

The Impact of Women Participation in the Political System in India

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Abstract:

Women are drastically underrepresented in parliament and in positions of power on every societal and political level in the globe. Many regions, cultures, and political systems have different barriers and enablers for women's political engagement. Even within women, there is great diversity due to factors such as socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, culture, and level of education. When women choose a career in politics, they frequently encounter a climate that is less than welcoming. Women in India have full political rights under the country's constitution once they reach adulthood. Yet, women's actual rights have lagged behind those guaranteed by the Constitution. The underrepresentation of women in government institutions has historically received less attention from political scientists. Sexist preconceptions have contributed to a silence about issues of women's representation. The traditional gender roles at home have been seen as a precursor to the male-dominated political sphere. The traditional view is that women's lack of representation in government is due to their prioritization of home and family. Women's political participation has not been prioritized since it has been thought that they would support the same political parties and ideologies as their husbands and dads.

Keywords: Women empowerment, Sex-stereotyping, Inter-parliamentary

Introduction

From the 1990s, there has been a shift in developmental thought toward an emphasis on women's empowerment, decentralization, and governance. As women are still not treated as equals in the political and economic realms, it is clear that they have a pressing need to be

empowered. Despite the fact that all social issues are tied to political choices, women's involvement in the political process, particularly decision making, is more significant. Women continue to be denied their citizenship rights and obligations because of the persistent gender imbalance in decision-making, which also serves to marginalize women and their interests. Economic progress and social improvement are more likely to occur when the majority of the population is aware of development goals and plans and considers itself to be a direct benefit of the invested resources. The benefits of expansion When a detailed plan and programs stemming from it are in place, it is crucial to establish an integrated strategy and approach that targets economic, social, and political empowerment, bearing in mind the philosophy of empowerment. As a result, women will be able to experience growth in all areas, ushering in full emancipation.

Making half of the country's people a mere plaything of the other half - a burden on others - is not sustainable for India's future. This passage from a lecture given by Jawaharlal Nehru at the Mahila Vidyapeeth in Allahabad on March 31, 1928, demonstrates his developing conviction that a more open and equal society may be achieved via democracy. The true objective was to unite all people of all races, classes, and creeds in order to create a prosperous and progressive country. 2 The idea of gender equality is incorporated in the preamble, basic rights, fundamental responsibilities, and directive principles of the Indian Constitution, which is one of the many reasons that support the glory of India's culture. Not only are women guaranteed full legal equality under the law, but the constitution also allows for positive discrimination on the part of the state in favor of female citizens. 3 Our laws, development policies, plans, and programs have all been created within the context of a democratic government with the goal of empowering women. The focus on women's issues shifted from welfare to development during the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974–1988). Women's empowerment has emerged as a key factor in recent years in evaluating the position of women in society. To protect women's rights and legal entitlements, Parliament established the National Commission for Women in 1990 by an Act of Parliament. Reservation of seats in the local bodies of Panchayats and municipalities for women was established by the 73rd and 74th Amendments (1993) to the Constitution of India, establishing a solid groundwork for women's involvement in decision making at the grassroots level. 4 Women's goals of democracy remain unfulfilled, despite gains in political participation

and equality. Women in India are continuing their battle for full political equality. The basic essence of democracy is the opportunity for all people to take part in the administration of public affairs. Yet, males continue to hold a vast majority of elected positions in India, and certain state legislatures are even entirely male bastions. That said, it ignores a key democratic value that the Inter-Parliamentary Union included in the International Declaration of Democracy.

Achieving democracy requires "a true partnership between men and women in the administration of the business of society," in which men and women contribute equally and complementarily to society and learn from one another's differences. 5 Parliament, and its governing bodies more generally, will require a more gender-balanced membership if it is to serve as a real institutional representation of society and its demands. The term "political participation" refers to the process through which individuals take part in political activities with some degree of intentionality. Some of the most telling signs of political engagement are the individual's attendance at public meetings, participation in agitation activities, attendance at study circles of political parties, voting in elections, participation in electoral campaigns, membership in a political party, and membership in representative bodies. Women's representation in government is often seen as an indicator of gender equality. If a sizable portion of the population (women) is denied the same rights as males in the political process, the democratic system will fail to achieve its goals. They need to be included at all levels of political and national development as full participants. The next paragraph opens Beijing Platform for Action's section on "Women in authority and Decision-Making" ... The empowerment of women as a whole is greatly aided by women's equal involvement in political life. The need for women's equal involvement in decision making is not simply about fairness or democracy; it's also a precondition for ensuring that women's interests are considered. Equal rights, sustainable progress, and lasting peace are impossible to attain without women's full and equal involvement in society at all decision-making levels. 6 Since India's independence, women's access to the political sphere has shrunk, and those who do participate often do so out of loyalty to family rather than any strong personal beliefs. The first woman to serve as Prime Minister of India was elected in 1966, and the first woman to serve as President of India was elected in 2007. Their performance as Prime Minister and President was on par with that of

their male counterparts, but they were unable to expand the number of women in political leadership roles since they came from patriarchal and capitalist backgrounds, respectively. Besides Indira Gandhi, India has produced many more strong female leaders, including Sushma Swaraj, Vasundhara Raje Scindia, Mayavati, Jayalalitha, Sonia Gandhi, and Mamta Banerjee. All of these women overcame formidable obstacles to get to the top of Indian politics. There are now four female Chief Ministers of States in India, in addition to the country's first female Foreign Affairs Minister (Mrs. Sushma Swaraj) and Lok Sabha Speaker (Mrs. Sumitra Mahajan) (Mrs. Anandiben Patel and Mrs. Vasundhara Raje, Mrs. Jayalalitha Jayaram, and Mrs. Mamata Banerjee). Because there was no male heir to carry on the family's unique standing, women were elevated to governmental positions as a means to perpetuate the privilege. The depressing reality in the Lok Sabha is that female representation has never been more than 15% since independence. Women's representation in national and state legislatures is, without a doubt, much too small to make a meaningful difference. Socioeconomic status, location, culture, and political structure are only few of the elements that either encourage or discourage women from taking part in politics. Even within women, there is a wide range of diversity due to factors including socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, culture, and level of education.

Review of Literature

Nie and Verba people have grasped the significance of involvement and have seen that it provides them with a sense of pleasure, both with the government and with their own position in society. They believe that it is detrimental to one's sense of self to feel powerless over one's own life and the choices that must be made.

Milbrath and Goel argued that electing public officials is a minimum need for keeping government responsive to citizens' needs and interests. They go on to say that engaging in politics and public discourse makes people better and more noble individuals, or that the world would be a better place if more people did so.

Almond and Verba They conclude that political culture is generated concurrently under the activity of forces under the political system, based on their research presented in their book *The Civic Culture*. Members of the political system, therefore, tend to adopt the norms and

customs of the system in which they operate. According to their definition, a democracy is a political system in which citizens participate in making major policy choices. The average citizen is supposed to be involved in political life, to understand the decision-making process, and to voice his opinion.

Mc Glen and O'Connor offered a significant cross-sectional analysis of women's representation in American politics. Using research mostly from the 1970s and 1980s, the writers analyze several aspects of women's attitudes. Negative cultural assumptions about women's roles in politics, a lack of preparation on the side of women for political engagement, and discrimination by male political leaders have all been cited as possible explanations for the gender gap in attitudes.

Kathleen M. Blee It out that women's political leanings might change depending on factors like marital status and career advancement. The path of political change, however, varied between mobility levels.

Woman's role in Politics in India: A historical Perspective

The early 19th century was a turning point in the liberation of women in India. Here, particularly in Bengal, the influence of British rule, the capitalist economy, and contemporary Western culture sparked a huge awakening that aimed to remove societal oppression of women. The women's liberation movement received a breath of fresh air. As the political independence movement and the social reform movement united, at about mile they became a powerful force. Despite the fact that women now have the same legal and constitutional rights as males thanks to post-independence reforms, their situation has not improved. According to one research, women were able to participate in and take on greater roles in the revolutionary politics of the nationalist movement. After independence, however, women were once again relegated to a secondary and subservient role since no national commitment to women's liberation was created or disseminated. After independence, women made up just 4-5% of the legislative body; by 2014, that figure had risen to 11.2%. This shocking lack of female participation in the Union Parliament should serve as a wake-up call and a chance to reform the country's political culture.

Obstacles in Women's Political Participation

The lack of education is a major barrier to women's equal political participation. They are unaware of their civil and political liberties due to a lack of education. The parties' bias extends beyond the allocation of seats in elections and into the ranks of the parties themselves. Women in India are underrepresented in politics because of the country's patriarchal culture. Several barriers prevent women from participating in politics. The predominant presence of men in political institutions can be traced back to a number of factors, including the norms of the time. They have been unable to cultivate their political constituents because of their small percentage in the inner political party system of India. Insufficient funding from political parties makes it difficult for women to run for office. Women face additional barriers to political engagement due to the traditional roles society has allocated them. They do not have access to adequate political training because of inequitable distribution of resources or a lack of money and a lack of knowledge. Women are discouraged from running for office because of social and cultural norms. They have no choice but to conform to society's norms and carry its weight. They internalize the society's culture of deprivation and subversion of status in their own lives. As a result of poverty and a lack of education, prejudice and ignorance run rampant in today's society. Another major barrier is that not enough women take part in community-based activities. The male counterparts control the vast majority of the available resources. Women have no control over these funds. They also do not have any control over potential sources of income. One of the biggest obstacles to women's political empowerment is economic inequality. The female offspring of low-income families bears the brunt of these difficulties. It has also been shown that women have a greater dropout rate than males. Due of long-standing cultural and societal standards, many women are socialized to believe that they belong in a lower socioeconomic level than males. One positive trend is the rising number of educated women. Yet, since they are pressured to quit school as soon as they finish elementary school, women are underrepresented in postsecondary education. The prevalent caste system or class structure is also a significant barrier. Women from lower social classes did not have the financial resources to go to school. When it came time to provide for their family, these women settled for lower wages. In India, few women hold property or land titles. Even in their parents' estate, they get very little. It's not just that women in India don't know about their constitutional

rights; there's also no political will to enforce them. Another important barrier to women's empowerment is the poor health of most women in the nation. Healthcare in this country is not equally available. Prenatal discrimination based on gender occurs in the medical field as well. Most girls don't make it to adulthood because their families would rather have boys. Daughters no longer have the same access to these services after birth as their male counterparts. Marriage obligations and dowry systems further marginalize women in society. Because more men than women are seen in hospitals, they are often accused of being sexist.

Positive social outcomes from women's leadership

Women in political leadership positions have been found to improve several aspects of society, including equality (WEF, 2017), productivity (WEF, 2017), and innovation (WEF, 2017) collaboration across political and ethnic divides (Markham, 2013) and a heightened focus on social problems including healthcare, education, maternity leave, and retirement benefits (Markham, 2013).

The needs of both men and women must be taken into account at all times. At the heart of gender equality and women's empowerment is women's equal involvement with men in authority and decision making, as emphasized in the Millennium Development Goals.

Women's potential as a "vote bank" was finally acknowledged by political parties in India. Campaigning and voter turnout are two areas where women play crucial roles for their parties, although they are underrepresented in positions of power. Women are heavily represented in the political process, both as voters and as active participants in election campaigns.

Women's representation in parliament's ruling bodies is, without a doubt, too small to make a significant difference. Hardly no political party is willing to put forth a female candidate. "It is really difficult for a woman to make up her mind to pursue politics," Sushma Swaraj said. After she has made her decision, she must inform her husband and children. The male applicants she is competing with make up all kinds of tales about her after she has surmounted these difficulties and applies for the ticket. Even yet, when her name is presented to party leaders, they reject it out of fear of losing their position. The Women's Reservation Bill, which would guarantee a 33 percent quota for women in Parliament and State Legislatures, is still in the

works in the House of Representatives. Because 'reservation' of seats for women would provide a feasible entrance point for them in politics, and since it is undeniable that a small number of women in legislative bodies cannot make a loud enough noise on their own, quotas for women in national and state legislatures are important. It was acknowledged that women's numbers in leadership roles are low, their opinions are often ignored, and they are frequently pressured to make concessions. When political policies and national legislation are made the decision upon jointly by men and women with equal and fair regard for the interests and aptitudes of both halves of the population, then and only then does the concept of democracy assume true and dynamic significance. This is why seat reservations in legislature are so important. Women's empowerment depends on their being given a place in today's society. It frees women from social constraints and narrow opportunities. Also, it raises females' general political and social consciousness.

Conclusion

Since its independence, India has kept detailed records on women's political engagement. The relevance of tracking women's input on policymaking has grown over the last two decades as government has become more decentralized. Appropriate gender-based budgeting has planned to promote gender equality and women's empowerment by allocating at least 33% of program funds to female beneficiaries.

The Indian government places a premium on monitoring social indicators in real time and acting on that information via policymaking. Improved gender budget efforts need more accurate data on women's engagement in order to advance the nation toward gender parity.

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