The Gender Gap in Politics: An Empirical Study of Women's Political Representation in India

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Abstract

Gender inequality in politics is a chronic problem that is widely acknowledged. This empirical study offers a thorough analysis of the existing situation from the perspective of women's representation. By looking into the gender gap in Indian politics, the authors in this instance have gone above and above and are willing to fill this gap in the literature. For this investigation, two different types of data were gathered: primary and secondary. Primary information from 144 respondents has been obtained to better understand the gender gap in Indian politics. In conclusion, the present empirical study highlights how critical it is to overcome gender inequality in Indian politics and improve the women's representation in India. It is crucial for a healthy democracy and not merely a matter of gender justice.

Keywords

Gender gap, India, Indian politics, Representation, Women.

Introduction

In any country, Politics, as the arena for decision-making and government, is crucial in determining a country's present and future. The principle that every citizen, regardless of gender, should have an equal voice and rights in the area of power is at the heart of democracy. However, the truth frequently indicates a different picture, showing a dramatic gap in the representation of men and women in politics even in India too where this gender imbalance has significant ramifications for the democratic fabric of the country in the Indian setting. "The continued under-representation of women in legislative bodies and within the rank and file of political parties offsets the momentous gains made in the people-driven feminization of electoral politics in India." (Rai, 217)

Gender inequality in politics is a chronic problem that is widely spread at every level of the politics. Despite improvements in many societal, cultural, educational, technological and political fields, women are still underrepresented in political positions on a global scale and even in India. This underrepresentation not only calls into question the concepts of gender equality and democratic representation, but it also has crucial effects on how policies are prioritized and how they are formulated. This empirical study offers a thorough analysis of the existing situation from the perspective of women's representation as the underlying issues and the prospects for the future to unravel the complex web of causes that lead to gender disparities in political representation is also addressed.

Rationale of the Study

This topic has so far been the subject of several ongoing investigations. Despite the existence of verifiable information, the gender gap in Indian politics has not been adequately explained. By looking into the gender gap in Indian politics, the authors in this instance have gone above and above and are willing to fill this gap in the literature. The gender representation of women in Indian politics and the gender gap in politics are the authors' main concerns.

Objectives

- To study the factors which are responsible for the Gender Gap in Indian Politics in regard to the Women's Political Representation in India
- To explore the prospects of the Gender Gap that exists in Indian Politics in regard to the Women's Political Representation in India

Research Methodology

Data Source For this investigation, two different types of data were gathered: primary and secondary. Primary information from 144 respondents has been obtained

to better understand the gender gap in Indian politics. To gather primary data, an interview schedule is used in the Charkhi Dadri district of the state of Haryana. The information acquired based on the respondents' responses was then looked through. The study was conducted from July 2, 2023 to July 22, 2023. We personally met the responders at their residences. Where appropriate, the primary material is supplemented with secondary information culled from a range of books, journals, websites, and other relevant sources.

Research design The research design is empirical in nature where primary was also collected for the analysis of data followed by secondary data wherever required.

The Sampling Frame Work

Only respondents in the Charkhi Dadri tehsil of the Charkhi Dadri district of Haryana were used for the current study. The respondents who are over the age of 18 are chosen for the study based on the purposive sampling method.

Data Analysis Procedure

The data that have been gathered have been analyzed using categorization and tabulation. The straightforward percentage approach is used in tabulation presentation to further obtain the true facts. A Likert scale presentation of the data is also used.

Limitation

The limits of the two researchers' time, sample size, and geographic coverage prevent them from generalizing the findings of the current study.

Analysis of Data

Following are the results of the analysis of data based on both primary and secondary sources in accordance with the paper's objectives:

- To study the factors which are responsible for the Gender Gap in Indian Politics in regard to the Women's Political Representation in India

Many factors can be held responsible for the sad plight of women's representation in India and some of them are provided below in the table 1:

Table: Factors which are Responsible for the Gender Gap in Indian Politics

Challenges	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Societal and Cultural Factors	5%	28%	14%	42%	11%
Institutional Barriers	17%	11%	12%	46%	14%
Economic Factors	12%	19%	26%	32%	11%
Educational and Professional Backgrounds	3%	9%	40%	42%	6%
Media and Public Perception	4%	11%	35%	33%	17%

Source: Interview Schedule (The data in parenthesis denotes the percentage)

Based on Table 1, it could be inferred that the majority of the 42% of respondents agreed with societal and cultural factors followed by 46% of respondents for the institutional barriers, 32% of respondents for the economic factors, 42% of respondents with the educational and professional backgrounds are responsible for the Gender Gap in Indian Politics in regard to the Women's Political Representation in India whereas 35% respondents remained undecided that media and public perceptions are responsible for the Gender Gap in Indian Politics in regard to the Women's Political Representation in India

Discussion

In the discussion of the factors responsible for the low representation of women in Indian politics following points could be raised:

o Societal and Cultural Factors: There are many societal and cultural factors including biased attitudes, and patriarchy as claimed by the majority of the respondents which are somewhere responsible for the low women's representation in India. As " Drawing on nationally representative data from India and instrumenting marriage age with menarche age, we find that delaying marriage has substantial positive effects on women's everyday political participation." (Carpena & Jensenius, 2021) Moreover that, "Culturally, there's a belief that girls are imagined to be diode however to not lead. After all stereotypical notions concerning girls represent major barriers." (Ameen, 2018)

o Institutional Barriers: "Despite stereotypes about macho leaders, leadership is not inherently masculine." (*THE STATUS of WOMEN in LEADERSHIP Barriers and Bias*, n.d.) But still, The impact of electoral systems, party structures, and candidate selection processes on gender disparities is also

responsible for fewer women in the Indian politics as said by the majority of the respondents.

o Economic Factors: Women generally have less access to the financial resources and less access to campaign funding which affects women's political campaigns as said by the majority of the respondents. In fact, "The causes of the Feminization of Poverty are family composition, family organization, inequality in the access to public services, Inequality in social protection and labor market finally legal, paralegal and cultural constraints in public life." (Sindhuja & Murugan, 2017)

o Educational and Professional Backgrounds: Less education and professional experience also influence women's eligibility and success in politics as pointed out by the majority of the respondents.

o Media and Public Perception: The perception of media and the public is also in favor of males as compared to females and it also created negative impacts on the women's representation in Indian politics as expressed by the majority of the respondents.

The future prospects for the Gender Gap exist in Indian Politics in regard to the Women's Political Representation in India

There are many perspectives from the future point of view to address the existing gender gap in Indian politics and improve the women's representation in India. Some of them are provided below:

o Changes in Social Norms: There is a need to alter the social norms regarding women to address the problem of the gender gap existing in Indian politics.

o Legislative initiatives: More legislative measures should be initiated.

o Political Parties: The dedication and policies of political parties can have an impact on the participation and leadership of women.

o Potential electoral reforms: It could bring the actual changes like reserved seats may increase the number of women in elected office.

o Increased educational possibilities: It can help women become more aware and help to become powerful in politics.

o Promote Women Leadership: There is an urgent need to encourage a greater number of women who might hold important political leadership roles.

o Engagement of young people: The political gender dynamics of the future may be influenced by young women as they are citizens who will build the future of nation.

o Civil Society: The advocacy of the civil society and NGOs is crucial to effectively address the menace of the gender gap in Indian Politics.

By following the above prospects, the idea of gender equality could be made a reality in Indian politics. Proper implementation of laws with true spirit is also essential for this.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the present empirical study highlights how critical it is to overcome gender inequality in Indian politics and improve the women's representation in India. It is crucial for a healthy democracy and not merely a matter of gender justice. Although there is no quick remedy, our conclusions lay the groundwork for future study, policy creation, and community-based activities targeted at bringing India's dream of a more just and representative political system to life. Closing the gender gap and ensuring that women's perspectives are adequately voiced, heard and represented in the political sphere are common obligations that a civilized society should maintain.

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