

Gender Equality and Women in Democratic Politics

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Abstract:

Gender Equality is a current political issue. Globally, women's political participation lags behind men. The beginning of the 20th century saw a transformation in almost all phases of women's daily activities, from the household to the public sphere. The emergence of a women's association to protest for equal freedom and rights and the ups and downs since modern times. Women are neglected at family, community and society levels and live as an oppressed class. Although women make up almost half of every society, their roles, resources, status and participation in all areas of social life are considered low compared to men. The prevailing system of male dominance in society creates gender inequality, discrimination, exploitation of women, it is against human rights. The political participation of women is considered a fundamental element of building equality between women and men and the development of democracy. This work basically aims to study how women's political participation can contribute to the creation of gender equality, that political participation is one of the solutions to establish gender equality in the global world.

Keywords: Gender equality, politics, democracy, women.

INTRODUCTION

India is a democratic country. Democracy is the ideology of the Indian political system based on representative government, people's participation in politics. Gender equality is a hallmark of democracy. Gender refers to social and cultural differences between men and women. It is used to indicate differences, discrimination, inequality and oppression that characterize society due to the presence of religious, cultural and social customs, traditions and values. Gender difference and discrimination is a product of man-made and male-dominated society. Unlike such discrimination against women is unreasonably harmful, senseless and wrong. This is a crime and therefore must be eradicated through political participation. Political participation is another democratic concept. Political participation can be defined as the activities of citizens that influence politics. Empowerment of women and gender equality in society, as well as their political participation, is integral to accelerating the process of national development. UN Sustainable Development Goal five promotes gender equality. This goal guarantees women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of political decision-making. Realizing women's right to vote is a necessary step towards achieving global gender equality and democratic governance. Furthermore, gender equality is very important for a peaceful, harmonious and sustainable world. The Constitution of India guarantees equality, liberty and the right to vote in its preamble in Part III of the Constitution. Women have the right to vote in elections, be elected to public office, serve on boards of directors, and speak out in all ways that will ultimately affect them, their families, and their communities. Participation in the electoral process is not only about the right to vote, but also about representation, political activism, political awareness and much more. Voting empowers women to analyze, organize and mobilize for

social change. Niti Aayog, the policy arm of the Indian government, has created the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Index, which assesses the performance of all Indian countries in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. This is related to the equal status of women, ensuring equal opportunities and freedom for their development. Empowerment of women means an increased role in decision making. A few decades ago, women rarely had a voice. But fortunately, the scenario is changing now and women are participating in elections in large numbers. This is the emergence of a stable and just society. However, it should be understood that women's problems, demands and political aspirations are different from men.

Objectives of the study

1. To analyze the political participation of women to increase gender equality.
2. To study the causes of non-participation of women in politics.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted in the preparation of this paper is analytical in nature. In this present task primary and secondary sources of data have used. The primary sources are books and secondary sources are creative writings and relevant materials are collected from various articles, journals and book which are pertinent to study important.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Political Participation

Political participation refers to an individual's participation in the political process. Political participation means sharing power, decision-making and policy-making at all levels of the national government, more than exercising the right to vote. It allows people to fully participate in politics. There are different types of women's political participation, which include:

Voting, working with election campaigns and organizations, working with government departments, participating in protests and demonstrations, working informally with others to solve community problems, Training and leadership programs, Representatives of heads of state, Members of parliament, Members of legislatures and Panchayats.

Achieving Gender Equality

Gender, the difference between men and women, is innate as a creation of Almighty God and is a form of culture that must be nurtured and socialized to a wider society since the beginning of time. This is why the distinction between gender roles is so important and helps to rethink the division of roles that people have in order to create a more dynamic and effective gender reality in society. He was born into different roles, duties and responsibilities in everyday life. Sexual difference is no longer a reason for women to work in politics. The mindset and culture of society that ignores the presence of women needs to be renewed. Political participation for women can start as small as encouraging government programs. Gender functions as a sociocultural construct, where gender represents the difference between men and women that exist in biology and social culture, and we can distinguish between men and women as social beings. Thus, gender can be defined as the concept of difference between men and women, or people's understanding of the differences in roles and responsibilities performed by men and women. The process of political education must take into account the concept of gender equality at the national and international levels, gender equality is very important, but there are often many problems that stand in the way. Most female cadres in political parties do not participate fully. In addition, women are nominated as candidates or regional candidates in the elections. Many countries like

Indonesia have political dynamics. Gender, what has happened so far is political discrimination against women in the world of democratic life and politics.

Significance of Gender Equality

Gender equality is intrinsically related to sustainable development and is essential to the belief of human rights for all. The gender equality is very critical to achieve the aim of women empowerment. The general goal of gender equality is a society in which males and females enjoy the identical opportunities, rights and responsibilities in all spheres of lifestyles. Equality between men and women exists when each sexes are capable of proportion similarly in the distribution of energy and affect; have same possibilities for financial independence through work or through setting up groups; experience same get entry to to training and the possibility to broaden private objectives, interests and capabilities; share obligation for the home and children and are completely free from coercion, intimidation and gender-primarily based violence both at work and at home. In context of population and development programmes, gender equality is critical as it will allow males and females to make choices that impact more positively on their very own sexual and reproductive health in addition to that of their spouses and families. selection-making with regard to such issues as age at marriage, timing of births, use of birth control and recourse to harmful practices stands to be advanced with the fulfillment of gender equality. The fulfillment of gender equality implies changes for both women and men. More equitable relationships will need to be based totally on a redefinition of the rights and duties of women and men in all spheres of life, along with the own family, the administrative center and the society, at big. It is consequently essential not to overlook gender as an aspect of men's social identification. This reality is, certainly, frequently not noted, due to the fact the tendency is to take into account male characteristics and attributes because the norm, and people of women as a version of the norm.

However, the lives of males are simply as strongly motivated by way of gender as those of ladies. Societal norms and practices about "masculinity" and expectations of fellows as leaders, husbands or sons create demands on men and form their behaviour. Males are too often predicted to pay attention at the cloth wishes in their households, as opposed to at the nurturing and being concerned roles assigned to females. Socialization inside the family and later in faculties promotes danger-taking behaviour among young guys, and this is regularly bolstered via peer strain and media stereotypes. So, the existence that men roles call for frequently result in their being extra uncovered to extra dangers of morbidity and mortality than women. These risks include ones relating to injuries, violence and alcohol consumption. But it is crucial to well known that wherein gender inequality exists, it's far normally females. Whom are excluded or deprived in relation to choice-making and access to monetary and social assets? Consequently, an essential thing of gender equality is the empowerment of ladies, with a focal point on figuring out and redressing energy imbalances and giving women more autonomy to control their own lives. The adoption of a gender attitude is a first important step; it exhibits that there are hazards and prices to men accruing from styles of gender distinction. It also underscores that gender equality is concerned no longer simplest with the roles, responsibilities and wishes of women and men, but also with the interrelationships among them.

Political Participation of Women in India

In a democratic country like India, men and women have equal rights to participate fully in all aspects of the political process. In practice, it is often difficult for women to exercise this right. The Government of India Act of 1935 gave all women the right to vote unconditionally. In 1950, the Indian constitution gave all political and legal rights to women. There are several laws,

ordinances and amendments that help women get equal political representation in the country. Under the 73rd Amendment Act, 33% seats in the panchayat raj system are reserved for women. It is an important step at the grassroots level for women's decision-making and political participation. This amendment was made to improve the status of women, especially at the village level, thus empowering women in politics. Several important laws have been passed to protect the interests of women. The fundamental rights and directive principles of our Constitution have provided comprehensive guarantees to women. Equality is a fundamental right for Indian citizens against any discrimination in the conduct of public affairs between men and women. UNDP supports women's opportunities and skills to exercise their political rights and participate in decision-making.

Participation of Women in Political Process

Table 1: Representation of women in Lok Sabha

Year	Total seats	Women Elected	
		No.	%age
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	66	12.5
2019	543	79	14.4
Average	528.94	39.52	7.38

Source: Rai, 2011; rao, 2020

Table 2: Representation of women in Rajya Sabha

Year	Total seats	No. of women	% of women
1952	219	116	7.3
1957	237	18	7.6
1962	238	18	7.6
1967	240	20	8.3
1971	243	17	7.0
1977	244	25	10.2
1980	244	24	9.8
1985	244	28	11.4
1990	245	38	15.5
1996	223	19	9.0
1998	223	19	8.6
2004	245	27	11.1

2009	245	22	8.97
2014	245	29	11.83
Average	238.21	22.92	9.62

Source: Census of India 2011

Interpretation:

From the above two table, it can be further analyzed that India is far behind in achieving gender equality, especially a term of representation of women in political decision making, among others. Representation of women in executive government and parliament is extremely low in India both in absolute numbers as well as globally. Between, first Lok Sabha (1952) and the sixteenth Lok Sabha (2019) women representation have increased from 4.4% to 14.4%. Similar trend of low representation of women is also observed in the Rajya Sabha (upper house) during the entire period of post-independence era. Women's representation in Rajya Sabha have increased from 7.3% in 1952 to 11.83% in 2014.

Barriers for Non-Participation of Women in Politics of India

Illiteracy:

One of the main obstacles to the presence of women in politics. India is the country with the largest illiterate population. Illiteracy limits women's ability to understand political systems and issues. Because of their illiteracy, many women are sometimes removed from the voter list and cannot exercise their political rights.

Poverty:

Another obstacle that has led to the decline of women's political participation in India. 70% of India's population is made up of women, most of them live below the poverty line. They have fewer job opportunities and receive lower salaries than men. They have no decision-making role in the family or politics. The institution of marriage is another obstacle that leads to the decline of women's political participation in India. After a woman gets married, all her political decisions are controlled by her family. After marriage, women have little opportunity to run for office or participate in political campaigns.

Discrimination:

Although the Indian constitution eliminates gender and gender inequality, discrimination remains a widespread barrier to women's political participation. The burden of domestic responsibilities is the main reason why most Indian women do not participate in politics. Unlike men, women have fewer opportunities to participate in organizations to acquire leadership skills. The Indian government reserves seats for Dalits and Scheduled Castes, but women face discrimination and harassment as elected officials.

Lack of Awareness of Women:

Female are not aware of their rights charter gives same rights for women and men. As residents, they are able to exercise their right to vote. They could emerge as political leaders and make political selections through them. However, most women are not aware of their rights. Arranged marriage could be a reason for low participation of women in India. Once a woman gets married, all her political decisions are managed by way of the own family. Women do now not have time to participate in elections or take part in celebration campaigns.

Religious Barriers:

India is a nation geared up with many religions. Every faith has its own one of kind beliefs. Non secular is the primary reason for gender discrimination, because of the patriarchal gadget within the society, the gap of gender discrimination among men and women has arisen. Women are underestimated. Men consider that women must live inside the boundary of the house, because of non-secular reasons, girls ought to face gender discrimination and they are not able to enter politics.

Social Cause:

The famous truth seeker Aristotle says that a person who's a social animal and who does not live consistent with the guidelines of society is either a deity or an animal. The society has been looking to impose diverse sorts of restrictions on women inclusive of exercise, child marriage, widow life, maid service, dynasty tradition, estranged wealth, and illiteracy are a number of the vital elements that save you the participation of girls in politics. And promote gender discrimination.

Commercial Constraints:

It is no wonder that the work of women and men has been specific due to the fact historical times because of the gender differences regular in society. Women ought to depend upon a person of the own family for financial assist, due to which they may be disenchanted in taking selections of each type, huge and small. Because of being economically susceptible, even these days women are not allowed to enter politics, while men are capable to take decisions of their own, because of which men are higher and women proportion are less in Indian politics. Gender-based totally discrimination is full-size in India. Here, from delivery to dying, from education to employment, from family to political degree, gender inequality is visible anywhere. On the level of social and political, perpetuating discrimination play a massive and primary role among both genders. Recently the World Economic Forum (WEF) has released the Global Gender Gap Report - 2020 based on the data of 153 countries. In this annual report, India ranked 112 with a 91/100 sex ratio. India has lost four ranks in the case of gender inequality compared to the year 2018. From this rank, we can clearly guess how strong and deep the roots of lagging discrimination are in our country. Some of the main points are outlined below -

Health and Survival:

According to the report, the performance of India (150th place) in the field of health and survival is very poor, so it is worrisome.

Education Opportunity:

Education is also a critical factor in gender discrimination. in step with the Indian census conducted in 2011, male literacy in India is 78.26 percentage and woman literacy is 65.46 percent. in keeping with the record given by way of the sector monetary discussion board, India ranks 112th inside the global in phrases of the supply of tutorial possibilities for women.

Economic Partnership and Choices:

The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 has been enacted in India to eliminate gender discrimination in the employment region, however even after the regulation comes into pressure, the depths of gender discrimination inside the employment zone in India can be definitely measured. According to WEF statistics, the position of women in the economic sector in different countries in terms of

opportunities is as follows - India (35.4%), Pakistan (32.7%), Yemen (27.3%), Syria (24.9%) and Iraq (22.7 %).

Gender Equality can be Convention of Discrimination of Women

The conference defines discrimination in opposition to girls as "any difference, exclusion or restrict made on the idea of sex which has the impact or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or workout by using girls, no matter their marital popularity, on a foundation of equality of women and men, of human rights and essential freedoms in the political, financial, social, cultural, civil or every other area. Such situation ends in women empowerment. Through accepting the conference, States dedicate themselves to adopt a series of measures to stop discrimination towards girls in all forms, consisting of: to comprise the principle of equality of women and men in their felony device, abolish all discriminatory legal guidelines and adopt appropriate ones prohibiting discrimination against women; to set up tribunals and different public institutions to make certain the powerful safety of girls in opposition to discrimination; and to ensure elimination of all acts of discrimination against women through people, agencies or corporations. The convention affords the basis for figuring out equality between women and men through making sure women's equal access to, and equal possibilities in, political and public lifestyles consisting of the proper to vote and to stand for election as well as training, health and employment. States events conform to take all suitable measures, which include law and temporary special measures, in order that women can enjoy all their human rights and essential freedoms. The convention is the simplest human rights treaty which affirms the reproductive rights of girls and objectives culture and lifestyle as influential forces shaping gender roles and family family members. It affirms girls's rights to accumulate, trade or hold their nationality and the nationality of their children. States events also comply with take suitable measures against all kinds of site visitors in women and exploitation of women. Nations that have ratified or acceded to the convention are legally bound to position its provisions into exercise. They are also devoted to publish national reports, at the least every four years, on measures they have got taken to comply with their treaty duties.

Ways to Solve the Barriers

Voting Rights:

Voting is one of the most important acts of political participation. Although women make up half of the country's population, they are not given the same attention. More awareness programs should be created to encourage women to vote. Whether it's a man's or a woman's vote, all voters have equal weight. Women should have the right to be elected and hold high positions in the public sector. There is no discrimination on the basis of type of employment in the Services.

Training and Leadership Programmes for Women:

Various training and leadership programs prepare women for political work and develop their political skills. Education helps women make public decisions, and they become public speakers, confident and politicians with leadership skills. In 2021, with the support of UNDP, the newly elected women representatives can walk together.

Government Initiatives to Eradicate Gender Inequality:

NGOs/Governments can take initiatives to arrange various awareness applications on gender equality. There are numerous plans via the government that may sell gender equality. National coverage of women empowerment 2001, Vocational schooling for females, Beti Bachao Beti padao are desirable examples.

Education:

Education is a vital tool for developing gender equality. Human rights education in faculties and universities is one of the simplest and most crucial solutions to put off gender inequality. The role of education in promoting gender equality, training, gender and improvement is a part of the talk on gender equality and ladies's empowerment, which recognizes the principal function of schooling. The fine consequences of education encompass advanced maternal fitness, decrease little one mortality and beginning rates, and possibilities for women.

CONCLUSIONS

In modern times, there is a lot of interest in studying gender equality. This is one of the relevant political issues. Despite the fact that women constitute almost half of every society, their role, position and participation in all areas of life is unequal and insufficient. The above studies seek to find causes and solutions for gender inequality. Women's participation in politics can be a tool or a means to create gender equality. It could be seen clearly from the above discussion that gender equality is very essential to achieve the goal of women empowerment. It is observed that women in India have been subjected to various types of discrimination and disabilities towards enjoyment of benefits of development consequent upon disempowerment. Hence the empowerment of women could be possible through attainment of gender equality.

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