

Chapter -6

Conclusion

The collapse of Soviet Union and the democratic transition of Uzbekistan and Russia in 1991 was a result of combination of its internal struggles and politics. After the end of cold war a new course of action and development has emerged for the developed and developing countries, while some countries followed the path of neo-liberal policies and globalisation. Russia and Central Asian countries too started their democratization process and peaceful political reforms. The vulnerable sections of society such as women, children, tribal's, and migrants were given more rights and liberty in most of the countries. Women's political participation has been accepted internationally as an important step for enhancing the status of women in every country. Women have been given a significant space for political participation and representation in the democratic process of Uzbekistan and Russia since 1991. During the post-Soviet period, major economic and political transformation appeared in the Central Asian countries. Both Russia and Uzbekistan have been ruled by strong authoritarian leaders like Gorbachev, Yelstin and Putin in Russia and Islam Karimov in Uzbekistan since 1991. Women issues have been addressed in both the countries based on their constitutional laws and influenced by the changing international scenario. Although, there has been a change of women representation in Uzbekistan and Russia, still they have a long way to go to attain gender justice and political participation.

Women political participation is one of the major elements for the development of a country in the present day scenario. The underrepresentation of women not only makes them vulnerable but also the state faces challenges. The main focus of the study is to analyze the socio-political, traditional and cultural issues both in Uzbekistan and Russia for a better understanding of women political participation and critically examine how the democratization process of these two countries has contributed to low participation of women in parliament, political parties, state legislatures and local government, and other decision-making authorities. The study argues that although the status of women participation in Uzbekistan is better than the status of Russian women but the political participation and representation of women is much low in both the countries. The study carries forward this discussion in detail with the help of supportive data.

The major findings of the study have been examined within each chapter. The thesis begins with brief introduction of women of Uzbekistan and Russia in Chapter 1. It discusses the present political process and its impacts on women in both the countries. The study made an effort towards the conceptual understanding of gender equality and women empowerment. This has helped to on the social context and political scenario of Uzbekistan and Russia since the post-Soviet period and how people have supported the women rights. In looking more deeply into the present condition of Uzbek and Russian women in chapter 2 and 3, discussed the social and political status. In doing so the study found that in spite of having low political representation, women in both Uzbekistan and Russia enjoy a certain reputation and status in the socio- political and economic fields. Irrespective of secular nature of society, inter-ethnic conflict is common in Uzbekistan and Russia. Although, the practice of religion in Russia is different from Uzbekistan the relationship between the issues of religiosity and women empowerment is extremely intricate in both the countries.

The findings of this study here allow us to understand how the democratization process of Uzbekistan and Russian has actually implemented gender rights and equality in the life of women. In particular, the study highlights the role of political parties and civil society organisations in the matters of women empowerment in socio-political fields. Throughout the study, analyzed the contexts and situations where authoritarian nature of government of both Uzbekistan and Russia has impacted the process of change of women's status.

While examining the women issues it has been observed that both the Constitution of Uzbekistan and Russia prevents all types of discrimination and grants equal rights for men and women. The governments of these countries are committed to protect the rights of women. However, marginalization of women is prevailing in social, political and economic fields. Traditional, cultural and social elements control women's capabilities and opportunities to utilize their freedom to participate in political processes. The electoral process in Uzbekistan and Russia has contributed to a low-level participation of women in parliament, political parties, state legislatures and local government, and other decision-making authorities.

Socio-political status of women in Uzbekistan, discussed in chapter 2. three dominant factors: that impact on the Soviet inheritance, the social and economic challenges of the transition period, and the traditional Uzbek values and cultural traditions. The

traditional social norms, values, patriarchal mind set and customs continue to hinder their progress. Women are affected more disproportionately than men by the negative aspects of the on-going socio-economic transformation in Uzbekistan. Some of the issues like increasing poverty, rising unemployment, lack of resources in many families to educate boys and girls, political marginalization, domestic violence, sex trafficking etc, have given the women marginal space at all fronts, due to which they are discriminated and exploited on all fronts. It can be argued that in a male dominated society women have been granted equal rights not by the society but by the government rule.

In fact, it has been observed that during the pre-Soviet and Soviet period, women position was very low in comparison to men but during the post-independence there is an improvement of women's participation in Uzbekistan. Some special provisions for women such as family code and labour code were introduced in 1998. As per the data the analysis has shown that there are 16% women in Oily Majlis, Uzbekistan and 14 percent in Russian Duma. But it is noteworthy that the no of women in Uzbekistan is after having the quota system Place in 14 percent and in Russian Duma is without quota. Hence it is difficult to say that the statistical data point towards the actual participation of women in decision making administrative positions. It is difficult to comment that women's presence in administration their participation in decision making process.

In Uzbekistan the civil society organisations though budding, are too small. Though, women participation in NGO sector is speedily growing but it remains low in media, and other voluntary associations. The study has found that the organisations of civil society also follow the same path of traditions and old culture which affect women position in society. Though the new changes brought about an increase in the status of women in political parties and civil society organisations, their position in Uzbekistan continue to remain low as compared to men.

With the collapse of Soviet Union, the scenario of economic crisis in Uzbekistan was that of overall unemployment, which affected women worse than any other section of society. With the emergence of economic and structural transformations in 1991, women's condition particularly with reference to employment has gradually changed. Despite the negative impact of the LPG (liberalization, privatization and globalization) process, women in economic sector improved. Structural reforms in Uzbekistan have been a

modest increase in the share of employment in industry and services, and the decrease in the proportion of employment in agriculture. However, women's share in overall employment has seen an increase. Thus, women participation grew in the economic sector in the post-Soviet Uzbekistan in spite of their low representation in the mainstream politics.

The study in chapter 3 has evaluated the social and political status of women in Russian Federation during the 1991-2013. The study has found that similar problems and situation as they exist for Uzbekistan's women are also found in Russia. The women in Russia were influenced by Soviet inheritance, traditional patterns of life, conservative and patriarchal nature of society. They are affected by poverty, unemployment, domestic violence, sex trafficking and political marginalization due to which they are discriminated and exploited on all front.

According to 2016 estimate female population in Russia just like Uzbekistan is greater than men, with women, representing 53.54% of the total, compared to 46.46% men. Regarding the education status 2015 report shows that the literacy rate of the total population is 99.7% which includes 99.7% male literates and 99.6% female literates. Though the women literacy rate is higher than men but they remain at a lower stratum in higher and professional education, a scenario which is similar to Uzbekistan.

During the Soviet period, the quota representation formula made women participation in politics inevitable, though the quota system provides women symbolic and very little real power. Since the fall of communism, Russia has experienced a significantly lower level of women's participation in politics. When quotas were eliminated in the first Soviet competitive elections in 1989, women made up less than 16 percent of the newly formed Congress of People's Deputies. Thereafter women representation continued to decline in every election. The study reveals that this type of electoral system has a deep impact on the level of women's representation in the country. Women suffer even with the use of PR (Proportional Representation) and SMD (Single Member District) system in the elections.

In the Soviet era, women played a prominent role in politics with the communist party. In Russia, women are fighting election with their own political groups which is significant development in life of women in the Post-Soviet Russia. A political party known as Women of Russia Party was formed in 1990 which captured 8 percent of the vote in the

1993 State Duma election. Of course the level of support has been dropped but this party remained active throughout the decades in electoral process. Russian history is proud of famous Russian women political leaders, like Catherine the Great, Russian Empress Elizabeth Petrovna, Regent of Moscow Elena Glinskaya, Empress of Russia Catherine I and others. More women are involved in the economic and political sector. Some of them hold high position in the political as well as the economic fields. The women political movement and the political parties have a great role in making women strong enough in fighting the elections and other decision-making fields. In the case of civil society organization similar situation of Uzbekistan is found in Russia. Though civil society organisations and NGOs are growing but only a few have been working on women issues. These organizations have also been following the same path of traditions and conservative culture. So, the contribution of civil society and voluntary organizations for gender equality and women empowerment are found inadequate in the democratization process of Russia.

The socio-economic reforms of Russia have shown that all the changes happening in society have a different and contradictory impact on men and women. Women still are far behind men in earnings. This gap has been widening since the past decade. While in the 1980s, the wages of women constituted, on average, 70% of men's; by the end of 1999 this figure had dropped to 52%, and in 2000, to only 50%. The majority of women continue to work in public sector of the national economy. The low wages, unemployment, and poverty have hindered women for their progress in the political participation.

Chapter 4 of this study has looked into the level and nature of women empowerment in three distinct spheres: social, political, and economic and found that inadequate progress has been made to improve the conditions of women in Uzbekistan and Russia. While examining the programme, policies and provisions for emancipation of women the study has found that both Uzbekistan and Russian have adopted different policies and programme such as Family Code, Civil Code, Labour Code, which has impacted significantly in empowering women in the social sphere.

Both the countries have implemented the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) as well as Millennium Development Goal for empowering the women which positively impacted on women. Both Uzbekistan and

Russia have launched their National Action Plan in the strategies of the Beijing platform, 1995 and outlined the strategies and priorities for improving the status of women. Both countries have adopted and implemented a number of policies and programmes, which have a lot of commonalities, for the betterment of women. The government of Uzbekistan and Russia has declared its commitment by introducing the rights of women in its constitution, adopting the women's policy and programme and National Action Plan for gender equality and empowerment of women. The National Action Plan has significant impact on women of Uzbekistan even better than in Russia. In the political sphere, both Uzbekistan and Russia have taken a number of initiatives including the reintroduction of quota system for effective participation of women in the decision making process.

While comparing the socio-economic status of women of Uzbekistan and Russia, the study has observed that women in both countries are engaged less than men in a different sector. In Uzbekistan, the employment rate has increased since 1991 when the country got independence, but it is not so in Russia. During Soviet period the employment women were more than men, but since 1992, there is an increase in number of unemployed women. Moreover, Uzbek women have excelled in private entrepreneurship in comparison to Russian women. It is also found that in Uzbekistan, quota system has significantly supported for the enhancement of female employment, but in the case of Russia, the economic activities of women were much influenced by the socio - economic reasons. In fact, in different spheres the Russian women have got more exposure and easily availed education and medical services, social safety net, and personal security. Thus, for the sustained and effective growth of the country, it is necessary to create an institutional mechanism that will guarantee the equal opportunities for women and men in all spheres of the society and public domains.

The study has observed that the nature and behaviour of political parties on women of Uzbekistan and Russia is understood on the basis of socio-cultural factors from both Uzbekistan and Russia. Although, some women hold important public offices, women are given symbolic and minimal role in politics in each country. The study has examined that in both countries nature of political parties on women is changing due to traditional and structural factors which hinder women to occupy offices and be active in the political fields. The rise of women representation in Uzbekistan is not because of political parties but due to quota system. In Russia, women themselves have the political parties which

present good share in the elections since the couple years in the post-Soviet period. In fact, despite the low representation of women in Russia, they are more powerful than that of Uzbek women.

The study has found that in the post-Soviet period particularly since 1991 women issues have not been significantly taken by the civil society organisation in both Uzbekistan and Russia. The communist culture, patriarchy and excessive control of the administrative authority have brought the challenges before the civil society organisation in the process of women empowerment in the political fields. Nevertheless, for the last couple of years the civil society organisations in these two countries have been playing important role for consolidating and strengthening the democratic process in both these countries. They have significantly inspired and encouraged women to continue the democratic struggle in spite of social structure and traditional patriarchy in Uzbekistan and Russian. The participation of women in civil society and NGOs is also growing since last few years. It study has observed that social and communication arrangements competent necessitate developing and changing into social movements. Uzbekistan is being privileged by the women's NGO which are playing a considerable role for the cause of women's political participation.

In spite of the fact that progress in this regard has been slow, there have been some positive changes in women's life in Uzbekistan and Russia. Today Women are more empowered in the social, economic and political fields. Their representation has significantly improved in the parliament, political parties, local self government in Russia and Uzbekistan. Some of the women have even occupied the key position and playing major role not only for women issues but for the nation building process. In the social and economic sector, their participation has been enlarged with better employment and economic position. Political parties and civil society organization have extended their support for women issues and have tried to eliminate the discrimination against women. The study has argued that women's position is relatively better than the pre-1991 period but they remain marginal in the present day scenario in Uzbekistan and Russia.

It has been observed there are various challenges in the field of women participation in the democratization process of Uzbekistan and Russia. Today, the issue of elimination of gender discrimination along with realizing socio-political development is an enormous

challenge before Uzbekistan and Russia. Some major constraints to achieve this goal are: low representation of women in decision-making process and at the top positions in public and private sectors; traditional attitudes and stereotypes about the role of men and women. Reluctant nature of political parties and civil society organisation has further made women marginal in the electoral process. Women of Uzbekistan and Russia are also facing severe problems due to poverty, low wages, unemployment, authoritarianism, gender violence, human trafficking, abortion issues and other diseases. Lack of commitment and efficient implementation of programme and policies by the ruling authorities has been a challenge for women empowerment. In Uzbekistan and Russian, political parties and civil society organizations are mostly controlled by the men that become reasons for low participation of women in politics. They are underrepresented due to weak civil society organization and reluctant of parties toward women.

In spite of problems and challenges, the women of Uzbekistan and Russia are also having better opportunities for improving their participation in decision making process. They represent a good number of populations of women having a high rate of education. Socio-political, economic, and other women related changes are occurring in the Uzbekistan and Russian society. Irrespective of the gender discrimination in each country, the economic growth offers great opportunities to improve gender equality in the long term. Thus, for sustained and effective growth of the country, it is necessary to create an institutional mechanism that will guarantee the equal opportunities for women and men in all spheres of the society and public domains. Although women issues can be addressed in many ways but the democratization and socio-economic reforms are the most favourable means to tackle any kind of issues and problems. However, the essential condition for long-term development and empowerment for women in Uzbekistan and Russia lies in the capacity of the state along with that of political parties and civil society to work tirelessly in this area. Thus, an effort by the government, political parties and civil society should be made to educate the women about their rights and status, and to eliminate the gender discrimination.

Through the analysis of women's status in decision making process in Uzbekistan and Russia it is observed that the government should allow for an electoral reform process that will further help women representation in decision making bodies. A more proportional representation and more inclusive politics are necessary for achievement of this goal. In

this context, an improved system of checks and balances is also needed. The state institutions should be strengthened. Also, major improvements are needed with regard to the workings of civil society and NGOs for women causes. The political parties should also commit themselves to designating more women in their decision-making bodies, as women activists and women with responsibility in politics may become more aware of their civil rights. In fact, political parties and civil society organizations are needed to be strong enough in addressing and empowering the women in Uzbekistan and Russia.

In a nutshell, Uzbekistan and Russian have focused on eliminating gender discrimination and empowering the women. Although, some women hold high position in Russia and Uzbekistan, but women are given symbolic and minimal role in politics in each country.

Though, women in Uzbekistan have better representation than the women of Russia, but their situation remains as men subordinate. The low participation of women is mainly due to economic, social, political and cultural factors. In both Russian and Uzbekistan society, the traditional pattern, culture, values, patriarchal system favors segregation for women and they are treated as marginalised and vulnerable sections of society. In Uzbekistan despite the reintroduction quota system the percentage of women's political participation remains low in comparison to men. Low political and economic activity and weak civil society institutions are some of factors for the low number of Russian women in politics. Though, Russian women play a bigger role in decision making process but their political representations remain lower than the women of Uzbekistan. Nevertheless, women's condition in both Uzbekistan and Russia has been improved in the post-Soviet period in comparison to Soviet era.