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Challenges faced by women leadership in politics

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Abstract

Gender equality and equal chances are necessary components of a just society, progress, and national and international security. A structural interventional strategy in social work seeks to promote gender empowerment via women's effective engagement in politics. The challenges that females encounter in Indian politics were discussed in this paper. The prime aim of this paper is to study the challenges faced by women leadership in politics. To achieve the aim of this paper, secondary sources of information was used. For this purpose various articles, case studies on women leadership in politics are selected and studied. This present paper found that patriarchal views, weak informal networks, finance, religion, and educational level are various challenges which are encountered by the Indian women. This paper discusses how to address these issues, like, the development of electoral reforms that promote equitable participation of females, the improvement of competency for women candidates in politics, elevated government assistance for women's representation in politics, and the use of social media and education to change society's attitudes. The paper conclude that, while India is still a long way from attaining the necessary 33 percent female representation in government, Indian women have a bright future in politics. The survival of Indian democracy requires a gender-balanced political leadership.

Keywords: Gender equality, structural interventional strategy, gender empowerment, electoral reforms

1. Introduction

Women are constantly expressing their leadership influence felt in commerce, management, academia, architecture, healthcare, and other sectors on a local, national, and worldwide scale. Women are becoming increasingly motivated to break through the traditional glass ceiling that has kept them from ascending to positions of leadership, while possessing the required skills and ability. Gender has no bearing on leadership. It's a set of leadership qualities that come naturally or are nurtured in people growing into powerful leaders with a wide following. Both males and females may be leaders (*Women in Leadership - Introduction*, n.d.). Females pursue to be under-represented in political office all over the world, and they continue to know less about and participate in politics than males (Goyal, 2019) ^[4]. Women's engagement in politics and the democratic process changes around the world, but it has become an important aspect of modern discussions about development and governance (Ogbogu, n.d.) ^[6]. Women's political engagement in any nation provides a snapshot of how women are regarded in society. Any country's progress is also dependent on equitable involvement of men and women. Women continue to battle for equality in society. Their difficulties and problems are often ignored and unacknowledged because to their minimal participation in Indian politics (Alam, 2015) ^[2].

2. Historical framework

Women's standing in post-independence India recovered strength and began to advance. Women began to take part in many aspects of life, including politics, social, economics, culture, and religion. They are enrolling in educational institutions in order to obtain a higher education. They have become professionals, such as physicians, attorneys, scientists, teachers, educators, directors, executives, and so on, as a result of their realization of the importance of education. India is ranked 18th in terms of political empowerment in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2020. Indira Gandhi's two terms as Prime Minister, from 1966 to 1977 and again from 1980 till her death in 1984, had a tremendous impact on India's status. Gandhi's importance as a prominent female politician must not be overlooked. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment, passed in 1992, requires that one-third of village government head positions be designated for women.

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The program was implemented in order to improve female political involvement at the municipal level. As a result of the legislation requiring women to be represented in politics, the number of females elected members at the municipal level has increased. India has been attempting to keep track of the number of female representatives at the panchayat level, with figures indicating that women make up 30 to 50 percent of elected officials at the local scale. Nagaland, Sikkim, and Manipur are among the Indian states with no women ministers. No state has even a third of women ministers - Tamil Nadu has the greatest proportion of female ministers at 13%, while 68 percent of states have less than 10% female presence in state leadership positions. Women's vote share in India grew considerably during the previous 50 years, according to a 2014 research, which was regarded as a good trend ("Women in Indian Politics," n.d.)^[2].

3. Research objectives

- To study the challenges faced by women in politics.
- To examine the factors which restrain women for participating in politics.
- To study how to overcome the challenges faced by women in politics.

4. Challenges faced by women leaders

Women leaders have higher and more difficult problems than males since they must also contend with perceptions. With more women who take up leadership roles, previously unrecognized concerns and obstacles associated with such a position are now becoming apparent. Life is becoming increasingly tough for them due to rising stress levels and multiple responsibilities at work and at home, as well as the continual need to prove herself (*Women and Leadership*, n.d.). Women's political engagement is hampered or facilitated by a variety of circumstances, including socioeconomic status, geographical, cultural, and political system form (Shvedova, 2007)^[9].

4.1 Political obstacle: Women's political representation and advancement are hampered by four primary political obstacles. Absence of party support, such as restricted financial assistance for female candidates, restricted access to political connections, and more stringent standards and credentials applied to women; absence of availability to well-developed education systems for women's leadership in general, and for guiding young women towards political life; and the essence of the electoral system, which favors men (Singh, 2011)^[10].

Women are prevented from participating in politics for a variety of reasons. There are many factors like; the present cultural value system, the private-public gap in terms of domain identity, and male predominance in political institutions, which are responsible for less participation of women in politics. They have been unable to amass help and services for cultivating their political constituency due to their low share in India's inner political party structure. Women do not receive appropriate financial backing from political parties to run for office.

4.2 Social obstacle

One of the most significant barriers to women being politically engaged is illiteracy. They are unaware of their basic and political rights due to a lack of awareness. Parties prejudice not just in terms of seat allocation in polls, but

also inside their ranks.

Poverty is also a significant barrier to women's political engagement. An impoverished family's daughter kid is the primary victim, and she faces several challenges. Women are also shown to have a greater rate of dropping out of school than men. Women's thinking is trained in a sense to accept that they are of a lesser class than males since this has been the viewpoint of many in society due to social and cultural standards. The caste system, or social class structure, is also a significant barrier. Because of their families' poor money, women from lower castes were unable to attend school. To provide for their family, many women were involved in low-paying jobs. In India, the majority of women do not own land or property. They don't even get a piece of their parents' assets (Singh, 2011)^[10].

The country's poor health situation for women is also a big barrier to their involvement. In the country, there is a disparity in access to healthcare facilities. Gender inequality in health-care settings occurs even before birth. The majority of girl children are terminated due to the family's preference for sons. Daughters are denied the same feeding services as males after they are born. Due to marital responsibilities and dowry systems, women are also seen as less fortunate. Hospitals are also said to as "gender biased" since males attend hospitals at a higher rate than women (Alam, 2015)^[2].

The possibility of violence, according to Martha Nussbaum, is a substantial impediment to women's capacity to participate in politics. "Violence and the prospect of violence undermines many women's ability to engage actively in various types of social and political connection, to speak publicly, to be acknowledged as respected people whose value is equal to others," writes Martha C. Nussbaum (Nussbaum, n.d.). Because of the continued unequal allocation of family care obligations, women spend significantly more time than males caring for their homes and children (Shames, n.d.)^[8].

5. How to overcome the challenges

Women's groups have concentrated on the empowerment of Indian women to overcome challenges of discrimination and violence. Empowerment is linked to family support and better standing inside the home, both of which are threatened by domestic violence and sexual assault. Poverty and illiteracy are two socioeconomic factors that restrict women from running for public office or even voting. The inability to comprehend Panchayat Raj norms erodes one's confidence in running for public office (Ria, n.d.)^[7].

5.1 Developing competency for women candidates in politics (*Advancing Gender Equality in Political Decision-Making: Good Practices, European Institute for Gender Equality*, 2016)^[1].

- Mentoring in politics. Guidance and training programs help women prepare for political positions and improve their political abilities.
- Positions in the community. Women who work at the local level get the skills they need to advance to higher levels of government and careers in regional and national politics. As a result, measures aimed at encouraging women to join municipal politics can be especially beneficial in increasing women's political engagement.
- Platforms for Female. Many competencies development

initiatives include strengthening women's platforms, relationships, and pools of future candidates.

- Sustained Training: Providing female candidates with continuous and systematic training delivers greater outcomes than providing stand-alone training during a single period of the electoral cycle. The applicability and effectiveness of training is increased by including local female leaders or trainees who pass on their expertise to others.
- Finance: To overcome the barrier of financial deprivation, women are being taught how to fundraise and funding networks are being established.
- Leadership skills: Offering orientations for newly appointed women, leadership skills training, networking opportunities, and offering chances to stimulate policy discourse are all examples of ways to improve elected women's impact and leadership.

5.2 Support from government for women in politics

There should be State support for efforts to encourage women to join political parties. These organizations host seminars and training events, push for more female to get nominated, as well as provide networking opportunities for female politicians. Increased political party support for women participation in politics (*Compendium of Good Practices for Advancing Women's Political Participation in the OSCE Region, Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE) Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)*, n.d.)

- Meetings will be held in convenient and welcoming locations, and at times when women will be able to attend.
- Financial assistance for caring obligations or child care provision.
- Within parties, distinct women's wings or groups.
- Training programmes that are tailored to the needs of women and men
- Quotas inside the party.
- Political parties should conduct gender audits in order to develop gender action strategies.
- Set goals for female attendance at party conventions and ensure that women are given safe seats.
- Share your experiences with people from other nations and places.
- Women in campaign leadership positions should be trained and promoted.

5.3 Transfer attitude (*Advancing Gender Equality in Political Decision-Making: Good Practices, European Institute for Gender Equality*, 2016) ^[1].

- Materials for Publicity: Preparing PR resources, like manuals, toolkits, and handbooks, for the awareness campaign strengthens it and gives useful information and reasoning.
- Collaboration between the media: Obtaining favorable media coverage, whether on television, radio, social media, internet, or print media, boosts the effect of public awareness campaigns. To encourage public discussion on women's empowerment, training, and creating favorable images of women leaders, employ awareness campaigns, television shows, and radio programs.
- Education: Design and deliver gender-sensitive civic

and voter education programs to women and men citizens, emphasizing why female should participate and how family help for home and child care obligations may assist women in being politically involved.

6. Conclusion

Women's engagement in politics is critical for successful governance, and this paper suggests that an enabling environment be created to increase women's political participation. It also suggests that the constitutional legal framework be improved to better accommodate the requirements of women in politics. Women should also be financially empowered by having access to education, job, and finance. It is also suggested that political party members get gender awareness training, as well as leadership training for future female leaders. Political parties' agendas and operations should include gender-sensitive and egalitarian policies, and their execution should be evaluated. It is critical to pay attention to essential issues in order to increase women's empowerment chances. These include education and training programs, the prevention of numerous types of criminal and violent acts, the requirement of equal rights for them, the elimination of discriminatory treatment against them based on factors like race, caste, class, religious doctrine, ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic class, and encouraging them to participate in politics.

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