

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND PARTICIPATION IN ELECTORAL POLITICS: FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The democratic process, electoral politics, and women's participation present an intricate picture that is continuously evolving. The purpose of this study is to examine the complex dynamics surrounding women's empowerment and involvement in electoral politics in Indian democracy and the implications of their empowerment on the level of democracy in India. Moreover, it investigates the obstacles that prevent women from participating in politics, including violence, patriarchal beliefs, and scarce resources. This study also acknowledges the range of issues that vary by caste, class, religion, and geography, and examines the intersectional character of women's experiences in politics. It further invites attention to the way that society is transforming and the role that women's movements play in creating politically sensitive situations for women. In order to investigate the gendered threats to democracy, this article presents the qualitative analysis of the relationship between women's status in society, measured primarily in electoral representation, and the level of democracy in a country, measured in the integrity of elections and checks on executive power. The findings indicate that there is a direct relationship between women's empowerment and resilient democracies, and they go hand in hand. Moreover, it highlights the importance of all-encompassing strategies aimed at tackling structural impediments and encouraging women's equal and full participation in electoral politics in order to achieve true empowerment and inclusive government in Indian democracy.

KEYWORDS: Gender, Women's Empowerment, Electoral Politics, Resilient Democracy, Inclusive Government, India.

1. INTRODUCTION

Adequate representation in politics on the part of women constitutes the very essence of a purely representative democracy (Nelson and Chowdhury, 1994). Though recent history has witnessed the rise of representative governments around the globe, women's involvement in politics has remained significantly on the lower side. The underrepresentation of women in politics is reflected in the rule of only twenty-seven countries out of the total UN member states by a woman across the world (UN Women, 2024). This has been possible owing to the concerted multi-dimensional attempts in the recent past to promote gender parity and empowerment of women. The road to political empowerment of women is through legislative representation, which ensures their involvement in the law-making mechanism. The legislative body performs a crucial role not only to bring significant governance-related issues for discussion but also to exact accountability from the government. As far as the indicators of gender parity and level of democracy in parliamentary politics are concerned, women's share in the national parliament is one of the key indicators. India is home to the world's biggest democracy, with a female population of 662.9 million (Statistics Times). This, by far, makes it a crucial subject of women's participation in parliamentary politics.

Time Magazine portrayed 2024 not as 'an' election year but as 'the' election year (Ewe, 2023). Around 50% population of the globe was scheduled to cast their votes in around 64 countries in national elections. This is perhaps the greatest number of voters who cast their ballots in a year in human history. For many, the outcome of these elections will have far-reaching consequences. Most of the nations around the globe where elections were held showed concern over election rigging, including disinformation, non-transparency in donations, and issues of voter identification. There is an overwhelming consensus that we are going through the era of "democratic backsliding" nowadays. Today's democracy index at the global level is not quite different from what it was in 1985 (Lindberg, 2024).

In many parts around the world, including South Asia, autocracy has been on the rise. Even in fairly refined democracies, a downward trend has been observed in democracy. A study conducted by Smeltzer and Karppi in which they observed twenty-nine different countries, indicates that only five countries experienced a rise in the level of democracy while ten recorded collapses of democracy (Smeltzer and Karppi, 2024). South Asia is a region that is characterized by strong governments representing civil liberties and suppress political dissent. 2024 has witnessed general elections in five out of eight South Asian countries, including India. As India looks to strengthen its position by bolstering its alliances and security in the region, while China seeks to make inroads in South Asia, India's future relations with the states it deems its 'backyard' are projected to be strongly impacted by the outcomes of general elections in these five states, including India (Pande, 2024).

As far as the "global democratic recession" is concerned, it is, perhaps, best reflected by India's case. India's "downgrade to a hybrid regime" has had an overwhelming influence on the "autocratization" of the world. Moreover, it demonstrates the manner in which India's democracy has experienced decline. According to Tudor, India has ceased to be the world's biggest democracy (Tudor, 2023). The threat to India's liberal democracy is reflected in the weakening of the judiciary and other independent institutions by the powerful government. It is quite ironic to observe that there is a great deal of popular legitimacy behind the Bhartiya Janta Party's (BJP) authoritarian turn. A recently conducted survey indicates that a good number of Indians desire a strongman as leader over a democratic system of governance. Not surprisingly, the BJP has not faced much resistance in intimidating its adversaries. Vaishnav is of the view that the infusion of "Hindu Nationalism" by Modi's government is changing secularism, economy, diplomacy, and Indian society to great lengths (Vaishnav, 2019). This article opens by emphasizing the necessity of gender parity in electoral representation to achieve the goal of resilient democracy. The simultaneity of democratic recession and backlash against the rights of women incites the major query of how and why they are connected. The next part explores the trajectory of women's empowerment, involvement in electoral politics, and representation in parliament to get to the end of resilient democracy in India. The last section details the challenges and remedial measures aimed at institutional reforms to improve the standards of women's empowerment, gender parity, and involvement in parliamentary politics.

2. METHODS AND MATERIALS

This research is qualitative in nature, which utilises the qualitative content analysis technique. In order to examine the gendered threats to democracy, this research offers a qualitative analysis of the relationship between women's status in society, measured primarily in electoral representation, and democracy's level in a country, measured in the integrity of elections, and checks on executive power. This study has primarily emphasized secondary sources of data, which include scholarly research articles, newspaper articles, books, election reports, UN reports, constitutional texts, etc., on the subject.

3. WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION, EMPOWERMENT, AND GENDER DISPARITY IN INDIA

Women's potential is hampered by gender inequality, which has serious negative effects on the environment and politics. Global gender disparity is further exacerbated by women's susceptibility to the effects of climate change. It is difficult to bring about long-lasting constructive change in India because of the numerous variables that contribute to gender inequality and discrimination, including caste, class, ideology, and religion. Stronger alliances across women's rights organizations are necessary because the road to gender parity will be lengthy and difficult, even though women are questioning gender roles (Kumar, 1993; Heuer, 2015).

Indian women are considerably less influential in politics than many of their well-known contemporaries. If women make up a smaller percentage of voters, they may have less political clout. Voter turnout and election campaigns have significantly increased in India, as seen by the participation of women in official politics. "Women remain disproportionately underrepresented in political parties, national and state legislatures, and other legislative bodies" (Rai, 2011) despite significant progress in these two areas. As a result, this could have negative effects in important areas, including obtaining an education, finding employment, and having a safe healthcare system for giving birth. Those who are voting in the vicinity of India, as well as peers from developed and emerging economies, were included in the comparison. Women comprise more than half of the voting-age population in the US, UK, Pakistan, Indonesia, and other nations. Russia has the greatest share at 54.8%. The low female-to-male ratio in India has been a result of gender-biased abortions, although reports indicate that this is beginning to change in recent years. Women currently comprise 48.7% of India's voting-age population, according to UN demographic projections (Chandel, 2023).

Political empowerment is crucial for world development, as it promotes women's education, workforce participation, and participation in politics. Legislation and female candidate quotas can accomplish this (Bush, 2011; Kumar and Suvvada, 2023). Several countries have implemented examples of both, which have contributed to women's political empowerment. Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nepal are closer to one another and have more women in their legislatures as a result of taking the legislative route. For example, women have 17% of the seats in the national legislature of Pakistan, 50% of the 350 seats in the Jatiya Sangsad of Bangladesh, and 33% of all seats in the assembly of Nepal. The percentage of elected female parliamentarians is rising and overtaking the percentage of seats reserved for women, according to data, suggesting that women are becoming more politically

empowered. Over the past 25 years, the percentage of women serving in parliaments has risen from 11.3 percent in 1995 to 24.9 percent in 2020. Between the lower and sole chambers of parliament, the percentage of female seats increased from 11.6 to 24.9%. The share in the upper houses increased from 9.4% to 24.6% (IPU, 2020). While there are many nations without legislation requiring gender quotas, political parties are obligated to provide a specific proportion of their tickets to female candidates. Although the parliaments of Australia (38%), Canada (31%), South Africa (45%), and Sweden (46%) do not have legally mandated quotas, the majority of these nations have more than 30% of women in their parliaments (IPU, 2020).

This clearly shows that there are alternatives to quotas for women's political representation. There is another way to reserve seats within parties while offering tickets, and it is equally effective for women's political representation. Even after legislation was enacted in 2023, Kumar and Suvvada (2023) claim that the absence of female candidates running for office in India's Assembly elections is a sign of the political establishment's lack of commitment to promoting greater women's empowerment.

Numerous studies have looked closely at the connection between women's empowerment and electoral politics in India. Singh and Mishra (2015) provide insight into how Indian women's voting habits affect political party operations, while Jayal (2009) explores the development of women's citizenship rights in India, the impact of gender quotas, and women's involvement in electoral politics. It also covers a variety of democratic subjects in India, including women's participation and political empowerment.

A worldview on women's politics, which incorporates Indian viewpoints, highlights women's representation, the obstacles they encounter, and their empowering strategies (Pamela Paxton et al., 2020). They provide a thorough analysis of women's involvement and representation in politics. The writers use in-depth case-study narratives and thorough statistical overviews to illustrate historical trends and the current state of women's political strength. They focus on the structural, political, cultural, and global elements that influence women's entrance to political power and their influence once they are in elected office.

Though not exclusively focused on electoral politics in India, Karlekar (2006) provides visual insights into the broader Indian women's movement, which intersects with political empowerment, while Calman (1992) analyzes women's political movements in India while discussing empowerment. Paula Banerjee (2022, 2010, 2008) examines a variety of topics pertaining to women, including migration concerns, women's fight for political representation and empowerment, and identity and status in Indian politics. Important insights into Indian electoral politics are offered by Palshikar and colleagues (2014), who discuss how political party structures have changed and how they have supported female candidates.

Roy (2025) highlights historical perspectives on Indian women's emancipation struggles and their changing participation patterns in electoral politics while presenting a complex pattern of women's experiences in India over the previous century. It also provides valuable information on this crucial aspect of Indian democracy by offering a range of studies on the complex relationship between women's empowerment and electoral politics in India.

Using data on state assembly elections from 1951 to 2019, Kapoor and Ravi (2022) examine historical trends in women's involvement in Indian democracy as voters, candidates, and lawmakers. They conclude that India's democracy is expanding, as seen by an unprecedented increase in women's political participation in all three areas. Women have voted more often than men in India's 73-year democratic history. After a steep and consistent drop, the gender disparity between electors and voters has all but vanished in the last decade. During the specified time frame, they draw attention to the increase in female lawmakers and the number of female candidates for public office.

Various viewpoints on the connection between women's empowerment and electoral politics are presented in a number of publications on Indian democracy and women's issues, underscoring the need for more study.

4. WOMEN AND ELECTORAL POLITICS IN INDIA

In the general election of 2019, Indian women voted at greater rates than men, reversing a long-standing gender gap (Kumar, 2024). This trend has continued in the general elections of 2024, where women turned out at a rate of 65.8% compared to 65.6% for men (Times of India, 2024). Indian elections are seeing a rise in the number of female voters as a result of political parties emphasizing women in their campaigns and leadership activities. However, only 8.9% of all candidates in 2019 were women, which is still a small ratio. In the general elections of 2019 and 2024, women voted at higher rates than men, ending a long-standing gender disparity. This signifies a substantial change in India's political involvement.

In India, despite rising female attendance and declining female labor force, the gender gap persists in many other areas of political activity, including campaigning for office (Kapsos, 2014). In India, as in many other democracies across the world, there has long been a clear gender gap in the public's political participation. Talking about women in the party's leadership ranks and throughout the campaign is blatantly biased. It sees women as people who need to be attended to and as caregivers. This fails to grant women a unique identity outside the home and instead maintains patriarchal views. If women are to participate in society as equal citizens, strategies to enhance their vote participation must be supported by continuous initiatives to increase female autonomy in the social, political, and economic domains.

It is crucial to remember that a lot of planning is done in developing nations in order to get an electoral edge. Particularly for women, the government and opposition parties vie to provide differing financial and social benefits. Researchers have focused on the situation in India, where the issue is very significant. The Indian government is working hard to encourage women's agency and boost their participation in the workforce (Lal, 2024). Prime Minister Narendra Modi and several other BJP lawmakers have been overheard talking about the country's "narīshakti" several times during the Lok Sabha election campaign.

According to the United Nations, if the world is to meet sustainable development goals by 2030, women must have equal participation and leadership in politics and civic life (UN, 2023). However, the truth is that women are incredibly underrepresented in positions of decision-making at practically every level of the world. For this reason, even in politics, gender equality is still a long way off. And women make up only 22.8% of cabinet positions worldwide. Women's representation in India's current Lok Sabha is 14%, which is slightly lower than in the 2019 Lok Sabha. However, even though the presence of women in the MP and MLA positions of the country is less, in the last few years, it is seen that their importance in voting politics has suddenly increased. On September 19, 2023, the Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Eighth Amendment) Bill, 2023, was presented to the Lok Sabha. The Bill aims to allocate one-third of all seats in the State Legislative Assemblies and Lok Sabha to women. Two years after it was introduced in the Rajya Sabha, the House passed a Bill that was comparable. It expired in 2014 following the dissolution of the 14th Lok Sabha.

There are fewer female Trinamool Congress (TMC) candidates in West Bengal than there used to be. The state's ruling party fielded female candidates for 17 seats in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. In 2024, it was seen that the number of women in the candidate list has reduced to 12. That is, five less than before, 29 per cent of the total candidates. Interestingly, an important break from the State's long-standing practice of developing leaders from grassroots politics is marked by the growing prevalence of dynastic politics in West Bengal during the Lok Sabha election. Dynastic politics has long been a defining characteristic of Indian democracy. Thirteen of the forty-two Lok Sabha constituencies are run by members of political dynasties. Compared to past elections, when political dynasties were only allowed to hold three seats, this is a notable increase (Bhattacharya, 2024). On the other hand, the powerful leaders of Bihar are trying to reach the Parliament by 'taking their wives to the polls', but they did not get the ticket themselves. Leaders have also 'chalked out arrangements for fielding wives' on either Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) or Janata Dal United (JDU) tickets (Tewary, 2024).

The ruling and opposition parties in Indian politics are engaged in fierce conflict, with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) emphasizing social advantages for women. One important tactic used by the party to win over female supporters is the "nari shakti" celebration of women's power (Singh, 2024). With longer voting lines and more privileges, women's empowerment has been greatly enhanced by the most recent grants and project announcements in India. But even with recent advancements, women's rights and equal pay still remain a challenge (Kumari and Siotra, 2023).

Neglected and backward women in Indian society are prioritized in electoral politics and vote campaigning for party interests and power acquisition, not for women's empowerment and development. In the reality of India, politicians know that to win the race for votes, they have to favour women at all costs. According to the Chief Election Commissioner, women have voted more than men in at least 18 states in 23 major state assembly elections in the last 5 years. Since 2019, female voter turnout in the country has increased by 9.3%, while male voter turnout has increased by 6.9%. Another report says that from 2029, the number of women voters in the country will exceed the number of male voters. As a result, there is no room for doubt that women are increasingly becoming a controlling force in power politics. According to research (Benrji, 2024), the proportion of female voters is increasing and might account for over half (49%) of all voters by 2024. After 2029, it is anticipated that women will vote in much greater numbers than men in elections. As per projections, there may be a 55 per cent female to 45 per cent male voting gap by 2047.

The nation's leaders and ministers have already acknowledged that the significant influence of women's vote in certain states has contributed to political transformation. Women comprehend that too. And because of that strength, there are now a lot of self-assured, excited women in the voting line. Furthermore, the nation's opposition and ruling parties lack the strength to disregard that "woman power."

It is an undeniable fact that women-centric projects like 'Lakshmi Bhandar', 'Kanyashree', 'Rupshree' etc. in West Bengal, 'Grihalakshmi' in Karnataka or Dole have become a major tool to bring the ruling party back to power. It also influenced the recent state election results of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Telangana. Madhya Pradesh's schemes like 'Ladli Lakshmi Yojana', 'Ladli Perhena Yojana' won the ruling party in the last assembly elections. It has been seen that wherever women have voted more, the government has been established in their favour.

It is for this reason that almost all the political parties in India now have a bird's eye on those women voters. If they come to power, which will increase the amount of dole in the state for them, who will open the doors of various benefits including 50% reservation in government jobs for them, the same message is being written everywhere. But it is better than evil. Because in one way or another, if the financial progress of the girls, the importance of her in the family, in the society increases, she can take some decisions herself - it has been witnessed among many girls of self-reliant groups in various villages of West Bengal. In fact, 'Investing on women or girls leads to development' - the theme of this year's International Women's Day is reflected in many villages, where

girls with immense power are changing their families, neighbours and society, and even the declining natural environment of the village. It is to be hoped that the strength of women is gaining importance in politics today. Although the constitution of India has equal rights for men and women, the path to achieve it is thorny. However, an invisible insistence has been created among the girls today to continue walking on that thorny path. That inflexible insistence is giving them strength for years even in inhumane conditions on the streets of the centre and the state to demand their rightful rights. Again, the women are showing courage to come out against the oppressive party and the ruler to protest and resist the injustice and oppression that is happening to them.

Notably, the modern Indian women's movement (Phadhe, 2003) which dates back to 1975, has been significant in establishing feminist politics and putting gender issues into the public sphere of development planning. The movement gained traction through social reform initiatives, nationalism and the fight for independence. The creation of various women's organizations and groups, together with their agitations, campaigns, and networks aimed at improving the lives of Indian women, helped to advance the cause. The modern women's movement helped to open up the public sphere for women and introduced several concerns for public discourse. In order to combat the numerous problems that women in Indian society at all levels confront, the movement drew together a variety of individuals and organizations.

Future obstacles for the women's movement may include providing training programs, educating them about their rights, and providing them with a platform to participate in different development initiatives.

5. CHALLENGES AND DREAMS

When discussing the role of Indian women in politics, it is crucial to realize that "women's empowerment" (Kabeer, 2005; Mosedale, 2005) refers to the process of giving women greater autonomy and decision-making authority over their lives. One way to do this is by empowering women to take responsibility for their own health and well-being and to fully engage in the political and economic spheres.

Indian women have long battled for their right to vote, political empowerment, and political participation. They have also banded together to combat injustice and discrimination. Scholars examine many facets of collective agency and the political-legal struggles of women in post-independence India against gender and class prejudices within the framework of women's rights activism and empowerment talks. The donor-driven international community has been eager to acknowledge and celebrate its "best practices" and global normative agenda-setting achievements. However, the latest empirical research demonstrates (Upadhyaya, 2024) genuine local ownership and women's agency, valuing intersectionality and the cultural context while showcasing instances of women's activism for change and offering insights into the everyday struggles and dynamic claims of voice and political power both inside and outside of official political institutions.

In the meantime, different women have varied perspectives on the nature of "gender disparity and discrimination in India" (Kumar, 1993; Menon, 2011) for a variety of reasons, including caste, class, ideology, and religion. Attempts to make significant and long-lasting progress for women have been hampered by the division and differences of opinion among women's organizations. Even though women are increasingly integrating into important political institutions and questioning conventional ideas of gender roles, achieving gender equality in India would take time and effort. To ensure future advancements for women's rights in India, there would probably need to be a larger convergence of interests across women's rights groups, which could result in the formation of powerful and long-lasting alliances.

India's electoral politics and women's empowerment have evolved over time, despite ongoing challenges (Rai, 2011). In India, the proportion of women in politics has grown. As a result, the percentage of women serving in local government has significantly increased. Despite the success of women's reserves in local governance, similar reservations at the federal level have been discussed. Although the legal system encourages women to participate in politics, women, nonetheless, encounter a number of obstacles in the electoral process. Patriarchy, gender bias, violence against women in politics, a lack of funding, restricted access to political and educational networks, and lack of financial resources are a few of these. Political parties have a significant influence on how many women choose to participate in politics. Parties differ in how actively they support women in leadership roles and as candidates. Women's advancement in politics is frequently hampered by patriarchal views and internal party politics. Depending on caste, class, geography, and religion, women's experiences in politics differ.

Understanding intersectional analysis is necessary to comprehend the variety of challenges encountered by women from different origins to ensure inclusive policies for their empowerment. The implementation of programs may be impacted by women's participation in electoral politics. Issues like welfare, health, and education that directly impact women and minority groups are more likely to receive top attention from female lawmakers. Women's movements and civil society organizations are crucial for advancing women's rights and political empowerment. These movements seek to increase understanding, provide resources, and galvanize support for electoral reforms and gender-sensitive legislation. There has been a discernible change in public perceptions of women in politics throughout time. Even if women's empowerment in Indian electoral politics has advanced, much more has to be done to remove structural obstacles and guarantee women's full and equal involvement in governance and decision-making processes. To overcome these challenges, comprehensive strategies involving cultural shifts toward gender equality, political will, community mobilization, and legal changes are required.

In actuality, because patriarchy still governs Indian politics and society, unequal treatment of women has left them economically and socially disadvantaged. Religion and culture both perpetuate long-standing practices. Even within the family, women lack the autonomy to make decisions. In society, there is no chance to form one's own opinion. As a result, there is little political participation. When a woman enters politics like a comet, not much can be expected from her. Now women are brought into politics not because of expectations but Just from the responsibility of fulfilling the 'quota'. Genealogy or husband's identity plays a big role there. It takes a force to carry power. The ability to achieve that power comes from within the family and society. But women representatives were not made fit to carry that power. However, a male guardian of his family remained to guide her. Therefore, the history of reaching the goal by holding power in the case of women has not progressed even one step. Falling behind became a series of cycles and women are not getting proper opportunities, participation and status in politics. The increase in women's participation in elections in India over the past ten years has been termed by many as the 'feminization of politics'. But most of the women are in the dark about other political activities and electoral issues apart from voting.

Feminists have argued for a long time that more women in politics make it possible for them to voice their opinions and concerns. As the number of female MPs increases, it is often claimed that politics in general will shift. However, a lot of issues remain, such as: are we truly seeing a feminization of politics? If women have an impact on politics, how does that impact manifest itself? In order to address these issues, it is important to examine how women have been represented in politics and how the changing proportion of women in politics affects institutions, processes, and procedures. Further research is necessary to explore the issues involved in achieving gender parity in public office and highlight the ways in which gender influences political action opportunities and constraints, which is crucial to take into account in the context of India. Political parties in post-independence India have long attempted to alter the current situation, yet inequity persists. Leaders have neglected to address the crucial subject of women's development and emulation, instead concentrating on preserving ties with male household members in order to win over women's votes.

It is a universal truth that the degree of freedom enjoyed by women in a society can be used to gauge its overall level of emancipation. The nation's leaders solely take their own interests into account when making decisions, occasionally even putting party interests first. The interests of the nation or the vast majority of people are never taken into account by them. Everyone wants a government or political party that will take women's issues into consideration. The protective function of the government in preserving women's political empowerment is a must. However, people make up the government—not wood, stone, or brick. They who desire emotional softness, dependency, and weakness in female leaders, unwilling to enhance more women in leadership positions.

Therefore, the wives of local politicians are the first to be identified. All of the work will be done in the wife's name by that individual. Candidate's guardian presents during election campaign and counting from filing of nomination. Even if he wins unopposed, the woman's husband will also do the job of dressing the people of the party and making him sweet. The woman will follow her husband with only a smiling face and a veil. Many times, the husband of the female also gives a speech on the stage. Many times, again those who are easy to manage from behind get a place in the cabinet. Sometimes that woman has the blessing of a 'heavyweight' leader on her head. It is not possible to reflect the leaders' own view without giving priority to his opinion.

The role of women in Russia is highlighted by Stites (1978), who divides their lives into three categories: education, family, and employment. Before the revolution, married girls fought for social reform and freedom but were not provided with high-quality employment. In the USSR, female activity peaked with the 1917 Revolution, which brought hope. Over 90% of working-age women were either employed or enrolled in school and skilfully explored the ways in which women's circumstances changed before to, during, and following the Russian Revolution, as well as the roles that women played in politics and society at each time. In India, women's development and empowerment are essential for both political participation and economic growth (Tamuli & Mishra, 2023). Women can enjoy the same status and respect as males in a society when their rights to vote, freedom of movement, and democratic rights are upheld.

6. CONCLUSION

Gender inequalities in political involvement are clearly closing, but gender parity has yet to be achieved. Meanwhile, India's political system is under threat from extremist politics based on religious divisiveness. The position of secular political parties is also unclear. In addition, women's position in Indian religion and folklore will promote women-centric politics—or perhaps more precisely, women-oriented political strategy. This *mélange* will continue to develop through different government welfare programs, party organizational styles, campaign philosophies, etc. The populist will continue to use the same tactic, but its political acumen will advance. Therefore, women's entry into the political and economic arenas is the most significant and fruitful phase of their empowerment in India. After many acts, revisions, and legislative implementations, women were finally given the chance to engage in political representation. Since women in the legislature were still vulnerable to gender-based violence even when local bodies reached a critical mass, transforming women's political empowerment into true social empowerment was a very difficult task. Nothing changed in terms of the societal perception of women

in political roles, but patriarchy is still very much in place and actively works to prevent women from entering the political sphere. In addition, women ought to have more representation in local and state legislatures.

Women's empowerment will be further strengthened by the determination to eradicate prejudice against them and to increase their political participation. Similarly, the populists' women-focused public welfare initiatives will highlight the place of women in politics. The populist mindset is based on the dichotomy of the desire for women's status and the reality of discrimination. Although it is hard to predict how much women's power will be incorporated into politics through parliamentary politics, it is undeniable that the emergence and solidification of a patriarchal or male-centric ideology and its national status, along with the desperate existence of folk religion and folk sentiment, are signs of a different aspect of the conflict. And one of the main characters in this conflict is the role of women, be it a political campaign battlefield or an electoral issue.

On the global list of "gender gap," India comes in at number 131 out of 190 nations, dropping two places from the previous year. The proportion of female Lok Sabha members did not increase to adolescence despite India's independence. Indian women still have to wait for a society free of gender roles, despite the fact that "gender equality" is one measure of the nation's socioeconomic progress. Indian women must, therefore, first shed the roles of "maid" and "divine" and adopt the mindset of "common people." To help women realize and utilize their potential, social, economic, cultural, and political circumstances should be established.

India's democratic society is built on the backs of women, both powerful and weak. If they don't obstruct, they will both need to be further marginalised. Maybe it's too late to realise this in India's democratic system. Women's empowerment and democratic government cannot be ensured if women's issues are just merely used as a political tool.

Regarding the objective or degree of resilient democracy, the results indicate that nations with autonomous civil societies, free and fair elections, and independent and responsible governmental institutions are typically those where women are doing well. The results further show that nations with high levels of female participation in politics and the economy are those where executive power is restrained and balanced by a strong legislature, an independent court, and a strong media. Promoting women's standing and creating robust democracies go hand in hand. The results suggest that democracy efforts should pay more attention to women's safety and inclusion in democracies, partial democracies, and post-conflict nations, even though additional research is required. Stakeholders working on democracy must collaborate rather than work in isolation in order to achieve shared objectives of creating inclusive, just, and equal societies. Given all these parameters for resilient democracy, India's case seems to portray not a very sublime picture. India needs to cover a long distance to get to the end of true resilient democracy.

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