



Political participation of women in Indian politics

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Abstract

Women of later periods spanning between the middle and modern ages have been denied their rightful place of honour and a vortex of innumerable caste and communal combinations, has paid scant regards for the education and welfare of women culminating in child marriage, sati, ban on widow marriage, and divorce, to name a few atrocities on them. The ability to challenge the subordination was seriously affected by the omission of women from positions of power in all its manifestations. The leaders of both pre and post independent India paid nothing but lip service to the upliftment of women in various walks of life including rightful representation in the legislatures, both at the centre and in the states, with the result that even now women do not enjoy place of pride in the power centres of legislation, administration and party leadership. At the international level also, on women's issues, women's political empowerment was at the center stage of all the discourses, but still, in any political system, participation of women is very low as compared to men right from the developed to developing countries. No doubt, the principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution. The Constitution of India guarantees adult franchise and provides full opportunities and framework for women to participate actively in politics. But it is pity that the decades following independence witnessed a decline in the participation of women in the politics.

Keywords: gender equality; political participation; reservation; women empowerment

Introduction

The empowerment system which is today's arising as a remarkable India reaction to the difficulties of balance, advancement what's more and harmony. Assuming women's are to be enabled, it is important to give an extending systems administration of support benefits so they are liberated from a portion of their orientation related shackles. Assuming women's are to be monetarily and politically engaged they are to be given additional channels of credit, preparation, employment, more prominent perceivability, the board skills and government-managed retirement. During the first 50 years after freedom, the subject of getting women's the front in legislative issues have been considered every once in a while. Later in profundities, investigation of different social and financial developments it was understood that women support in political direction was significant. In 1980 the idea of women's support developed amazingly. Towards the end of the hundred years, our planning methodologies began discussing women's administration and their strengthening. Since autonomy, different drives have been embraced for improving the financial circumstances and empowering women's India. In this context, the constitution ensures socio-financial matters, cultural and political correspondence and the arrangement of giving equivalent privileges to profiting various open doors to all gatherings of the populace, particularly people. Expanding accentuation has additionally been accommodated starting an assortment of improvement plans and government assistance programs with expanding the support of women's in various exercises during the past plans.

The participation of women's in PRIs is the principal component of their political support. Cooperation of women's in PRIs includes women's as 1) Electors 2) individuals from Ideological groups 3) competitors 4) Chosen individuals from the PRIs talking part in decision-making, arranging, execution and assessment: and 5) as an individuals from mahila mandals and their relationship with deliberate associations. The principal focal point of the women's' political cooperation is justified to cast a ballot. Right to cast a ballot is thought of as essential boundary for the political investment. Political support additionally shows the association of individuals in the direction cycle of the public authority.

To give another face to the PRIs it might essentially draw nearer to the average citizens, the 73rd Protected Alteration was passed. In reality this Bill was passed by the Public authority of India in Lok Sabha during 1989. It is accounted for that in Rajya Sabha the protected correction couldn't be done in that frame of mind to non collaboration of different political parties. During 1991 the bill was acquired for protected revision the Lok Sabha later the Bill was all used to the Joint Council of the Parliament and it was passed on December 22, 1992 and by the Rajya Sabha on December 23, 1992. This Constitutional Revision Bill was then to be accepted by the states. A number of states consented to it through their regulation in no less than 90 days of the required enough said. Out of 29 State lawmaking bodies, 17 passed the sacred change and subsequent to getting signature of the leader of India and doing the necessary customs it was made regulation by a warning on April 24, 1993.

Subsequent to passing this Follow up on April 14, 1993 and in this way by the vast majority of the states the demonstration changed into regulation, prevalently it is known as 73rd protected correction. Nonetheless, by righteousness of 73rd constitution correction act, 1993 the women's have been conceded 33% reservation of seats in the Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Constitutional provisions for women

The Preamble of Constitution of India guarantees –Justice, Liberty and Equality to all its citizens. Constitution provides for equality of women and called State to take measures to neutralise the socio-economic, educational and political disadvantage faced by women. Article 14 guarantees equality before law and equal protection of law within the territory of India. Article 15 prohibit discrimination on the basis of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. Article 15(3) State can make special provisions for the benefit of women and children. Article 16 guarantees Equality of opportunity in the matter of employment. No citizens can be denied employment on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, decent, place of birth, residence or any of them. Article 39 (a) provides for an adequate means of livelihood for all citizen, Article 39 (b) has provisions for equal pay for equal work for both men and women, Article 39 (c) has provisions for securing the health and strength of men and women and not to abuse the tender age of children. Article 42 guarantees just and humane condition of work and maternity relief. Article 325 and 326 guarantees political equality, equal right to participate in the political activity and right to vote, respectively. Article 243 (D) provides for the political reservation to women in every panchayat election, it has extended this reservation to elected office as well. But it is really unfortunate that what is assured in the constitution is not actually realized in the day to day affairs of our country. It is, therefore, felt necessary to make special legal provisions for women in accordance with the spirit of the provisions laid down in the clause (3) of Article 15 of the constitution. The demand for greater representation of women in political institutions in India was taken up seriously after the report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India. It suggested that female representation in political institutions especially at the grass-roots level needed to be increased through a policy of reservation of seats for women. In 1988, the National Perspective Plan for women in its first draft suggested that 30 percent reservation be provided for women from panchayat to parliament, but later in its final draft restricted the reservation to the panchayat level. The national consensus around this demand resulted in the adoption of the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendment in 1993 that provided 33 percent reservation in institutions of local governance. This has been implemented in all states of India without any opposition. Panchayath Raj Institutions have brought about significant changes in the lives of women, The Panchayath villages have become a political training ground for women, who have become self-confident and politically aware and are transforming local governance by sensitizing the state to issues of poverty, inequality and gender injustice. But the constitution (Eighty-first Amendment bill), popularly known as Women's Reservation Bill which was tabled in the Lok Sabha on 12th September, 1996, raised opposition from several political parties regarding issues of elitism and overlapping quotas for women generally and for lower caste women, and the bill introduced twenty three years ago is yet to be passed.

Though the percentage of women voters in India has increased considerably, their presence in the country's decision making bodies, in the process of vital policy making, has left much to be desired. It is said that the personality traits of women, the socio-economic and cultural environment in which they are brought up and India's political environment as such are to a great extent responsible for women's meagre participation in the field of politics. One may even cite general apathy among women towards politics as a reason for their little presence in important political post. But such apathy is the product of the social conditions in which women are brought up. Lesser exposure to education facilities, lesser economic freedom, the role the society expects a girl child to perform in future, the social taboos, the difference in attitude of the parents and other relatives towards a boy and a girl make things difficult for women in general. Women generally regard politics as a risky game. Therefore, they want to keep themselves away from politics. Violence and threat of violence affects women's ability to participate actively in politics and in decision – making positions. In a time when digital spaces play a prominent role in our daily life, digital violence or cyber bullying are aimed at silencing the voices of women who are politically active. Women in India are generally expected to manage household affairs, and to provide support and inspire a man to be successful in his life. The reign of muscle power, criminalisation and corruption in Indian politics may have a bearing on women's indifference towards politics. And the average Indian parents hardly dream of their girl child to become an administrator, a police or a military officer, not to talk of a politician or a people's representative in the legislature.

Strengthen women's political participation

Women in India have made major inroads in various male dominated professions. They have proved themselves in the fields of business, art, medicine, engineering, law and culture. But they have failed to gain grounds in politics, which indicates that representation of women in politics needs special consideration. Government need to demonstrate gender equality in their decision making bodies by not only increasing female representation in ministerial and elected position, but also by fostering gender – equitable work culture in state institutions. Government could adopt gender- responsive policies and practices in governing institutions like parental leave, child care services and fixed hours for voting debate and negotiating in decision making bodies such as national and regional parliaments, to ensure that female- leaders are able to function in an open and inclusive work environment.

Conclusion

After 66 years of democracy, India continues to face many challenges in the realization of inclusive and genuine democratic governance. The primary democratic deficit throughout the country is the under-representation of women in decision-making bodies, particularly in the state and national legislatures where there are no reservations available for women. Women's marginalisation from political life is preventing them from participating in society as complete and equal citizens. This also reduces the capacity of decision-making bodies to effectively govern or address the needs and priorities of all members of the community. In recent years there has been a marked increase in women voters turn out in election. But they continue to be under-represented in legislature. The only way to increase women participation in politics would be through active involvement of civil society organisation in educating women of their rights. Government need to demonstrate gender equality in their decision making bodies bypassing the long standing Women Reservation Bill.

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