

# Is Gender Discrimination Affected Women Status and Empowerment in India?

Meenakshi M<sup>1</sup> and Dr. Shripad Kulkarni<sup>2</sup>

Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Government First Grade College KGF, Karnataka, India<sup>1</sup>  
Assistant Professor in Political Science, University College of Arts, Tumkur University, Karnataka, India<sup>2</sup>

**Abstract:** *The development of any society depends on the status of women in the society. Fifty per cent of the World's population comprises of women, in this male dominated society, women have always suffered. We need to make the women of our country strong socially, economically, psychologically and politically we need to tell the men of our country about their wrongdoings. In India Women's political participation and representation has been affecting by the gender issues , but without active participation and well representation women will not certainly acquire higher positions.*

*This paper aims to examine the reasons for gender gap in politics, and it also attempts to explain the participation of women as leader and as citizen, here researcher has adopted the qualitative method and data is collected from the journals, articles, published books and authentic websites.*

**Keywords:** women, development, representation, participation, country

## I. INTRODUCTION

Women's political participation in India, including political representation at different Levels of India's political system, women as political leaders, and women as active Citizens, there is a gender gap it affects the representation of women and to use the political power. According to the WEF Global Gender Gap Report 2020, India ranks 18<sup>th</sup> in terms of political empowerment, far better than its rank in the other dimensions of the index: 149<sup>th</sup> in economic participation and opportunity, 112<sup>th</sup> in educational attainment, 150<sup>th</sup> in health and survival, and 108<sup>th</sup> in the overall index. The political empowerment ranking sits above the UK's ranking of 20<sup>th</sup> and significantly above the US rank of 68<sup>th</sup>. The sub-index for political empowerment measures the gap between women and men at the highest level of political decision-making through the ratio of women to men in ministerial positions, the ratio of women to men in parliamentary positions, and the ratio of female to male heads of state in the past 50 years. India's positioning is strongly driven by the tenure of Indira Gandhi as Prime Minister from 1966 to 1977 and then again from 1980 until her assassination in 1984.

While Gandhi's role as a prominent female leader should not be overlooked, it does somewhat skew our interpretation of India's positioning in the index. The other two measures that constitute the index see India ranked 69<sup>th</sup> with 30% of women in ministerial positions and 122<sup>nd</sup> with 17% of women in parliament. The sub-index also fails to factor in state-level leadership, where significant powers sit. Of India's 28 states, currently only West Bengal has a female Chief Minister.

## II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

2.1. To address the status of Gender discrimination in India.

2.2. To identify the challenges for Status and women empowerment in Indian politics.

To identify the specified aim, there is a need to conduct the study based on the existing literature. The article reveals that, though India adopted the Panchayat raj system still gender discrimination has been affecting the status and her empowerment in India.

## III. METHODOLOGY

This research paper prepared based on the secondary sources like books ,research articles, to explain the data Explanatory method has adopted .In order to analyse women's Political status as a representative in a democratic

nation, this paper also analyses the various Governmental schemes provided to improve her status. It describes the various challenges faced by the women representatives in Indian politics. In order to address women's political status in democracy, this paper analysed the various existing literature on women's political empowerment, participation and leadership.

#### IV. WOMEN'S POLITICAL STATUS IN INDIA

In 1992, the 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment mandated that one-third of village government head positions in the country should be reserved for women. The policy was introduced to increase the political representation of women at the local level. A significant body of research has since been carried out to consider the impact of the policy, demonstrating a sharp increase in the number of women elected as village sarapanch. However, female representation in higher offices remains low. In particular, the representation of women at the state level has lagged significantly behind, excluding women from important seats of institutional power and decision-making. The IGC has collected data on the composition of state government leadership from their websites, as of 30 March 2021. Six states in India have no female ministers, including Nagaland, Sikkim, and Manipur. No state comes close to a third of female ministers – the highest proportion of female ministers is in Tamil Nadu with 13%, and 68% of states have less than 10% female representation in state leadership roles. Figure 1 below depicts the low rates of female representation in ministerial positions in Indian states.

#### V. REASONS FOR GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN INDIAN POLITICS

In Indian culture, women have been treated with respectful manner. but still, there is a difference between a woman and man due to physical reasons which is natural and it can also be called a natural gender distinction, but by society women and The gap in gender differences between men is very deep and weakening the society. It is equally important for men to win the structure of a society, as same for women. But it is due to some so-called people of the society that men are more dominant in society considering women as second class citizens. Gender discrimination plays a huge role in pushing back in society so that it is maintained in different ways. There are some other reasons also which promote gender discrimination in politics like-

**5.1. Religious Reason:** India is a country equipped with many religions. Every religion has its own different beliefs. Religious is the main reason for gender discrimination. Because of the patriarchal system in the society, the gap of gender discrimination between women and men has arisen. Women are underestimated. Men believe that women should stay within the boundary of the house, due to religious reasons, women have to face gender discrimination and they are unable to enter politics.

**5.2. Social reason:** The famous philosopher Aristotle says that a man who is a social animal and who does not live according to the rules of society is either a deity or an animal. The society has been trying to impose various types of restrictions on women such as practice, child marriage, widow life, maid service, dynasty tradition, estranged wealth, and illiteracy are some of the important factors that prevent the participation of women in politics. And promote gender discrimination.

**5.3. Commercial reason:** It is no wonder that the work of women and men has been different Since ancient times due to the gender differences prevalent in society. Women have to depend on a man of the family for financial help, due to which they are dissatisfied in taking decisions of every kind, big and small. Women from the family have to face gender discrimination. Due to being economically weak, even today women are not allowed to enter politics, whereas men are able to take decisions on their own, due to which men are more and women less in Indian politics.

**5.4. Political reasons:** The Indian constitution has given constitutionally many rights to a woman considered weak in the court. According to which women will not be discriminated on the basis of caste, religion, descent, place of birth, and will be considered equal. But some parties of Indian politics do not invite women to enter politics because male-dominated society and politics view women with gender discrimination and on the other hand men believe that if

women enter politics then they should abdicate, therefore, due to Indian politics being male-dominated, there is a gender bias in politics.

**5.5. Other reason:** It is often seen that women are looked down upon due to gender differences, female feticide after sex test, beaten up in the family, they are deprived of education by understanding the money which is due to them mentally. Weak and afraid of doing risky work, while men are not afraid to take the risk. This can also be a reason for gender discrimination in Indian politics.

## **VI. WOMEN AS ACTIVE CITIZENS**

Women's representation as citizens in political spaces is important on normative grounds of political inclusion and on political economy grounds because it is likely to cause policy change. A survey in Uttar Pradesh (Iyer and Mani 2018) corroborates that the biggest gender gaps are indeed in non-electoral participation (for example, attending village meetings) rather than in electoral participation. The gender gaps are partially explained by factors such as women having significantly lower knowledge about political institutions and electoral rules; lagging behind men on self-assessed leadership skills; and needing permission to go outside.

## **VII. WOMEN AS POLITICAL LEADERS**

Anecdotally there is a view that female political representatives in local government are merely a front for their male relatives. If this were so, we should see no difference in the policy choices made by political leaders based on their gender – as these would be controlled by men even in the case of female leaders holding reserved seats. However, this has been refuted by the well-known study by Chattopadhyay and Duflo (2004). Using data that the researchers collected on 265 village councils in West Bengal and Rajasthan, it is seen that the reservation of a council seat has a bearing on the provision of public goods, with female leaders investing more in public goods valued by women (for example, drinking water).

Other studies point towards the effectiveness of female political leaders – but experience is key. Hence, there is a need for capacity-building and institutional support to enhance the effectiveness of policies pertaining to affirmative action and women's participation in politics.

## **VIII. MEASURES TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT FOR GENDER EQUALITY/SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN.**

According to the National Sample Survey Report (2011-12), the workforce participation rates of male is 54.4% and female is 21.9%. As per the India Country Report, 2015 by Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation on the Millennium Development Goals, the percentage share of females in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector during 2011-12 increased to 19.3% which is higher than 18.6% reported during 2009-10 by National Sample Survey Organisation.

Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner and Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation are involved in collection and dissemination of data covering wide range of issues that affect women's empowerment. The report titled "Women and Men in India – 2015" by Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation, Government of India highlights the status of women covering health, education, work and decision making along with social obstacles in women's empowerment.

The Ministry of Women and Child Development is administering following schemes for gender equality/socio-economic development/empowerment of women:

1. Swadhar and Short Stay Homes to provide relief and rehabilitation to destitute women and women in distress.
2. Working Women Hostels for ensuring safe accommodation for working women away from their place of residence.
3. Support to Training and Employment Program for Women (STEP) to ensure sustainable employment and income generation for marginalised and asset-less rural and urban poor women across the country.
4. Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) to provide micro-finance services to bring about the socio-economic upliftment of poor women.

5. National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW) to strengthen the overall processes that promote all-round Development of Women
6. Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme for Children of Working Mothers (including single mother) to provide day care facilities for running a crèche of 25 children in the age group 0-6 years from families having monthly income of less than Rs12,000.
7. One Stop Centre to provide integrated support and assistance to women affected by violence.
8. Scheme for Universalization of Women Helpline intended to provide 24 hours immediate and emergency response to women affected by violence.
8. Sabla Scheme for holistic development of adolescent girls in the age group of 11-18 years.
10. In order to strengthen the process of gender budgeting the Ministry of Women and Child Development has been undertaking various capacity building measures for the officials of the State Governments by organising training programs/workshops regularly.

#### **IX. VARIOUS LAWS AND LEGISLATIONS FOR STRENGTHENING POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN INDIA**

There are various provisions for women under the Indian Constitution. In the preamble of the Indian Constitution, in the Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and in the Directives Principles, the provisions of gender equality are enshrined in the Constitution of India.

I. In Part III of the Indian Constitution which guarantees the Fundamental Rights of men and women.

II. Article 14 guarantees the right to equality. This Article says that there shall be no discrimination by law or in their administration.

III. Article 15 states that there shall be no discrimination on the ground of religion, race, sex or place of birth. It is a guarantee against every form of discrimination to all the citizens of India. According to Article 15 part 3, there shall be nothing which shall prevent the country from making any special provisions for the benefit and upliftment of women and children.

IV. Article 16 confers the right of equality of opportunity in the matters of public employment. No citizen shall, on grounds of religion, race, sex, decent, place of birth, residence or any of them, be eligible for, or discriminated against in respect of any employment or office under the State.

V. Article 21 protects life and personal liberty.

VI. Article 23 guarantees right against exploitation and trafficking in human beings.

VII. Part IV of the Constitution deals with the Directives Principles of State Policy and the Directive Principles which are of the concern for the women directly and bear upon their status are: Article 39(a) Right to an adequate means of livelihood equally for men and women. Article 39(d) Equal pay for equal work for both men and women.

VIII. The Constitution (73rd Amendment Act 1992) included the reservation of seats for women in Panchayats. This amendment was made in order to improve the position of women especially at the village level and thus, providing an opportunity to women in the political field. In addition,

IX. Part IX- A has been added to the Constitution by the 74th Amendment Act, 1992. It provides for the setting up of 3 types of Municipal Corporations. Of the total seats (including the seats reserved for women belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) to be filled by direct election in every Municipality, not less than 33% shall be reserved for women and such seats may be allotted to them by rotation to different constituencies in a Municipality.

#### **X. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

X.1. The status of Women and Women empowerment has been affecting from gender discrimination in India

X.2. Women representation in higher level politics remained as low.

X.3. In Indian politics, socio, political, economic factors have been affecting Women status.

#### **XI. SUGGESTIONS**

XI.1. Political parties should consider her abilities, should give higher level positions to women.

XI.2. The training programmes should conduct to improve her knowledge in political fields.

XI.3 Families have to support her capabilities and have to believe in her work.

XI.4. Women higher level education should be strengthened at rural India.

#### **X. CONCLUSION**

Women have to move forward with confidence while remaining active in the field of work. Now women are demanding their rights in power, do not want to give up the right to empower women. This can be changed only after the constitutional right to equal status in politics which has been going on for centuries, women in India are quoted in lower-level politics (local politics), but women are discriminated against in high-level politics (parliament). Men should promote women's representation in their political parties. In terms of the representation of women in India's Parliament, far behind developed countries, India should learn from developed countries that women can be good politicians in politics as well as men without discrimination.

#### **REFERENCES**

- [1]. <https://www.theigc.org/blog/leaders-and-citizens-womens-political-participation-in-india/>
- [2]. <https://www.ideasforindia.in/topics/social-identity/the-persistent-gender-gap-in-political-participation-in-india.html>
- [3]. <https://www.ideasforindia.in/topics/social-identity/the-power-of-womens-political-voice.html>
- [4]. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/350372514\\_Gender\\_issues\\_in\\_Indian\\_Politics](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/350372514_Gender_issues_in_Indian_Politics)
- [5]. Dr. R Shankarappa: Women Empowerment: Anujaya Prakashana-2016
- [6]. Dr. Mahalinga .K: Women Empowerment: Usha Prakashana-2015.
- [7]. <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1707475>