

**“Women Leadership in Politics”**

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**ABSTRACT**

Gender plays no role when it comes to leadership. Natural or fostered attributes of leadership makes a person leader. Gender of any type can be a successful leader. Business, governance, teaching, technology, medical and banking are some fields where women are progressively asserting themselves as leaders. In every field women are breaking the glass ceiling and proving wrong those people who act as a barrier in advocating their rights. Women don't have sufficient opportunities to showcase their talent in any occupation and thus, standing contrary to Article 14, which talks about right to equality. This is the high time that voices of women get heard and they get equal participation in politics. Many movements at a global level were led by women in the past, by the way of which they protected their rights and fought against the injustice. This paper will focus on the need of women population in politics and discuss the reasons behind their less and active participation in the same. The paper will also throw light on current women leadership status among different countries and the measures they have adopted to promote empowerment of women in politics. Laws which deal with women reservation and promote leadership in politics will be discussed in an edifying manner in this paper.

Indian politics has already involved renowned female political leaders, but still Indian politics is experiencing dearth of female leaders in today's time. Women related offences are gaining pace day by day, and enactments and their enforcement are not satisfactory in nature. The current polity needs to be strengthened by including women lawmakers. So, this paper will also deal with the recommendations by which women leadership gets promoted in this country.

*“As we cannot ignore the inevitable reality that even to this day an equitable climate for women leadership in society continues to be a distant reality.”*

**Keywords:** *Governance, empowerment, reservation, enactments, enforcements etc.*

**RESEARCH PROBLEM**

In recent days, the world's biggest democratic country staged rolling elections in four state legislatures and one union territory. Despite the fact that women make up over half of the electorate, just roughly one in ten candidates were female: 9percent in Kerala, 7.8percent in Assam, and 11percent in Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, and West Bengal. Gender equality is still a way too far dream.

Female workers abound in India's leading parties, and they're often marginalised and refused a party nomination to run in elections. Internationally, India's failure in terms of women's

participation in politics isn't usually acknowledged, partly because of a few high-profile female leaders who dominate the news.

### **RESEARCH OBJECTIVE**

Women leaders are unable to concentrate on building their place in politics due to a lack of adequate financial security in their lives. Patriarchal society & gendered discrimination in positions of greater political authority, even after years of participation in party activities, are critical factors in preventing women from keeping their participation in politics.

Research objective of this paper is-

- (a) To study existing legal provisions dealing with participation in politics and find whether the same is favorable to both men and women.
- (b) To analyze the factors responsible for detaching women from leadership in politics.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Research Methodology preferred in this paper is Doctrinal Method of Research Methodology. Doctrines, legislations, precedents and books are taken into consideration while conducting research on the above mentioned topic.

### **INTRODUCTION**

According to research, having more women in legislature contributes to a greater focus on feminist concerns. Public engagement by females is a vital requirement for gender parity and authentic governance. It promotes female's active participation in municipal outcomes and ensures more responsibility to females. Civic obligation to women starts by expanding the amount of females in roles of power, but it does not end alone. Sexual identity management changes are needed to enable all political representatives more adept in establishing and enforcing female balance in state opinion.

The advancement of feminist's engagement in politics and democratic reform is among the cornerstones of United Nations Women's mission, since it ensures that judgment mechanisms are accessible, adaptive, egalitarian, and accessible. Initiatives are centred on key entrance areas which really may promote women's rights by triggering broad-reaching, protracted effects. Ladies are given assistance in converting the Agreement mostly upon eradication of every kind of inequality towards people, that has already been adopted either through most of the countries, in legislative assurances of female's rights. A further tactic would be to collaborate with variety of members, including feminist groups, authorities, the United Nations system, as well as the corporate industry, to increase the number of females in administration, railway female politicians, and improve women's abilities to partake in polls as politicians and the public<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>Gary N. McLean, Rajashi Ghosh, Indian Women in Leadership 10-25(Springer International Publishing, 2018)

**HISTORY OF WOMEN LEADERSHIP IN POLITICS:**

Currently were 26 females acting as National leaders or group of ministers in 24 nations since about 01/09/2021. Sexual parity as among top powerful levels may never achieved until next one thirteen decades if present trends continue. Only ten nations had female heads of government, while only thirteen nations include female heads of the country. Just 21% of senior politicians are female, and just fourteen nations had 50% or higher females in their council. Feminist equality in government seats may never become realised until 2077, to a yearly growth at only 0.52 %.

Females played a very important role inside this anti-extreme movement in India. When they had to recollect all identities of female pioneers in their patriotic struggle, the record would be rather large. Commencing of heads of government such as Sarojini Naidu, Vijayalakshmi Pandit, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, and Mridula Sarabhai, humans could move forward with regional figureheads like Annie Mascarene and A.V. Kuttimalamma in Kerala, Durgabai Deshmukh in Madras Presidency, Rameshwari Nehru and Bi Amman in Uttar Pradesh, Satyawati Devi , the character of the independence struggle makes distinguishing among local and things individuals extremely challenging. Several people started just at community scale then rose through Croatian ranks of the independence struggle.

**CURRENT WOMEN LEADERSHIP STATUS IN THE INDIAN POLITICAL SYSTEM:**

Women are inadequately inside the legislature as well as far distant from stance positions across the globe in any social economic sectors. Although each nation's governmental landscape is unique, another aspect stays consistent across the board: it is unequal and unwelcoming to female's involvement. Females confront barriers to involvement in government all across the globe. Current cultural and financial frameworks, and also entrenched power institutions, contain such impediments. In India, especially notably among females, a people's official profession is largely inspired by her familial status.

Several women were likewise hesitant to participate mostly in kinds of behaviors which appear as be required for nomination to government officials. Their representation in Parliament, Legislative Bodies, as well as other upper legislative echelons is small. Having fair engagement in society as electors, politicians, activists, and governing party receptionists continues to be a pipe vision. They have yet to recognise the significance of their political position. This research attempts to investigate the situation of females in government in the global, provincial, and county stage within that environment<sup>2</sup>.

The Indian Constitution provides equal opportunity, yet women's representation in legislative bodies and political inclusion at all levels remains minimal. The global average for women in Parliament is 23.1 percent while India has only 12 percent representation. India ranked 145th

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<sup>2</sup>Payal Kumar, Unveiling Women's Leadership: Identity and Meaning of Leadership in India 85(Palgrave Macmillan, 2015)

out of 193 nations globally and stands at the 5th position within SAARC member countries. Women's representation in State Legislative Assemblies i.e 9% in India is considerably poorer than in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha 12.15%. The average number of female participants is just 6.7 percent, whereas women account for over half of India's population (7.51 percent). This paper provides an analysis of the facts about women representation in legislature both at the state and national levels.

The author highlights key issues and challenges based on available data and also suggests possible solutions to increase women's participation in Indian politics. During the first three decades after independence (from 1951 to 1977), the average number of women contestants was 62 and the average elected women were around 5 only. The proportion of female MPs rose from 5% in 1956 to 12.02 % in 2014. The numbers in the Rajya Sabha are similarly bleak. Women's representation in the Rajya Sabha has never surpassed 12.8 percent since Independence. Over the last seven decades, the percentage of women Members of Parliament (MPs) in the Rajya Sabha has climbed from 6.9 percent in 1951 to 12.8 percent in 2014. The Rajya Sabha had 31 women in 2014, the most since independence. To begin with, the author gives a comparative assessment on representation of women legislators at both the national and global levels.

### **WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL:**

Women make up just 25% of all national legislators worldwide, a significant increase over the previous year's figure of 11 percent. In addition, only four nations in the world have a majority of women in single or lower houses of parliament (50 percent or more). A total of 61 percent belongs to Rwanda, 53 percent to Cuba, 53 percent to Bolivia, and 50 percent to the United Arab Emirates. While 19 nations have 40 percent or more female MPs, nine countries in Europe, five countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, four countries in Africa, and one country in the Pacific have reached or exceeded the 40 percent mark. More than two-thirds of these nations have implemented gender-based quotas (either in the form of legislated candidate quotas or reserved seats), enabling women to participate in their national legislatures for the first time. In all, women make up less than 10% of members of parliament in single or lower houses in 27 nations, with four single or lower chambers having no women at all<sup>3</sup>.

Gender parity in national legislative bodies seems to be difficult to attain before the year 2063 at the present pace of advancement. Women control more than 30% of legislative seats in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as in Europe and Northern America, according to the World Population Prospects. Women make up less than 17 percent of national parliaments in Northern Africa, Western Asia, and Oceania, according to the United Nations Development Programme. Female representation in the Pacific Island States is at an all-time

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<sup>3</sup>Increasing Women's Political Participation, Available at: [https://wfuna.org/files/inline-files/wfuna\\_-\\_best\\_practices\\_for\\_increasing\\_women\\_s\\_political\\_participation\\_d....pdf](https://wfuna.org/files/inline-files/wfuna_-_best_practices_for_increasing_women_s_political_participation_d....pdf) (last visited 02Dec, 2021)

low, accounting for just 6 percent of total seats, and women are completely absent from three countries' parliaments.

### **WOMEN IN MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT:**

Data from 133 countries show that women make up 2.18 million (36 percent) of elected members of local deliberative bodies as of January 2020, based on data from 133 countries. While just two countries have female representation in local administration that exceeds 50%, another 18 countries have female representation in local government that exceeds 40%. Throughout the globe, the involvement of women in local deliberative bodies varies depending on the location. Central and Southern Asia accounts for 41% of the world's population, Europe and Northern America accounts for 35%, Oceania accounts for 32%, Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for 29%, Eastern and South-Eastern Asia accounts for 25%, Latin America and the Caribbean accounts for 25%, and Western Asia and Northern Africa accounts for 18%.

### **EXPANDING PARTICIPATION:**

A goal of equal political involvement and power sharing between men and women in decision-making was established by the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which was adopted by governments throughout the world. However, the majority of countries have not attained this aim, and just a handful have set or accomplished aggressive goals in terms of gender parity in politics. Women's leadership in political decision-making institutions has long been established, and there is increasing evidence that it enhances such institutions. An Indian survey of panchayats found that the number of drinking water projects was 62 percent higher in areas with women-led councils than in regions with men-led councils, according to the findings of the research. In Norway, researchers established a clear causal relationship between the presence of women on municipal councils and the availability of childcare<sup>4</sup>.

Politics is exemplified by women working across party lines in parliamentary women's caucuses, even in the most politically combative environments, and by championing gender equality issues such as the abolition of gender-based violence, parental leave and child care policies, pension's policies, and gender-equality legislation, among other things<sup>5</sup>.

### **DEVELOPMENT OF PROFICIENCY AMONG WOMEN CANDIDATES:**

Women's positions at the domestic level train them for greater management levels, also for opportunities in regional or national politics later on. Initiatives aimed at encouraging women to join provincial politics, for example, may have a significant impact on expanding women's participation in political decision-making operations. An important component of several expertise projects is the establishment of women's forums, connections, including pools of prospective candidates. Mentoring women candidates in a coherent and logical manner

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<sup>4</sup>Bhalotra, Sonia, Irma Clots-Figueras and Lakshmi Iyer (2018), "*Pathbreakers? Women's electoral success and future political participation*", THE ECONOMIC JOURNAL, 128(613)

<sup>5</sup>Sampa Guha, *Political Participation of Women in a Changing Society* 154 (Inter-India Publications, 2007)

enhances results when compared to offering stand-alone learning just during one section of the election season. Participating in teaching and also including regional women in leadership roles or volunteers to share their knowledge increases the credibility and efficacy of the programme. Women must be educated how to campaign as well as to participate in fundraiser structures in order to lower the barriers of economic hardship. In order to increase the effect & leadership of female members elected, more possibilities should indeed be made accessible, including orientations for recently appointed women and training in governance expertise<sup>6</sup>.

### **ELECTORAL SYSTEMS WITH PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED:**

Women are more likely to vote in proportional voting electoral systems than they are in majority representation election systems. Not only do proportional representation systems encourage higher engagement by females, but it is far more probable to appear in proportional representation systems than in majority representation systems, according to research. When it comes to women's political engagement, if one party chooses women for crucial posts, other parties under proportional representation systems will follow suit far more quickly, according to the research. According to the International Institute for Democracy and Election Assistance, reforming a country's election system is generally a much more feasible goal to aim for than significantly altering a society's attitude of women and girls.

### **ESTABLISH QUOTA SYSTEMS:**

Quota systems are a proven means of increasing the involvement of women in election systems. Quotas, but at the other hand, should be evaluated in combination with some other approaches. A "critical mass" of female politicians can only be achieved via quotas. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) emphasizes that involvement entails more than just showing up at decision-making meetings. It is also about being able to articulate topics that are significant towards both males and females, and the capacity to shape and assess policy decisions and initiatives. Female participation in the political system, as well as participation in vital decision-making activities, is very essential.

The use of candidate quotas may be used at either the nomination or the election phases of the electoral process. Female representation in the candidate pool eligible for discussion during the stage of the selection process is mandated by candidate quotas, which ensure that a certain number of female candidates be represented. The election stage is characterised by the presence of female candidates who meet a certain proportion of all nominated contestants. Election law, and also the constitution, may enforce candidate quotas on candidates running for office. Those voted under seat reservation quotas must represent a certain percentage or number of women voters. Seat reservation quotas, similar to candidate quotas, may be

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<sup>6</sup>Chattopadhyay, Raghavendra and Esther Duflo (2004), "Women as policy makers: Evidence from a randomized policy experiment in India", *Econometrica*



enforced by the constitution or by electoral law under certain circumstances. One further example is the use of discretionary party quotas, which are policies adopted by political groups to ensure that at least a certain quantity or proportion of women be represented among its candidate pools when elections are held. New options include "soft quotas," which are more flexible. Also possible are "soft quotas." Inter-party quotas, informal goals, and suggestions are all examples of soft quotas. Although optional, internal party quotas have shown to be more successful in increasing the participation of women in politics in various nations<sup>7</sup>.

### **MINDSET MUST BE CHANGED**

In order for the initiative to be visible and popular, innovative methods of making people aware must be used. To raise awareness of political parties that did not comply to women equality rules, outdoor performance and a "pillar of shame" were employed in Croatia, among other places.

**Promotion Sources** - Developing promotion materials like guides, development tools, guidebooks, or other similar items may assist to increase the effectiveness of an awareness campaign by giving helpful information and rationale for the effort<sup>8</sup>.

**Media Collaborative effort** - Providing appropriate coverage of information in the journalism, whether it's on tv, radio, social media, the internet, or print media, helps to increase the impact of an awareness campaign's reach and impact. In order to encourage public discourse on issues like as women's empowerment, training, and creating favourable images of female leaders, awareness campaigns, television programmes, & radio shows should be used.

**Education** - Create & implement gender-sensitive civic and voter education programmes for both male and females citizens, including why women should vote and how family help for household and child care responsibilities may aid women in becoming politically involved in their communities.

### **EXISTING LAWS IN INDIA THAT DEAL WITH WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS**

Women's inclusion in politics and other areas of social life can only be secured with a comprehensive strategy to assuring women's safety while also permitting reservation provisions aimed at their advancement. In such a case, the following legal provisions should be noted:

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<sup>7</sup>Baskaran, T, S Bhalotra, B Min and Y Uppal (2018), '*Women legislators and economic performance*', IGC Working Paper.

<sup>8</sup>Gangadharan, L, T Jain, P Maitra and J Vecchi (2015), 'Women leaders and deceptive behaviour', Ideas for India

**Constitutional Provisions:**

The Constitution Of india not only ensures that all people are equal, but it also empowers the Indian government to take steps to alleviate the cumulative social, educational, & electoral obstacles that women are facing. These fundamental rights include, among other things, the establishment of equality before the law & equal treatment under the law; the prohibition of discriminatory practices against any citizen on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sexual orientation, or place of birth; and the provision of equal opportunities to all citizens in employment affairs. Aspects of the Constitution such as Articles 14, 15, 15, 3(3), 16, 38a, 38b, 39a, 39c, and 42 are especially significant in this context<sup>9</sup>.

**Provisions in the law**

For the purpose of carrying out the Constitution's mandate, the government has passed various parliamentary policies aimed at guaranteeing full equality, countering discriminatory practices as well as other violent acts and brutalities, and giving support services, especially to women in the workplace, among other things. Women, on the other hand, continue to be victims of a variety of 'Crime towards Women' crimes that are directed specifically at women, such as 'Murder,' 'Robbery,' 'cheating,' and so on.

**SPECIAL INITIATIVES FOR WOMEN**

- National Commission for Women: This statutory agency was created in January 1992 by the government to oversee all topics connected to women's constitutional and legal protections, examine current laws, and propose revisions if required, and so on.
- The Girl Child's National Plan of Action (1991-2000): With the purpose of building a better future for female children, government had devised a strategy to ensure their survival, safety, and well-being.
- National Policy for the Empowerment of Women, 2001- This was developed by the Ministry of Human Resources Development's Department of Women and Child Development in 2001. Female's progress, development, and empowerment are the goals of the strategy.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following are my recommendations:

- Steps should be done to ensure that all members of society have a voice in the political process in a nation as diverse as India.
- Political parties must unite to support the approval of the Women's Reservation Bill, which guarantees that 33 percent of seats in Parliament and all state legislative bodies would be reserved for women.

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<sup>9</sup> The Constitution of India.



- Women who served as sarpanches and members of local bodies who have more than 30 years' experience in local politics should be given the opportunity to serve in state legislatures. They expect to play a more prominent role in state legislatures and the House of Commons in the future.
- Women Quotas in Political Parties- The Gill Formula; the Election Commission of India (ECI) suggestion to make it essential for recognised political parties to guarantee the inclusion of a minimum agreed proportion of women in State Assembly and Parliamentary elections must be implemented.
- It's important to promote internal party democracy by holding elections for key positions inside the party. This ensures that all women in the party have a fair shot at leadership positions such as president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer.
- As a society, we need to challenge the idea that women are solely responsible for household duties. Women's demands must be met by all institutions, such as the state, the family, and society, through lowering educational inequities, renegotiating roles for women and men, and redefining the gendered division of labour, among other things. A person's unique qualities, opportunities, and circumstances are overlooked when a stereotype is applied to them. In order to achieve their full potential, individuals are hindered by negative preconceptions, which restrict their alternatives and opportunities. They are at the core of overt and covert, direct and indirect, and recurring gender discrimination, which undermines women's substantive equality<sup>10</sup>.

## **CONCLUSION:**

Young Indian women may represent progressive India more than any other subgroup today. If given a chance, they might infuse fresh life into our outdated politics and shift it toward the supply of fundamental needs such as health, nutrition, education, and livelihoods. Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals promotes peaceful and inclusive society. Women's active engagement in political processes is an essential component of an inclusive society. Women are estimated to make up 49.6 percent of the global population in 2016, but just 23.6 percent of parliamentary seats worldwide. Bridging this representation gap necessitates many measures and is strongly reliant on local and regional specifics. A more comprehensive strategy would focus on reducing the underlying, interwoven barriers that women experience in being nominated for elected office and running effective campaigns. Such obstacles include the election system itself; lack of access to financing; weaker professional networks; and outside responsibilities that make it harder to take on punishing and unpredictable working conditions.

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<sup>10</sup>Iyer, L and A Mani (2013), '*The power of women's political voice*', Ideas for India, 17 June.