

Empowerment of Women : Political Participation and Representation of Women in Indian Politics



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Introduction

Women are treated with great dignity and respect in global as well as Indian context as she has the capacity to manage her multifold responsibilities with ease and perfection. Women empowerment becomes a developing concept, which leads to bring a better society in the world. Where women constitute half the population in political system which supports equality and where both women constitute half the population in political system which supports equality and where both women and men legally eligible for political office, women's participation should be equal to that of men. Representation is not only a means of ensuring individual participation. It is also the responsibility of the representatives to act on behalf of the constituents, including women, who elected them and reflect their ideas and aspiration

Participation of Indian women in political movement Independence Movement

Social reforms like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Swami Dayananda Saraswathi rose to the occasion and fought for the Liberation of oppressed and suppressed women in India. The Brahma Samaj in Punjab by Swami Dayananda Saraswathi in 1873. Through the Arya Samaj was very active in the promotion of women's Education. Swami Dayananda Saraswathi was very clear about women's role, "The women should do the 'domestic duties in obedience to her husband. The work outside should be the province of the man's duties." ¹

In the beginning of the 20th century, the saradha act gave impetus to women's movements fighting for their rights. Gopala Krishna Gokalae had to impress on the Indian women that only education could get rid of their social and political deprivations. In 1925, Mahathma Gandhi stated "As long as women of India do not take part in the public life there can be no salvation for the country." ² After the first

world war, a large number of women played an integral part of all struggles which were launched during the freedom movement against British Colonialism ³

Status of Women in the Post Independence

The constitution of India promises equal rights to women. There would not be any discrimination on the basis of sex for political positions, However, it is found that the constitutional rights, have not been availed adequately by Indian women to participate in the political process of the country. The Patriarchal culture has the effect of diluting freedom equality in the political sphere. Indeed, the existing social and economic pal turn of society has marginalized women with the result that there are only a peace women in public life.

The Constitution of India has granted women equal rights but in practice or reality these rights are not sufficient because their voice is hardly given any weight age. This is possibly due to their poor representation in the offices of parliament and state literature.

The following given in the table show the low representation of women in India and in various countries.

Table-1
Women's Representation in Loke Sabha in India

S.No	Term of Lok Sabha	Total Seats	No.of Women	%
1	1952-1957	489	14	2.8
2	1957-1962	494	18	3.6
3	1962-1967	494	30	3.6
4.	1967-1971	520	31	6.0
5.	1971-1977	520	20	3.8
6.	1977-1980	542	19	3.3
7.	1980-1984	529	28	5.3
8.	1984-1989	542	42	7.7
9.	1989-1991	523	23	4.4
10.	1991-1996	536	39	7.2
11.	1996-1998	543	35	6.4
12.	1998-1999	543	43	7.9
13.	1999-2004	543	48	8.33
14.	2004-2009	543	44	8.8
15.	2009-2014	543	59	10.7

Source : PIB, Ministry of information and broad casting, New Delhi.

The table 1 reveal that the highest and the lowest representation of women among the 14th Lok Sabha 8.4 Percent in 1999-2004 and 2.8 percent in 1952-57 respectively. While women got selected to the first Lok Sabha, their strength plummeted to 19 in the sixth Loke sabha, their strength plummeted to 19 in the sixth Lok Sabha from 42 in the eighth Lok Sabha,

Most women in India have very little say in decisions affecting their own lives. The cumulative effect of all this is that women tend to lack the self-confidence and skills needed to function effectively in the public sphere. The under representation of women and absence of women from positions of power and decision making reinforces their exploitation and deprivation. It is in this context that women's greater political representation becomes all the more necessary.

Table – 2
Women's Representation in Rajya Sabha

S.No	Terms of Loke Sabha	Total seats	No. of women	%
1	1952	219	16	7.3
2	1957	237	18	7.5
3	1962	238	18	7.6
4.	1967	240	20	8.3
5.	1971	243	17	7.0
6.	1977	244	25	10.2
7.	1980	245	24	9.8
8.	1984	245	28	11.4
9.	1989	223	24	9.7
10.	1991-1992	223	38	15.51
11.	1996	223	19	8.52
12.	1998	245	15	6.12
13.	1999	245	19	7.76
14.	2004	238	22	9.2
15.	2009	228	18	7.89

Note : The composition of Rajya Sabha changes every two years.

Source : Chandrika Parmar with CSDS data units NDLS. Election commission of India.

The table 2 (women in Rajya Sabha reveals that the presents of women in the Rajya Sabha is much better. Till 1996, while women was only 6 percent is Loke Sabha, on an average the percentage of women, MPS in the Rajya Sabha has been 10.3 percent. However, it has to be noted that women also of through nominations to the Rajya Sabha. Many of them have not fought electoral battles.

Table 3
Women's Representation in Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Year		No. of Women Contested	No. of Women Elected	Total Seats	% of Women
1952	I st generated Elections	11	7	238	2.94
1955	2 nd	23	12	301	3.98
1962	3 rd	24	9	300	3.00
1967	4 th	34	12	287	4.52
1972	5 th	48	23	287	8.01
1978	6 th	53	9	294	3.06
1983	7 th	76	11	294	3.74
1985	8 th	76	12	294	4.08
1989	9 th	67	18	294	6.12
1994	10 th	125	8	294	2.72
1999	11 th	150	28	294	9.52
2004	12 th	80	25	294	8.08
2009	13 th	53	27	294	11.06

Source : PIB, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting the figures correspond to the present area of A.P. Which were formerly parts of madras presidency and Hyderabad state. Kill seats for Andhra Pradesh region in the madras presidency.

The table 3 reveals the number of women elected to the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly since 1952 and it indicates that except 1972 and 1999 election only a few women have been able to get elected. The women representation rose to 28 in 1999 election only a few women have been able to get elected. The women representation rose to 28 in 1999 election. The highest ever in the Andhra Pradesh

Legislature. The despite the fact that all parties intended to implement 33% women reservation in distribution of party tickets.

Women participation in mains stream of political activity has important implications for the broader arena of governance in any country. Governance relates to a set of rules, institutions, and values that are involved in the management of state and society. Governance institutions and processes include political parties. Parliaments governments and their interactions with society. Where women constitute half the population in a political system which supports equality and where both women and men are legally eligible for political office, womens participation should be equal to that of men. It this is not the case, if signifies deep flaws within the political system. Representation is not only a means of ensuring individual participation. It is also the responsibility of the representatives to act on behalf of the constuents, including women who elected them and reflect their ideas and aspirations.

Women of power and women in power in Indian Politics

Inspite of the low political representation of women in Indian Politics, it must be noted that some women leaders have an important place in Indian Politics today. Jayalalitha as a leader of AIADMK, Mamatha Benerji as a leader of Trinamui Congress and Mayawati as leader of Bahujan Samaj Party are some instances in this point.

Some of them head important and strong regional political parties which have been in alliance with major national political parties both outside and in national government. Even through the rise of some of these women leaders might be linked to their proximity to make leaders, they now hold a position of leadeship within the party in their own right who can influence the decisions of their own party as well as course of national politics.

In addition, the example of Indira Gandhi who rose to be Prime Minister of India, and dater of Sonia Gandhi, leader of the Congress Party, both of whom had the dynastic advantage underpinning their leadership and position of power and decision making in the Congress Party and the government can hardly be ignored. Indira Gandhi, as P.M. of India, could leave her traces in Indian Politics.

In this sense as leaders of Political Parties, they were as power driven as their male peers. Political leadership by women is not dramatically different from that of men women leaders are no better or worse than men. Nor have women leaders been topically anxious to give greater representation to other women within their own organization or in the political process generally. Representation of women has not

necessarily increased greatly under the leadership of women. In fact interestingly the 73rd constitutional amendment and the policy and implementation of 33 percent reservation for women in Panchayat's received strong support and impetus due to Rajiv Gandhi's interest and advocacy in the matter.

Thus the Indian Political system cannot be said to be non - receptive to the emergence and dominance of women leaders even through the political representation of women has not particularly registered a significant increase over the last 14 general elections. While on the one hand most women politicians have found it difficult to rise within male dominated party hierarchies, on the other hand some women have managed to become leaders when they have set up parties of their own.

A good number of observation on women empowerment have been made in journals like Kurukshetra, Social Welfare and Yojana. Although these articles are not based on empirical research but they do throw light on the emerging trends of rural leadership in India as the basis of personal observations. Representation of women in political parties at the grass root level changes their social chances and it helps to solve the local problems, particularly drinking water, health, education, child development, social security for aged, disabled.

Conclusion :

Women occupied a prominent role in all areas of present society. But they have to come out to enter political stream, with full determination including family support. Political stream differs from other streams 33% of women reservation can be fulfilled only when women can leave their traces not only in other areas but also in Politics. Women can prove that they are not only their families effectively but also can sure and go forward with their dedication and decision making. They can lead the country successfully.

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