

Female Participation in Indian Politics : An Overview

*A Research Paper Submitted in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Completion of Summer Internship 2021*

By

Seerat Arora, Simron Tandi, Sentirenla Imchen and Atulya Lucy Alexander

Under the Guidance of

Dr Sayak Bhattacharya

Director of Centre for National Policy Research

July 2021

BONAFIDE CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that this project report entitled “**Female Participation in Indian Politics : An Overview**” submitted to Centre for National Policy Research is a bonafide record of work done by **Seerat Arora, Simron Tandi, Sentirenla Imchen and Atulya Lucy Alexander** under my supervision from **15 May 2021** to **1 July 2021**.



Dr Sayak Bhattacharya

Director of Centre for National Policy Research





Countersignature

Dr Sayak Bhattacharya

Director of Centre for National Policy Research

Declaration by Author(s)

This is to declare that this report has been written by us. No part of the report is plagiarized from other sources. All information included from other sources have been duly acknowledged. We are aware that if any part of the report is found to be plagiarized, we shall take full responsibility for it.

Names	Signatures
Seerat Arora	
Simron Tandi	
Sentirenla Imchen	
Atulya Lucy Alexander	

Acknowledgment

This research work would not have been possible without the constant support and guidance of various individuals who helped us through thick and thin of the endeavour. We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to our guide and director, Dr. Sayak Bhattacharya who, with his vast experience, expertise and guidance, oversaw the completion of this work. His support and patience are unparalleled.

It goes without saying that certain people have also been indirectly instrumental in our work. Firstly, We would like to thank Christ (Deemed to be University) for giving us the opportunity to explore our research endeavours.

The following are the people without whose support we would not have been able to conclude our internship, Rev. Dr. Fr Jose, the Pro Vice Chancellor; Dr Manoharan and Dr Anurag Tripathi, for providing us with the academic space to research and hone our knowledge and skills.

We are forever grateful and indebted to everyone who has been with us throughout this research journey and successful completion of our summer internship.

Abstract

The sub-index for political empowerment estimates the gap between women and men at the most significant level of political dynamic through the proportion of women to men in ministerial positions, the ratio of women to men in parliamentary positions, and the ratio of female to male heads of state in the past 50 years. Caste, class and demographic differences need to be taken into high consideration for if we opt to be conscious of the nuances of how and why women vote because these intersectionalities are majorly instrumental in defining the political aspirations that these women may have or may develop with the course of time. Women's existence and portrayal as citizens in political spaces is highly important on normative grounds of political consideration, inclusion and on political economy aspects because it is likely to result in policy change.

While most of the North Indian social evils against women were absent in South India, caste discrimination and gender inequality gradually penetrated Tamil Nadu's societies. This led to unequal power divisions between the male and female population. Cruelty like the dowry system and female feticide still occur in a progressive state like West Bengal which is more prevalent in the rural areas. Gender discrimination has been very significant in the economic and social dimension of the state. On analysing the election trend, West Bengal is the only state where female political representation has consistently increased since the late 1990s. Under the leadership of Mamata Banerjee, the Trinamool has been a pioneer of women's inclusion in politics. Like other states of India, the women in Jammu and Kashmir remain under the dominance of men in the different aspects of life as in, socio-economic and political. A patriarchal culture is also followed by the Naga society with its deeply established traditional rules. These laws and practices still have a direct bearing on the lives of the Naga people though there is a blend of modernity to the traditional ways of life of the society.

Considering the global aspect in 1893, New Zealand became the first self-governing nation where women got the right to vote in parliamentary elections. Though it took 26 years for women to contest in the elections, the wartime work of women in the public arena such as public sector workers and nurses were recognized and thus resulted in a renewed feminist activism where they were more valued and honoured. The Rwandan genocide shows that women were clearly the largest victims of the conflict. Whether it is the national or international realm, patriarchy is a common enemy of all women across the world that rips them off their fundamental rights.

Table of Contents

Declaration	3
Acknowledgement	4
Abstract	5
Female participation in Indian Politics: An Overview	7
1.1 Trends in women driven elections.	8
1.2 Female Faces : Representation or Staged Actors.	8
1.3 Women centric manifestos : Bait or Boon.	9
1.4 The spatial politics.	10
1.5 Violent Politics.	10
Women Empowerment: A case study of Tamil Nadu	12
2.1 Schemes and Projects.	12
2.2 Socio-economic Trends.	13
2.3 Women Representation in State Politics.	14
Women Empowerment: A case study of West Bengal	16
2.4 Schemes and Projects.	16
2.5 Women Representation in State Politics.	17
Women Empowerment in Jammu and Kashmir	19
3.1 Status of women in Jammu and Kashmir: The Socio-Economic aspect	19
3.2 Women in Administration.	20
Women Empowerment in Nagaland	21

3.3 Status of women in Nagaland: The Socio-Economic aspect	21
3.4 Women in Administration.	22
Female Participation in New Zealand and Rwanda: An Overview	24
4.1 New Zealand.	24
4.1.1 Historical Context	24
4.1.2 Trends in Elections.	
24	
4.1.3 Changes in Political Culture.	27
4.1.4 The Question of Gender Double Bind.	27
4.2 Rwanda.	28
4.2.1 Historical Context	28
4.2.2 What Led to the Increase in Female Participation.	29
4.2.3 Statistics.	30
Conclusion	31
Bibliography	34

Female participation in Indian Politics: An Overview

The void of women's participation in policy and decision making bodies has driven a development perspective which is male-oriented and is heavily burdened with traditional gender roles and expectations. As 2021 is halfway through, the discourse is slowly moving towards questions about voter participation and how it has emerged as a key element of the discourse around the recent state elections in Bihar, West Bengal and other prominent states.

The sub-index for political empowerment estimates the gap between women and men at the most significant level of political dynamic through the proportion of women to men in ministerial positions, the ratio of women to men in parliamentary positions, and the ratio of female to male heads of state in the past 50 years. India's positioning is highly driven by the tenure of Indira Gandhi as Prime Minister from 1966 to 1977 and then again from 1980 until her assassination in 1984. While Gandhi's role as a prominent female leader should not be overlooked, it does fairly slant our interpretation of India's positioning in the index. The other two estimates that constitute the index see India ranked 69th with 30% of women in ministerial positions, and 122nd with 17% of women in parliament. The sub-index also fails to factor in state-level leadership, where significant powers sit. Of India's 28 states, currently only West Bengal has a female Chief Minister.

Besides, the political empowerment subindex focuses entirely on leadership. An attempt is made to explore the factors underlying a range of domains linked to women's political participation in India, including their representation at different levels of India's political system, women as political leaders, and women as active citizens.

1.1 Trends in women driven elections

The trends worldwide over the years have suggested that the female population may be the deciding factor for the elections by constituting the swing vote. It also means that voter turnout amongst women will be higher than ever with each passing election. While this might appear to be a progressive outcome on the surface, one must analyse and question: Does an increase in numbers necessarily indicate more meaningful political participation?

Numbers can often conceal and therefore cast a shadow over qualitative social realities. Statistics and data cannot justify how much agency a woman was able to exercise in casting her vote. To understand that, women, as a category, cannot be treated as one or under the same umbrella especially as a political category. Caste, class and demographic differences need to be taken into high consideration

for if we opt to be conscious of the nuances of how and why women vote because these intersectionalities are majorly instrumental in defining the political aspirations that these women may have or may develop with the course of time. If understood beyond the data there does not appear any significant discernible relation between any government policy and increased women's participation in politics. However, it is not so appropriate to measure empowerment in this manner, since the government is not the only social structure that functions within the patriarchal construct to restrict women's agency.

Few analyses reveal a sharp decline in gender bias in voting over time, across all states, including the traditionally backward states. This decline is exclusively driven by an increase in women participation while male turnout remains unchanged over time. This is a positive and encouraging trend in Indian politics. In particular, this improvement does not seem to be brought about by a chosen top-down policy action but largely due to voluntary participation of women voters in elections, that is the reason, we term this phenomenon as one of self-empowering and strengthening.

1.2 Female Faces : Representation or Staged Actors

Another aspect to the study is that Female political representatives in local government are merely a front for their male relatives. If this was the case, we would see absolutely no difference in the policy formulation by political leaders based on their gender – as these would be regulated by men even in the case of female leaders holding reserved seats. However, this has been refuted by the well-known study by Chattopadhyay and Duflo (2004). Considering the data that the researchers collected on 265 village councils in Indian states of West Bengal and Rajasthan, it is duly noted that the reservation of a council seat has a bearing on the provision of public goods, with female leaders investing more in public goods valued by women, for example, access to safe drinking water.

Our understanding of women's decisions to participate in politics has for a long time non successful history to recognise that the constraint in the given domain is not simply lack of resources, a household restrictions, division of labour or the rules of marriage imposed on women, but the complex amalgamation of these with social norms that prohibit extra and extended household political networks. Once we trace and acknowledge this, it becomes quite feasible to explain and respond to the persistent gender gap in political participation across developing democracies including India.

1.3 Women centric manifestos : Bait or Boon

Many parties like BJP have women-specific manifestos. The list of electoral promises, few of which do get fulfilled to an extent through welfare schemes, ranges from subsidies for institutional birth to monetary support for education and marriage and even “gifting” household articles like grinders and gas stoves. The BJP manifesto heavily propagated its patent “Beti Bachao Beti Padhao” and “Ujjwala cooking gas schemes” to assert that the party has “gone beyond tokenism to take substantive measures to ensure overall development of women and achieve gender equality”. While the BJP also claims that it was our honorable Narendra Modi’s vision that India see “women-led” development, the Congress counter claims that they have always been at the forefront of women empowerment and that they are the only party that gave India a woman head of the government.

Such designated backing to homemakers serves two purposes: First, it emphasizes the significance of women to that particular political party. Second, monetising a homemaker’s work puts weight to the income of a family. In a firmly contested constituency, any extra guarantee may support the electoral fate of the candidate. Yet, the emphasis on a "homemaker"— out of the general women as a constituent need isn't just astounding yet additionally favours the profound into the job of women in India's politics.

For what outcome are these political groups explicitly focusing on homemakers? Is there a quick setting for this? Furthermore, why guarantee cash backing to this section when general pay support plans to families are a frequently rehashed point in the manifestos ? The vast majority of the demands mentioned in it are rudimentary and it is tragic that women have to request these political gatherings to guarantee these basic rights to them

1.4 The spatial politics

The idea of “space” and the role of women is visualised as one that is enacted in the conventional formal space of politics. Thus, according to the studies done earlier , while the informal is perceived as being mediated and touched by culture, formal space is largely looked upon as a space for resolution through dialogue among conflicting groups, peace-building, and negotiation between civil society and the state. In theorising a formal space in conflict zones, civil society is not just the key term, but also a formal space for active participation in politics. Notwithstanding the possibility of conflict in public space for women, there is also another argument that women should be given leadership positions in decision-making or the peace-building initiatives and structures.

Women's existence and portrayal as citizens in political spaces is highly important on normative grounds of political consideration, inclusion and on political economy aspects because it is likely to result in policy change. We know that when women enter politics, policy changes if not significantly but it does bring about a change. In India, women's representation in local elected offices increased the provision of certain public goods like safe drinking water, sanitation etc.

1.5 Violent Politics

Politics and Violence are inseparable and a common scenario of South Asian politics. Electoral candidates and their families as well as voters have time and again confronted brutalities and law disorder during elections. The extreme nature of politics within South Asia often deters women from exercising within the political sphere. Politics has also primitively been endorsed as the territory of men and the perceived political sphere has led to atrocities against women in politics.

Violence against women in politics is violence that takes place within the political domain but that specifically and explicitly targets women. It is used to propagate and enforce traditional social and political structures by targeting women representation who challenge patriarchal set up and the concerned social assumptions and norms. Political violence confines women's mobility and capacity to function to the optimum level.

Few recommendations are listed for abolishing the violent political air in a country like India:

1. Establishment of Interest-based solidarity groups between women
2. Encouraging parallel electoral campaigns.
3. Awareness on issues like human rights and human development
4. Gathering data on harassment and violence against women
5. Lobbying for legislation against harassment and political violence based on gender.
6. Fixing quotas for women at all levels of political, policy and decision-making processes.
7. Undertaking measures to ensure the physical security of women in politics.

Women Empowerment : A case study of Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu has made reasonable efforts for the development of the position of women in the State. For a long time in history, women had a dignified role in society until the thirteenth century, when caste discrimination started. While most of the North Indian social evils against women were absent in South India, caste discrimination and gender inequality gradually penetrated Tamil Nadu's societies. This led to unequal power divisions between the male and female population. However, just like mainstream women liberation movements, the Dravidian Movement in South India voiced for women's liberation from a broader perspective. A Bill was advanced in the Madras Legislative Council in 1931 by Dr Muthulakshmi Reddy to abolish the Devadasi System, which was prevalent in the Madras Presidency.

2.1 Schemes and Projects

The State government has taken many empowering steps through the implementation of various policies and schemes. Welfare activities have been extended to women by the State government through the Department of Social Welfare and the involvement of non-governmental organizations. For the empowerment of rural women, a separate Corporation was established in 1983 (TNCDW). This Corporation was brought under Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department's administrative control in July 2006 to improve coordination in implementing schemes meant for self-help groups. Since 1989 the State Government has reserved 30 percent of seats for women in education and employment. In 1997 'Mahalir Thittam' was introduced and implemented in partnership with NGOs and banks.

2.2 Socio-economic Trends

Socio-economic factors define the quality of life of a woman in a patriarchal society. Hence rural women face far more challenges than urban women. According to the 2001 and 2011 Population Census, the sex ratio for the State registered an increase, but it has been in a continuous decline for the rest of the years. The sex ratio in Tamil Nadu has shown consistent lead than all-India average. Life expectancy at Birth provides a good idea of women's health status. According to official reports, life expectancy in Tamil Nadu has shown a steady increase from 66.2 years in 2002-06 to 70.6 years in 2010-16 which demonstrates the achievements made in the health sector. In the case of female literacy rates, there is a wide disparity. The literacy rates were 73.4 per cent and 86.8 for females and males, respectively, according to the 2011 population Census. The differences in literacy levels

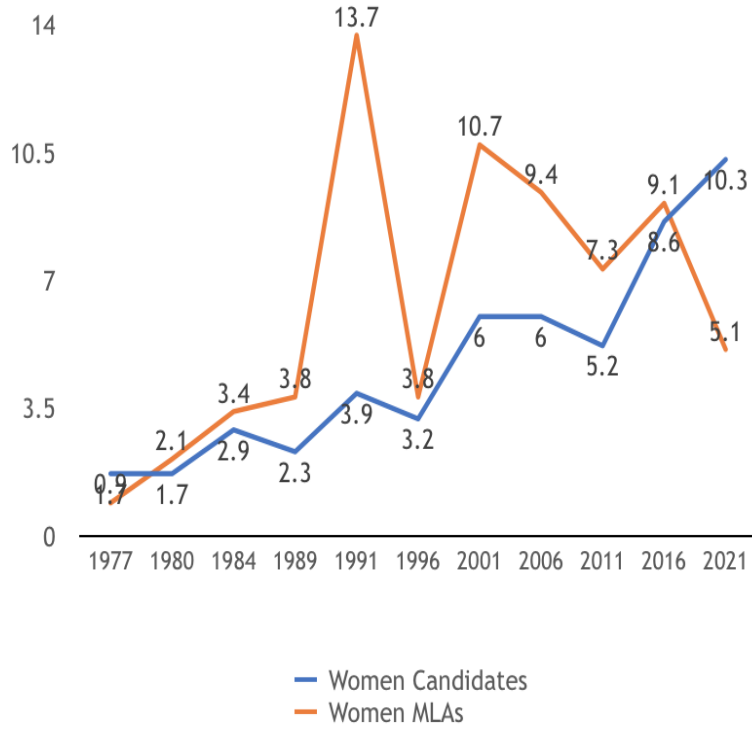
between males and females were remarkably higher in rural areas than in urban areas. The rate of work participation determines women's economic empowerment in society, elevating the status of women in the community. According to Census results for Tamil Nadu, the Work Participation Rate for females rose from 31.5 per cent to 31.8 per cent in 2011. The rate is still low, and it is necessary to ensure better and all-around economic empowerment in Tamil Nadu. Political equality demands the right to access the institutionalised centres of power and includes power-sharing, co-decision making and co-policy making at all levels. Women's political empowerment depends on three factors: a) the equality between women and men; b) the ability of a woman to achieve her full potential; and c) a female's right to self-representation and self-determination. The Gender-Equality Index (GEI) of women in Tamil Nadu has improved significantly between 2001 and 2011 due to the enormous investments in the education and health sector.

2.3 Women Representation in State Politics

The two Dravidian parties in Tamil Nadu have a significant difference. The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) positioned 11 women (5.9%) against 17 for the All India Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) (8.9%). In an assembly of 234, only 12 elected members were women, out of which six were from the DMK, three from the AIADMK, two from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and one from the Congress. Smaller parties like Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam and the Desiya Murpokku Dravida Kazhagam have shown better representation with 9.7% and 11.7% of women candidates. The BJP nominations were highest in Tamil Nadu (15%), and two of the three BJP women candidates were elected in Tamil Nadu. Women representation in Tamil Nadu has gone down and not followed a linear progression like most Indian States. In 1991 there was a peak in women's representation with Jayalalithaa's first term. While in 1989, the AIADMK nominated only two women candidates, Jayalalithaa distributed 27 tickets to women candidates when she took over. However, even Jayalalithaa later did not sustain the inclusion of women, and after a dip in 1996, with the DMK gaining power, women representation has suffered a downward trend. This year's women representation has been the lowest since 1996 and one of the lowest rates in the country as well. As long as parties remain a strong player in the state, women nominations have shown an increase. Still, the representation declines if the party is reduced to a minor coalition partner. The AIADMK alliance has done better than the DMK alliance in 2021, with 9% women candidates against 5.6%. Even though the NTK gave 50% of its tickets to women candidates in 2019 and 2021, none of them got elected this time. In the case of BJP, two out of four MLAs are women. Four women have been elected in the western region, three in the northern region and only one in each eastern and southern region.

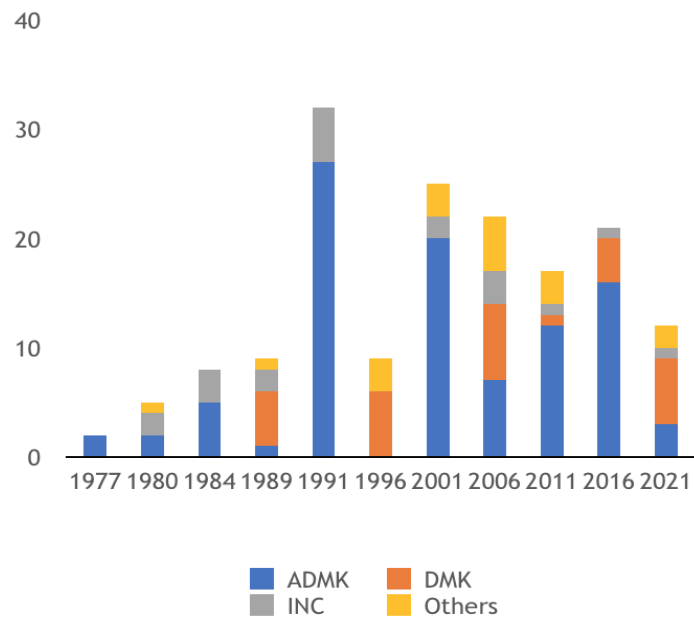
Women Representation among Candidates and MLAs in Tamil Nadu (1977-2021)

Source: TCPD-SPINPER Indian Legislators Dataset



Party-wise Women Representation in the Tamil Nadu Assembly (1977-2021)

Source: TCPD-SPINPER Indian Legislators Dataset



Women Empowerment : A case study of West Bengal

When a woman is deprived of education, health, physical and economic resources etc., the imbalance created abstains women from understanding and attaining the fundamental rights. Cruelty like the dowry system and female feticide still occur in a progressive state like West Bengal which is more prevalent in the rural areas. Gender discrimination has been very significant in the economic and social dimension of the state. The State Government in West Bengal is developing a long-term strategy to involve various social protection schemes and modify them according to the needs of an evolving economy.

2.4 Schemes and Projects

The government plans to introduce a scheme to provide a comprehensive widow pension that advances the current projects. Expansion of disability pensions is another element of inclusiveness. This will avoid expensive institutional care and give way to a cost-effective household community. Women's labour force participation can be increased with effective case management with a package of incentives. The Trinamool Congress Government has brought about many significant initiatives for females in West Bengal in the first five-year term. The West Bengal state government has been making efforts to promote programs like Kanyashree and Rupashree to empower women and delay minor girls from getting married. The state government is working towards the establishment of minority colleges for women in Kolkata. Through the Sabuj Sathi Scheme, the State Government provided bicycles to school children in rural areas. Various Government-sponsored libraries have opened many Women's Corners to be made available to women readers. Through the Swavalamban Scheme, the state government provides training to women on a wide range of livelihood activities, such as Zari craft, handloom weaving, beautician courses, wood carving, etc.

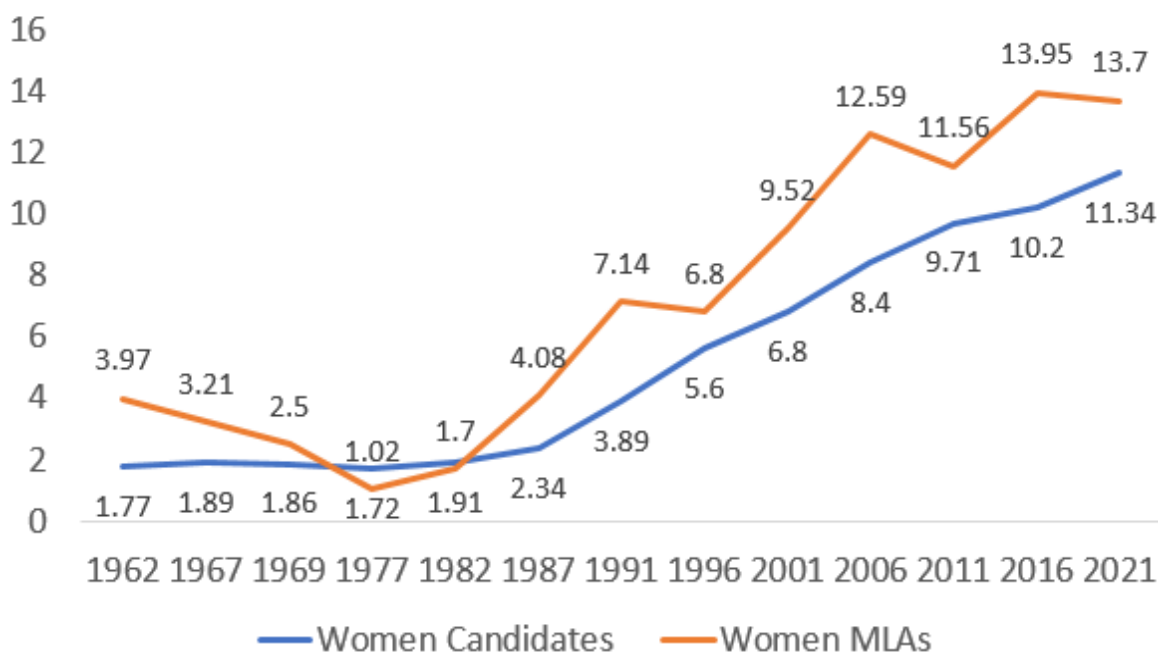
Muktir Alo is another comprehensive scheme for rehabilitating sex workers and provide them with a chance to lead a dignified life and offering alternative career choices. It also aims at protecting the victims of sex trafficking. Maternity and Child Care Leave has been extended for a total period of two years, in stages. Under Project Sukanya, martial arts training has been provided to schoolgirls to empower them to take care of their safety. The Biswa Bangla initiative by Mamata Banerjee has given way to employment opportunities for women. Women participation in MGNREGA has also improved, setting up new milestones and records in the State.

2.5 Women Representation in State Politics

In West Bengal, the ratio of women MLA is superior to that of women candidates because the TMC decided to field 48 women out of its 288 candidates (16.7%). However, it is less than the 41% of women candidates it fielded in the 2019 general elections. 33 of the 40 women in West Bengal ran on the TMC ticket and 7 on a BJP ticket, and a total of 19 women legislators were elected. On analysing the election trend, West Bengal is the only state where female political representation has consistently increased since the late 1990s. Under the leadership of Mamata Banerjee, the Trinamool has been a pioneer of women's inclusion in politics. With more inclusion, the female candidates get the opportunity to take part in political activists, campaigning and mobilisation, political rallies and campaign events. The outpouring of support of women voters for Mamata Banerjee had impacted the election results to a great extent. Even in the last decade's polls, women have always extended their support for Mamata Banerjee. Women have voted for the Trinamool Party in higher proportions (50%) than men (46%). Many welfare schemes targeted at women initiated by the Mamata Banerjee government have earned her good popularity among women voters. Her initiative to give greater representation to women in her party has also been a factor for her massive support from women in the state. Women from lower classes and older women aged 45 years and above have come out in support of the Trinamool Party.

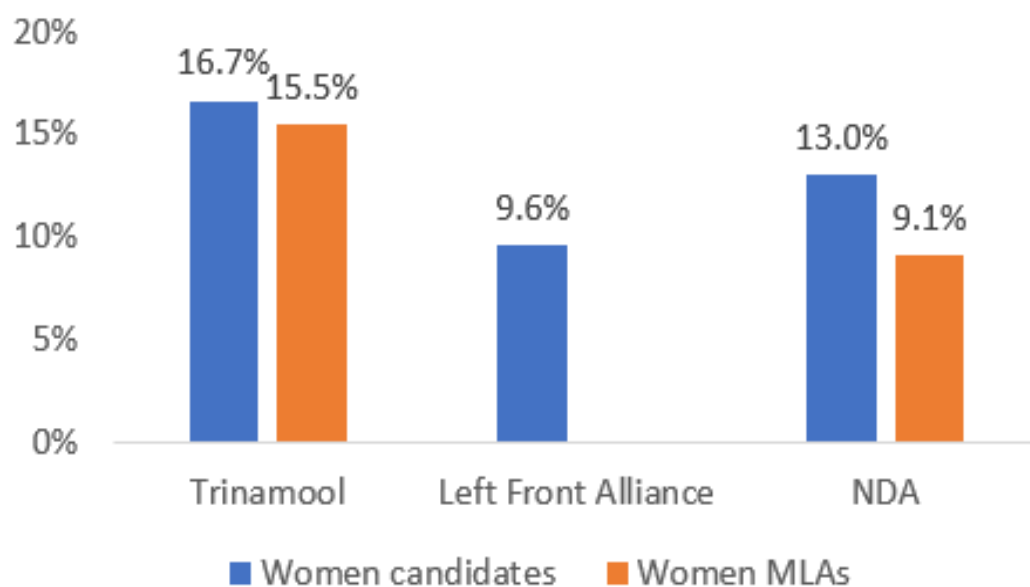
Women Representation among Candidates and MLAs in West Bengal (1962-2021)

Source: TCPD-SPINPER Indian Legislators Dataset



Women Representation among Main Parties and Alliance Candidates and MLAs in West Bengal State Elections (2021)

Source: TCPD-SPINPER Indian Legislators Dataset



Women Empowerment in Jammu and Kashmir

Throughout history, women have been put to discrimination, forcing, subordinating, exploiting, deprived, degrading, hostile and humiliating. In patriarchal countries, women are typically regarded as inferior and as a result, both women and men are refused access to their privileged and utilitarian duties. Roles like leadership and management roles, for example, in religion and government, are exclusively for males. However, the issue of women has been primarily linked to domestic politics, strategies, programmes and schemes, leading to development for women across the board. Like other states of India, the women in Jammu and Kashmir remain under the dominance of men in the different aspects of life, socio-economic and political.

Jammu & Kashmir became a disputed zone after the partition in 1947, between India and Pakistan resulting in huge loss of human life, Govt. and public property. The majority of the topography of Jammu and Kashmir being mountainous led to an obstruction in its adequate rise of infrastructure, along with terrorism and militancy, making it difficult for the people to live a normal life.

3.1 Status of women in Jammu and Kashmir: The Socio-Economic aspect

The society in Jammu and Kashmir is diverse and multicultural, influenced greatly by Indian, Persian and central Asian cultures. All its socio-economic and political developments have been shaped by the different factors both indigenous and the external forces.

Education is an important instrument for the development of human resources. It leads to the advancement of the country and requires the capacity building of both genders. According to the 2011 Census, the literacy rate in Jammu and Kashmir is only 67.16 percent. Out of the total, the male literacy rate is at 76.75 percent while the female literacy rate is at 56.43 percent. While the literacy rate has seen a rise in recent years, the female literacy rate is lower than the all-India level of 70.30 percent. As such, the status of women in the socio-economic life of Jammu and Kashmir is not equal throughout the state. It has been observed that in Jammu and Kashmir, women's rights to inheritance, education, employment, and political rights are significantly lower than those of men. Jammu and Kashmir, like most states of India, has mostly a patriarchal social structure. As a result, women live under the subordination of men. Furthermore, women are given less opportunity to make choices that allow them to modify the circumstances of their life. The activities of the public and state administration are dominated by men and are governed as so.

The Indian Government has implemented exclusive schemes for Jammu and Kashmir for the empowerment of women in the state and aims at empowering women in different aspects. They are,

- i. *Kashmir Humanity Foundation: Helping Hands for Humanity* which aims to provide quality education, healthcare facilities and livelihood opportunities to women.
- ii. *Technoserve*, an organization to help women entrepreneurs.
- iii. *National Minorities Development & Finance Corporation (NMDFC)*: It provides finance to women belonging to the minority communities.
- iv. *National Backward Classes Finance & Development Corporation (NBCFDC)*: It helps women with a minimum of 40% of disability, especially by providing finances and also provides educational loans and micro credit loans.
- v. *Sher-I-Kashmir Employment and Welfare Programme*: This scheme implements the “Empowering Skilled Young Women, 2009” with its main focus to create employment avenues for educated unemployed youth.
- vi. Scheme for empowering skilled young women loan: The scheme was launched on 8th January 2010 by the Ministry of Social Welfare Department and sponsored by the State. It aims at various welfare measures for the socio-economic upliftment of women by providing loans to them so that they can establish their own enterprises.

3.2 Women in Administration

A government's most important instrument is administration in order to achieve the goals set for the country. In the management of the affairs of the government, women are far inferior in number than the men in Jammu and Kashmir. In the administrative structure, out of a total of 26 Ministers of State only two are women (Mir S R, 2017). This shows a picture of the representation of women in politics in Jammu and Kashmir. From the statistics of the General Administration Department of Jammu and Kashmir, the number of men with senior positions is clearly higher than that of the women. The dominance of men over women even in administration is evident through this. The social and cultural factors account for this gender discrimination of women even in politics. As most patriarchal societies which have deeply rooted cultures and traditions, women are assigned domestic roles that make them work at home, affecting the rights they actually have in the political sphere as well as in the social and economic sphere.

The women's representation in politics in Jammu and Kashmir is low as many other states in India. In 1972, four women candidates were elected to the state legislature, making it the highest number of women legislators in the state to date. The percentage of women represented has never been more

than 3 percent. Though this means that there are women representing politics, its ratio is very minimal to the ratio of men representation. Only four women from Jammu and Kashmir submitted nominations for the Lok Sabha elections in 2019, with one withdrawing her nomination and another failing to pay the security deposit. There were just two female competitors in the end, compared to 61 male contestants. Similarly, just 28 women ran in the 2014 Legislative Assembly elections, out of 831 candidates.

The lack of women representation in the decision making processes and the public policies, deprives important rights of the women. Their views on the political affairs are left unheard which may lead to developments and possibilities in a region like Jammu and Kashmir.

Women Empowerment in Nagaland

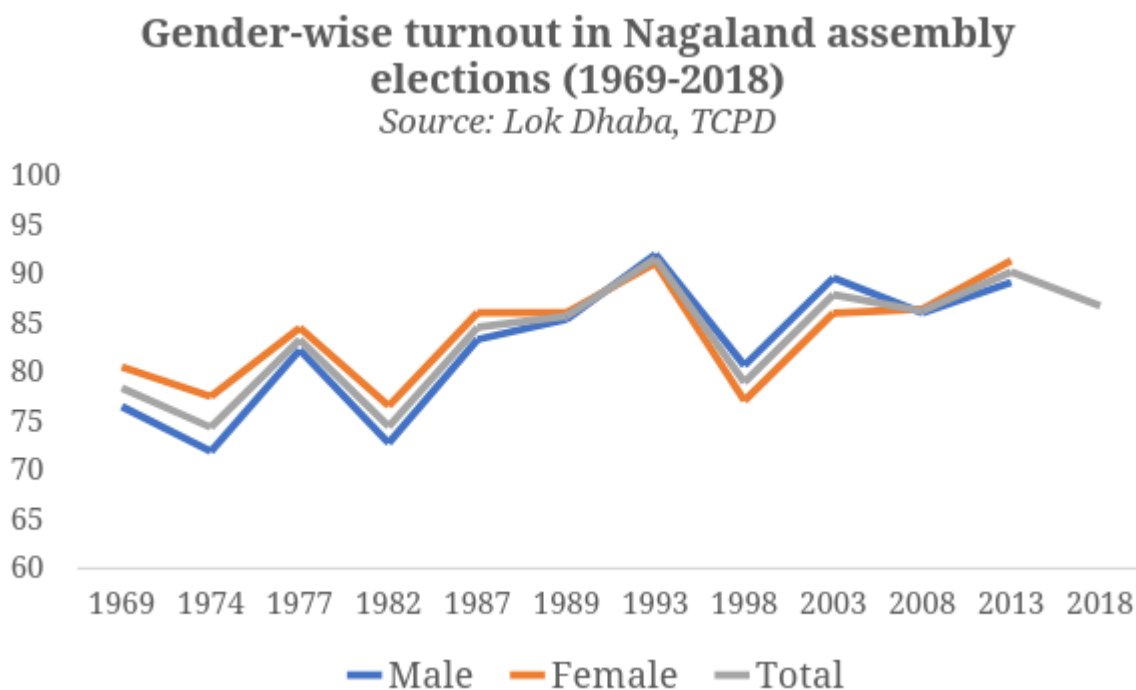
3.3 Status of women in Nagaland: The Socio-Economic aspect

A patriarchal culture is followed by the Naga society with its deeply established traditional rules. These laws and practices still have a direct bearing on the lives of the Naga people though there is a blend of modernity to the traditional ways of life of the society. Women could not be involved in politics and government. However, in many societies women's standing has been enhanced, and for Naga society this can be claimed too. Although the society follows a patriarchal form, the women in Nagaland enjoy freedom and have important roles in the family and the different communities, and have greater responsibilities in domestic life as well. As compared to the other parts of India, women in Nagaland have certain privileges. For example the following ritual practices, especially the dowry system, are almost free in Nagaland except for a few Naga tribes. Religion plays an important role in the 'safety of women' in Nagaland as the teachings that we are all one makes way for women to be respected in the society. Apart from the political representations, there are many women bureaucrats who take active roles and possess leadership qualities. In the Naga society women are not looked down on and are accepted equally unlike most of the women in mainland India. However, safety does not mean equality. The Naga society is casteless and classless yet the traditions deeply bind the society for gender-equality to be found. There are Self-Help groups that serve as a strong pillar in empowering the Naga women along with different schemes and programmes implemented for the empowerment of women in Nagaland such as the Mission Purna Shakti which has been oriented to strengthen women's position in the areas of education, socio-economic and health care.

3.4 Women in Administration

The women's representation in Nagaland politics is low. There has been no female representation in the Legislative Assembly of Nagaland since Nagaland was founded by Rano M. Shaiza, the first and only Naga woman to be a Member of this Parliament, since its foundation in 1963. A major shift in Naga's political arena came in 2018, when five women candidates were challenged and represented in the electoral process. It offered optimism that women in politics would be equal to men. But Naga traditions have removed this optimism and raised political hurdles to gender equality, which do not offer equal status to even highly educated women. At present there is no female representative in the State Assembly or the Parliament.

Even though the political representation of women is low, there have been a higher number of female voters than the male counterparts in Nagaland. The votes casted by women do not make a great change in the empowerment of women. The decision making and the policies from women makes a greater change. As per the Census 2011, the literacy rate of Nagaland is 79.55 percent with male literacy rate at 82.75 percent and female literacy rate at 76.11 percent. The female literacy rate is higher than many states of India.



The opting for education by the women gave them a realization of their rights and equal opportunities with men. Even so, the traditions that the society is deeply rooted in become a factor for the few or no representations of women in the political sphere.

Female Participation in New Zealand and Rwanda: An Overview

4.1 New Zealand

4. 1.1 Historical Context

In 1893, New Zealand became the first self-governing nation where women got the right to vote in parliamentary elections. Though it took 26 years for women to contest in the elections, the wartime work of women in the public arena such as public sector workers and nurses were recognized and thus resulted in a renewed feminist activism where they were more valued and honoured.

In 1933, Elizabeth McCombs became the first woman to be elected to the parliament. It was with the onset of the second wave of feminism and the introduction of proportional representation of women in 1996, the numbers of women in the parliament increased.

4. 1.2 Trends in Elections

The last general election in 2020 ranked New Zealand at number five in the world for women's representation in parliament, at 48.3%; it rose by ten points from the previous elections. New Zealand also ranks 4th in the Global Gender Gap Political Empowerment sub-index. It has closed 84.0% of its gap, the highest in East Asia and the Pacific. The ratio of the female population enrolled in school and tertiary education is more than 97% as opposed to less than 70% for men. With the last general election in October 2020, New Zealand stood at the 5th rank for women's representation in the parliament.

Women in ministerial positions

UN Women, 2021. The number of women in ministerial positions in 192 countries is shown in the table below. The table is sorted by the percentage of women in ministerial positions in descending order.

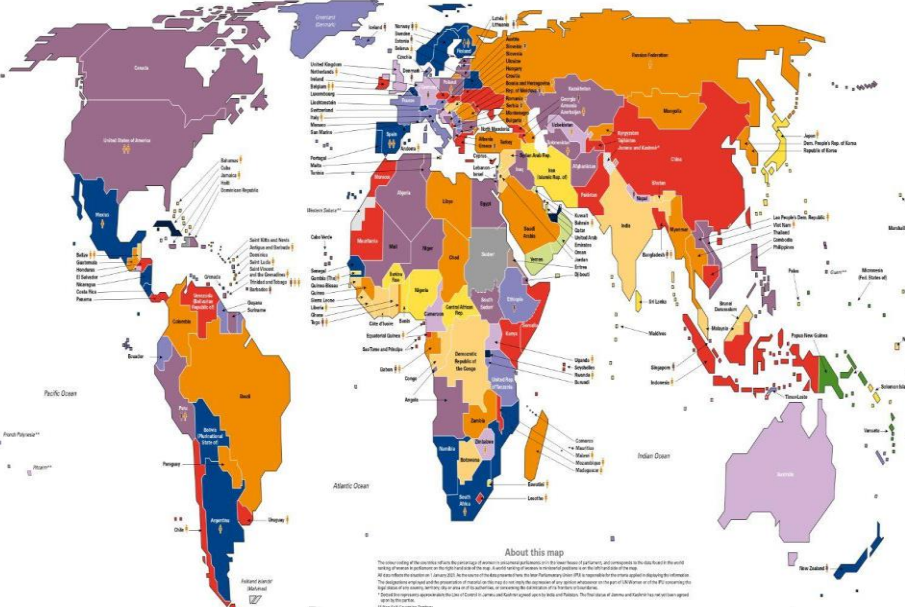
Country	Number of women in ministerial positions	Percentage of women in ministerial positions
1. Iceland	14	92.0%
2. Finland	13	88.0%
3. Norway	12	85.7%
4. Denmark	11	83.3%
5. Sweden	10	80.0%
6. Netherlands	9	75.0%
7. Belgium	8	66.7%
8. Luxembourg	7	61.0%
9. Austria	6	57.1%
10. Germany	5	47.6%
11. France	4	37.0%
12. Canada	3	23.1%
13. United Kingdom	2	15.4%
14. United States of America	1	7.7%
15. Japan	0	0.0%
16. South Korea	0	0.0%
17. China	0	0.0%
18. India	0	0.0%
19. Brazil	0	0.0%
20. Mexico	0	0.0%
21. Argentina	0	0.0%
22. Chile	0	0.0%
23. Colombia	0	0.0%
24. Peru	0	0.0%
25. Venezuela	0	0.0%
26. Cuba	0	0.0%
27. Haiti	0	0.0%
28. Dominican Republic	0	0.0%
29. Ecuador	0	0.0%
30. Bolivia	0	0.0%
31. Paraguay	0	0.0%
32. Uruguay	0	0.0%
33. Costa Rica	0	0.0%
34. Panama	0	0.0%
35. Guatemala	0	0.0%
36. Honduras	0	0.0%
37. Nicaragua	0	0.0%
38. El Salvador	0	0.0%
39. Belize	0	0.0%
40. Jamaica	0	0.0%
41. Barbados	0	0.0%
42. Trinidad and Tobago	0	0.0%
43. Guyana	0	0.0%
44. Suriname	0	0.0%
45. Guyana	0	0.0%
46. Suriname	0	0.0%
47. Guyana	0	0.0%
48. Suriname	0	0.0%
49. Guyana	0	0.0%
50. Suriname	0	0.0%



Women in Politics: 2021



Situation on 1 January 2021



About this map

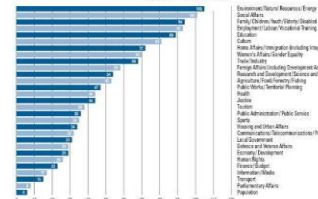
The underlying data for this map is the percentage of women in ministerial positions in 192 countries, as compiled by UN Women in the world. The data is based on the most recent available data as of 1 January 2021. The data is based on the most recent available data as of 1 January 2021. The data is based on the most recent available data as of 1 January 2021.

Women in parliament

UN Women, 2021. The number of women in parliament in 192 countries is shown in the table below. The table is sorted by the percentage of women in parliament in descending order.

Country	Number of women in parliament	Percentage of women in parliament
1. Iceland	100	92.0%
2. Finland	95	88.0%
3. Norway	90	85.7%
4. Denmark	85	83.3%
5. Sweden	80	80.0%
6. Netherlands	75	75.0%
7. Belgium	70	66.7%
8. Luxembourg	65	61.0%
9. Austria	60	57.1%
10. Germany	55	47.6%
11. France	50	37.0%
12. Canada	45	23.1%
13. United Kingdom	40	15.4%
14. United States of America	35	7.7%
15. Japan	30	0.0%
16. South Korea	25	0.0%
17. China	20	0.0%
18. India	15	0.0%
19. Brazil	10	0.0%
20. Mexico	5	0.0%
21. Argentina	0	0.0%
22. Chile	0	0.0%
23. Colombia	0	0.0%
24. Peru	0	0.0%
25. Venezuela	0	0.0%
26. Cuba	0	0.0%
27. Haiti	0	0.0%
28. Dominican Republic	0	0.0%
29. Ecuador	0	0.0%
30. Bolivia	0	0.0%
31. Paraguay	0	0.0%
32. Uruguay	0	0.0%
33. Costa Rica	0	0.0%
34. Panama	0	0.0%
35. Guatemala	0	0.0%
36. Honduras	0	0.0%
37. Nicaragua	0	0.0%
38. El Salvador	0	0.0%
39. Belize	0	0.0%
40. Jamaica	0	0.0%
41. Barbados	0	0.0%
42. Trinidad and Tobago	0	0.0%
43. Guyana	0	0.0%
44. Suriname	0	0.0%
45. Guyana	0	0.0%
46. Suriname	0	0.0%
47. Guyana	0	0.0%
48. Suriname	0	0.0%
49. Guyana	0	0.0%
50. Suriname	0	0.0%

Portfolios held by Women Ministers



Women in the highest positions of State

Women heads of state (5/192 = 2.6%)
 and women heads of government (13/192 = 6.8%)

Women speakers of parliament (58/192 = 30.2%)

Women deputy speakers of parliament (165/192 = 86.0%)

World and regional averages of women in parliament

Region	Single house	Open house	Both houses combined
World average	25.6%	28.8%	25.6%
Regional averages			
North America	41.5%	33.0%	31.4%
Europe (including countries not included)	30.5%	30.2%	28.3%
Sub-Saharan Africa	15.1%	23.3%	25.6%
Asia	20.8%	13.6%	20.6%
Middle East and North Africa	19.2%	18.2%	17.8%
Pacific	18.0%	44.8%	29.9%

Source: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2021/03/women-in-politics-map-2021>

TABLE 1.1 The Global Gender Gap Index 2021 rankings

Rank	Country	Score		Rank change		Score change			
		0-1	2020	2020	2006	0-1	2020	2020	2006
1	Iceland	0,892	0,892	-	+0,016	+0,111			
2	Finland	0,861	0,861	1	+0,029	+0,065			
3	Norway	0,849	0,849	-1	+0,007	+0,050			
4	New Zealand	0,840	0,840	2	+0,041	+0,089			
5	Sweden	0,823	0,823	-1	+0,003	+0,009			
6	Namibia	0,809	0,809	6	+0,025	+0,122			
7	Rwanda	0,805	0,805	2	-0,014	n/a			
8	Lithuania	0,804	0,804	25	+0,059	+0,096			
9	Ireland	0,800	0,800	-2	+0,002	+0,066			
10	Switzerland	0,798	0,798	8	+0,019	+0,098			
11	Germany	0,796	0,796	-1	+0,010	+0,044			
12	Nicaragua	0,796	0,796	-7	-0,008	+0,139			
13	Belgium	0,789	0,789	14	+0,039	+0,081			
14	Spain	0,788	0,788	-6	-0,006	+0,056			
15	Costa Rica	0,786	0,786	-2	+0,003	+0,092			
16	France	0,784	0,784	-1	+0,003	+0,132			
17	Philippines	0,784	0,784	-1	+0,003	+0,032			
18	South Africa	0,781	0,781	-1	+0,001	+0,068			
19	Serbia	0,780	0,780	20	+0,044	n/a			
20	Latvia	0,778	0,778	-9	-0,007	+0,069			
21	Austria	0,777	0,777	13	+0,033	+0,078			
22	Portugal	0,775	0,775	13	+0,031	+0,083			
23	United Kingdom	0,775	0,775	-2	+0,008	+0,038			
24	Canada	0,772	0,772	-5	+0,001	+0,056			
25	Albania	0,770	0,770	-5	+0,001	+0,109			
26	Burundi	0,769	0,769	6	+0,024	n/a			
27	Barbados	0,769	0,769	1	+0,019	n/a			
28	Moldova	0,768	0,768	-5	+0,011	+0,055			
29	Denmark	0,768	0,768	-15	-0,014	+0,022			
30	United States	0,763	0,763	23	+0,039	+0,059			
31	Netherlands	0,762	0,762	7	+0,026	+0,037			
32	Mozambique	0,758	0,758	24	+0,035	n/a			
33	Belarus	0,758	0,758	-4	+0,012	n/a			
34	Mexico	0,757	0,757	-9	+0,003	+0,111			
35	Argentina	0,752	0,752	-5	+0,005	+0,069			
36	Lao PDR	0,750	0,750	7	+0,019	n/a			
37	Trinidad and Tobago	0,749	0,749	-13	-0,007	+0,069			
38	Bulgaria	0,746	0,746	11	+0,019	+0,059			
39	Cuba	0,746	0,746	-8	+0,000	n/a			
40	Jamaica	0,741	0,741	1	+0,006	+0,040			
41	Slovenia	0,741	0,741	-5	-0,002	+0,066			
42	Ecuador	0,739	0,739	6	+0,011	+0,096			
43	El Salvador	0,738	0,738	37	+0,032	+0,055			
44	Panama	0,737	0,737	2	+0,007	+0,044			
45	Croatia	0,733	0,733	15	+0,013	+0,019			
46	Estonia	0,733	0,733	-20	-0,019	+0,038			
47	Zimbabwe	0,732	0,732	-	+0,002	+0,086			
48	Montenegro	0,732	0,732	23	+0,021	n/a			
49	Georgia	0,732	0,732	25	+0,024	+0,061			
50	Australia	0,731	0,731	-6	+0,000	+0,015			
51	Suriname	0,729	0,729	26	+0,023	n/a			
52	Eswatini	0,729	0,729	31	+0,026	+0,069			
53	Guyana*	0,728	0,728	n/a	n/a	n/a			
54	Singapore	0,727	0,727	-	+0,004	+0,072			
55	Luxembourg	0,726	0,726	-4	+0,001	+0,059			
56	Zambia	0,726	0,726	-11	-0,005	+0,090			
57	Madagascar	0,725	0,725	5	+0,007	+0,087			
58	Bahamas	0,725	0,725	3	+0,005	n/a			
59	Colombia	0,725	0,725	-37	-0,034	+0,020			
60	Israel	0,724	0,724	4	+0,006	+0,035			
61	Bolivia	0,722	0,722	-19	-0,012	+0,089			
62	Peru	0,721	0,721	4	+0,007	+0,059			
63	Italy	0,721	0,721	13	+0,014	+0,075			
64	Timor-leste	0,720	0,720	53	+0,058	n/a			
65	Bangladesh	0,719	0,719	-15	-0,006	+0,092			
66	Uganda	0,717	0,717	-1	-0,000	+0,037			
67	Honduras	0,716	0,716	-9	-0,006	+0,068			
68	Cape Verde	0,716	0,716	-16	-0,009	n/a			
69	Mongolia	0,716	0,716	10	+0,010	+0,034			
70	Chile	0,716	0,716	-13	-0,007	+0,070			
71	Botswana	0,716	0,716	2	+0,006	+0,026			
72	United Arab Emirates	0,716	0,716	48	+0,060	+0,124			
73	North Macedonia	0,715	0,715	-3	+0,004	+0,017			
74	Ukraine	0,714	0,714	-15	-0,007	+0,034			
75	Poland	0,713	0,713	-35	-0,023	+0,033			
76	Bosnia and Herzegovina	0,713	0,713	-7	+0,001	n/a			
77	Slovak Republic	0,712	0,712	-14	-0,007	+0,036			
78	Czech Republic	0,711	0,711	-	+0,004	+0,039			
79	Thailand	0,710	0,710	-4	+0,003	+0,027			
80	Kazakhstan	0,710	0,710	-8	-0,001	+0,017			
81	Russian Federation	0,708	0,708	-	+0,002	+0,031			
82	Tanzania	0,707	0,707	-14	-0,006	+0,004			
83	Cyprus	0,707	0,707	8	+0,015	+0,064			
84	Malta	0,703	0,703	6	+0,010	+0,051			
85	Uruguay	0,702	0,702	-48	-0,035	+0,047			
86	Paraguay	0,702	0,702	14	+0,019	+0,046			
87	Viet Nam	0,701	0,701	-	+0,002	n/a			
88	Romania	0,700	0,700	-33	-0,024	+0,020			
89	Dominican Republic	0,699	0,699	-3	-0,001	+0,035			
90	Belize	0,699	0,699	20	+0,028	n/a			
91	Venezuela	0,699	0,699	-24	-0,014	+0,032			
92	Lesotho	0,698	0,698	-4	+0,003	+0,017			
93	Brazil	0,695	0,695	-1	+0,004	+0,041			
94	Liberia	0,693	0,693	3	+0,008	n/a			
95	Kenya	0,692	0,692	14	+0,021	+0,044			
96	Cameroon	0,692	0,692	-	+0,006	+0,105			
97	Ethiopia	0,691	0,691	-15	-0,015	+0,096			
98	Greece	0,689	0,689	-14	-0,012	+0,035			
99	Hungary	0,688	0,688	6	+0,011	+0,019			
100	Azerbaijan	0,688	0,688	-6	+0,001	n/a			
101	Indonesia	0,688	0,688	-16	-0,013	+0,034			
102	Korea, Rep.	0,687	0,687	6	+0,016	+0,071			
103	Cambodia	0,684	0,684	-14	-0,010	+0,055			
104	Senegal	0,684	0,684	-5	-0,000	n/a			
105	Togo	0,683	0,683	35	+0,068	n/a			
106	Nepal	0,683	0,683	-5	+0,003	+0,135			
107	China	0,682	0,682	-1	+0,006	+0,026			
108	Kyrgyz Republic	0,681	0,681	-15	-0,007	+0,007			
109	Myanmar	0,681	0,681	5	+0,016	n/a			
110	Mauritius	0,679	0,679	5	+0,014	+0,046			
111	Brunei Darussalam	0,678	0,678	-16	-0,009	n/a			
112	Malaysia	0,676	0,676	-8	-0,001	+0,026			
113	Fiji	0,674	0,674	-10	-0,003	n/a			
114	Armenia	0,673	0,673	-16	-0,011	n/a			
115	Malawi	0,671	0,671	1	+0,007	+0,027			
116	Sri Lanka	0,670	0,670	-14	-0,009	-0,050			
117	Ghana	0,666	0,666	-10	-0,007	+0,000			
118	Guinea	0,660	0,660	7	+0,018	n/a			
119	Angola	0,657	0,657	-1	-0,004	+0,053			
120	Japan	0,656	0,656	1	+0,003	+0,011			
121	Sierra Leone	0,655	0,655	-10	-0,012	n/a			
122	Guatemala	0,655	0,655	-9	-0,011	+0,049			
123	Benin	0,653	0,653	-4	-0,004	+0,075			
124	Burkina Faso	0,651	0,651	5	+0,016	+0,066			
125	Tajikistan	0,650	0,650	12	+0,024	n/a			
126	Tunisia	0,649	0,649	-2	+0,005	+0,020			
127	Gambia, The	0,644	0,644	9	+0,016	-0,000			
128	Maldives	0,642	0,642	-5	-0,004	n/a			
129	Egypt	0,639	0,639	5	+0,010	+0,061			
130	Bhutan	0,639	0,639	1	+0,004	n/a			
131	Jordan	0,638	0,638	7	+0,015	+0,027			
132	Lebanon	0,638	0,638	13	+0,038	n/a			
133	Turkey	0,638	0,638	-3	+0,003	+0,053			
134	Côte d'Ivoire	0,637	0,637	8	+0,030	n/a			
135	Papua New Guinea	0,635	0,635	-8	-0,001	n/a			
136	Algeria	0,633	0,633	-4	-0,001	+0,031			
137	Bahrain	0,632	0,632	-4	+0,003	+0,043			
138	Niger*	0,629	0,629	n/a	n/a	n/a			
139	Nigeria	0,627	0,627	-11	-0,008	+0,016			
140	India	0,625	0,625	-28	-0,042	+0,024			
141	Vanuatu	0,625	0,625	-15	-0,013	n/a			
142	Qatar	0,624	0,624	-7	-0,005	n/a			
143	Kuwait	0,621	0,621	-21	-0,029	-0,013			
144	Morocco	0,612	0,612	-1	+0,008	+0,030			
145	Oman	0,608	0,608	-1	+0,006	n/a			
146	Mauritania	0,606	0,606	-5	-0,006	+0,022			
147	Saudi Arabia	0,603	0,603	-1	+0,003	+0,079			
148	Chad	0,593	0,593	-1	-0,003	+0,068			
149	Mali	0,591	0,591	-10	-0,030	-0,009			
150	Iran, Islamic Rep.	0,582	0,582	-2	-0,002	+0,002			
151	Congo, Democratic Rep.	0,576	0,576	-2	-0,002	n/a			
152	Syria	0,568	0,568	-2	+0,001	n/a			
153	Pakistan	0,556	0,556	-2	+0,007	+0,013			
154	Iraq	0,535	0,535	-2	+0,005	n/a			
155	Yemen	0,492	0,492	-2	-0,002	+0,032			
156	Afghanistan*	0,444	0,444	n/a	n/a	n/a			

Notes

"—" indicates score or rank is unchanged from the previous year.
 "n/a" indicates that the country was not covered in previous editions.

* New countries in 2021

Source:

4. 1.3 Changes in Political Culture

Factors that led to the re-election of Jacinda Ardern are:

Inclusivity

Parliament of New Zealand stands out for its inclusivity of members of parliament; which consists of female members of parliament, indigenous members of parliament, and LGBTQ members of parliament.

Management of the Pandemic

According to an annual study conducted by *Deep Knowledge Group*, it has been revealed that New Zealand ranked the second safest country in the world due to the government's successfully effective management of the pandemic.

Commitment to Wellbeing

Jacinda Arden's Labour government introduced its "wellbeing budget". Rather than kowtowing to "economic metrics such" as GDP, the budget focuses on outcomes such as mental health, safety, to weigh the success of policies.

Cultural Shift

Jacinda Ardern is the second country leader in the history of politics to give birth while in power just under a year and proved that motherhood is no barrier to carry on with her ministerial duties. The Prime Minister along with ministers with maternal responsibilities worked towards the current changes in the rules for childcare in the parliament and family-friendly initiatives put forth by the Speaker, Trevor Mallard. This shift in public perception and political culture would encourage more women to break the glass ceiling of the parliament.

4. 1.4 The Question of Gender Double Bind

Women leaders often face what is known as the gender double bind. Due to the ascribed behaviour society binds women too, they are ridiculed if they are too masculine but also ridiculed if they are too feminine as political leaders. Female leaders are subject to labelling either for being too considerate or not taken seriously. Pandemic is one such crisis, where women leaders come to terms with the double bind. This was showcased by Jacinda Ardern when New Zealand imposed strict lockdowns

and closed borders. New Zealand was the only country that announced that rather than simply containing the virus, its goal was to eliminate the virus. Several financial schemes were disclosed by the government, including the government allocation of NZD 2.8 billion for income support initiatives and NZD 50 billion COVID-19 responses and recovery funds to resolve the immediate and long term damages.

Human rights activist Philip Baldwin shares, “There are many factors which demonstrate that Jacinda Ardern is a great leader, but from a human rights perspective, it was her masterful handling of the Christchurch shootings which really stood out. Around the world – from Brazil, India, Turkey, to even the USA and the UK – we have seen the rise of nationalism and populism. Nationalist and populist rhetoric typically comes at the expense of minorities and the already disenfranchised, be that on grounds of gender, faith, race, caste, or sexuality, within those countries.”

“When faced with a white supremacist attack on New Zealand’s Muslim community, Jacinda Ardern preached social cohesion and solidarity. Following Jacinda Ardern’s lead, the people of New Zealand stood side by side with the victims of the atrocity. Demonstrating decisiveness, empathy and understanding, Jacinda Ardern initiated a healing process following the shootings. She managed to bring New Zealand together at what could have been a hugely decisive moment for the country.”

This indeed answers the question of double-bind, where women leaders can employ strategic policies as well as be compassionate and empathetic.

4. 2. Rwanda

4. 2.1 Historical Context

Following the Rwandan genocide, the death toll was between 800,000 and 1 million. Records show that the country’s population was 60-70 % female. More than 200,000 women were raped; therefore women were clearly the largest victims of the conflict. In the pre-genocide Rwanda, women were bound to the private space, but the post-genocide Rwanda changed everything and women became an active part of the public sphere- “the conflict also enabled women to become the main economic, political and social engine of Rwanda during its recovery from the war”(Reyero, 2020). A prominent shift has been seen in the political sphere.

4.2.2 What Led to the Increase in Female Participation?

Rwanda's leaders realized that the nation cannot be rebuilt solely by men's labour. A new constitution was passed in 2003 with the country's recovery from its post-genocide period. It decreed a gender quota that mandated 30% of the parliament seats for women. Therefore, Quotas had a crucial reverberation in Rwandan politics. From about 18% in the 1990s to more than 50% at present, Rwanda has come a long way. Additionally, an active **women's caucus** escalated electoral gains. Rwanda Women Parliamentary Forum, the cross-party women's caucus, came up with strategic approaches to increase the number of seats in the parliament. In the elections of 2003, it went beyond its mandatory minimum and secured 48% seats for women.

Additionally, the **electoral system** of Rwanda is such that it increases the chances of women getting elected. Due to the proportional electoral system, more women are successfully elected as the number of seats in government for a party is almost equal to the number of voters who support the party.

It has to be noted that the increase in representation of women in parliament was through candidate quotas in political parties instead of seat reservations. According to a study by Mala Htun published in *Perspective on Politics*, "Women and men belong to all political parties; members of ethnic groups, by contrast, frequently belong to one only." By using quotas, the Rwandan government is acknowledging the bipartisan nature of women in government.

The Constitution additionally argues that the precept of gender equality needs to be sustained in politics and that the members of the Chamber of Deputies need to be exercised by this equitable principle. In 2008, a law on gender violence was passed, which recognizes protection against the prohibition of marital rape, three-month mandatory maternity leave and even equal rights in the process of inheritance irrespective of gender. In 2009, several protection laws for women were passed by the labour law, which includes receiving the same salary as male workers protection from sexual harassment at the workplace. Rwandan parliament member Connie Bwiza Sekemana states "The issue is not the sex. It is the issue of equal opportunity, of citizen's rights, human rights, and the fundamentals of any citizen."

4. 2. 3 Statistics

Rwanda reached the fourth-highest position in the last World Economic Forum's gender gap report. Currently, Rwanda has the largest female representation in the parliament with 61.3% of its members being women. IPU Secretary General Martin Chungong in the *65th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) IPU-UN Women Parliamentary Event* singled out Rwanda, Cuba and the United Arab Emirates for having achieved gender parity, with women accounting for 50 per cent or more parliamentary seats.

If women have come to earn considerable space and powerful positions in Rwanda, it has come with its hurdles. Even though the political sphere of Rwanda is progressive, the private sphere remains conservative and patriarchal. Berthilde Muruta, Executive Secretary in the Rubavu District noted that “there are people who think that we come to meet men, or for other business, which makes it hard to be trusted by our husbands. Additionally, female politicians in Rwanda are oftentimes not seen as equals to the men in similar positions. ?” (Borgen Project, Alina Patrick,2019). Even though women are faced with such difficulties, due to their large representation in the government, numerous laws have been passed to enhance and improve the lives of women across the country as mentioned earlier.

Referring to Rwanda as a role model for women’s participation in government, Mr Chungong said “we have seen evidence that where countries have come out of conflict and have had the opportunity to re-found the foundations of society, the legal framework of society, there is a greater chance of promoting gender equality because this is something that has been articulated at the international level and it’s an opportunity for the society as a whole to sit down and say ‘this is what we want in the constitution.’” The female representation in the Rwandan parliament has resulted in various improvements in terms of rights for female citizens across the country. Even though the system may have certain shortcomings, nevertheless today Rwandan politics is cited as a model of gender inclusiveness in government as encouraging gender politics in Rwanda and countries around the world is crucial to overcome numerous issues which the government faces today.

Conclusion

We know that when women enter politics, policy changes if not significantly but it does bring about a change. In India, women's representation in local elected offices increased the provision of certain public goods like safe drinking water, sanitation etc. Therefore, endeavours must be made for higher inclusion and better incorporation of women in the political sphere, but till the men are not sensitized and the social and structural hindrances are not shattered, there is a lengthy and very crude way ahead for their representation. When a woman is deprived of education, health, physical and economic resources etc, the imbalance created abstains women from understanding and attaining the fundamental rights.

Taking international example, the parliament of New Zealand stands out for its inclusivity of members of parliament; which consists of female members of parliament, indigenous members of parliament, and LGBTQ members of parliament. Even Rwanda's leaders realized that the nation cannot be rebuilt solely by men's labour. A new constitution was passed in 2003 with the country's recovery from its post-genocide period that decreed a gender quota that mandated 30% of the parliament seats for women. Hence by using quotas, the Rwandan government is acknowledging the bipartisan nature of women in government.

While this might appear to be a progressive outcome on the surface, one must analyse and question: Does an increase in numbers necessarily indicate more meaningful political participation?

Therefore, There have been endeavours made for higher inclusion and better incorporation of women in the political sphere, but till the men are not sensitized and the social and structural hindrances are not shattered, there is a lengthy and very crude way ahead for their representation. This can only come through ``Mindfulness, Acknowledgment and Demand'' of the women, by the women and for the women.

Bibliography

Books

- Aier, A., (1998). *Women in Ao society*. In Lucy Zehol (ed.). *Women in Naga Society*. New Delhi: Regency Publications.
- Ao, T. (1999). *The Ao-Naga oral tradition*. Baroda: Bhasha publication.
- Krook, M. L. (2020). *Violence against women in politics*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Journals

- Amer, M. (2009). Political Awareness and its Implications on Participatory Behaviour. *Indian Journal Of Gender Studies*, 16(3), 359-374. Retrieved from, doi: 10.1177/097152150901600303
- Banday, M. M., & Ganesan, D. P. (2016). Women Empowerment and Its Challenges in Jammu and Kashmir. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 3(4). doi:10.25215/0304.048
- Bilal, Dr. Showkeen. (2014). Assessment and understanding of gender equity in education in Jammu and Kashmir. *ResearchersWorld -Journal of Arts, Science & Commerce*. Vol. – V, 2014. [115]. Retrieved from, DOI: 10.5958/2231-458X.2017.00019.7
- Chattopadhyay, R., & Duflo, E. (2004). Women as Policy Makers: Evidence from a Randomized Policy Experiment in India. *Econometrica*, 72(5), 1409-1443. Retrieved June 15, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3598894>
- Panmei, M., (2015). Political Status of Rongmei Naga Women. *International Journal of Science and research (IJSR)*, 4(12), 914-916. Retrieved from, <https://doi.org/10.21275/v4i12.nov152082>
- Paul, R., (2019). Socio-Economic and Cultural Status of Naga Women - *IJAR* (n.d.).Vol. 9, Issue. 1. Retrieved June 10, 2021, from [https://www.worldwidejournals.com/indian-journal-of-applied-research-\(IJAR\)/fileview/January_2019_1546343466_161.pdf](https://www.worldwidejournals.com/indian-journal-of-applied-research-(IJAR)/fileview/January_2019_1546343466_161.pdf)
- C., Vijayachandrika. (2021). Women's Empowerment in Tamil Nadu: A Multi-dimensional Aspect.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348742356_Women's_Empowerment_in_Tamil_Nadu_A_Multi-dimensional_Aspect

- Seenivasan. A. (2012). Women Empowerment in Tamil Nadu Emerging Trends and State Initiatives. https://globaljournals.org/GJHSS_Volume12/4-Women-Empowerment-in-Tamil.pdf
- Kishor, S., & Kamla Gupta. (2004). Women's Empowerment in India and Its States: Evidence from the NFHS. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 39(7), 694-712. Retrieved June 20, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4414645>
- Pramila, B. (2014). A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF TRIBAL WOMEN IN TAMIL NADU. *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 75, 1232-1240. Retrieved June 20, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44158514>
- Ghosh, A. (2007). The Gender Gap in Literacy and Education among the Scheduled Tribes in Jharkhand and West Bengal. *Sociological Bulletin*, 56(1), 109-125. Retrieved June 20, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23620707>
- Sarkar, Raju. (2015). Influence of Women Employment on Women Empowerment in West Bengal. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325415850_Influence_of_Women_Employment_on_Women_Empowerment_in_West_Bengal
- Htun, M. (2004). Is Gender like Ethnicity? The Political Representation of Identity Groups. *Perspectives on Politics*, 2(3), 439-458. Retrieved June 19, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3688807>
- Women in government: Representation in Rwanda. (2019, May 29). Retrieved from <https://borgenproject.org/women-in-government-representation-in-rwanda/>
- Retrieved from http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/Resources/Academic/part_womenrwandangenocide_hogg_mar2010.pdf
- Gender in the time of COVID-19: Evaluating national leadership and COVID-19 fatalities. (2020, December 31). Retrieved from https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0244531&fbclid=IwAR1rOwmO_ocND6Emg3PxaJYB-xuU272M671B4SJP-Ck610yUf9KLiNPaRcQ
- It's the No. 1 country for women in politics — But not in daily life. (2016, July 29). Retrieved from <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2016/07/29/487360094/invisibilia-no-one-thought-this-all-womans-debate-team-could-crush-it>
- Women, political leadership and substantive representation: The case of New Zealand. (2008, March 16). Retrieved from <https://academic.oup.com/pa/article/61/3/490/143803>

Online Sources

Ideas For India. (n.d.). Leaders and citizens: Women's political participation in India. Retrieved June 20, 2021, from <https://www.ideasforindia.in/topics/social-identity/leaders-and-citizens-women-s-political-participation-in-india.html>

Politics of the Informal : Women's Associational life and public space in the hills of Manipur. (2018, February 23). Retrieved June 20, 2021, from <https://www.epw.in/journal/2018/8/special-articles/politics-informal.html>

Where are the women in indian politics? (2019, May 09). Retrieved June 20, 2021, from <https://www.epw.in/engage/article/where-are-women-indian-politics>

BJP manifesto to focus on women's Empowerment, jobs. (2021, March 20). Retrieved June 20, 2021, from <https://www.sundayguardianlive.com/news/bjp-manifesto-focus-womens-empowerment-jobs>

Verniers, G. (2021, May 11). *Tamil Nadu's new assembly in 33 charts: Lowest women representation in 25 years, OBCs dominate*. Scroll.in. <https://scroll.in/article/994446/tamil-nadus-new-assembly-in-33-charts-lowest-women-representation-in-25-years-obcs-dominate>.

Krishnaswamy, T. (2021, March 13). *Tamil Nadu politics: TN women make better political leaders but there aren't enough - Times of India*. The Times of India. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/elections/assembly-elections/tamil-nadu/why-women-political-representation-is-so-low-in-tamil-nadu/articleshow/81431080.cms>.

Ramakrishnan, A. (2021, May 5). *Explained: Share of women, youth in new state Assemblies*. The Indian Express. <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/assembly-elections-benal-tamil-nadu-kerala-share-of-women-youth-in-new-assemblies-7300884/>.

Verniers, G. (2021, May 6). *The new Bengal assembly in 28 charts: Fewer Muslims, more Scheduled Caste MLAs – and not much youth*. Scroll.in. <https://scroll.in/article/994172/the-new-bengal-assembly-in-28-charts-fewer-muslims-more-scheduled-caste-mlas-and-not-much-youth>.

from http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2021.pdf

Facts and figures: Leadership and political participation. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/facts-and-figures>

Global affairs strategic studies - Universidad de Navarra. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.unav.edu/web/global-affairs/detalle/-/blogs/a-comparative-study-of-the-effectiveness-of-women-s-political-participation-the-case-of-spain-rwanda-and-south-africa>

Global gender gap report 2021. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2021/in-full/gggr2-benchmarking-gender-gaps-findings-from-the-global-gender-gap-index-2021>

The IPU brings the voices of parliaments to the UN Commission on the Status of Women. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.ipu.org/news/news-in-brief/2017-03/ipu-brings-voices-parliaments-un-commission-status-women>

Proportion of women parliamentarians worldwide reaches 'all-time high'. (2021, March 8). Retrieved from <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/03/1086582>

Which country has the highest proportion of women in Parliament? (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/which-country-has-highest-proportion-women-parliament>

WTX News. (2021, January 22). Inspirational female leader 2020 winner: Jacinda Arden. Retrieved from <https://wtxnews.com/world/female-leaders/female-leader-2020-jacinda-arden/>

Africa takes historic lead in female parliamentary speakers. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://blogs.worldbank.org/nasikiliza/africa-takes-historic-lead-female-parliamentary-speakers>

[The global gender gap report 2020. \(n.d.\). Retrieved from https://gdc.unicef.org/resource/global-gender-gap-report-2020](https://gdc.unicef.org/resource/global-gender-gap-report-2020)

[Head, A. \(2020, October 21\). 14 reasons why Jacinda Ardern is such a successful leader, according to the experts. Retrieved from https://www.marieclaire.co.uk/entertainment/people/jacinda-ardern-popularity-715953](https://www.marieclaire.co.uk/entertainment/people/jacinda-ardern-popularity-715953)

[How Jacinda Ardern became New Zealand's youngest female prime minister. \(n.d.\). Retrieved from https://nationbuilder.com/jacinda_ardern](https://nationbuilder.com/jacinda_ardern)

The real reason why countries with women leaders are handling Covid crisis better. (2020, May 18).

Retrieved from

<https://theprint.in/features/the-real-reason-why-countries-with-women-leaders-are-handling-covid-crisis-better/422456/>