

## Multi-party consultation on 'Facilitating women's participation in governance'

# 'Men being efficient is a male created myth'

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The parties and ideologies were different but they all agreed on one point. That there was an urgent need for empowerment and equal opportunities to women in politics and decision making.

The speakers at the multi-party consultation on "Facilitating women's participation in governance" organised by the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS) underscored the need for change in the mind set of the people in providing the necessary platform to encourage more women to enter public life.

NIAS had invited the presidents of the women's wing and also some senior leaders of the prominent parties including Congress, BJP, JD(S), JD(U) and the left parties to present their view point on providing opportunities to women in governance.

At the senior leaders sessions, opinions differed when it came to inclusion of castes and sub-castes in Womens' Reservation Bill. JD(U) leader K B Shanappa insisted that the 33 per cent reservation should also include reservation for SC/STs and the backward classes. Each speaker, Mr Basavaraj Bommai (JD-S), Mohan Kondaji (Cong) and Mr Suresh Kumar (BJP) irrespective of their party affiliation, exhorted the need for an early passage of Bill in the parliament.

Earlier, Minister of State for Kannada and Culture Rani Satish called for an understanding among all political parties and also the Election Commission in the selection of party nominations in local bodies for those seats reserved for women. "The restriction on the

spending money during elections for instance has helped women contestants", she said.

She said providing reservation for women was not sufficient and it was also necessary to involve them in policy making. Former minister B T Lalitha Naik speaking for the JD(S) said

### Women must attend gram sabha meets: Minister

BANGALORE, Jan 18 (DHNS)

Minister of State for Kannada and Culture Rani Satish on Wednesday assured that she will place before the cabinet a proposal making it mandatory for women members of gram sabhas to participate in its proceedings.

She was responding to a question by Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council Basavaraj Bommai during discussion at a multi-party consultation on "Facilitating women's participation in governance" organised by the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS) here on Wednesday.

Mr Bommai during discussions said that women were not participating in the gram sabhas actively and asked the minister whether she would consider initiating a rule making it mandatory for women to participate in the sabhas. A similar rule had been effected in Madhya Pradesh, he informed.

Ms Satish said that she will look into the proposal and place it before the cabinet.

awareness and literacy campaign was the solution for encouraging the participation of women in politics.

Ms Vijaylakshmi Ram Bhat (JD-U) and Vimala Gowda (BJP) stressed the need for nominating more women as office bearers in political parties. The discussions that followed witnessed the audience put forth some very practical questions to the panel.

Why is the reservation bill every time tabled for discussion on the last day of the parliament session? Why are political parties not implementing the reservation scheme within the party? Why cannot Congress and BJP join hands and pass the bill?

The panel, however, did not have satisfactory answers to these questions. Asian Centre for Entrepreneurial Initiatives Trustee Director Madhura Chatrapathi chaired the session.

Earlier, in his inaugural address former chief secretary T P Issar termed it as "male created myth" that men are more efficient in governance compared to women. "Nature has compensated women for their relatively less physical strength with integrity and efficiency", he said emphasising that women make great administrators. He lamented that women were not given tickets to contest elections by political parties on the pretext that they were inexperienced. "The lack of experience is in fact an asset as it will lead to a freshness in policies which we need more", he said. "The performance of men, who dominated politics all these years is not all that flattering", he added.

NIAS Director Roddam Narasimha, Mrs Asha Ramesh, research associate of the Gender Studies Units at NIAS and Dr N Shantha Mohan of the institute also spoke.