

MUSLIM WOMEN AND POLITICS OF INDIA

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Abstract

Politics is the progeny of political engagement, which is the mother. As it produces, nurtures, develops, rules, and shapes politics, the former is of utmost importance to both the country and the individual. Because of this, political engagement in every aspect of a nation's affairs defines its politics, and despite the fact that women make up close to half of the population, their political importance is far less than that of men. Women make up the bulk of the population. Women have always been viewed as second-class citizens in communities where men dominated, as is evident from history. The potential of women has been limited by forcing them to carry out domestic tasks within of four walls. Indian women were not allowed to leave their homes. Their freedoms and rights had been revoked. Enrolling them in school was prohibited. They had an idea of the perfect housewife. They have no access to opportunities in society, politics, the economy, or health. Women must be given more influence if civilisation is to advance. Muslims have a tremendous influence on Indian society. The largest minority in this nation is them. In 2011, the overall population of India was 13.4% Muslim, with the majority of them residing in Lakshadweep and Jammu & Kashmir. Emerging nations like India are currently concerned about the empowerment of women. It is thought that a number of factors, including the "invisible" role and "marginal" social status of women in Muslim societal dynamics, have hampered the development of Muslim society. The rate of women's emancipation is in danger within the greatest Muslim minority. Lack of social chances for Muslim women is a severe issue that needs immediate attention. The position of Muslim women in India will be primarily examined in this essay.

Keywords : Muslim, Women, Political Participation, Society Etc.

1. INTRODUCTION

Women are the group most at risk in the advancement of a better society in all spheres—political, economic, cultural, and social. Women are unable to advance in many fields due to patriarchal and feudal structures. The struggle to free women from social ills has been more difficult, but they are showing signs of empowerment in a variety of occupations. The emancipation of women in all faiths also reveals the alarming fact that some communities are still being left behind in the contemporary world as a result of outdated taboos about access to formal education, the workplace, and political power generation. Muslim women and men are persistently underrepresented in emerging countries despite being the second-largest religious community in the world. Since they are denied fundamental human rights like education, employment, health care, and sanitation, Muslim women in particular are at risk.

The rise of new Muslim women leaders has been observed in recent years. Both audacious and intelligent. She wants to take part in the democratic conversation happening in the nation and is not content to be restricted to the four walls of her house. The orthodox clergy are not someone she trusts to speak for her, which is significant. As a citizen and a practicing Muslim, she is aware of her rights. Anyone who infringes on her rights will not be tolerated. Women have rights, according

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to the Constitution. To give them more authority, various Acts have occasionally been created. Strong attempts are being taken toward positive discrimination in order to mainstream them, and various programs are also developed at the federal and state levels. However, on paper, each of these clauses appears to be flawless. Reality shows that there is frequently a gender divide. Muslims women are particularly hard hit. No of their gender, religion, or other characteristics, residents in a free India were guaranteed liberty and equality under the Constitution. As a result, although legally speaking women and men are on an equal footing, in actuality women's political engagement is lower than that of men. Due to this, despite all of the constitutional protections, they play a relatively insignificant role in both the Indian Parliament and State Legislatures. There are still millions of individuals who do not engage in politics. The primary causes of this include a lack of education, family discord, an unfavorable political climate, a paucity of women in local leadership positions, and the significant financial costs associated with elections. Every political party is constantly faced with fierce competition from male candidates for seats in the assembly and the Parliament.

1.1. Research Objectives

The Indian Constitution gives citizens the right to be elected, free expression, freedom to organize and vote. The Indian Constitution bars sex and class discrimination. Women are essential to the wellbeing of the family, society, community, civic bodies, institutions, and the State in the twenty-first century, holding up half the sky. They cannot be disregarded while making decisions, forming policies, or doing other essential citizen obligations. The aim of this paper is to highlight the participation of Muslim women in the politics of India.

1.2. Methodology

The main literature that were used as mainly secondary source of data are; Books, Articles, Journals, unpublished dissertations, newspaper and internet sources were examined in order to arrive of conclusion in an objective way.

2. DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Since women are an integral part of society, almost every nation after World War II committed to empowering them and modifying their constitutions as needed to ensure that they had the same rights as men. Occasionally, though, they were treated equally to men. Women represent the same percentage of the population as men, but there is no proof that this translates into equality with men in any field. Women from underrepresented groups are consequently at a distinct disadvantage. It is astonishing how underrepresented and anonymous they are in politics. In numerous countries, it took a considerable amount of time and work to win women the "right to vote." The greatest democracy in the world, India, grants all women the right to vote. Caste prejudice has been successfully addressed in India, but work needs to be done in the areas of sexual orientation and religious beliefs. Although the word "democracy" indicates that all citizens ought to be treated equally, anyone above the age of 18 who is not barred from voting by law, as long as they meet all other eligibility requirements, is also permitted to run for office. Despite fulfilling the requirement, we were unable to locate any instances of women being represented equally in any of the 16 Lok Sabhas or in state legislatures.

The world has been hit by a tsunami of division and tensions, and those who promote community ideals and divisive policies for their personal gain are triumphantly riding these waves. India is no exception. One particular group within our society stands out in the current context as being burdened by everything that has torn the social fabric apart: Muslim women. Muslim women

have a history of having identity crises in politics. This has grown into a topic of debate and conflict. Since independence, there have been no Muslim women MPs in five of the sixteen Lok Sabhas, and there have never been more than four Muslim women MPs in the 543-seat lower house of parliament. One of the main reasons why women are underrepresented in politics is the patriarchal structure of society.

Women participation

According to information provided by the Election Commission, the proportion of women elected to represent one of India's 543 Lok Sabha seats increased from 11% in 1999 to 16% in 2009. 49 women were chosen to serve in the lower chamber in 1999. Punjab (30.8%) had the highest percentage of female newly elected officials in 2009, followed by Madhya Pradesh (20.7%) and Haryana (20.0%). While this is going on, the proportion of Indian women who are eligible to vote has increased from 44.3% to 45.8%. The patriarchal, hereditary nature of Indian politics needs multifaceted action. A 33% reservation, the minimum mass required, will be one of the most important changes in assisting women in obtaining the right to participate in Indian democracy not just as voters but also as leaders. The patriarchal, hereditary nature of Indian politics calls for intervention on many levels and in many forms. To ensure that women in India have the right to vote and run for office, one of the most important reforms would be to impose a minimum mass reservation of 33%. Muslims make up a much smaller portion of India's political representation than their share of the population, which is estimated to be around 14% but is widely believed to be much higher. Muslim women must be able to speak up in the British Parliament. More significantly, this is due to the false assumption held by male lawmakers that Muslim women have no issues, despite the fact that numerous issues relating to women need to be discussed in parliament and can only be done by female Muslim lawmakers. Therefore, it is necessary to look at the kind and degree of women's participation in the political process from the standpoint of women's growth. This would be an essential tool for furthering women's interests as well as a good indicator of how far women have come in terms of their own understanding and expectations. As a result, there will be an increase in the number of women in the media, which is wonderful for increasing their political participation, sense of self-worth, and the role models they look up to. Following Mahatma Gandhi's advice, only fourteen women were elected to state legislatures on the Congress Party's slate after independence, when the constituent assembly chose its final form. But each and every one of them did an amazing job of doing their part. It followed that when the Constitution was passed, women would be acknowledged as full citizens and legal equals. These ideas become official in India's democratic constitution.

Muslim Women and Political Participation

The Muslim community is more conservative, has a patriarchal society, and wants to keep its religious identity than the Hindu and Christian communities. This makes it harder for women to participate in public life in the Muslim community than in the Hindu and Christian communities, where religion does not act as a strict barrier to the advancement of women. In secular India, the Muslim clergy has a big impact on Muslim women, especially those from poor, illiterate, or socially backward groups. In strictly orthodox Islamic cultures, women are not allowed to leave the house without permission from their husband or father. Some Muslims in some places still think that a Muslim woman's only job is to be a mother and wife, even though things have changed in these areas and more Muslim women are taking part in politics. Still, scholars from many different traditions and worldviews have made the same argument. But in the 20th century, there were more Muslim women talking about politics, writing books, and doing research in universities. In the same way, Muslim women in India want equality and an end to unfair treatment. But there should be enough Muslim women in Parliament so that they can fight well. If non-Muslim women in

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Parliament who understand and care about the situation of Muslim women speak up for them, the Muslim community will accuse them of interfering in religious matters. In 1996, the government proposed a bill that would give women 33% of all reserved seats in Parliament and other bodies that make laws. Male MPs have been holding up the bill for a long time because they won't make any changes for women. Muslim women in politics have often had trouble getting to know them. This is being talked about and debated right now. Since India became independent, there have been 16 Lok Sabhas, but only four Muslim women have ever held seats in the 543-person lower house of parliament. The patriarchal structure of society is a big reason why women don't get involved in politics.

Participation in Lok Sabha

Only 22 of the 543 members of the outgoing Lok Sabha are Muslims, according to the 2011 census. Despite making up 6.9% of the population, there are just 0.7% of Muslim women in parliament. This demonstrates the lack of action taken by political parties to correct this false information in the Lok Sabha. Approximately 21 of the 612 women who have been elected to the 16 Lok Sabhas since independence are Muslim women. Since independence, there have been no Muslim women MPs in five of the sixteen Lok Sabhas, and their representation in the 543-seat lower house of parliament has never surpassed four. Currently, there are no Muslim women serving in the legislature in 24 of the 29 states. Muslims make up 6.9% of the population as a whole, yet only four of the 543 members of the outgoing Lok Sabha, or 0.7%, are female Muslims. Approximately 21 of the 612 women who have been elected to the 16 Lok Sabhas since independence are Muslim women. India has 13 Lok Sabha districts with a Muslim population of above 40% and 14 Lok Sabha districts with a Muslim majority. There are 101 seats where more than 20% of the people are Muslims. 78 women were elected to the lower house of parliament in India's 2019 elections, making up 14% of the legislative body. It didn't, however, go smoothly. Only one Muslim woman, Sadja Ahmed, is now a member of the lower chamber, down from four before the May election. The situation is not that different at the state level. State legislatures have a representation of women of less than 8%. Nearly no Muslim women exist. Only one Muslim woman is among the Assam Legislative Assembly's 14 female members. There are just three female chief ministers among the 29 states and seven union territories, and none of them are Muslim. There are just two female governors and lieutenant governors/administrators among the 29 states and 7 union territories, and none of them are Muslim. Only three of the 36 Lok Sabha committees are now led by women, and none of them are Muslim women.

If Muslim women were represented in proportion to their numbers, they would have always numbered more than 35. (Take into account that 13.5% of the nation's population is Muslim; since women outnumber men almost evenly, it can be assumed that 7%, or half of the 13.5%, are Muslim women.) However, there were never more than three Muslim women in any of the sixteen Lok Sabhas. There were only a few Muslim women present, maybe five times.

Participation in Rajya Sabha

There were 30 women in the Rajya Sabha as of October 28, 2014, although just 4 of the female MPs were Muslims. Only 15 Muslim women served in the Upper House from 1952 to 2010, and they all did so in various ways. Similarly, none of the 12 standing committees in the Rajya Sabha are led by a Muslim woman (the others are joint committees). In the 16 Lok Sabhas, there has never been a Muslim woman Speaker, and there has never been a Muslim woman Chairman of the Rajya Sabha. Four out of the eighteen times a Muslim woman has held the position of deputy chairman in the Rajya Sabha. It's intriguing that Najma Heptullah was the only one to attend each of the four gatherings.

State Legislatures

The situation is not much different at the state level. Less than 8% of the people in the state assemblies are women. Muslim women don't seem to be around much. One of the 14 women in the Assam Legislative Assembly is a Muslim, but that is the only one. One of the 14 women in the Assam Legislative Assembly is a Muslim, but the other 13 are not. Out of the 29 states and 7 union territories, only three have female chief ministers, and none of them are Muslim. Only two of the governors and lieutenant governors/administrators of the 29 states and 7 union territories are women, and none of them are Muslims. There are about 36 committees in the Lok Sabha right now, but only three are led by women, and none of them are Muslim women.

Political Heads and Executive

It doesn't matter all that much if they are at the top. There have been 16 Lok Sabha elections thus far, but only one woman has served as prime minister. Muslim men and women have not held this position until far. Similar to how there has only ever been one female president of India, Muslim women have not yet opened their accounts. Only three of the 29 states and seven union territories have chief ministers who are women, and none of them are Muslim. In India's 29 states and seven union territories, only two of the governors, Lt. governors, or administrators are women, and none are Muslims.

Committees

Parliament at the federal level and state legislative assemblies set up advisory groups to help them do their jobs well. They are called committees. Some of them meet only once, but others meet all the time. There are about 36 committees in the Lok Sabha right now, but only three are led by women, and none of them are Muslim women. In the same way, none of the 12 standing committees in the Rajya Sabha are led by a Muslim woman. The other committees are joint committees. Managing the business of the Houses: There is a woman Speaker who is in charge of the Houses (the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha in the Indian Parliament and the Legislative Assemblies and Legislative Councils at the state level), but there has never been a Muslim woman in the position of Chairman of the Rajya Sabha. Speaker (Lower House) and Chairman (Upper House) say that a Muslim woman has been the Rajya Sabha's deputy chairperson four out of the last eighteen times. In any of the 16 Lok Sabhas, there was never a Muslim who was in charge. It's interesting that Najma Heptullah was the only person there all four times. People often make assumptions about Muslim women that are based on stereotypes, but most of the time; these women have stood up to these assumptions and shown what they can do. They have also run for office on their own as independent candidates.

The caste system has significantly altered the Muslim societies of India. Islam has been "Indianized" in this way. Indian Muslims have a variety of social and economic issues as a result of their low levels of education. Due to the social, cultural, and patriarchal components of Islam as it is practiced in India, this is also true for Muslim women. They frequently have trouble enrolling in even primary school, let alone further education. Young girls are distracted from their studies and lose interest in school due to family member matchmaking. Even if they attend a reputable institution, they are frequently talked out of enrolling in college, especially if it is abroad. The likelihood that a girl will find a good husband decreases with her level of education. People frequently have false perceptions of how "clean" highly educated ladies and girls who have studied overseas are, which contributes to this. Women don't dispute religious leaders' laws because they are accustomed to being exploited. They can only be set free from the bonds of ignorance, illiteracy, and exploitation via education.

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3. CONCLUSION

People often think that Muslim women are strict, socially backward, poor, and culturally deprived, and that they follow strict rules. Why are they that way? Who put them in a box? It can't be their religion, because Islam is the most open-minded religion and has given women equal rights. Women have also broken out of their stereotypical roles and shown what they can do when given responsibility. But it seems that some things, like the patriarchal past and mindset of political leaders, are mainly to blame. Constitutionally, they have the same rights as men when it comes to making decisions, but in practice, this is mostly just for show. In reality, they are always affected by the decisions that other people, mostly men, make. Lastly, macro factors like trade networks, foreign direct investment, national debt, and GDP put them at a disadvantage in the world-system tradition. So, at the current rate of progress, Muslim women will be able to close this political gap in a long time.

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