

Political Reservation and Empowerment of Women in India: An Analysis

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Abstract: Women make up over 50 percent of the entire population. In India, however, the sex ratio was disproportionately high, with women being substantially lower than men. Each 1000 man has 940 females. The alphabetisation rate for men is 82.14%, whereas for women is 65.46%. With regard to their social status, they are not treated everywhere as men. Although women are as skilled in all activities as men, they only play a high part in reproductive activities. The participation of women in politics remains very low compared to men in India, despite the variety of government research, programmes and policies, international agreements, conferences, recommendations and approval of women's reservations in parliament. The significance of political participation is not limited only to women's voting rights, but it also includes women's active participation in political consciousness, advocacy and decision-making. We can observe that women have economic, social, nutritional and technological strength to a certain degree, but the rate of political empowerment between them is too slow. It is thus very important to our country that women do not participate in politics and that women participate in local and national decision-making bodies. Improving women's rights and tackling hindrances to their political involvement could achieve gender equality.

Keywords: Women, Equality, Representation Bill, Rights, Legislature Politics, Reservation, Power.

Introduction:

The overall population is 65.2 crore per woman compared to 69.7 crore per woman. In the field of production and reproductive production, their social and economic contribution to the development of societies also exceeds half that of men [3]. The concept of empowerment originated in 1960 in the United States civil rights movements. Empowerment is that we move from enforced impotence to a power position. Despite several scholars, government programmes and regulations, international agreements, conferences and suggestions, there are still few women involved in politics as compared to men in India. Policy engagement is also about women's active participation in the political consciousness, activism and decision-making process. It does not just require women to have the right to vote. Women can be found to have some economic, social, nutritional and technological capacity, but the rate of political empowerment among them is too slow. Therefore, it is important that women are not involved in politics and should be engaged in national and local decision-making bodies. Improving women's rights and tackling hindrances to their political involvement could achieve gender equality [9].

Gender disparity today contributes to women's power deprivation. Women at every level of the ladder, starting with the family to the pinnacle of policy, are constantly excluded from decision making. Although the Indian Constitution seeks to eliminate gender inequality by banning gender and class discrimination and enshrining fundamental rights for all people, the rights of women are still de jure rather than de facto. (Mehta and Paul 2016) In India, female literacy is 65.46%, and in men it is 82.14%. (Census 2011). It also showed that, in the decadal period 2001–2010, rise in women's literacy (11.8%) was significantly higher than in men's literacy rates (6.9%). In the 2011 census population, a population of 940 females for 1000 males was found in India in 2011. The 2011 sex ratio indicates an increasing trend from the 2001 census data. The 2001 census showed that the gender gap of 1000 men was 933 women and hence it seems that the gender gap is closing. Nevertheless, they remain negligible in political institutions and arenas, where choices are taken about the utilisation of society resources generated by men and women.

Women are still being hampered by political participation in Indian governing organisations and are very underrepresented. During the previous two decades, a substantial number of countries have established the reservation of women through quotas across the world in public decision-making organisations [1]. The phenomenon of both developing and developing countries is the under-representation of women in public decision-making bodies. Everybody notices with the changing times that women are also involved in the development, which in the near future becomes a progressive nation. The inclusion of women in government entities is therefore time-consuming. Women's representation is a context-related issue in the socio-political Indian environment Indians, however, are divided culturally, multi-ethnic, caste, class and gender. However, what is commonly known as women

are disadvantaged, marginalised and excluded in the real sense. For various reasons, the equilibrium between the sexes of politicians is vital. It should be noted that just approximately 16 percent of the world's legislators are women and around 40 nations, by means of constitutional amendments or by modifying electoral laws, have established the sex quotas in elections for national parliaments. Nevertheless, women's gender quotas are sometimes highly discursive and the employment of the quota instrument in making historical leap or in the representation of women becomes a new trend of global political order.

Women's Reservation in India:

The reservation of women focuses on numerous topics such as equality, fairness, citizenship etc. But women's reservation efficiency depends on a country's social and political structure. However, in the Scandinavian countries in Europe, it is well-known that higher representation of women is frequent. In Scandinavian, the feminist arguments on gender citizenship are significantly influenced by a social democracy model. The issue of citizenry for Scandinavia, which evolved within the context of social movements, based on social-political inclusion and exclusion. In other words, social movements are seen as key actors in historical transformations.

Equality, however, is the core principle of all democracy worldwide. But the effective representation of women inside any democracy is hampered by male rule and a socio-cultural mindset. On the contrary, Nordic democracies are capable of speeding forward the concept of "state feminism." Despite customary devotion, masculine workers are able to change their "friendly women" public domain. State feminism is politics where the mobilisation of women "from below" and integration policy from above mix. Besides, masculine party-politics monopolisation was simply a democratic issue, since women's political partiality was a concern. In his book *Unfinished Democracy*, Haavio-Mannila et. Al (1985): Women in Nordic politics have declared gender-based injustices and inequity. Political scientists therefore felt that the political system has to combine a set of values and benefits. Otherwise, the basis of gender equality will be distorted by power and its unfair division. But since the foundation of the state, different discrimination against women has been experienced in Indian society. As a cultural endeavour in the social reform movement in India, the topic of women was raised in the 19th century. The nationalist project corrupted women's question after independence. The execution of these rights was patent, and the State was not obliged to do so, even while the Indian Constitution gave women fundamental rights—equality in legal processes, right to vote. Moreover, personal rights, notably Muslim minorities, have challenged the secular character of the Indian state. The Indian Constitution, on the one hand, represents unequal relationships between women and men, but governmental rhetoric continues to emphasise on equality between men and women regardless of caste, class, faith, etc. This should be noted. In fostering a conducive climate for women's participation in the independence movement, Mahatma Gandhi played a key role by emphasising that fighting for women's equality formed an intrinsic element of the Swaraj movement [2]. Instead of becoming feminised by more masculine action based on violence, Gandhi has permitted women to actively participate in a nonviolent satyagraha. However, reservation advocates promote the role of women in politics. It improves their political empowerment. At the same time, reservation opponents stated that the women's reserve contradicts the idea that women are equal and effectively represented. In democratic bodies women are only acting as "proxy" women. Opponents believe that the law will end only with "elitistic women" empowerment while leaving lower caste women and minorities such as Muslims behind them [4]. Early after independence, women made up little more than 4.4% of the overall strength in the First Lok Sabha election. At the period, there was the free movement behind thousands of exceptional women throughout the country. In decision-making bodies, even in the congressional party women found little room. Even after the passage of "reformed" Hindu legislation in the mid-1950s, the women's front of the party declined in significance. Before the Lok Sabha Election in the 1990s, women participated less [5]. In the Indian electoral process, women have been more involved since the 1990s (www.eci.gov.in). In 1992, a high number of women in local policies, both in rural and urban bodies in Indian democracy, were included in landmark 73rd and 74th Constitutional amendments. The reality, however, is that these democratic bodies are nothing more than quiet observers. The manner their representation in such entities was inhibited is party political, male-dominated socio-cultural norms. This is the descriptive portrayal of women in decision-making bodies. In this similar line, the well-known academic said that it is an inclusive marker for disadvantaged groups like women and the ethnic minority within a democracy. Their politics have become their presence in decision-making bodies. But the 108th Women's Reservation Proposal is waiting because of a lack of political unity. In national and state legislatures, they are seeking 33 percent reservation. "Sub-reservation for SCs, STs, OBCs and minorities inside 33 per cent of a quota" means "quota within the quota." It is also an unconstitutional requirement. In the example of Indian democracy, we have observed that women in the political family have stronger opportunities for political advancement. But the principle of democracy is founded on equality regardless of caste, class, sex and belief, etc. Indian democracy can therefore be argued as hegemonic concerning gender, class and caste.

Political Empowerment of Women:

Empowerment means creating an enabling atmosphere in which people can take full use of their life. Empowerment also involves creating or gaining the ability to achieve certain tasks and to achieve specified objectives. It is becoming widely known in women's political empowerment that both women should empower each other and be empowered. This concerns both individual (e.g. gaining city skills) and collective empowerment (such as networking). Strengthening also includes building an environment conducive to women to apply their skills in addressing their male counterparts' core societal concerns.

Consequently, it is equally vital or even more important than growing female numbers in the high political and decision-making organisations and institutions to develop women's analyses, politics, advocacy, leadership, networking, and other competencies. These qualitative aspects can even be argued that constitute the basis on which the status of women can be sustainably improved. Otherwise, legislative or constitutional mandates (or if existing male-dominant power institutions are obliged to "favour" women - by nominating them for cabinet, for example) might only end in tokenism, manipulation and unsustainable representation.

We have come a long way in terms of women's political empowerment. Women are making some political and governmental progress, but not yet sufficient to make a difference. We might conclude that empowering women was just a non-starter in national and state politics. The women in Lok Sabha never crossed two digits as a proportion of the total membership in Lok Sabha, despite the fact that around fifty per cent of voters are women. The share of women in the House has been grown in more than six decades and in 15 Lok Sabhas from just 4.9% in 1952 to 10.68% currently, a proportion significantly less than the average of roughly 15% in countries with elected legislatures. Although the strength of the women in Lok Sabha has increased substantially, they participate significantly less in the decision-making positions.

Status of women in parliament:

| HDI Rank | Country | Share of Seat in Parliament (% Held by Women) 2015 |
|----------|-------------|--|
| 169 | Afghanistan | 27.5 |
| 2 | Australia | 30.4 |
| 3 | Switzerland | 28.7 |
| 131 | India | 12.3 |
| 1 | Norway | 39.5 |

Table 1: HDI report (2015) on Gender Inequality Index

The table 1 indicates the presence of more women in the parliament in industrialised countries, such as Norway and Australia. India has only 12.3 percent of women in parliament, while it is less developed than India, roughly half the percentage of Afghan women in parliament.

- This global plan is quite low in India's 148th position, including Nepal (48th), Afghanistan (54th), Pakistan (89th), Bangladesh (91st), the United Arab Emirates (96th), and Saudi Arabia (98th), amongst others.
- India ranks 31st out of 47 Asian countries. India ranks fifth out of eight SAARC countries, with India ranking fourth out of five BRICS nations. Comparatively low performance is visible in terms of women's parliamentary representation when India (11.9%) is compared to the top performer in Rwanda (61.3%).

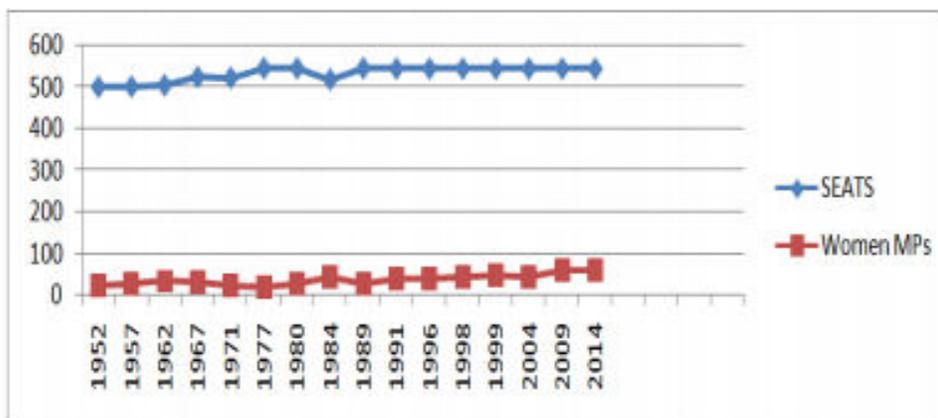


Figure 1: Women Presence in the Lok Sabha.

Figure 1 shown quite clearly that the participation of women in Lok Sabha is extremely low than that of men. With regard to women's representation in Lok Sabha, it was increased from 4% in 1957 to 5.5% in 1971. In 1984, the representation of women was first boosted by 8% with the election of 42 MPs in the lower house. In 2009, however, 59 of 556 candidates were elected by 59 representatives. In Lok Sabha today, the largest share of women has clearly been noticed. The total number of female members rose to 61. If this pattern continues, the critical mass of 33 percent will need another 50 years to forget the equivalent share.

| Year | Total Seats | No of Women | % |
|------|-------------|-------------|-------|
| 1998 | 223 | 19 | 8.5 |
| 2004 | 245 | 27 | 11.02 |
| 2009 | 245 | 22 | 8.98 |
| 2014 | 245 | 29 | 11.83 |

Table 2: Women Presence in the Rajya Sabha

- Women's general elections in India for 2014 were 65.63%, compared with 67.09% in men. Administrative status of women in the IAS services, there are no separate bookings for women. Your entry is on its own merit. The overall number of women is 331 of 4,284 IAS officers. The proportion of women in the administration is 7.7%.

Factors preventing the participation of women in politics:

- **Political factors:** Masculine dominance in political parties and political activities restricting the participation of women in political activities. When it comes to national matters, the woman feels always overlooked because men decide from their point of view.
- **Social-cultural elements:** Social-cultural issues that affect the public involvement of women are equally essential. Because of their multiple roles in the productive and reproductive realm, women find participating in politics difficult. The partition of space between genders is public (male) and private (female) (Basu 2015). Family and political relationships are expected to aid women at every step of the decision to be elected effectively, not always by an autonomous decision reached by the women themselves.
- **Economic factors:** politicians are now moving around making money and marketing has grown. Women are often less proprietary of producing resources and capital, restricting their potential for political involvement. Political processes are becoming costly. Election costs were also obstructive.
- **Psychological considerations:** Psychological factors also contribute to the limited participation of women in politics. Men are often interested in politics more psychologically because they consider politics to be their field, but women are generally unlucky about these issues. Politics is a highly perilous game, and elections are also very difficult, violent and nasty. Women want to stay away from politics hence. During the old era women were not permitted to join politics, but it was because of a patriarchal establishment they were not interested in it.

Nussbaum (2005) states that the ability of many women to actively participate in a variety of forms of social and political relationships to talk in public and to be recognised by women as dignified beings, whose value is equal to that of others, in the broader society affects violence and threats to violence

- In a 2016 research, more than 44% of elected women were intimidated in office, including threats of death, rape, beatings or kidnappings.
- Over 60% of women who fear violence do not participate in politics.

Strategies to enhance women's political participation:

- **Education:** Education is the strongest human resource development tool. Education was pushed as the basic instrument that women should be provided to fulfil their role as key social members, as long as the 3rd World Conference on Women in 1985 under the theme "equality, development and peace." The literacy among women in India is 65.46%, whereas among men is 82.14% (census 2011). It also showed a positive development in women's literacy rates (11.8%) in 2001-2011, slowing the gender gap considerably faster than in men's literacy rates (6.9%). Jayal and Buch (2010) studies found that women in Panchayats, if analphabets are "persistently humiliated and devalued"

- **Changes in the Indian Constitution:** Government main emphasis is on the inclusion of more women at all levels of political activity in decision making and in political formulating. In 2001, an Indian government designated a year of women's empowerment to boost political participation for women in Panchayats. According to the 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Indian Constitution in 1992, all Indian women are granted a thirty-three percent female reservation in Panchayats and urban local governments.

This move aimed to allow more grassroots women to get into the political stream and build "critical masses" of leaders whose voices are heard at different levels.

PRI's role in the empowering of women politics:

In the lives of women themselves, PRI has brought about enormous changes, which have gained self-confidence, political awareness and the confirmation of their own identity. In Panchayat villages, women, many of them uneducated, are currently leaders in the village of Panchayats, have become politically trained places. Panchayati Raj's leaders alter local government through raising awareness about poverty, inequality and gender injustice in the state [6]. Women as electorates, women as party members, women as candidates, women as elected PRI members in decision-making, programme planning, implementation and assessment, women as members from Mahila Mandals and their partnerships with diverse organisations, are part of the PRI's participation. Many elect women claimed that their proposals have not been taken seriously and that they have not been consulted throughout the decisions taken. Some thought that only because they are women were their thoughts ignored. Sometimes, they were pressured to accept their male-dominated Panchayats choices by their husbands. The male family members and other panchayat members deliberately blocked women from participating in panchayat [7].

Role of education for enlargement in the empowerment of women politicians:

- **Use of media as an empowerment tool:** a local dialect radio programme should be broadcast each day or once a week that might include issues such as the function of panchayats, their work and their aims, etc. Social media may play a major role in informing women about their rights and duties. Social networking websites and the smartphone app can make kids aware of the cruelties and barriers they face. Printing and electronic media can be an essential role in awareness building in the society of rulers.
- **Exposure Visits:** A tour should be made to places where the women are exceptionally active in politics to stimulate uneducated or unknown women. Sarpanch can be a source of inspiration to successful working women.
- **Women's Organisation:** the organisation of women through the Mahila Mandal and Selbsthelp Groups should be encouraged. Government should provide financial assistance to groups that work successfully and encourage women's political representation.
- **Incentives:** women who successfully head political parties should be rewarded and supported by the publication of their leadership abilities. All women present at the time would undoubtedly be motivated.
- **Grass Root and National Level Training:** Training programmes to raise knowledge of why women need to take part in decision-making, what their rights and how their socio-cultural barriers can break through should be arranged at the village and domestic level. These training courses can also lead to greater communication and leadership. The women members and all other PRI members & local officials concerned should be trained on different parts of the PRI. The 73rd amendment provides that certain fields of formation may be provided for include the provision of written documents, the conduct of meetings, the maintenance of community assets, financial management, understanding of the administrative structure, government programmes for the rural poor, unemployed, education, public distribution system, etc. (India's Government 2014 Planning Commission)
- **Sensitivity building:** political consciousness is a step towards political participation. Sensitivity generates interests and involvement [8]. Women have a very low awareness about the Gram Panchayats electoral process and can be organised in communities by rallies and nuclear natak. They have limited awareness of voting age in Gram Panchayats, Panchayat Samitis, Assemblies and Parliament, political rights provisions, and women's seats.
- **Women's Motivation:** Extension workers can play an important role in persuading women to take advantage of Indian constitutional rights.

Conclusions:

While India is on the development side, the representation of women in politics in India is still quite low. By enhancing women's rights and addressing impediments in political engagement, extension education can play a

significant role in achieving gender equality. For a nation's overall development women should be active in both national and local decision-making organisations. The issue of gender-based violence and security for women and the promotion of gender equality on a social and political level should also be tackled on a priority basis. The aim of empowering women is not achieved with reservation alone. Additional policies must be implemented to promote women's self-confidence and capacity building to speed up and speed up this process.

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