

## WOMEN REPRESENTATION IN INDIAN PARLIAMENT – A CASE STUDY

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**“ I measure the progress of community by the degree of progress which women have achieve”**

**--- Dr.B.R.AMBEDKAR, The Father of Indian Constitution.**

India is largest democratic system in the world. Largest democratic system in the meaning is its enrolled voters are 90 crore today. It is more than the population of European continent. Above one million employees participate in the election process and lakhs of security personnel give protection at the time of election. We following the parliamentary democracy for the development of our nation. In India the total population are above 136 crores. Out of this; half of the population are women. The law making body i.e. the Parliament of India is a two house body as the Lok Sabha (People's house) and the Rajya Sabha (States house). In both the houses in parliament, both men and women representing the people, but women are having under-representation for their size of population. Till today women's representation do not cross the 12% against their half of the population. In the both houses of parliament the same condition prevails.

In our democratic system, we follow the exercising the universal adult franchise, periodic elections, establishing the political parties. While observing the social life, our democracy treats both sexes of men and women equally in all spheres of life, but in political participation and representation point of view, women were not allowed to exercise their due share in representation in the law-making process. Why women were not allowed, because India is a male-dominated society, patriarchy is very strong and there is no uniform pattern of social, economic life between the men and women.<sup>1</sup> Due to this discrimination against women, they unable to exercise political representation.

In India, for the seven decades, our Independent, Republic, Democratic India had witnessed to conduct the 16 General elections to the parliament, from 1952-2014. Out of 16 General Elections. Women's representation could not cross the 12% in both the houses of parliament.

The following table shows the condition of representation of women in the Lok Sabha (Peoples House).

**Table -1: Women's Representation in the Lok Sabha (1952—2014)**

Year	Total Seats	Women MPS	% Women MPS
1952	489	22	4.41
1957	494	27	5.40
1962	494	34	6.76
1967	523	31	5.93
1971	521	22	4.22
1977	544	19	3.29
1980	544	28	5.15
1984	544	44	8.9
1989	517	28	5.22
1991	544	36	7.17
1996	543	40	7.18
1998	543	44	7.92
1999	543	48	9.02
2004	543	45	8.03
2009	543	59	10.86
2014	543	61	12%

**Source – Election Commission of India**

The above Table 1 shows, women however, have not found adequate representation in the Lok Sabha. The percentage of elected women members in the Lok Sabha has never exceeded the 12%. The table shows that the representation of women in Lok Sabha since 1952, average representation of women in Lok Sabha worked out to only 6.74%. The women representation between 1952 and 1980 was in upset moment. From 1996 to 2014, except in 2004, the presentation has the minimum edge of increase. In 2014, the total number of women elected was 61, this is the biggest victory of women since 1952.<sup>1</sup>

**Table -2: Women as Contestants in the Lok Sabha from 1952-2014**

Year	Males	Females	Total	Males Percentage Winning	Females Percentage Winning	Female
1952	1831	43	1874	26.05	51.16	2.30
1957	1473	45	1518	31.7	60.0	3
1962	1915	70	1485	24.0	50.0	3.50
1967	2302	67	2369	21.3	44.8	2.80
1971	2698	86	2784	18.5	24.4	3
1977	2369	70	2439	22.1	27.1	2.8
1980	4478	142	4620	11.5	19.7	3
1984	5406	164	5574	9.2	25.6	2.9
1989	5962	198	6160	8.5	13.6	3.2
1991	8374	325	8699	5.9	12.0	3.7
1996	13353	599	13952	3.8	6.7	4.2
1998	4476	274	4750	11.2	15.7	5.7
1999	3976	278	4254	12.3	17.3	5.8
2004	5080	355	5435	9.8	12.3	6.5
2009	7514	556	8070	6.44	10.61	6.8
2014	7851	402	8253	4.8	15.2	6.2

Source = Parliamentary information Bureau, Ministry of Information and Broad Casting Government of India

The above Table – 2 show that number of women contested in elections was very low on par with men. It is understood that from 2.3% in 1952 to 6.5% in the year 1999, compared to the population, the percentage of women contestants was very low. It is true that men contesting for 93% of total contestants. The percentage of women winning in elections was more than male contestants. In first general elections. Men won elections 26.05% where as women were 51.16%. In the 14<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha elections 12.06% of female contestants won the elections. In the 15<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha elections 10.6% and in the 16<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha elections 15.17% women won the elections. It is observed that political parties denie tickets to women candidates presuming that they are not capable of winning elections. Election results show that women contestants winning more than male contestants.<sup>2</sup>

**Table -3: Women Representation in Rajya Sabha ( 1952 –2014)**

Year	Total Seats Rajya Sabha	No. of Women	% of Women
1952	219	16	7.3
1957	237	18	7.6
1962	238	18	7.3
1967	240	20	8.3
1971	243	17	7.0
1977	244	25	10.2
1980	244	24	9.8
1985	244	28	11.4
1990	245	38	15.5
1996	223	20	9.0
1998	223	19	8.6
2006	245	25	10.20
2009	245	25	8.97
2014	245	-	-

Source : Election Commission of India

The above Table 3 shows the representation of women in the Rajya Sabha has been slightly higher than comparatively in Lok Sabha. It is possible by following the indirect elections and nominations of some women members. It was highest in 1990 at 15.5% and shows a declining trend thereafter. Although a little bit of higher representation, but it did not touch the 33% of women representation bill under pending. Even in Upper House, the under -representation of women continues because the social, economical and cultural aspects of Indian life<sup>3</sup>. In the Rajya Sabha , women members might be the class of intellectuals and elders, unfortunately in the same house also the election became costly affairs where sincere and ethics based representations could not enter the house.

**Table -4: Number Of Women Ministers In Various Cabinets Of The Government Of India.**

Year	No. of Women Ministers
1952	3
1957	3
1962	5
1967	5
1971	3
1977	2

1980	8
1984	5
1989	1
1991	5
1996	5
1998	4
1999	9
2004	10
2009	9
2014	7

Source : [www.parliamentofindia.nic.in](http://www.parliamentofindia.nic.in)

The above Table 4 shows the representation of women in the council of ministers were formed, women were given less important portfolios like health, welfare, local government etc. the case has been same in the state governments as well. The table 4 depicts the total percentage of women who have contested the **Lok Sabha** election between 1952 and 2014. The every government at Central level never gave due share to women in their council of ministers and law making process.<sup>4</sup> Women were intentionally and culturally neglected by all the governments.

#### Reasons behind the under representation of women:

If we carefully studied and understood the social life of India, since ancient times ours is a male dominated society, women were given the second priority. We had the patriarchal society, in which son occupies the leadership in the family. Women's role in the family reduced to kitchen, giving birth to children and taking care of them.

Women have had to depend on men for their economical necessities. Only in 2005, Indian parliament amended the Hindu inheritance law giving rights to women of their parents' property on par with men. The institution of family also blocking women from entering the politics. Male domination led to female subordination to the under representation of law making bodies. Religion also favours the men rather than women to have their say in family and society. Education, also not favours the women. Only education can bring change of human beings life.

In the competing demands on women's time, lack of role models, in traditionally male-dominated field and deep rooted cultural biases, all contributed to the low level of female leadership in elected government.

It is a fact that certain social norms and stereotypes made voters less likely to vote for women<sup>5</sup>. Moreover, political parties have had been historically slow to incorporate the interests of women in the mandates and were known to invest fewer resources in female led campaign.<sup>6</sup>

33% of Reservation Bill of women which allows in the law making bodies is under pending for the last 20 years.

#### Measures to Take for More Women Representation In Law Making Process:

There are certain measures to improve the representation of women in parliament as follows:

Firstly, Indian parliament (Lok Sabha) should pass the 33% of Reservation Bill of Reservation Bill for women in law making bodies. Earlier, the Rajya Sabha has already passed the same Bill.

Secondly, before political reservation, we should have equal social relations between men and men, women and women and men and women.

Thirdly, as Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the father of Indian Constitution said, that "women were given the right to vote on par with men. Right to vote is not mere a vote, he eulogized that 'adult suffrage' was an ideal. It did not mean a mere matter of the ballot box, not mean a mere polling booth, and placing of polling officers there. Right to suffrage and franchise were nothing but are the right of self-defense Through this, the Legislature could be created and the required laws passed, which would give effectiveness the life, liberty and property of the people<sup>7</sup>."

Fourthly, women in India should have taken their part in the electoral process to the success of Indian Democracy. Regarding the success of democracy, L.T. Hobhouse, said that "the success of democracy depends on the response of voters to the opportunities given them. In order to call forth the response. The exercise of popular government is itself all education . . . enfranchisement itself may precisely be the stimulus needed to awaken interest. The ballot alone effectively liberates the quite citizen from the tyranny of the shouter and the wire puller<sup>8</sup>."

Fifthly, the involvement of women in politics is now regarded as an important factor for a healthy democracy. It cannot be termed as healthy if half of the women population does not participate in the political process. It is also being increasingly realized that participation as mere voter is not enough. It has to be followed by large scale participation and decision-making process<sup>9</sup>."

In India there are about 35 lakhs of Non Governmental Organizations working for various purposes. The N.G.Os should have taken partnership in mobilizing the people to awaken their political representation.

The Social Movements led by various kinds of intellectuals should think that women should be understood correctly and encouraged to have their participation in Indian law making process.

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