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## Role on political participation of women in urban local self governance

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### Abstract

True democracy is a system which in Abraham Lincoln's words, is a government of the people, by the people and for the people. While most of the democracies have given a system which has government elected by all the sections of societies, it is debatable whether the government comprises of all the diverse sections and importantly whether the government works for all the people of the democracy. In this context, the problem of low participation of women is of special concern for democracies and without changing that true democracy can never be achieved. Women's participation in decision-making is essential for women's interests to be incorporated into governance. It has been widely experienced that governance structures which do not provide for adequate participation of women, often suffer from state interventions which are neither inclusive nor democratic. Including women, especially in local governments is an essential step towards creating gender equal opportunities and gender sensitive policies. Since women have different needs and perspectives on social and political issues, it is important to involve women in governments to incorporate all of the societal viewpoints in policy and decision-making processes. Women are actively involved in household and community work and hence well aware of real issues faced by common people. This gives them insight and perspective which can be instrumental in sustainable overall development. Women's political support assumes a significant part in laying out the situation with women's in a specific country. Women's are venerated as an encapsulation of penance and power in India. In any case, with regards to entrusting power into their hands. There is a dithering from the male partners, as it represents a serious worry of overwhelming their qualities and capacities. Women's has succeeded in all fields however her presence in governmental issues makes the larger part uneasy. The purposes behind this viewpoint can be added to the strength of women's nearby which is overall turned into the Man's region. The urban local bodies and the impact of the 33% reservation on the participation of the women in the local level politics. However, women remain seriously underrepresented in decision-making positions.

**Keywords:** women, decision making, political participation, urban local bodies

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### Introduction

Political participation of women leading to their empowerment largely is a vital issue in giving finer shape to the political process of a country. All over the world it has been considered as an attribute of human index development. Consequent upon such thinking, India witnessed movement for women enfranchisement during the freedom struggle itself. The endeavor which began long ago is still far away from the desired goal. Women's were from ages the nurturer, yet what assist with canning it do, when she can't utilize her capacities to influence the world. She had a great deal of battle to come to standard with her manly partner. In any case, she is high on her close to home knowledge, the explanation for her greatness in all fields. Be that as it may, can our gendered society acknowledge her strengthening? She is driven into the dim and is weakened. Governmental issues has turned into a man's statement and Man's reality. In any case, in India, we have seen women's rulers who were known for their exemplary and groundbreaking administration from the old times up to the present. The outcome of the authentic women's send shudders down the spine of the men. They examined strengthening to women's however consigned political strengthening to their pockets. They saw legislative issues as a means to meet the positive closures. Political vote banks was what they looked for. The independence conceded around here will be an obstacle to their successful reign in the political field.

### Participation of Women in Post Independent Period

The foundation of political participation of women was laid down during the national movement. The transfer of power from British to Indian hand gave women opportunity to participate in democratic process. Large number of legal, social and economic measures has been taken up by the Independent government to raise the status of women in India. Women too have become politically conscious, as they have started participating in national and state politics. Women participation in politics is pivotal to the social, economic and democratic growth of any nation. That is why it pertinent to embrace all forms of positive measures that will stimulate as well as sustain women's interest in political participation. One of these ways is implementation of quota allotment reserved for women. The problem of making laws and not implementing them is affecting virtually all sectors and this has

also fast-tracked underdevelopment for women in politics. It is important that percentages seats in government as recommended by different notable bodies be adopted and thoroughly implemented.

In addition, to sustain women's participation in politics, there is the need for unparallel training and retraining with a unique innovative approach to impact knowledge and equip them with required resources for optimal productivity. With knowledge comes power and information for liberation; information cutting across all spheres of political participation, to motivate, support and encourage. This social sensitization should be extended to the general public as it would correct various stereotypic notions that could cause retrogression in women political participation, Civil city organisations are caught in the web of encouraging and equipping women to participate in politics.

### **Women Reservation Bill**

Post Gandhi, India experienced centralization of planning which resulted in higher inequality in political decision making at the various levels. While Government was deeply concerned of issues of gender equality, women were not always a part of such decision making. Although, India has seen women participating in politics as the longest serving Prime minister, as chief ministers of various states, members in national parliament and state legislative assemblies in large numbers, yet the occurrence of such events has not been commensurate to their population. In order to enable better women participation in active politics, authorities had been trying to put in reservation for women but have not been successful in true terms due to non-support from some of the regional parties. Back in history, one of the prominent member of freedom struggle, Sarojini Naidu rejected reservation for women, citing that women are not weak, timid, meek. She claimed that the demand for granting preferential treatment to women is an admission on her part of her inferiority and there has been no need for such a thing in India as the women have always been by the side of men. The issue of women's reservation again came to limelight in 1973 with voices recommending reservation for women in at least one third of the seats and eventually statutory women's panchayats at the village level were recommended to take care of the neglect of women in rural development programs through 73rd & 74th constitutional amendments in 1993.

In the same vein, active grooming and mentoring will go a long way in advancing women political participation and representation. Proper coaching and orientation would birth attitudinal change in women and break them from the patriarchal shackles imposed by the society. Some women are definitely interested in contributing their quota of proper representation in governance but they need concrete escapism to stay above the social limitations. Therefore, a mentorship scheme would position them in the right perspective to achieving this feat. This 74th Amendment of the Indian Constitution ushered in a new era in the democratic process in India. It not only provided constitutional status to the municipal bodies but also provided an enabling environment for women to take part directly in the process of local self governance. It brought women to the forefront of city development. The 74th CAA has laid foundations for the emergence of strong bottom up women leadership who could climb the ladder to occupy positions of power at the state and national levels. Our country saw an increase in the number of EWR's in comparison with the previous years. It is often easier for women to participate in local than at the national level, because of the flexible eligibility criteria's and the local government is the closest to the women's sphere of life, and easier to combine with rearing children. It serves as a springboard to national politics, by developing capacities and gaining experiences. Local level politics can be more interesting to women as they are well acquainted with their community,

### **The line of Argument for Women's Political Participation**

Politics by and large has become a man's world. There are has been different arguments to assert her participation in the political sphere. The justice argument implies that women constituting half the population and their participation in politics are justified. The experience argument states that women's experiences differ from the men and needs representation result in policy-making and implementation. Women's perception of the needs and priorities are different from men. They may be sometimes conflicting and therefore women are needed to represent the institutions to express the interests of women. The symbolic argument states that every female politician acts a role model for all women, regardless of political views or party membership. She plays the role of the motivator to attract more women to the political arena. The critical mass argument states that women are able to achieve harmony of purpose to represent women's interests when they are able to achieve certain levels of representation. The democracy argument asserts that the equal representation of women and men enhances the democratization of governance in both transitional and consolidated democracies. All of the arguments deals about the importance of women inclusion in politics are justified.

### **Women's participation in politics**

#### **Fundamental Inequality**

While women are bestowed with the constitutional rights they are not seen as equal, their roles are limited to their reproductive and household activities, Politics and community affairs are seen as incompatible for them. In many countries women face obstacles such as culture and tradition (the view that men are superior to women), religion, political turmoil, violence, money, workloads and lack of opportunities. Demographic statistics, particularly in the South Asia subregion, show low literacy rates, poor health rates and poverty, all of which point to a lack of basic rights to such things as education, health care, safety and employment opportunities.

### **Political and Economic Instability**

Political and economic instability has a bearing on the development of a democratic political culture. Socioeconomic norms and religious norms are frequently used for challenging and women's rights and preventing women from participating in politics. Highly patriarchal societies dictate rules, responsibilities and behaviour for women, enforcing these norms in ways that lower their self-confidence, limiting their access to information and skills and reinforcing their lower status.

### **Measurement of Decision Making Initiatives**

The quantitative data of political participation of women at local level is available but the qualitative data on the aspects of their active participation including the utilization of the decision-making functionality provided to them is not being quantified properly. Although, the legislature has enabled their huge presence into the state of affairs, but their valuable essence into the system is yet to be established at most of the places. The data on their sensitization about their rights and its usage is still missing. Efforts can be made to capture the performance of women in debates, initiative in brining legislation and participation in other aspects of the democratic process.

### **Conclusion**

Women's participation has positive effects on the quality of local government. A legitimate space in rural political institutions have been acquired though they have low political status as compared to men which raise their marginalized position, even though they are still a minority. Without taking women's needs and interests into account and opportunity for them to participate in and influence decision-making, development interventions and planning, sustainable as well as meaningful results will not come and to attain strong local government empowerment of women is inevitable. There is a range of factors that hinder women's access to political participation in India. Despite the legal constitutional provisions, women are still at the subordinate position and women in the country occupy low status in the society. The involvement of women in policy formulation and decision making processes has been insignificant. Democracy has become a fundamental tool for accomplishing sustainable development. Political participation which is the manifestation of democracy allows for diversity of opinion and participation of both men and women cannot thrive by excluding the women folk that constitute half of the world's population. Without equal participation of women to political process, the hope for democracy and democratization is unrealisable. Thus, the democratic process is able to grow and develop effectively only when women can experience benefits equally with their counter parts. The active participation of women on par with with men at all levels of decision-making is essential to the achievement of equality, sustainable development, democracy and gendered governance. Political participation is a voluntary involvement of individual both in active and tacit formats. It includes voting, campaigning, contesting and occupying public office at the formal level and involvement in trade unions and cooperatives in the informal sector. Involvement of women in the process has been considered as imperative to make politics more democratic and inclusive. Ironically in India as in case of many South Asian countries, role of women in this context has remained far from satisfactory. It is more conspicuous in the field of decision making process as despite her prominence as a voter and campaigner, she fails to have a space.

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