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2. Women's Political Participation in India

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The term political participation has a very wide meaning. It is not only related to Right to Vote but simultaneously relates to participation in decision making process, political activism, political consciousness etc. Women in India participate in voting, run for public offices and political parties at lower levels more than men. Political activism and voting are the strongest areas gender equality in politics, the Indian Government has instituted reservation for seats in local government.

Women turnout during India's parliamentary general election was 65.63% compared to 67.09 % turnout for men. India rank 20th from the bottom in terms of representation of women in parliament. Women have held the post of presidents and prime minister in India, as well as chief ministers of various states. Indian voters have elected women to numerous state legislative assemblies and national parliament for many decades.

The movement for women suffrage began in the early 1900s in response to a national movement for suffrage, even though vast majority of neither man nor women had a right to vote the British colonial rule before 1947. After 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 administation records. The rights granted in response to the movement towards suffrage were limited to qualification 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. This is enshrined I Article 326 in the Indian constitution. India is a parliamentary system with houses Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. Rates of participation among women in 1962 were 46.63% for Lok Sabha elections and

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rose to a high in 1984 of 58.60%. Male turnout during that same period was 63.31 % in 1962 and 1968.18 in 1984.

Tge gap berween men and women voters has narrowed over time with difference of 16.7% in 1962 to 4.4 % in 2009.

Voters turnout for national elections in the past 50 years has remained stagnant with turnout ranging between 50 & 60%. State election have seen a growing trend in women's turnout is exceeding male turnout. Increased turnout of women was repoted for the 2012 Vidhan Sabha election with states such as Uttar Pradesh reporting 58.82% to 60.29% turnout.In the 2013 assemly election, women's overall turnout was reported to be 47.4% and male turnout was 52.5% . Indian states of Arunchal Pradesh, Goa, Kerala, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Daman and Diu and Punuchery all reported higher turnout among than men in 2013

Increased participation is occurring in both rich and poor states in India. The sex ratio of voters has improved from 715 female voters for every 1000 male voters in the 1960 to 883 female voters in the 2000s. The election Commission of India has sought to increase voter turnout by cleaning up electoral rolls and removing missing or deceased members. Voters outreach has included door to door voter registration and in 2014 election, voters will be issued a photo id with pollng station information turnout in India is also partially due the women voters. ECI has sought to encourage voter registration among women participation through education and outreach on college and university campuses. Growing participation has also been attributed to increased security at polling station.

2014 elections

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

Women politicians in Lok Sabha

Sr.No	Year elected	No of women politicians elected
1	17th (2019)	78
2	26th (2014)	64
3	15th(2009)	52

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India has a federal form of government, with devolved powers. The elctorate votes to elect a national parliament as well as state assemblies. In 2012 India had a minimal percentage of 10.9% women elected representatives in the national parliament which is but relatively hifher than Hungary 8.8% Brazil 9.6% China 9.1% and Malaysia 9.8%

A broader measure of political participation includes number of women candidates who compete for election and women in stste assemblies. According to world Economic Forums annual global gender gap index studies, which considers such a broader scale, India has ranked into top 20 countries worldwide for many years, with 9th best in 2013-a score reflecting more women's participation in Indias political process than Demark , Switzerland, Germany, France and United Kingdom.

To remedy low participation of women electors, India in 1994 established quotas in Constitutional amendments 73 & 74 to reserve 33% of seats in local govrnments for women. The women reseration bill 108 amendment has been introduced in the national Parliamnent to reserve 33% of Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha seats for women. The bill has yet to be passed by Lok Sabha signed into law. The discussion of womens resevaration began in the 1920s and continued inti the 1930s untill a compromise was reached with Britain to allow women in urban areas to vote. Discussion of women resevaration were again introduced in 1974 by the united Nation Commission on the status of women's in India, but India did not fully establish quatas in local government untill 1994. Local governing bodies in India are called Panchayati Raj institutions and one third of seats and leadership positions must be reserved for women . States such as Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Kerala, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tripura and Uttarakhand have increased reseravation to 50 %. The National government has also proposed to rise the level of reservations in PRIs to 50%

Seats reserved for women are rotaed for assurance that each seats has an equal chance of being reserved. After the establishment of women reservation, political participation went to from 4-5% TO 25-40 % among womens and gave millions of women the opportunity to serve as leaders in local govrnment. Odisha, an Indian state, established reservation prior to the 73th amendment and they had 28,069 women elected in 1992 and 28,595 women in 1997. Class difference have manifested with poorer women gaining presence in panchatats, but women of a higher class being elected as chairpersons.

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Concerns remain in reserving seats for women in elected positions. The issue of training has become an increasing concern with preparing women for the role of leadership. It was found in Tamil Nadu that women lack the education and training to understand procedures in panchayats. Family also plays a significant role in women's participation in government. Familial influence can be a barrier or a support system for female elected officials in terms of connections. Family connections can help women seek elected positions at both te national and local government level. There has been concern over the role of womenas proxies for ale family member, but women may still have been increased in the number of public goods, including water and road, irrigation, education and water. Women are also likely to bring welfare issues such as violence against women, childcare and maternal health to consideration.

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