



**ISSN 2349-638X**

**REVIEWED INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL**

**AAYUSHI  
INTERNATIONAL  
INTERDISCIPLINARY  
RESEARCH JOURNAL  
(AIIRJ)**

**MONTHLY PUBLISH JOURNAL**

**VOL-II**

**ISSUE-V**

**MAY**

**2015**

**Address**

- Vikram Nagar, Boudhi Chouk, Latur.
- Tq. Latur, Dis. Latur 413512
- (+91) 9922455749, (+91) 9158387437

**Email**

- editor@aiirjournal.com
- aiirjpramod@gmail.com

**Website**

- www.aiirjournal.com

**CHIEF EDITOR – PRAMOD PRAKASHRAO TANDALE**

**Political Participation And Women****Prof. Akanksha Bhanji &**

Dayanand College of Commerce, Latur

[aks.14988@gmail.com](mailto:aks.14988@gmail.com),**Prof. Manisha Ashtekar**

Dayanand College of Commerce, Latur

[manishasalunke27@gmail.com](mailto:manishasalunke27@gmail.com)**Abstract:**

There is growing momentum among governments and civil society to foster and ensure women's participation and leadership in the political arena, and specifically within local governance structures. Establishing quotas for women's representation at different levels of government has been a strategic tactic in achieving this goal in many countries. In India, the Constitution (73rd Amendment Act), enacted in 1992, mandated the reservation of a minimum of one-third of seats for women (both as members and as chairpersons) within all of India's locally elected governance bodies commonly referred to as Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). The amendment also entrusted panchayats with the responsibility of furthering the agenda of economic development and social justice. Affirmative action to ensure women's political representation is an important step in democratising and engendering local governance. However, it does not guarantee effective participation or ensure that issues of concern to community and women will automatically be addressed by local governance structures. Such issues reflect women's practical gender needs as well as their strategic gender interests. Practical gender needs are immediate needs such as water and healthcare, which fall within women's socially defined roles. While the importance of these issues cannot be undermined, attention to only these does not necessarily challenge women's status in society, transform power and gender relations to enable gender equity and social justice.

**Introduction:**

From the local to the global level, women's leadership and political participation are restricted. Women are underrepresented as voters, as well as in leading positions, whether in elected office, the civil service, the private sector or academia. This occurs despite their proven abilities as leaders and agents of change, and their right to participate equally in democratic

governance. India has witnessed the world's largest experiment in grass root local democracy, triggered by the 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Indian Constitution, which created a third tier of governance-Panchayati Raj Institutions (Village Councils) and urban local bodies. These are elected bodies and cannot be dissolved by administrative order. Since 1995, three rounds of elections have been held; and as one-third of seats (proposed to be increased to 50 per cent) are reserved for women, more than 1.5 million women have been elected to office in each round. It is evident therefore that first generation issues of framing the 'rules of the game' and creating an understanding about them have been addressed.

Women constitute slightly more than half of the world population. Their contribution to the social and economic development of societies is also more than half as compared to that of men by virtue of their dual roles in the productive and reproductive spheres. Yet their participation in formal political structures and processes, where decisions regarding the use of societal resources generated by both men and women are made, remains insignificant. Presently, women's representation in legislatures around the world is 15 percent. Despite the pronounced commitment of the international community to gender equality and to the bridging the gender gap in the formal political arena, reinforced by the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform of Action, there are only twelve countries where women hold 33% or more seats in the parliaments (UNDP Report, 2005).

Women's participation in formal politics in India reveals that there has been a marked increase in their voting turnout and election campaigning. While there have been significant gains in these areas, women continue to be under-represented in legislative bodies both at the national and state level and in political parties. An analysis of the factors influencing participation reveals that these differ for women in elections as voters and their involvement as campaigners. All said and done, positive affirmative action in the form of reservation in legislative bodies, greater accommodation of women in decision-making positions in political parties and in government would go a long way in addressing a serious lacuna in politics in the country.



**Objectives of the Study:**

- To know the political participation of women in India
- To know the Status of women in the politics
- To understand the challenges before women in the politics

**About Women and Democracy:**

*“Every country deserves to have the best possible leader and that means that women have to be given a chance to compete. If they’re never allowed to compete in the electoral process then the countries are really robbing themselves of a great deal of talent.”*

– Madeleine K. Albright, NDI Chairman

Women around the world often face daunting social, economic, Ideological and political challenges. For democratic governments to deliver to their constituents, they must be truly representative, and they must be equal partners in the process of democratic development. As activists, elected officials and constituents, their contributions are crucial to building a strong and vibrant society. It is therefore essential to support women around the world because:

- Women are highly committed to promoting national and local policies that address the socio-economic and political challenges facing women, children and disadvantaged groups.
- Women are particularly effective in promoting honest government. Countries where women are supported as leaders and at the ballot box have a correspondingly low level of corruption.
- Women are strongly committed to peace building, as they often disproportionately suffer the consequences of armed conflict. Reconstruction and reconciliation efforts take root more quickly and are more sustainable when women are involved. By helping women become participating members of a democracy, one can look to mitigate conflicts or stop conflicts before they begin.
- Women are strongly linked to positive developments in education, infrastructure and health standards at the local level. Where rates of gender development and empowerment are higher, human rates of development and standards of living are also higher.

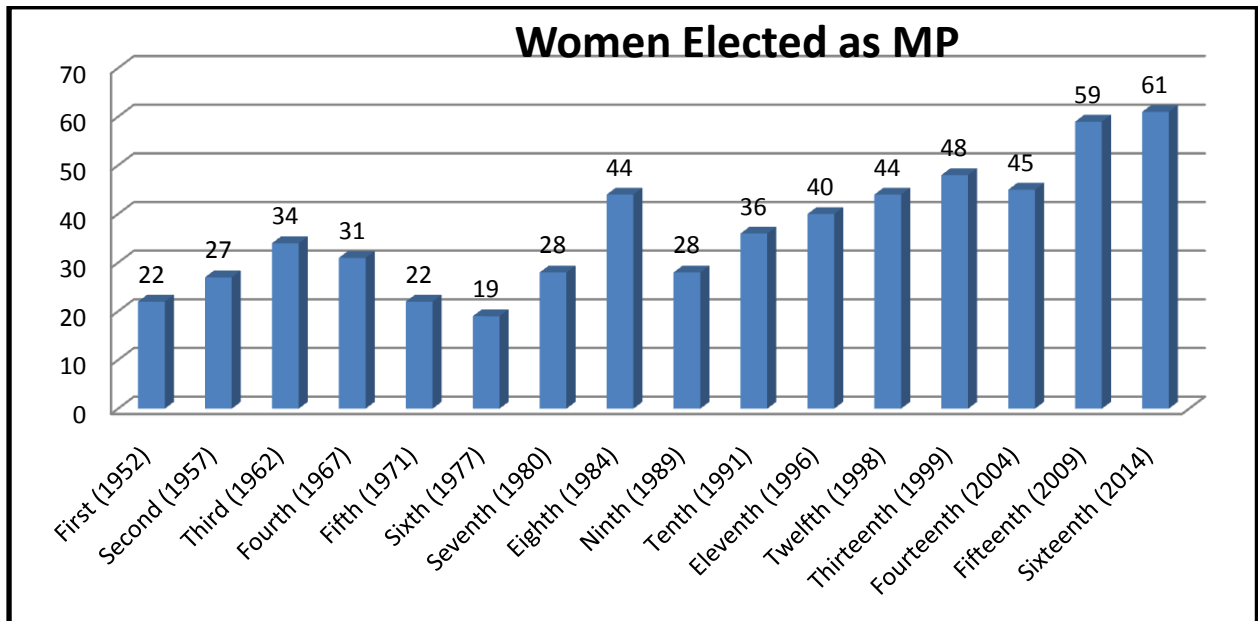
**Constitutional rights of women:**

The Constitution of India establishes a parliamentary system of government, and guarantees its citizens the right to be elected, freedom of speech, freedom to assemble and form associations, and vote. The Constitution of India attempts to remove gender inequalities by banning discrimination based on sex and class, prohibiting human trafficking and forced labor, and reserving elected positions for women. The Government of India directed state and local governments to promote equality by class and gender including equal pay and free legal aid, humane working conditions and maternity relief, rights to work and education, and raising the standard of living. Women were substantially involved in the Indian independence movement in the early 20th century and advocated for independence from Britain. Independence brought gender equality in the form of constitutional rights, but historically women's political participation has remained low.

**Women Participation in Politics:****Representation of women lower house of Indian Parliament from 1<sup>st</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha**

Lok Sabha	Total No. of seats	No. of Women Members who won	% of the total
First (1952)	489	22	4.4
Second (1957)	494	27	5.4
Third (1962)	494	34	6.7
Fourth (1967)	523	31	5.9
Fifth (1971)	521	22	4.2
Sixth (1977)	544	19	3.4
Seventh (1980)	544	28	5.1
Eighth (1984)	544	44	8.1
Ninth (1989)	529	28	5.3
Tenth (1991)	509	36	7.0
Eleventh (1996)	541	40	7.4
Twelfth (1998)	545	44	8.0
Thirteenth (1999)	543	48	8.8
Fourteenth (2004)	543	45	8.1
Fifteenth (2009)	543	59	10.9
Sixteenth (2014)	543	61	11.23

Source: Election Commission of India



The movement for women's suffrage began in the early 1900s in response to a national movement for suffrage, even though vast majority of neither men nor women had a right to vote during the British colonial rule before 1947. After Indian independence from Britain, the Indian Constitution in 1950 officially granted women and men suffrage. Prior to universal suffrage, provincial legislatures had granted women the right to vote.

Madras was the first to grant women's suffrage in 1921, but only to those men and women who owned land property according to British administration's records. Other legislatures followed shortly after, but like Madras, the political rights were granted by British Raj to select few, and the London appointed Governor of each province had the right to overrule and nullify any law enacted by the elected men and women. The rights granted in response to the movement towards suffrage were limited to qualifications of literacy and property ownership, including property ownership of husbands. This excluded vast majority of Indian women and men from voting, because they were poor. This changed in 1950 when universal suffrage was granted to all adult Indian citizens.

In 1950, universal suffrage granted voting rights to all women. India is a parliamentary system with two houses: Lok Sabha (lower house) and Rajya Sabha (upper house). Rates of participation among women in 1962 were 46.63% for Lok Sabha elections and rose to a high in 1984 of 58.60%. Male turnout during that same period was 63.31% in 1962 and 68.18% in 1984.



The gap between men and women voters has narrowed over time with a difference of 16.7% in 1962 to 4.4% in 2009. Voter turnout for national elections in the past 50 years has remained stagnant with turnout ranging between 50 to 60%. State elections have seen a growing trend in women's participation, and in some cases women's turnout is exceeding male turnout. Increased turnout of women was reported for the 2012 Vidhan Sabha elections (legislative/state assemblies) with states such as Uttar Pradesh reporting 58.82% to 60.29% turnout. In the 2013 assembly elections, women's overall turnout was reported to be 47.4%, and male turnout was 52.5%. Indian states of Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Kerala, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Daman and Diu, and Puducherry all reported higher turnouts among women than men in 2013.

### **2014 elections**

Women turnout during India's 2014 parliamentary general elections was 65.63%, compared to 67.09% turnout for men. In 16 out of 29 states of India, more women voted than men. A total of 260.6 million women exercised their right to vote in April–May 2014 elections for India's parliament.

### **Political parties:**

#### ***Pratibha Patil***



India has a multi-party system with the 24 registered parties at the national level. The three largest parties in India are the Indian National Congress (INC), the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and the Communist Party of India (CPI). Political parties have increased outreach among women voters as India's party system has become more competitive. This has included the creation of women's wings in the largest parties. The BJP's wing is the BJP Mahila Morcha, the INC's wing is All India Mahila Congress, and the CPI's wing is the National Federation of Indian Women.

Women's involvement in political parties is tied to the increasing demand for equal rights. The INC held power until the 1990s. As the INC moved away from welfare politics, other parties arose to challenge the INC using poverty as the center of their agenda. The INC regained power in 2004 with the help of women's participation. The INC has increased women's participation by instituting a 33% quota for women in all levels of the party. In June 2009, the INC nominated a woman to become first speaker of Lok Sabha, and also supported the election of Pratibha Patil, India's first female president. Women were involved in the early establishment of the BJP. The BJP has encouraged greater representation of women by developing women's leadership programs, financial assistance for women candidates, and implementing a 33% reservation for women in party leadership positions. BJP has received women's support by focusing on issues such as the Uniform Civil Code to extend equal rights to women and men regardless of religion. They have also spoken out against violence against Indian women. The CPI has also supported gender inequality issues including addressing issues of violence through the National Federation of Indian Women.

### **Conclusion:**

UN Women's programmes on leadership and participation are guided by a history of international commitments to women's representation. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women upholds women's right to participate in public life, while the Beijing Platform for Action calls for removing barriers to equal participation. The Millennium Development Goals measure progress towards gender equality in part by the proportion of women in parliamentary seats.

Towards these ends, we provide training for women political candidates to help build their capacities, and offer voter and civic education and sensitization campaigns on gender equality. We back gender equality advocates in calling on political parties, governments and others to do their part in empowering women. Other initiatives encourage young men and women to engage in advocacy around making gender equality measures central to public policymaking.

In India we are seeing positive changes as far as women participation in politics is considered. No. of women contesting elections, winning the seats and voters turnout are



increasing in every five year. This shows that we are providing fair ground to the women to participate, develop and enrich themselves in the political matters in the interest of the nation.

**References:**

- 1) <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation>
- 2) <https://www.ndi.org/gender-women-democracy>
- 3) [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women%27s\\_political\\_participation\\_in\\_India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women%27s_political_participation_in_India)
- 4) <http://www.icrw.org/files/publications/India%20governance%20report%20synthesis%202013.pdf>
- 5) <http://www.womankind.org.uk/policy-and-resources/womens-civil-and-political-participation/>
- 6) <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/enabling-environment2005/docs/EGM-WPD-EE-2005-EP.12%20%20draft%20F.pdf>
- 7) <http://www.csdn.in/sites/default/files/Banner/Electoral%20Participation%20of%20Women%20in%20India.pdf>
- 8) <http://www.ndtv.com/elections-news/election-results-2014-61-women-elected-to-lok-sabha-562470>



ISSN 2349-638X

www.aiirjournal.com