



THE ROLE AND CONTRIBUTION OF SMT. SHASHIKALA KAKODKAR IN POLITICS IN THE STATE OF GOA

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Abstract:

Woman can enter politics and can lead the administration of a State have been proved by many in recent times Mrs. ShashikalaKakodkar is one among them. ShashikalaKakodkar has contributed a lot to the Goan Politics and the society, participated in the Goa's struggle for the freedom served as the Chief Minister of Goa, Daman and Diu for six years, General Manager and Managing Director of Bhandarkar Group of Companies and as Leader of BahujanSamaj, she has tried her level best to uplift the masses. She even established educational institutions. Her role as an education minister of Goa State is also remarkable. Her love towards mother language is seen right from her entry into Politics and it's still evident today, when she came on the roads to fight against the government decision on Medium of instruction. Shashikalakakodkar though criticized by many on several occasions has contributed a lot to the Goan Society and Goa's Politics. This research paper will focus on Role into Politics, Social Life and contribution to uplift the subaltern

Keywords: Administration, democratic, freedom, Woman

Introduction

The position of women in Goa is better than their counterparts in the neighbouring states of Karnataka and Maharashtra, However very few women have appeared on political scene in Goa. Ms. Urminda Mascarenhas was the first women elected to the legislative assembly in the elections held in 1963. She was followed by Ms. ShashikalaKakodkar, Ms. Ilo Miranda, Ms. Farrel Furtado, Ms. Fatima D'sa, Ms. SangitaPorob, Ms. Victoria Fernandes, Ms. Nirmalasawant, Ms. AlinaSaldhana and Ms. Jennifer Monserrat. It is Ms. SanyogitaRaneSardesai who is the only women to have represented Goa in Parliament. The article is about the first

Women Chief Minister of Goa Mrs. ShashikalaKakodkar.

Early Life

A lady is always introduced as daughter of so and so or husband of so and so, but I do not like to introduce Mrs. Kakodkar in that manner. Because she has her own earned position and she has her own identity. It's my firm belief that society should change this attitude and behavior of introducing ladies by their fathers and husbands name.

ShashikalaKakodkar was born on 7th January 1935 at Pernem. She was the first child of Mr. DayanandBhandokar and Mrs. SunandaPednekar. UshaVengurlekar, Kranti Rao Jyoti Bandekar and SiddharthBhandokar are



her younger Siblings. She completed her elementary education from MustifundSchool. She completed her Matriculation from Peoples High School, Panjim. At the age of 11 she participated in the Goa's Struggle for freedom. She was shouting slogans "Jai Hind" and was beaten up by the Portuguese Police Officer for this act. She fearlessly participated in the struggle for freedom at a very tender age. From 1954 to 1958 she was at Fatima College Dharwad where she studied anthropology, Sociology and History, and was awarded Bachelors of Arts. She completed her Masters in Arts from Elphinstone College Mumbai.¹

The year 1963 is double joyous occasion for Shashikala; because the first ever democratic elections took place in Goa after the 450 years of Colonial domination and her father Mr. DayanandBandodkar became the first Chief Minister of Goa Daman and Diu Union territory. Secondly She got married to GurudattKakodkar. In 1968 she was made General Manager of Bandodkar group of Companies. She was the member of Youth Red cross Society, All India Woman Conference and Central Social Welfare Board.²

She was influenced a lot by her father Late DayanandBandodkar who always inspired her to do good things for the society. She is very spiritual lady and often visits Shankaracharys Math at Shringeri. Her fearless attitude and her inborn leadership style helped her to enter into Politics. Her sympathy towards the downtrodden and the

oppressed section motivated her to enter into social and charitable Work.

Role in Politics

In the orthodox hindu society the general mentality is that, a woman should not enter into politics because its meant for man and its unhealthy place for women. Although criticized by many Mrs. Kakodkar ran the administration of the Union Territory. "She had proved by her actions deeds, that she was a capable leader, she had not only ran the administration successfully improved the lot of people, brought about substantial development of the territory in the sphere of education, agriculture, industry and social work...".³

ShashikalaKakodkar was into social work since she came to Goa after completing her masters from Mumbai. Politics in general is always taken into negative sense and women are kept away from it but Mrs. Kakodkar took in a positive sense and entered Goan Politics in 1967 general Elections, when the question of Goa's Identity was solved.

Elections were held on 12 April 1967; ShashikalaKakodkar contested election from Ponda Constituency and won the seat with vast majority. In 1972 she contested from Bicholim Constituency. This time she became the Minister in Bandodkar's cabinet. But the destiny had something else for Mrs. Kakodkar. On 12th August 1973 DayanandBandodkar passed away. And on the same day she was appointed as the Chief Minister of Goa Daman and Diu. She was not new into politics but the responsibilities at 38



years were too much for her. There were many who were not happy with her leadership. Even her cabinet Minister Mr. Pratap Singh Rane was not happy. There was split in MGP L, few MGP leaders left the Party and joined Indian National Congress. There were threats to her leadership; she was severely criticized within her political party. Responsibilities at her home were also increased as her sons were very small when she became the chief Minister of the State. But very efficiently she managed the affairs at home and the affairs of the Union Territory.⁴

She was popularly known as "Taai". In 1977 General elections were held, there was a shift in Goa's local political polarization but MGP managed to get 15 seats i.e. 1 less to the majority. Taai formed the government with the help of 2 independent MLAs of Daman and Diu. She became the chief Minister for the second time. SartoEsteves believed that MGP came to power in 1977 because of the qualities of leadership displayed by Mrs. Kakodkar. This time she faced much more problems than earlier. She was criticized for running corruption-prone government, which was particularly dominated by the goans than-strong transport lobby, and which saw a lot of her fellow Gomant Maratha Cast members gained predominance in Government postings.

Towards the end of her tenure Mrs. Kakodkars government was hit by two major agitations; One lead by traditional fisherman (Raponkar agitation) protesting against the government policy

and another campaign by students demanding 50 per cent bus fare concession for all bonafide students. Latter was largely successful. She accepted the demand of the students. She established 11 Industrial Estates in Goa which created Employment for the Goan Youths. As the unemployment rate was going on increasing taai realized the need of industrialization and established Industrial estates in Goa.

On 23rd April 1979 Taai faced a major problem in her political career as DayanandNarvekar, Shankar Lad and Dilkhush Desai, these three MLAs from MGP left the party and government was reduced to minority and ShashikalaKakodkar's Government after 6 years of her rule collapsed and President's Rule was imposed in Goa Daman and Diu.

Elections were held in 1980, MGP lost the elections and Congress for the first time came to power. Taai lost elections from Bicholim Constituency. Taai left MGP and joined Congress. She was expelled from MGP. Taai even left Congress and established BhaushebbanbodkarGomantakPaty popularly known as "bhabango". In 1984 she contested from Cancona and marcaim constituency but lost the elections in both the constituencies. By this time Konkani became the sole official language of Goa. Goa attained statehood. Taai came back to MGP. Once again contested from Mayem Constituency. She won the seat but MGP did not come to power, instead Congress came to power. But Congress government collapsed just after few



months and some of the Congress MLAs resigned and along with MGP formed PDF government under Churchill/Alemao which was for two months. Churchill resigned and Dr. Luis Proto Barbosa became the chief minister of Goa. In his cabinet Taai was made education, art and culture, transport and fisheries Minister. But MGP withdrew its support to PDF government and Government was reduced to minority and presidents Rule was imposed in Goa. Taai again contested 1994 General elections and she won that lections from Mayem Constituency and this was her last Victory. She contested 1999 and 2002 general elections but could not win elections.

Leadership Qualities:

Kakodkar followed a different style of functioning which resulted in her downfall. She was educated and had better capacity to understand and control the administration of the union territory, but she lacked mass contact with the people like her father. She was proud of herself. (Almeida, 2013) Mrs. Kakodkar was a prominent leader of the MGP. She emerged as the only second line leader within the MGP during the Second Bhandarkar Ministry (1967-1972) to some extent, sidelining senior party members. While her father was facing the ministerial crises of 1970, his daughter already an MLA and Parliamentary Secretary of MGP "Actually began directing the Party affairs and suggesting probable solutions for various kinds of problems."⁵

When she was Minister of State there was an impression that she

exercised far more powers than the senior cabinet colleagues in the Third Bhandarkar Ministry (1972-1973). After taking reins of the government, she kept the old friends of her father at a distance and arranged her own advisors. Her main agenda in functioning the government were implementation of land reforms and reorganization of *comunidades*, secure statehood for Goa, promote tourism and small scale irrigation projects. During her second tenure she did not project any specific agenda. She spoke in terms of all round development of the people of Goa. Because of her attitude there was dissatisfaction within MGP. Some of its leaders left MGP and joined INC. by this time UGP was merged with INC. In the fourth general elections which were held on 1st June 1977, MGP got 15 seats, INC got 10 seats, three candidates from Janata Party and two independents won. MGP under ShashikalaKakodkar with the support of independent formed the government but could not complete its full term.

She did possessed certain inherent qualities which could enable her to emerge as an efficient and effective leader- youthfulness, sensitive outlook, personal charm, varied experience, tremendous affection and support from the party and people irrespective of religion due to the affection felt her for father BHAU by majority of Goans. She was better educated and code perceives the political and social situation through a much more sophisticated analysis theoretically. The grooming of ShashikalaKakodkar by Bhandarkar had many similarities with Nehru-Indira



dynasty. Like Indira Gandhi ShashikalaKakodkar closely followed her father's work and accompanied him on tours and party meetings. Unlike Bandodkar, who was a mass leader it is difficult to say Mrs. Kakodkar had a mass base. Her influence was projected through a more formal structure of association rather than contact with common man. Unlike Bandodkar, she emerged as an efficient administrator and injected discipline into public survey system.

As a leader ShashikalaKakodkar showed the ability to read the signs of the times and shift policies on major issues. In the sphere of executive leadership initially she capitalized her father's image, she soon realized the need to step out of "The Bandodkar's daughter" image and emerged as a leader in her own right with this objective in view she began the practice of distributing sweets to orphans and aged on her birthday and made it a point to initiate or inaugurate Government and Party Projects on her birthday. By 1974, she was emerging as a leader in her own right and it's evident in the Mandrem by election where the MGP candidate RamakantKhalap won against Congress candidate RajuTalenekar. When this victory was followed by another victory she was herself so surprised by the result that she addressed 9 hands giving meeting.

The Chief Ministers Executive leadership to a fair extent depends on bureaucracy, its talent, its characteristics, prestige and popularity. MrsKakodkar owed of the shortcomings of her father's regime and

promised efficient and responsive administration. That would provide the people with adequate basic amenities, develop roads, and provide potable water, health, educational and other facilities. To a fair extent she was able to infuse discipline in the administration especially during national Emergency.⁶

Every Person has strong as well as weakness. Some of the shortcomings of Mrs. Kakodkar's leadership are: She lacked the rapport with party colleagues and people, which was so characteristic of Bandodkar, and as a consequence alienated herself from the Party workers and created a coterie which proved her undoing. Being the youngest Chief Minister also had its drawbacks. Compared to her father, she appeared to many as more egoistic. Unlike her father who trusted his common sense and mass contact who helped him to take his decisions, ShashikalaKakodkar came to rely heavily on a coterie which included her husband GurudattKakodkar (PRO). She took Particular care not to create the impression of a CM who disobeyed or disregarded her husband, thereby seeking to maintain the traditional image of a good Indian Wife.

Unlike her father she was neither an extrovert nor she maker herself as easily accessible as her father. She failed many times on the floor of the house to command and could not control her own MLAs. Dissidence within the organizational Wing overflowed into the legislature. In spite of the shortcomings she had proved by her actions and deeds that she was an able administration.



Today Taai has taken retirement from active Politics. But she is active in her Social work. Taai's Contribution to Goan Politics is remarkable. We talk about women empowerment and Taai is an example before all the ladies to manage Home and the State simultaneously. We have seen many women contesting elections and disappearing after the elections. The sole reason is that they are not getting encouragement to participate in Politics. Taai spent 35 years in Goan Politics, 1967-2002. She is the only woman in Goa who has been into Politics for such a long period. Victoria Feranandes, NirmaI Sawant, SangitaParab are other examples before us. But we cannot compare the experience of Mrs. Kakodkar to any other Goan woman Politician.

Education:

From 1980-1990 Mrs. Kakodkar devoted her years for social work. She established SiddharthBandodkar Higher Secondary school in Velguem, where her father established ShrimatiBandodkar High school. Velguem is a small village in the BicholimTaluka, where proper facilities were not available. It's because of Bhau and Taai the students can get basic elementary and higher education and they do not have to go far to Bicholim.⁷Mrs. Kakodkar was a highly qualified lady who became the chief Minister of Goa. In 1990's she became the Education Minister of Goa state and was responsible in a major way of the regional languages- alone, no English education policy implemented in

government aided primary schools in Goa.⁸

Contribution to the society

Mrs. Kakodkar was very much into social work even before entering into politics. She was associated with Youth Red Cross Society Goa Branch, she was the member of Central Board of Social Welfare even she was the member of All India Women Federation. She always worked for the betterment and overall development of the society.

Welfare of the Subaltern:

She has sympathy towards oppressed sections of the society. On many occasions she has helped the subalterns. One such instance is that, when Banbodkar allotted lands to the kunbis, Gaudas, vellips and dhangar community for kumeri cultivation which was illegal, but taai gave those lands to the tillers legally and those who were given illegally they were made legalized. The land to the tillers, the famous "KulKaaido" The Mundkar Protection from Eviction Act 1975 was passed by taai. This act was introduced to provide for better protections to Mundkars against evictions from their dwelling houses.⁹Mundar got legal rights in the land. The mundkars were released from the oppression of the Bhatkars. Taai hails from bhaujanSamaj i.e. Gomantak Maratha Samaj. She always worked for their socio-economic upliftment and worked for their rights.

Love for the Mother language:



It was ShashikalaKakodkar who started grants to Government Marathi and Konkani Primary Schools in 1991 when she was the education Minister and grants to English medium schools were stopped as she was of the opinion that a child's basic education has to be in his/her mother language.

ShashikalaKakodkar (TAAI) has played multiple role in her life and has proved

that a woman can do many things in her life. Nothing is impossible in this world. She was the third Woman chief Minister after Suchitakripalani of Uttar Pradesh and NandiniSatpathy of Oddissa.She is truly an iron lady of Goa. A freedom fighter, Chief Minister, a legislator, Language Lover, Businesswoman, a daughter, a mother, a wife.

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