

SIGNIFICANCE OF WOMEN ENGAGEMENT IN POLITICS

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ABSTRACT

In India, with advancements taking place and with the advent of globalization, there has been an increase in the participation of women within the political sphere. The participation of women within the political sphere enables them to acquire an efficient understanding of the problems and challenges, which need to be overcome for leading to progression of the country. When women render a significant contribution in political participation, then it is vital for them to possess the essential skills and abilities. The most important aspect is, they need to be aware of the strategies and approaches to promote well-being of the community and nation as a whole. The main areas that have been taken into account in this research paper include meaning and significance of political participation, the participation of women in politics: historical framework, modes of political participation, variables of political participation, measurement framework, empowerment of women through political participation and recommendations. After independence, the Condition of women in India has developed. Almost half of India's population is female. A civilization or culture that does not respect and esteem women cannot be deemed civilized. New legislation and regulations in India have increased the number of opportunities for women's empowerment. Once the country won its independence, women were also granted the universal suffrage. Nevertheless, the proportion of women serving in the Lok Sabha and the Parliament is progressively growing. This has led to an increase in the participation of women in politics, and this article examines this tendency. It examines the evolution of women's political power and the history of the feminist movement. It also investigates probable factors for women's underrepresentation in politics. The essay also discusses Indian women's political advancement and future potential.

Keywords: Discrimination, Empowerment, Political Participation society, Politics, Voting rights, Public office, Parliament.

1. INTRODUCTION

India, an ancient culture but a young country, is a shining example among the democratic nations of the globe. Its constitution is a hybrid that combines the best aspects of several international constitutions. The Indian Republic's foundational values of liberty, equality, and justice offered Indian women a sense of optimism and security for the future. However, their ambition of full citizenship has yet to be realized. Notwithstanding the progressive goals of the constitution, it has failed to address the complexity of gender discrimination fully. Without women, a culture cannot operate correctly. They are vital characters when it comes to a nation's destiny. It is impossible to overestimate the significance of their engagement in society's economic and political concerns. However, the history of society demonstrates that women have not received the respect they deserve. There is high sexual harassment and social exclusion against women in India. Persistent social stigmas continue against them, particularly in less developed countries such as India. Their equality exists mostly on paper and not in reality. In a country such as India, when the feminine form is the ultimate object of adoration, the alarming increase in crimes against women is perplexing. The position of women in society as a whole must be addressed while analyzing issues relevant to women in politics. In many respects, the rules and conventions of the society in which women are entrenched influence entirely their life. Women have long been entrusted with transmitting their societies' beliefs, traditions, and customs. Nevertheless, the socialization children get at home does not prepare them to handle standards that depart from the norm.

Politically involvement of Women:

The political participation of women can be taken into consideration in terms of three aspects. These are, their participation as a voter, their participation as an elected representative, and their participation in the decision making process. When these aspects need to be put into practice in an appropriate manner, then the women are required to possess certain skills and abilities. In some cases, the women, who are involved in politics, may not be highly educated, but it is vital for them to remain updated in terms of important factors. In this case, the important factors are, alleviating the societal problems of poverty, illiteracy and unemployment. The individuals, primarily belonging to poverty stricken and socio-economically backward sections of the society, need to be empowered to earn better livelihoods opportunities. In India, throughout the country, women are not given equal treatment as males. They are considered inferior in status as compared to males, within the household, as well as in public places. This inequality is more clearly depicted among the deprived, marginalized and socio-economically backward sections of the society. Hence, one of the important objectives of political participation of women is to give equal treatment to women and girls, and not discriminate against them. Another aspect that has led to their political participation is to curb the occurrence of criminal and violent acts

against women. Throughout the country, they have been subjected to various forms of criminal and violent acts, such as, verbal abuse, physical abuse, sexual harassment, rape, acid attacks and so forth, which have degraded their position within the society.

Accreditation Women Principal:

Reservations and quotas at the constitutional or political party level are a key step in addressing the gender imbalance in India's governance system. The reservation of seats for women at the Panchayati Raj level demonstrates the capacity of political reservations to successfully elevate their role in governance. However, additional efforts are required to empower women to take on leadership roles, to overcome the many challenges they face when they choose to be active in politics, and to facilitate their full participation in the political process. The passage of the Women's Reservation Bill is an essential first step in spurring women's participation in state and national level governance. The Bill must be prioritized in the upcoming session of parliament, to be held in late November 2013. Another step towards empowering women would be to train them in carrying out their responsibilities effectively and successfully. Leadership training programme must target and mobilize women from all levels of society who hold or have a strong desire to take on leadership roles. These training programmes should build their capacity to participate in governance structures and teach them how to be effective leaders and agents of change within their communities. Furthermore, training modules must include the process of filing for candidature and campaigning as well as providing information on electioneering machinery. In addition to this, initiatives must be developed either at the government or political party level to ensure that all political parties provide 33 % of winnable tickets to women candidates. Central and state level institutional support must also be provided to women's organizations that work for the political empowerment of women. Finally, efforts should be made to develop an enabling environment that promotes and facilitates the full and active participation of women in politics.

The Participation of Women in Politics: Historical Framework:

Women participated in the freedom movement with true spirit and undeterred audacity and courage. To achieve independence, they were required to face exploitations, adversities and distress. In other words, the struggle for independence from the British rule involved the participation of women and they developed the aptitudes among themselves to deal with challenges and problems. Indian women, who participated in the national movement, initially belonged to educated and liberal families. Transformation was brought about in this perspective with the advent of the movement, initiated by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. The freedom struggle was converted into a mass movement, which involved all sections of the society. Furthermore, there was prevalence of the viewpoint that the country would not be able to achieve true freedom, if all the sections would not participate effectively. His most successful campaign against the imperial rule was fought on the issue of salt tax, which contributed in bringing women to the forefront. Local issues began to get debated and women took the center stage with respect to these.

The lives of women in India are primarily centered upon the factors, which are regarded as five Ps, patriarchy, productive resources, poverty, promotion and powerlessness. It has been estimated that women are employed in two-thirds of the work. Whereas, in return of their work, they receive only 10 percent of all the income and own a mere one percent of the means of production on a global scale. The women work diligently in the implementation of various tasks and activities. Their work is unpaid at home, whereas, it is lesser paid outside the home, especially in minority jobs. In minority jobs, women are required to mostly carry out manual tasks. But even when they are employed in manual jobs, on a full-time basis, their pay is less. But one important point that needs to be noted is, they participate wholeheartedly in the implementation of job duties. It is a fact that the real social status and the real level of political participation of women cannot be investigated in isolation. The number of factors is interconnected to each other. These are the socio-economic conditions, political climate and inequalities, inherent in the traditional social structure, norms, values, standards, principles, cultures, customs and rituals. All these factors together determine the social status of women. On the other hand, there are differences in the status of women, on the basis of factors, such as, region, caste, class, race, ethnicity, religion and socio-economic background. In the present existence, too, women, who belong to wealthy families and are residing in urban communities are educated and are living enhanced lives. Whereas, women, belonging to rural communities, who do not possess the literacy skills and are not engaged in employment opportunities, need assistance and support to bring about improvements within their overall quality of lives.

2. REASONS BEHIND THE ABSENCE OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS

Patriarchal cultures:

The reality that "strong female leaders" are not respected in our male-dominated culture cannot be denied. Fear of public opinion is another issue stopping women from standing for political office. When men govern political parties, they are less likely to promote women to positions of authority, which may have a detrimental effect on their self-esteem and

discourage other women from joining politics. Unless a woman founds one, every political party is essentially male-dominated.

Violence against female politicians:

Female politicians have been the focus of antagonism, discrimination, and even torture throughout India's turbulent history. To frighten and humiliate these women politicians only for being women and speaking up in politics, they were assaulted, mostly by male chauvinists, to intimidate and degrade them. This violence deters women in India from participating in politics.

There is pervasive sexism in the political realm:

When women join politics, they are often restricted to positions that are consistent with conventional ideas of femininity—the frequent sexual harassment of women holding powerful positions by male politicians. As a consequence, women who want leadership roles often feel discouraged. In recent years, substantial progress has been achieved in this area, such as appointing women to high-ranking positions in the Ministries of Defense and Finance. However, there is still more work to be done.

Psychological factor:

Over the board, Indian women are indifferent towards political engagement. They are considerably less inclined to have an interest in politics, discuss politics, attend political gatherings, and control political outcomes. Politics has long been associated with a desire for power and a readiness to use force to accomplish one's objectives. Politics is a "dirty game" consisting of cynical and dishonest individuals, as she has been conditioned to think over the course of her whole life. Due to societal pressures to adhere to stereotyped gender norms, many women prefer not to join political parties. Many people anticipate males because they are thought to possess significant characteristics such as objectivity, self-control, ambition, and openness.

Achievement of women in politics:

- 1) Voting Rights
- 2) Women in Public Offices
- 3) Panchayati Raj Reforms
- 4) Reservation of women in local bodies
- 5) Women's Reservation Bill

3. CONCLUSION

Women's political engagement in India has been researched since the nation's independence. In light of the decentralization of government that has occurred over the last two decades, assessing women's participation in decision-making has become more significant. The Indian government prioritizes the gathering and analysis of real time datasets to better analyze a react to social indicators more effectively. Efforts to improve gender budgeting aim to increase women's equality by collecting and evaluating more precise data on female's participation. At each and every stage of society and government, one-third of all program financing is already devoted to women. Despite the fact that each country's political system has its unique peculiarities, it is always unjust and unwelcoming to female participation. Women confront challenges worldwide while attempting to join politics. These difficulties are ingrained in our current political systems and social and economic structures. In the setting of India, a woman's familial history is crucial to her public career. Most women are hesitant to exert the effort required to attain public office. Few of them hold key government jobs. Women and men have equal possibilities to engage in political sphere as a unit of an electorate, campaigners, candidates, and party officeholders.

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