to bring reforms in the rural areas of Srilanka that women plight should be improved in the rural areas. She want to improve the plight of women labourers and peasants in Srilanka. Bandaranaike wanted to comply with all international instruments of Human Rights i.e. CEDAW 1979 and Beijing Declaration 1995 and wanted to transform the country policies with these international standards for the betterment of women's lot.

Bandaranaike was highly aware that political mobilization is essential to promote gender –balanced politics in Srilanka. The government should initiate such policies and reserve the quota and separate seats in the Srilankan parliament. She politically nurtured her daughter Chandrika Kumaratunga as the leader of party and of the country, and she rose to position to the president of Srilanka.

“She was highly aware that womenfolk are suppressed and downtrodden ,deprived of the right of inheritance , victim of customary practices ,no say or voice in management and decision-making and social matters .The illiteracy and poverty is common among women . They have no adequate food and basic necessities of life. They have less

opportunity regarding the community participation .They have no role in determining the number of children and family planning .There is no special provision for women's participation . There is obvious gender discrimination in employment, education, business and economic activity. There is need of (GEM) Gender Empowerment Measures are essential for involving the women in economic activity and political sphere. In 1997, the women's participation in local body system was just 2.1%.The prolonged civil conflict between Tamil Tigers and Sinhalese population had promoted the culture of violence in Srilanka, and had excluded the women folk to participate in politics. There are separate groups of women in politics i.e. Mothers Front of North and South and Tamil Women, which are only working for insurgency. There is another group named as Women's Coalition for Peace working for the settlement of civil strife within the country“(Kumar, 2000).

Research Findings

1. The SAARC female prime ministers policies were very democratic and progressive for their womenfolk in their regions. They brought tremendous changes in patriarchal society by bringing the revolutionary changes that womenfolk can contribute on equal grounds in every walk of life.
2. The SAARC female prime ministers found lot of socio-economic and political challenges in their countries, and tried to abridged the gap between theoretical policies and implementation in order to break the cruel clutches of the traditions.
3. The SAARC female prime ministers are icon of women empowerment not only within SAARC region but also in the entire world. They proved themselves as dynamic leader at par excellence in terms of shaping the foreign policy of their countries and addressing various socio-economic problems of women in their countries.

Measures (Assessment)

The SAARC female prime ministers arose to such a high position as a part of dynastical legacy. They were highly aware regarding the difference exists oriental and occidental culture that how our women is subject to gender discrimination in every walk of life. The religions has exalted the position of women in social and other spheres. The three prime ministers (Benazir Bhutto, Shaikh Hasina Wajid and Begum Khaleda Zia) belonged from Islamic states, and Islam has given a very respectable position to women as mother, sister, wife and daughter etc. The prime minister Indra Gandhi belonged to secular state but dominated by hindu ideology and hindu religion also believes in the ethical codes of humanity and also gives a lesson that women should be treated fairly. The Prime minister Bandranaike belonged from Bhuddist state and the spiritual leader Mahatama Budha also preached a very venerated position to women in family and society. The religion is not

practiced by the common people in their day –to- day affairs. The state laws are not sufficient to provide the protection to women within the family sphere. The customs and social values are the stronger force and chain to determine the status of women in the society. These female prime ministers realized that either with help of policies, laws, the women can be assigned with the better position in the society and state. The women are the assets of the nation, their services are essential in agricultural, industrial sector in order to get the desired results of stabilized economy.

Analysis

The plight of women is common in the SAARC region because this region portrays a model of patriarchal society, where the gender discrimination is common in every walk of society. The almost situation of SAARC countries is almost same in terms of exploitation of women's rights and lack of secure policies for them in all walks of life. These SAARC female Prime Ministers themselves confronted enormous challenges as prime minister in male-dominated society. In the third world countries, the women is the symbol of suppression and subordination. She is sacrificed at the altar of social values and customs. They did legislation and implementation of policies in order to protect them with the family domain and outside the family sphere. When the religion and constitutions is the guarantor of fundamental rights of citizens, then why there is gender discrimination in every walk of life. The crime rate is very high with respect to women i.e acid throwing, body mutilation, murder, kidnapping, abduction and violence. Most of the crimes are going unnoticed in the societies and even most of women cannot lodge the FIR (First Information Report) due to the honour of family. So, these prime ministers tackled that these crime should be controlled with the help of legislature, executive and judiciary, because justice delay is justice denied, and it is very difficult for women to get justice.

Discussion and Results

This research paper is of the immense importance and following results can be extracted from this research work.

1. It is encouraging sign that female have been rose to such a high position in SAARC region belonging from third world countries. These women had highly realized the plight of their women's lot and introduced lot of reforms for their betterment in various sectors and these reforms laid down the far-reaching impacts upon the women's lot in their respective countries.
2. The female SAARC prime ministers were highly aware regarding the oriental culture and the respect of traditional and social values. The women are the victim of cruel customs and tradition and they turned revolutionary to break the chains of cruel clutches of these customs with the help of education, media and legislation.

3. The SAARC countries are densely populated countries and the women had outnumbered the man in terms of population ratio. The prime ministers realized that women are the source of great power and strength for country and their talents are wasted in table serving and domestic activities. They launched various programmes in i.e. education, computer literacy programme, social welfare programmes. Skill development and vocational development programmes to utilize their services in various walks of life. The nation cannot reach at lofty position without involvement of womenfolk in nation-building activities.

Outcome (The Effects of Results)

1. The progressive policies introduced by these female prime ministers laid down indelible prints on the sand of time by improving the women's lot in their respective countries and addressing their issues at national and international level.
2. These female prime ministers are trend setters in streamlining the process of leadership not only in their respective countries to mobilize womenfolk to participate in the sphere of politic. They had proved themselves as best leader and accepted all challenges for betterment of women in their countries.
3. The female prime ministers had laid down the first brick of the paradigm of women empowerment .It has opened the gate of reforms for the other followers to realize the existing women plight and their problems and also suggest the strategies for the betterment of womenfolk . The policies they introduced proliferated the chain of reaction for other policies by conferring various acknowledged rights to women .

Conclusions

The SAARC female Prime Ministers are ranked as dynamic leader on the basis of these parameters: dynamism, leadership, motivation and lofty ideals. These SAARC female prime ministers were the representative of women empowerment itself and they also believed to solve the problems of women in their respective region by mobilizing them in every walk of life at par with men. They introduced their policies for educational uplift, health care, political representation, to control domestic violence and women trafficking, to wipe out the discrimination between the male and female, enhance women quota in jobs and to empower women in every walk of life. These female SAARC prime ministers had accepted the challenges of patriarchal society and broken the chain of orthodox traditions and cruel clutches of the society by promoting the womenfolk in their respective regions. They have high vision and ambition for the women that they are subjected to gender discrimination in every walk of life. Their lives decision is taken by the male member of society and they have less say and voice in social matters. These prime ministers reflected the socio-political plight of women at international forum in

order to won the sympathy from the international community that the it is hard nut to crack to break the cruel clutches of society. They are the champions of women's rights and heradler of innovation and modernation in the present scenario. These are the daughters of SAARC soil and had sown the seed of revolution, reformation, progressiveness, equality and transparency in the system and one day the new tree will sprout with the branches, leaves and fruit of gender balance, justice, women empowerment and developed SAARC. These female prime ministers are the role model that although themselves belonged from elite class, but they can realize the problems of common poor women .There far –reaching policies laid ineffacible imprints on the barren land of SAARC and golden words are embedded on the socio-political and economic fabric of SAARC. The three prime ministers i.e. Benazir Bhutto, Bandranaike and Indra Gandhi became the legendary figures due to their lofty ideals and immortalized themselves for reformatory steps for women in their respective countries. They had added the glorious chapter in the history and as the water of Ganges and Indus rivers will flow, these female prime ministers vision of women empowerment will remain alive.

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