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Political empowerment of women in India with special reference to Assam

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Abstract

Political Empowerment of Women in India with Special Reference to Assam

Political empowerment of women is a very widely discussed concept among the present academia. The Gender Development Index measured under United Nations Organization recognizes it as one of the core parameters of development. This paper therefore, undertakes the issue of political empowerment of women as the focal point of discussion. Again, the Global Gender gap report 2025 pointed out that there is wide gender disparity has been witnessed more especially in women's representation in political spheres in India (<https://csbias.com/world-economic-forums-global-gender-gap-report-2025-india-ranks-131st>). Thus, the study aims to comprehend the conceptual framework of political empowerment of women, the causes and determinants of women's political empowerment measures adopted in India to strengthen women empowerment and the available statistical figure out in the context of political participation of women in India in general and in Assam in particular. The paper is based on purely secondary sources of information. it uses descriptive analytical methods to explain the results.

Keywords: Political Empowerment, gender inequality, social issues, women's representation in politics etc.

Introduction

Political Empowerment of Women in India with Special Reference to Assam

Political empowerment of Women is a challenging area of work for present day academia and administration. Political empowerment can be understand as involvement of Women in political affairs of the State and more specifically in the political decision making process. It incorporates a vast area from the voting rights of women to participation in legislature at local, State as well as National levels. Before discussing about political empowerment of Women, we have to first talk about women empowerment. Women empowerment as a concept was first introduced at the

International Women's Conference at Nairobi in 1985 where it had to define as redistribution of social power and control of resources in favour of women. Empowerment of women involves many things-economic opportunity, property rights, political representation, social equality, personal rights and so on (D. Syamala Devi & N Kedareswari, 2001, p.180-181, In Rao, D. Pulla). Thus, empowerment entitles women in various domains starting from the access to and control over material, intellectual and human resources. Empowerment is the redistribution of power that challenges patriarchal ideology and male dominance (N. Sushma, 2001, p.165, In Rao, D. Pulla). Again, Political empowerment of women is a part of the overall empowerment process. Political participation is a major path to women's empowerment and participation in the decision making process or increase decision making power will lead to women's empowerment in the true sense of the term (N. Sushma, 2001, p.165, In Rao, D. Pulla).

Pam Rajput (2001) delivers that "Empowerment of women in all spheres, in particular the political sphere is crucial for their advancement and the foundation of gender equality. It is central to the achievement of the goals of equality, development and peace." Besides, Women's political empowerment implies the decentralization of power and authority in the deprived, oppressed and powerless people who have not been able to participate in the decision making processes and implementation of policies and programs of both government

organizations as well as familial and societal matters (<https://studymaterial.com/political-empowerment>).

According to Kabeer (1999), we define political empowerment as the process by which those who have been denied the ability and agency to express their voice in the political system acquire such ability. By political we refer to actions and beliefs that pertain to government institutions or are in service of engaging government institutions and policies (Burns *et al.* 2001).

(<https://emerge.uscd.edu/measuring-womens-political-empowerment-the-womens-empowerment-as-political-citizens-index/>)

Political empowerment involves having the power, ability, critical awareness, and sense of group identity to take action in order to create change in a political system. Having a sense of group identity and collective group interest is a critical component of political empowerment (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8222947/>). Therefore, political empowerment among women implies the degree of equality and freedom enjoyed by women in the shaping and sharing of power and the value given by the society to political role of women (Sabana, T. 2011, p.25, In Rao, D. Pulla). Again, political empowerment refers to the equitable representation of women in decision-making structures both formal and informal and their voice in the formulation of policies affecting their societies (Sujatha, D.Sai & Lakshmi, K.Dhana, 2001, p.100, In Rao, D. Pulla). According to P. Srivatsa, 'Political empowerment refers to the process by which women acquire due recognition on par with men, to participate in the development process of the society through the political institutions as a partner with human dignity. Political empowerment denotes a distinct role for women in the formation of policies and influencing decision-making process by integrating them into the political system' (https://yojana.gov.in/public-account_2016sep.asp).

Basically three fundamental and non-negotiable principles to be addressed to attain the goal of Women's political empowerment:--a) The equality between women and men b) Women's right to the full development of their potentials; C) Women's right to self-representation and self-determination." According to the Jakarta Declaration (1994). "empowerment of women is not only an equity consideration, it was also a necessary precondition for sustainable economic and social development." (Subrahmanyam, P.V.V.& Rao, I. Dosagiri, 2001, p. 218, In, Rao, D. Pulla)

Thus, from the above discussion it can be said that political empowerment of women is an entitlement of women to have their say in decision making and ability to take active participation in the political system, its transformation and changes in directions as per their preferences. It talks about the system of transferring various components of power such as resources, capabilities and positions etc. to those who have not it. Hence, if one considers Political empowerment of women as end then women's political participation is the core means to achieve that end.

Objectives

The paper enables to achieve the following objectives:

- Understand the concept of Political Empowerment of Women
- Factors that affect the Political Participation of Women
- Measure adopted in India for Political Empowerment of

Women

- Role and Position of Women in the Parliament and in Assam Legislature

In the introduction section, the author describes about the concept of political empowerment of women. Therefore, in the next section we will explain about the determinants or factors that affect the issues of participation of women at the political level.

Factors that affect Political Participation alongside the Barriers to Political Participation of women:

When we talk about the aspects of political participation of women, academicians and researchers have identified a number of interrelated factors that give rise to multiple issues ranging from responsibilities towards family and children, traditional gender stereotyping, division of labour and socialization, role of political parties, religious and cultural acceptances, and financial barriers as major obstacles to women's political participation (Ara, Fardaus: Barriers to the Political Participation of women: A Global Perspective

(<https://societyandchange.com/uploads/1650257648.pdf>).

Courage Mlambo & Forget Kapingura, in their article reveals that mainly the political, socio-economic and cultural barriers constrain or prevent women's participation. Factors come to the fore are Violent conflict, sexual violence and war, Electoral contests: voter intimidation, persecution, arbitrary arrests and assassinations, Institutional factors: party politics, cultural and traditional norms and economic factors

(<https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2019.1681048>).

Another observation summarizes that women's participation in political processes is restrained due to a number of social, economic, historical, geo-graphical, political and cultural issues. It results their minimal participation and even their exclusion. Illiteracy, women's triple burden, patriarchal values, lack of access and control over income and other resources, restrictions to public spaces and insensitive legal systems continue to impair their effective political participation. This is compounded by the lack of infrastructural facilities and support services to facilitate their participation. Besides Gender sensitization, personal/familial factors, media insensitivity, training etc. are some of the issues that hampered participation (Sujatha, D. Sai & Lakshmi, k Dhana, 2001,p.104, 105, 107, In Rao, D. Pulla).

From the above discussion one can derive that there are a number of factors that often hampers in the way of political participation of women:

- Responsibilities towards Family and Children: Women of a particular household usually come out and work in social life after completion of her family responsibilities, caring of children and maintenance of household chores. Gender bias patriarchal values, social acceptance, gendered division of labour etc. are the hiding forces that also destructs the coming out of women to social life and according that hampers their political participation too.
- Lack of education, awareness and economic privileges: Due to lack of education, political awareness and training is also limited among the womenfolk. Besides, a family generally shows less interest to invest financially when one woman is willing to participate or

contest in electoral process.

- Lack to interests of political parties: Political parties are also not giving enough tickets to women candidates in comparison to male candidates. Media also not vocal about more women participation rather they cover more stories of menfolk in the political field.
- Traditional and cultural barriers: Traditional ethos and cultural connotations also disfavour socio-political participation of women rather supports their engagement in family activities.

After analyzing the barriers as well as factors that influence or hamper political participation of women, now in the next section, we will discuss about the measures adopted in India to strengthen women empowerment.

Measures adopted in India for Political Empowerment of Women

Women empowerment is one of the focused areas of discussion in contemporary times. When we discussed about the available measures for political empowerment of women, we can have to first understand that political empowerment of women is generally possible with two directions first by having maximum number of seats to be filled by women and for that political parties must provide more tickets to women candidates. In Indian context, we can first go through the Constitutional provisions to comprehend the States perspective and measures taken for ensuring political empowerment of women.

The Constitution of India provided for equality of women and direct the State to take necessary measures to equalize the economic-social, educational and political disadvantage faced by the women. (<https://www.legislative-service-india.com/legal/article-1320-women-empowerment-and-constitutional-provisions.html>)

In the following aspects the Constitution is focusing on strengthening political empowerment of women:

Equality before Law

Article 14 refers to the general principles of equality before law and equal protection of Laws.

Prohibition from discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth Article 15 (1) and (2) prohibits the state from discriminating against any citizen only on the basis of any one or more of the aspects such as religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them.

Article 15 (3) makes it possible for the state to create special provisions for protecting the interests of women and children.

Article 15 (4) capacitates the State to create special arrangements for promoting interests and welfare of socially and educationally backward classes of society.

Equality of opportunity

Article 16 provides for equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State.

Article 39 requires the State to direct its policy towards securing for men and women equally the right to an adequate means of livelihood (Article 39 (a), and equal pay for equal work for both men and women (article 39 (d))

Article 39 A directs the State to promote justice, on the basis, on the basis of equal opportunity and to promote free legal aid by suitable legislation or scheme or in any other

way to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities.

Humane Conditions at Work

Article 42 directs the State to make provision for securing justice and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief.

Fundamental Duty

Article 51 A (e) enjoins upon every citizen to renounce practices derogating to the dignity of women.

Besides all these constitutional provisions, the parliamentary initiative again attach the 73rd and 74th amendment of the Constitution of India in the year 1993 and the following measure come to the fore.

Reservation of seats for Women in Panchayats and Municipalities

Article 243 D (3) and Article 243 T (3) provide for reservation of not less than one third of total number of seats in Panchayats and Municipalities for women to be allotted by rotation to different Constituencies.

Article 243 D (4) T (4) provides that not less than one third of the total number of officers of chairperson in the Panchayat and Municipalities at each level to be reserved for women (<https://www.legislative-service-india.com/legal/article-1320-women-empowerment-and-constitutional-provisions.html>).

The day, on which the 73rd amendment became operational, i.e. April 24th is also declared as Women's Empowerment Day.

Besides, there are a number of legislations made by the parliament of India for safeguarding the cause of women. Some of those are:

- **Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987:** The law aimed to more effectively prevent the occurrence of Sati, stop the glorification and address the related matters.
- **Amendment of Criminal Act 1983:** The legislation made domestic violence an offence and rape as a punishable crime.
- **Special Marriage Act 1954:** It sets the minimum age of marriage at 18 for females.
- **Hindu Succession Act 1956:** the act ensures equal share for daughters in father's property.
- **Immoral Traffic Prevention Act (ITPA) 1986:** The act put stop on the trafficking of women and girls for prostitution and increased the penalties for crimes involving minors.
- **Dowry prohibition Act 1961:** The law forbids the exchange of dowry before and after marriage.
- **Maternity Benefit Act 1961:** This law regulates the employment of women for a certain period before and after children.
- **Domestic Violence Act 2005:** The law aims to address and identify all types of domestic violence.
- **Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal), Act, 2013:** This law safeguards s women from sexual in all types of workplaces.
- Besides, the ratification of the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1993 is another notable step to

end discrimination on all spheres in India.

- **National Policy for Empowerment of Women, 2001:** The Government of India had adopted the national Policy for Empowerment of Women on 20th March-2001, with an objective of convey advancement, development and empowerment of Women and to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women.
- **National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW):** It is initiated by the Indian Government in 2010 to support comprehensive development for women (<https://edukemy.com/blog/constitutional-provisions-for-women-in-india-upsc-indian-society-notes/>).

However, it is noteworthy that government of India is implementing a number of schemes under Ministry of Women and Children Development (WCD) to strengthen women empowerment in one way or the other. Some of those are (Schemes/Programmes for empowerment of Women

(<https://pib.gov.in/Pressreleasedshare.aspx?PRID=1795471>)

- **One Stop Centre and Universalization of Women Helplines:** The One Stop Centres (OSCs), popularly known as Sakhi Centres, aim to facilitate women affected by violence with a range of integrated Services. The Women Helpline (WHL) Scheme provides 24 hours emergency and non-emergency and non-emergency response to women affected by violence.
- **Swadhar Greh Scheme:** The scheme provides institutional support for rehabilitation of women affected by difficult circumstances.
- **Ujjawala Scheme:** It prevents the trafficking of women and Children for commercial and sexual exploitation.
- **Nari Shakti Puraskar:** It facilitates institutions that work for development of women in society.
- **Nirbhaya:** The scheme ensures safety and security for women at various levels.
- **Mahila Police Volunteers:** They will serve as a public-police interface in order to fight against women.
- **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP):** The scheme prevents gender biased sex selective elimination, ensures survival, protection, education and participation of girl child.
- **Mahila Shakti Kendra (MSK):** It aims to empower rural women through community participation.
- **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY):** It is a cash transfer scheme to provide maternity benefit to pregnant women and lactating mothers.
- **Mission Shakti:** A number of schemes under an umbrella scheme have started aiming at strengthening interventions for safety, security and empowerment of women.

Hence in this section, we have discussed about the direct constitutional provisions that by and large ensures gender equality, economic, social as well as political empowerment of women. Some of the significant parliamentary legislations are also incorporated here to know about the legislative initiatives of the Indian government at various

times. Again some of the schemes undergoing under the Ministry of Women and Children Development are also enlisted to comprehend about the practicalities of government initiatives to safeguard women and ensure their overall development which will definitely widen the range of political participation of women.

Role and Position of Women in the Parliament

Role and position of women in the Parliament is not a single area of discussion rather it incorporates varied dimensions and influences by a number of related matters like voting rights, tickets given by political parties, pressure of social groups, willingness of women candidates, family pressures etc. In this section, we will discuss about the role and position of women, its related issues, prospects and practical scenario.

In India, the voting rights are conferred equally to men and women since independence. Article 325 of our Constitution states that “No person to be ineligible for inclusion or to claim to be included in a special, electoral roll on grounds of religion, race, caste or sex...” (S. C. Kashyap, 2004, cited in Dilip Kumar R, and M.V. Duraish Kumar, 2019, p. 221). Thus, ensuring all citizens can participate freely in the fundamental electoral process of the country irrespective of their religion, race, caste and sex. Besides, the Constitution also guarantees absence of restrictions on grounds of gender for contesting political offices in our country (S.C. Kashyap, 2004).

Ambar Kumar Ghosh (2023) in his article “Women’s Representation in India’s Parliament: Measuring Progress, Analysing Obstacles” identified three key areas to comprehend women’s participation in politics in Indian context. Those areas are the numbers of women who actually vote, how many of them contest, and how many of them get elected to legislative bodies at various levels. Besides, one can see the role of women as party workers and supporters in election or in other political activities.

Firstly, if we identify the figures of women as voters, according to an official report on the first general elections published in 1955, out of close to 80 million women voters in the country then, “nearly 2.8 million eventually failed to disclose their proper names and the entries relating to them had to be deleted from the rolls” (<https://www.thehindu.com/elections/lok-sabha/1951-52-lok-sabha-polls-when-ec-invalidated-women-voters-who-enrolled-as-a-mother-wife/article67967569.ece>). However, though the women’s participation as voters was not much encouraging at the first general election but it increased gradually. Significantly, in the last Lok Sabha election of 2019, almost as many women voted as men a watershed in India’s progress towards gender equality in politics which has been called a “silent revolution of self-empowerment”. Election Commission released that women voter participation at 67.18% finally outshone male participation at 67.01, in 2019 Lok Sabha poll (<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/women-voter-participation-exceeds-that-of-men-in-2019-Is-polls-cec-chandra/articleshow/87936542.cms>)

Secondly, regarding the candidature of women in legislative bodies, it is important to note that the number of women candidates filled by the major political parties in both the parliamentary and state assembly elections remained quite low till the early 1990’s. The following table shows the figures of elected women in Lok Sabha since 1952.

Table 1: Women in Parliament since 1952

Lok Sabha	Total No. of Seats	Number of women member who won	% of women members who won
1952	489	22	4.4
1957	494	27	5.4
1962	494	34	6.7
1967	523	31	5.9
1971	521	22	4.2
1977	544	19	3.4
1980	544	28	5.1
1984	544	44	8.1
1989	529	28	5.3
1991	509	36	7.0
1996	541	40	7.4
1998	545	44	8.0
1999	543	48	8.8
2004	543	45	8.1
2009	543	59	10.9
2014	543	61	11.2

Source: [https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Representation-of-Women-in-Lok-Sabha-1952-](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Representation-of-Women-in-Lok-Sabha-1952-2014_tbl1_313216585/downloads?_tp=eyJib250ZXh0ljp7lmZpcnN0UGhNzSl6ll9kaXJlY3QiLCwYWdlldjoiX2RpcmVjdCJ9fQ)

[2014_tbl1_313216585/downloads?_tp=eyJib250ZXh0ljp7lmZpcnN0UGhNzSl6ll9kaXJlY3QiLCwYWdlldjoiX2RpcmVjdCJ9fQ](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Representation-of-Women-in-Lok-Sabha-1952-2014_tbl1_313216585/downloads?_tp=eyJib250ZXh0ljp7lmZpcnN0UGhNzSl6ll9kaXJlY3QiLCwYWdlldjoiX2RpcmVjdCJ9fQ)

It is notable that while women candidates in parliamentary elections have increased over time, their proportion compared to male candidates remains low. In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, out of total 543 seats and 726 women contestants 78 seats were won by women politicians i.e. 14%. Therefore, if we compare results of women's representation of the first Lok Sabha with the 17th Lok Sabha, then we can identify a rise of around 10%. Currently, in the 2024 Lok Sabha, out of 797 women contestants 74

women have been elected, i.e. 13.6% and there we have seen a little fall in women's elected positions comparison to 17th Lok Sabha. (<https://www.firstpost.com/explainers/lok-sabha-election-results-2024-how-number-of-women-mps-has-fallen-from-2019-13779294.html>)

Considering the upper house of Indian Parliament, the actual representation of women can be realized with the help of the following table:

Table 2: Women in Rajya Sabha Since 1952

Year	No. of Women won	%	Year	No. of Women won	%
1952	15	6.9	1988	25	10.6
1954	17	7.8	1990	24	10.3
1956	20	8.6	1992	17	7.2
1958	22	9.5	1994	20	8.3
1960	24	10.2	1996	19	7.8
1962	18	7.2	1998	19	7.7
1964	21	8.9	2000	22	9
1966	23	9.8	2002	25	10.2
1968	22	9.6	2004	28	11.4
1970	14	5.8	2006	25	10.2
1972	18	7.4	2008	24	9.8
1974	18	7.5	2010	27	11
1976	24	10.1	2012	26	10.6
1978	25	10.2	2014	31	12.7
1980	29	12	2016	27	11
1982	24	10.1	2018	28	11.4
1984	24	10.3	2020	25	10.2
1986	28	11.5			

Source: <https://m.thewire.in/article/women/women-parliament-lok-sabha-rajya-sabha-political-parties>

The above table shows almost constant figures of women members around 10 % to 12% since 1952 till the middle of the 1970's period in the Rajya Sabha. However, a total of 102 women parliamentarians are working in the present Parliament. Present Rajya Sabha has 24 women M.Ps, i.e. 13% and Lok Sabha has 78 women, i.e. 15%. Again, the

significant portfolios won by the women parliamentarians also represent their active role played in the national legislature. The number of women members in the Council of Ministers under Central government since 1952 onwards are enlisted below:

Table 3: Women in Council of Ministers Since 1952

SL. No.	Duration of Government	Number of Women Ministers	Areas of work of Minister's
1	1952-1957	2	Health Minister, Deputy Minister of Health
2	1957-1962	1	Deputy Minister for External Affairs
3	1962-1967	6	Prime Minister, Finance, health, external education etc.
4	1967-1971	4	Prime Minister, Social Welfare, Tourism,
5	1971-1977	4	Prime Minister, Finance, Tourism etc.
6	1977-1980	4	Social welfare, industry, education
7	1980-1984	4	Prime Minister, Health, Home affairs, education etc.
8	1984-1989	12	Home affairs, education, HRD, Parliamentary affairs etc.
9	1989-1991	02	Environment & Forests, women and child development
10	1991-1996	12	HRD, Tourism, Industry, Welfare etc.
11	1996-1998	6	External affairs, I& B, Welfare etc.
12	1998-1999	4	HRD, I &B, External affairs etc.
13	1999-2004	11	HRD, Power, Mines and minerals etc.
14	2004-2009	10	Social Welfare, tourism, urban employment etc.
15	2009-2014	15	Textile, HRD, WCD, rural development
16	2014-2019	10	External affairs, water resources, WCD, food processing etc.
17	2019-2024	6	Corporate Affairs, Food Processing Industries, Rural Development etc.

Source: [https://www.mpa.gov.in/files/PDF women in Parliament.](https://www.mpa.gov.in/files/PDF%20women%20in%20Parliament.pdf)

Hence, from the above table it is found that though there are very less number of women members in Union government, yet they are shouldering responsibilities of some of the important fields of socio-economic development of India. Although women's participation as voters in elections has increased significantly, the data on women's representation in both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha suggests that the proportion of women representatives has remained low in comparison to their male counterparts. (https://www.orfonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/ORF_OccasionalPaer_382_Women-Parliament.pdf.)

Women's participation in politics is very much visible during the historic freedom movement of India at both the national as well as at the State of Assam. Assamese women like Kanaklata Baruah, Bogeswari Phukanani were actively joined in the freedom movement and sacrificed their lives for the cause of Assam. After independence, active political participation of women in Assam can be seen in the way of their participation as candidate as well as elected MPs in Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha as well as Assam Assembly. The following table represents women's participation in Lok Sabha from Assam and the table shows negligible numbers of women contestants and accordingly the number of elected members is also very low.

Role and Position of Women in Assam Legislature

Table 4: Participation of Women in Lok Sabha Elections from 1952-2024 in Assam

Year	Women contestants	Elected Women	Year	Women contestants	Elected Women
1952-57	2	1	1991-96	7	0
1957-62	2	1	1996-97	9	0
1962-67	3	2	1998-99	5	1
1967-70	2	1	1999-04	9	2
1971-77	3	1	2004-09	4	0
1977-79	3	2	2009-14	11	2
1980-84	2	0	2014-19	16	2
1984-89	0	0	2019-24	18	1
1989-91	0	0			

Source: Das, R. (2020) Women's representation in electoral politics: A Study of Assam, M.Phil. Dissertation, Sikkim University, p.49. (URL: <https://dspace.cus.ac.in/jspui/handle/1/7134>), retrieved on 05/05/2024)

Significantly, a few Assamese women proved their political competencies and well played in their political career. Besides, we can also analyze the number of women

contestants in the Assam Legislative Assembly since 1952 and the elected MLA's. The number of women elected in Assam Assembly can be read through the following table:

Table 5: Elected Women in Assam Assembly

Year of Election	Women elected	Year of Election	Women elected
1952	01	1985	04
1957	05	1991	05
1962	04	1996	08
1967	05	2001	10
1972	08	2006	13
1978	01	2011	14
1983	02	2016	08

Source: Das, R. (2020) Women's representation in electoral politics: A Study of Assam, M.Phil. Dissertation, Sikkim University p.52. (URL: <https://dspace.cus.ac.in/jspui/handle/1/7134>), retrieved on 05/05/2024)

However, the number of women won in the Assam assembly seats were declining since 2011. Currently, from the 2021 Assembly Election, there are 6 women MLA's

working in decision making process of Assam Legislature. To understand the active participation of women in politics, we can go through the following table.

Table: 6: Female Leaders of Assam holding ministerial positions and members at various levels of Legislature since independence

Sl. No.	Name	Level	Tenure in office	Portfolios
1	Bedavati Buragohain	MP, Rajya Sabha	1954-1966	
2.	Bijoya Chakaraborty	MP, Lok Sabha	2009-2019	
3	Bijoya Chakaraborty	MP, Lok Sabha	May 1999 -May 2004	Union Minister of State for Water Resources, Govt. of India
4	Bijoya Chakaraborty	MP, Rajya Sabha	1986-1992	
5	Sushmita Dev	MP, Lok Sabha,	2014-19	
6	Naznin Faruque	MP, Rajya Sabha	2010-2016	
7	Joysree Goswami Mahanta	MP, Rajya Sabha	1999-2001	
8	Ranee Narah	MP, Rajya Sabha	2016-2022	Minister of State of Tribal Affairs, Govt. of India
9	Ranee Narah	MP, Lok Sabha	2009-2014	
10	Basanti Sarma	MP, Rajya Sabha	1991-2002	
11	Renuka Devi Barkataki	MP, Lok Sabha	1977-1979	Union Minister of State for Education, Social Welfare, Culture
12	Bismita Gogoi	Minister of State (Independent Charge), Govt. of Assam	2015-2016	Handloom and Textile, Sericulture, Culture Affairs, Backward Castes Welfare
13	Pranati Phukan	Cabinet Minister, Govt. of Assam	2011-2015	Handloom and Textile, Sericulture, Culture Affairs
14	Ajanta Neog	Cabinet Minister, Govt. of Assam	2006-2016	Social Welfare, Jails, Public Works Development, Urban Development and Housing, Guwahati Development Department, Planning Development, Judicial, Legislative and Law
15	Sumitra Patir	Minister of State (Independent Charge), Govt. of Assam	2015-2016	Tourism, Tribal Welfare
16	Hemoprova Saikia	Minister of State, govt. of Assam	2001-2006	Handloom, textile
17	Syeda Anwara Taimur	Chief Minister of Assam	1980-1981	
18	Syeda Anwara Taimur	MP, Rajya Sabha	2004-2010	
19	Syeda Anwara Taimur	MP, Rajya Sabha	1988-1990	Minister for Agriculture, Govt. of Assam
20	Syeda Anwara Taimur	Minister	1991-1996	Minister for Public Works, Govt. of Assam
21	Syeda Anwara Taimur	Minister	1983-1985	Education, Govt. of Assam
22	Rekha Rani Das Boro	Minister	1985-1990	Welfare of Plain Tribes and backward Classes
23	Rekha Rani Das Boro	Minister	1996-2001	Social Welfare, Sericulture and Weaving
24	Pramila Rani Brahma	Cabinet Minister, Govt. of Assam	2006-2011	Agriculture, Welfare of Plain Tribes and Backward Classes
24	Pramila Rani Brahma	Minister	2016-2021	Soil Conservation, Environment and Forests, Welfare of Plain Tribes and Backward Classes, Mines and Minerals, Social Welfare

Source: Category: Women in Assam Politics: https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Women_in_Assam_politics and allied sources

Thus, from the above discussion, it is seen that women in Assam are poorly represented at various stages of leadership levels, especially in both national and state legislatures. Hence, by explaining the role and position of Assamese women at different phases of history, one can generalise the statement that though there are historical evidences of active female folk of Assam at various points, yet the large scale political participation among women itself is far from reality.

Conclusion

Political empowerment can be understood as involvement of Women in political affairs of the State and more specifically in the political decision making process. Political empowerment among women implies the degree of equality and freedom enjoyed by women in the shaping and sharing of power and the value given by the society to political role of women. Although women's participation as voters in elections has increased significantly, the data on women's representation in both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha

suggests that the proportion of women representatives has remained low in comparison to their male counterparts. Besides, there are very less number of women members in Union government, yet they are shouldering the responsibilities of some of the important fields of socio-economic development of India. Again, in Assam though there are historical evidences of active female folk of Assam at various points, yet the large scale political participation among women itself is far from reality.

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