



A Discourse on Gender Dynamics and Political Development of Women in Contemporary India – Path half trodden!

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Despite making about half of the population, women are underrepresented in politics. Women's political action, representation, and involvement are all hampered by gender dynamics. Gender dynamics refers to the current sociocultural concepts that relate, link, or interact between and among genders. The power dynamic that is defined by prevailing norms and manifested in society is a component of gender dynamics. The goal of this study paper is to examine the numerous gender dynamics and women's political progress in modern India. India has had 15 presidents thus far, two of whom are female, and 14 prime ministers, one of whom is female. Out of the thirty Chief Ministers across all Indian states, there is now only one woman in that position. In the Maharashtra Council of Ministers, there isn't a single female minister. In India, caste, religion, colour, language, economic standing, criminality, and—above all—gender are all closely related to politics! Violence, home duties, poverty, illiteracy, and patriarchy all impeded women's political engagement. Even a small amount of women's political development can have a significant difference in the following areas: equal opportunities, entrepreneurship, governance, employment, maternity relief, remuneration, and literacy rates. On the other hand, it has somewhat decreased crime, dowry deaths, child labour, corruption, and mortality rates. Women's reservation in local self-government, according to this research author, has changed the game at the grassroots level in the modern Indian environment. As a result, millions of women join the ranks of mainstream politics. Women's development in politics is concomitant with and supportive of their development in all other spheres, including social, economic, cultural, etc. The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments, which have had an impact for nearly three decades, are sometimes derided as kitchen cabinet and pseudo-feminism by detractors. This multidisciplinary study investigates the necessity of pre-training women to represent in both the houses of Parliament and State Assemblies using

qualitative and quantitative data. The family dynasty's crucial role in the political portrayal of the feminine gender is contested by detractors. It's up for debate whether or not women in politics who have already been allocated and have a strong family foundation are being empowered! To overcome gender dynamics and achieve the "Global Sustainable Development Goals (GSDG)" outlined in "The UN Transforming the World – Agenda 2030," we urgently need women's political development. This research study examines how the pronounced gender dynamics in modern India have prevented women from making significant political progress. Policymakers may find this study paper to be very helpful in fostering inclusive political growth that supports both feminine gender and communities of third gender.

Keywords: Gender Dynamics, Women's Political Development, Women's Political empowerment, Global Sustainable Development Goals (GSDG)

I. Introduction:

Yatranāryastupūjyanteramantetatradevatahl
yatraitāstu napūjyantesarvāstatrāphalakhriyāh

When women are honoured, the divine are incredibly joyful; when they are not, all actions (projects) are in vain. India's ancient women had a heyday. They had equal and better possibilities to learn, perform, administer, and manage day-to-day tasks, and there was less prejudice based on their gender. In matters of state, women also had a significant degree of say and voice. Numerous monarchs are known to have consulted with a female leader while carrying out their royal duties in accordance with "Rajdharmā." As time went on, women's status drastically declined throughout India; they faced discrimination and unequal treatment based only on their gender. They gradually became commodities and were objectified. Men began to view women as property that they could possess. The Mughal invasions caused extreme insecurity among women living in rural areas, which in turn led to the creation of



insensitive social customs such as polygamy, devdasi, child marriage, dowry, and sati. Because of education and the influence of Western culture on India's sociocultural life, Indian society underwent significant changes in attitude, behaviour, and way of life during the British rule. Furthermore, the English language gave the newly formed middle class access to the liberal ideology, which upheld principles such as equality, liberty, and respect for individual secularism. However, in colonial India, the application of these principles was restricted to the degree that it did not jeopardize the interests of the ruling class. There were two significant movements that impacted women's status during this time. These were the 19th-century social reform movement and the 20th-century nationalist movement. In addition to encouraging a lot of women to get involved in politics, the Nationalist Movement gave them the power and self-assurance they needed to organize and fight for what they believed in. One significant milestone in the progress of women towards equality was the establishment of the All India Women's Conference in 1927. This article examines the political advancement of women in modern India as well as the gender dynamics that have emerged in Indian society. The terms below need to be clarified for the same.

Gender dynamics: Based on prevailing sociocultural notions, gender dynamics refer to the relationship, connection, or interaction between and among genders. The power dynamic that is defined by prevailing norms and manifested in society is a component of gender dynamics.

Political Development: Eventually, political engagement, activism, and representation are implied by political development. Voting is a basic form of political engagement, but political activism involves actively participating in the electoral process, casting an independent ballot, and being knowledgeable of election practices and processes. Political representation can be defined as running for office, serving as the people's representative, holding public office, deciding on public policy, etc.

Political Empowerment of Women: The degree of gender equality in parliamentary politics, the decision-making process, and governance is largely determined by the presence of a political system that supports women's control over and participation in the political parliament.

The hypothesis suggests that implementing quota reservations in elections would help India accomplish its Sustainable Development Goals while also improving the political

development of women who are disadvantaged by gender dynamics.

Research Questions: 1. Did gender dynamics hinder women's political advancement in India? 2. Is it possible to attain women's political advancement and empowerment under an electoral quota system? 3. Will women's political growth through a shift in gender dynamics norms work toward accomplishing the Sustainable growth Goals of the United Nations?

Research Methodology: To better understand the subject at hand, the author has used both qualitative and quantitative research methods. To obtain the numerical data on women's political representation in local self-governments, state assemblies, and parliament, a variety of sources are examined. The writer conducted interviews with numerous female politicians to gain insight into the challenges and obstacles presented by gender dynamics in their professional lives. Many people were given a questionnaire to estimate the results of the 33% reservations for women in municipalities and panchayats. The author has offered a few recommendations based on the data analysis and doctrinal and empirical study findings.

Gender dynamics and political development of women

Women's political progress and gender dynamics Adequate representation of women in politics is a goal of a fully representative democracy. The world's biggest and most resilient parliamentary democracy is found in India. Since India's independence, the proportion of women in the parliament has increased. It is a crucial indicator for assessing how far the nation has come in eradicating gender inequality. Equal standing for men and women in all political, social, and economic domains was guaranteed by the Indian Constitution after the country gained independence. Three primary criteria are used to evaluate the involvement of women in Indian politics:

i) **Women Voters:** In the most recent Lok Sabha election of 2019, nearly equal numbers of women cast ballots as men did, marking a significant milestone in India's advancement towards gender parity in politics and dubbed a "silent revolution of self-empowerment." There are several reasons for the rise in participation, particularly since the 1990s.

ii) **Women as Candidates:** Out of the 8,049 candidates running in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, less than 9%—roughly 7 to 8 hundreds—were women.



iii) Women's Representation in Parliament: Despite a notable increase in female voter turnout, data on women's representation in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha indicates that the percentage of female MPs has remained low when compared to their male counterparts.

Studies reveal that despite their written constitutions guaranteeing women's representation, the majority of political parties actually provide few party tickets to female candidates. According to a research, many of the women who do receive party tickets are "dynastic" politicians—that is, they have political ties to their families. Political parties give fewer tickets to female candidates because of the false belief that they have a lower chance of winning than male candidates, which is still pervasive in the political community. In India, election campaigns need a great deal of effort and time. Women politicians face frequent discrimination, offensive remarks, harassment, and other hardships that make it difficult for them to run for office and participate in elections. Given that many women rely on their families for financial support, the costly electoral process and financing present further challenges. The cost of contesting parliamentary elections can be very high. A situation referred to as "internalized patriarchy," in which a large number of women feel obligated to put family and home before political aspirations.

73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment and its Implications

Significant historical turning point for women's political participation was the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments. To safeguard the rights of underprivileged groups within society, particularly women, scheduled castes (SC), and scheduled tribes (ST), and to guarantee their involvement in the democratic decentralization process. It is clear that every five years, local gender reservations have pulled tens of thousands of women out of the kitchen and the house and thrust them into the local political sphere. They would not have incorporated into electoral democracy if not for the directive found in the Constitution. Numerous independent-minded women have developed, pursued careers in politics, and demonstrated the skills necessary to be the finest council members, according to study. They have made it possible for some positive changes to be made to the gender stereotypes that the general public holds. The use of funds had also been a strength for female council members. In general, women are more inclined to support inclusive

policies and address constituent issues. They are particularly interested in health, community welfare, and poverty alleviation, and female lawmakers are more likely to actively pursue these issues. Women who hold positions like mayor or chairwoman of statutory municipal committees develop the abilities necessary to advance to higher political office. These also inspire other young women and girls to strive for leadership roles by compounding the impact. These reservations are occasionally made fun of as dummy representations, window dressing, kitchen cabinets, silver bullets, and sarpanchpati. The way women perform in LSGs is improving daily and a positive response to the detractors.

Global Sustainable Development Goals
Goal 1: No poverty-to end poverty in all its forms everywhere.2: Zero hunger- to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.3: Good health and well-being- to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.4: Quality education-to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.5: Gender equality- to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.6: Clean water and sanitation-to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.7: Affordable and clean energy- to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.8: Decent work and economic growth-to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure- to build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.10: Reduced inequalities- to reduce inequality within and among countries.11: Sustainable cities and communities-to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.12: Responsible consumption and production- to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.13: Climate action-to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.14: Life below water-to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.15: Life on land-to protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.16: Peace, justice and strong institutions-to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive



institutions at all levels.¹⁷: Partnerships-to strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

With only 31 countries having female heads of state or government, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and UN Women's "Women in politics: 2023" map provides updated statistics. Twenty-six percent of members of parliament are women. Less than one in four Cabinet Ministers worldwide (22.8%) are women. According to recent data, men predominate in policy sectors like defence and the economy, while women lead crucial policy portfolios related to social protection, gender equality, and human rights. As the only organization responsible for maintaining the GSDGs, UN Women provides data and analysis on women's representation in local government in this working paper.

Recent Developments

President Droupadi Murmu signed the 33% Women's Reservation Bill, formerly known as the Women's Reservation Bill, into law on September 28, 2023, after it was just passed by both houses of the Indian Parliament. According to this law, women must be granted 33% of the seats in the state legislative assemblies and the Lok Sabha, the lower house of Parliament. With only 14% of seats in the Lok Sabha and even fewer in several state assemblies, women are severely underrepresented in Indian politics, which is the focus of this historic decision.

The Implementation of this reservation is contingent upon the completion of the next national census and a subsequent delimitation exercise, which is expected to take place after the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. This process is necessary to reconfigure the boundaries of electoral constituencies based on the updated population data. The bill's passage marks the culmination of a decades-long effort to increase female political representation in India, first introduced in 1996 but repeatedly stalled due to lack of consensus among political parties. The new legislation is seen as a significant step towards promoting gender equality and empowering women by ensuring their voices are more prominently heard in legislative processes.

"Discussion on Women's Reservation Bill happened for a long time," Prime Minister Modi stated in his statement. The women's reservation law was introduced multiple times throughout Atal Bihari Vajpayee's administration, but it was never passed due to a lack of support, leaving the dream unfulfilled. God has given me the chance to move

this along today. "Nari Shakti Vandan Adhinyam" will guarantee that more women are elected to parliament and other assemblies. There are just 31 women, or 12.4% of the 250 members that make up the Rajya Sabha in India. According to Digital Sansad, a government website, of the 550 members of the Lok Sabha, 82, or 14.9%, are women. According to IPU Parline, a website that offers worldwide data on national parliaments, India is ranked 141st out of 185 nations in terms of the proportion of women in parliaments.

When does the bill get transformed into law?

The Times of India reports that the women's reservation bill cannot be implemented until the delimitation process is finished, which entails rearranging Lok Sabha and assembly seats in accordance with the results of a recent Indian census. This suggests that the measure won't take effect until after the Lok Sabha elections in 2024. The following delimitation exercise can only take place following the first post-2026 census, per existing regulation. This effectively means that the bill won't become law until at least 2027. A minimum of 50% of state assembly must also approve the measure for it to become law after it has been passed by both Houses of Parliament.

Important concerns with this measure....

Critics of the bill argue that it might lead to tokenism or that it could reinforce gender stereotypes. Nonetheless, proponents believe that this measure is essential for challenging the patriarchal structure of Indian society and for encouraging more women to participate in politics, which can lead to more inclusive and gender-sensitive governance. Critics contend that because women might not be seen as competing only on merit, the law could maintain the gender gap that now exists. Furthermore, they contend that this policy diverts attention from more important problems with electoral reform, like the criminalization of politics and the absence of internal party democracy. Voters' options for female candidates are restricted by the reservation of parliamentary seats. As a result, several specialists have suggested substitute strategies, like creating dual-member constituencies and making reservations within political parties. Since an MP may lose their ability to run for re-election from a particular constituency, the regular rotation of reserved seats in elections may reduce their motivation to serve their community.

II. Conclusion



It has taken a while for women to naturally find their places in Indian legislative politics. Due to gender dynamics, women's political advancement has been shown to be negatively impacted by the norms surrounding gender interactions inside the Indian political system. Politics in India has historically discriminated against women. To change the conversation about governance and policy-making and move India closer to becoming a fully inclusive and representative democracy, more women need to be represented on these forums. Every registered political party should be required by law to provide women with one-third of the party tickets it distributes in each election. To make this tactic possible, the Representation of People Act, 1950, will need to be changed. It will be necessary to resurrect the Women's Reservation Bill of 2008, which required the reservation of one-third of seats in state and legislative assemblies for women. In the face of entrenched patriarchal traditions, women's political participation is rising in the nation along with their educational attainment and level of financial independence. There are still not enough women running for state and parliamentary office. Women's representation has increased in places where local self-government has implemented the constitutionally required reserve of seats for women. Numerous international research studies have demonstrated that women excel in governance, policy implementation, and policy making. In politics, this human resource is not fully utilized. Thus, the author comes to the conclusion that women in modern Indian culture have only travelled half of the political journey. After 75 years of independence, gender parity in political representation is still unattainable, and in the current context, the representation of a third gender is still a pipe dream.

Suggestions:

1. We can use constitutional or statutory amendments that have immediate effect to support feminine gender in order to overcome cultural constraints that discriminatory gender dynamics impose on women's political development.
2. Women should be involved in politics at all levels, including grassroots, party worker, voter, candidate, and people's representative. This can be achieved by raising awareness of the importance of women's contributions and enforcing the mandatory quota reservation system in elections.
3. Gender dynamics norms that perpetuate the assumption that males should only work in politics

will be questioned and replaced with a vision of gender equality.

4. The ultimate goal of Political Development of Women is to see the 2030 Global Sustainable Development Goals realized.

5. This author would like to propose that political representation be inclusive and that the Third Gender receive equal representation with the female gender in order to truly support representative democracy.

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