



POLITICS AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

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DOI - 10.5281/zenodo.14556984

Introduction:

The subject of women politics has attracted scholarly attention since the latter half of the 19th century. Political status of women refers to the degree of equality & freedom enjoyed by them in shaping and sharing of power & in the value given by the society to their role. In the total development of society and polity, women all over the world were kept out of the social political realm as a marginalized section of the socially. There are still isolated from the main stream & subjected to all types of discrimination there. Exploited from the government of the nation. The word "to empower" means to enable" or "to give power to. The very term empowerment consists of a conspicuous word 'power' which means control over material assets, intellectual resources and ideology. Empowerment is not one-way process but it is multi dimensional process which enables one to realize his full identity and powers in all spheres of life. Power is not a commodity to be transferred; it can be given as alms. Power has to be acquired and once acquired; it needs to be exercised, sustained and preserved.

The National Policy for Women Empowerment was approved in 2001. Accordingly, various schemes are being implemented by the central government. Still women do not see development. It is necessary to define what exactly the empowerment of women is.

Women's dignity, employment, health, education etc. issues came to the fore after 1975. A situation had arisen where all these questions had to be discussed on a public platform. The idealism of freedom from exploitation was also repeatedly expressed in the women's movement. In that movement, spokespersons and activists of many ideologies presented their thoughts together. Accepting the definition of empowerment, leaving the definition of women's liberation as a collective struggle. In the mid-1980s the definition of empowerment came to light as a result of liberalization policies. After that the concept of women empowerment became a norm. The Government of India declared the year 2001 as the Year of Women Empowerment. The National Policy for the Empowerment of Women was

approved in 2001. Women's empowerment means increasing the spiritual, social, political, economic power of women. It involves building their confidence in their own abilities. Various aspects are considered in women empowerment. Fundamental rights and the ability to struggle to protect them are nowhere to be seen in discussions of women's empowerment. In India, gender equality became active after the 1970s. In the 1990s, grants from foreign organizations helped establish new NGOs for women. In India, voluntary organizations like 'Swayayady Gut and Self Employed Women's Association' played an important role in women's rights. Also, many women have come forward as leaders in the local movement. Women in India are now working in many fields like education, politics, media, arts, science and technology. Therefore, the Government of India is implementing many schemes to empower women. The notion of women's participation in power i.e. women's empowerment is now increasing in backward countries. In the advanced countries of Europe, women did not have much place in politics. Women in Europe have advanced in other fields, but still lag behind in politics. In Indian politics, it does not happen that women get positions and women take the lead. Apart from politics, women have also progressed in other fields. When the demand of the people increases, the rulers take popular decisions. Reservation is a byword for education, jobs and political positions. It is necessary to create a system and mindset that women will not be empowered by

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giving 33 percent positions in politics, but will provide encouragement and opportunities for self-reliance from the family itself. After independence, the Women's Reservation Bill was passed in the Rajya Sabha, but the same bill is being blocked in the Lok Sabha. It is the leaders who speak of equality between men and women who are opposing the passage of the Women's Bill. The issue of equality between men and women is still the same today. This argument is becoming an obstacle in the development of women. Therefore, in a democracy women will be empowered only if their power should be increased while giving rights and empowerment.

Research Methodology:

The information for this paper has been primarily collected from secondary sources i.e., Books, Journal, Government reports and Internet

Concept of Women's' Empowerment:

Empowerment is a multi- faceted, multidimensional and multilayered concept. Women's empowerment is a process in which women gain greater share of control over resources material, human and intellectual like knowledge, information, ideas and financial resources like money and access to money and control over decision making in the home, community, society and nation and to gain 'power'. According to the country report of Government of India, Empowerment means moving from a position of enforced powerlessness to one of power.

Women in Politics:

Women's representation and participation in various decision-making levels has been increasing in the services. Through the Panchayat Raj institutions, over a million of women have actively entered into political life in India. As per the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts, all local elected bodies reserve one-third of their seats for women in parliament and State Assembly.

Empowerment of women in India:

In the fundamental rights of Indian Constitution there has been provision for equality, social justice and protection of women. These goals are yet to be realized.

Still women are continued to be discriminated, exploited and exposed to inequalities at various levels. So the concept of empowerment as a goal of development projects & Programs has been gaining wider acceptance.

Women Participation in Various Sectors in India:

As the second-most populous country in the world, India has a female labour force participation rate of 20%, which is not even half of the global average of 47% in 2020. Women workers in India are predominantly employed in agriculture and traditional rural industries, or the service sector.

Table No.1: Women Participation in Various Sectors in India

Sr. No.	Sector	Women %
1)	Indian Parliament	9.1
2)	Central Executive Council (1999)	10.9
3)	State Legislation in India (2000)	5.6
4)	Panchayat Raj Institution in India (1997)	31.3
5)	Indian Administration (1996)	13.9
6)	I.A.S. Officers (2000)	10.4
7)	I.P.S. Officers (2000)	3.3
8)	Public Sectors (1997)	13.8
9)	Organized Sectors (1997)	15.9
10)	Sahasra Sena Bal	2.04
11)	Indo Tibet Border Police	1.4
12)	Central Industrial Security Force	4.7
13)	Border Security Force	0.55
14)	Assam Rifles	0.80

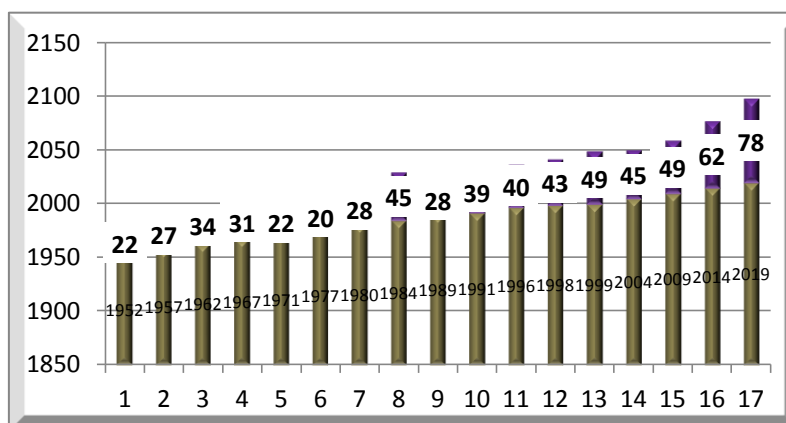
(Source: Central Government Statistical Report)

Women in the Lok Sabha:**Table No.2: Women Participation in Indian Parliament**

Name of the Loksabha	Year	Total No. of Seats	No of Women Members	Percentage
1)	1952	499	22	4.4
2)	1957	500	27	5.4
3)	1962	503	34	6.7
4)	1967	523	31	5.9
5)	1971	521	22	4.2
6)	1977	544	20	3.4
7)	1980	544	28	5.5
8)	1984	545	45	8.9
9)	1989	543	28	5.1
10)	1991	544	39	7.2
11)	1996	543	40	7.4
12)	1998	543	43	7.8
13)	1999	543	49	8.8
14)	2004	543	45	8.2
15)	2009	543	49	10.1
16)	2014	543	62	11.41
17)	2019	543	78	14.00

Women in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha
The 16th Lok Sabha in India comprised 62 women members only 11.41% of the total Lok Sabha membership. While it has increased from 10.86% in 2009, it is almost half of the world average of 22.2%. The Rajya Sabha does not much better representation, with just 29 women members comprising 11.9% of the total

membership in 2014. Again, while this is an improvement from the 2009 figure of 8.97%, it is far below the world average of 19.6%. It comes as no surprise then that India is ranked 141 in the world rankings of women in national parliaments, compiled by the inter-parliamentary union.

Diagram No.1 : Women Participation in Indian Parliament

The newly elected 17th Lok Sabha has 78 women Members of Parliament (MPs), the highest since independence. The highest-ever number of women have been elected in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls. Out of 542 MPs who will take oath as members of the lower house in the next few days, 78 are women with Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal leading at 11 each.

Conclusion:

Women's empowerment can positively influence the lives not only of women themselves but also of men, those of children. Political parties cannot remain indifferent towards women who constitute 586.5 million population 48.46 percent of the electorate. Although almost all political parties have attempted to build women organizations to secure their support and make their organizations more broad based, but in practice they have fielded much less proportion of women candidates in the elections giving them proportionately much less representation in the legislative bodies than their actual population strength. It is necessary to make it mandatory for all political parties to nominate at least a-third of women candidates in their party organizations and laid the foundation of political participation of women. Women are the legal citizens of the

country and have equal rights with men. Although the country's constitution says women have equal status to men, women are powerless and are mistreated inside and outside the home. Gender equality in the realm of politics continues to be elusive even today

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