



## **Women And Politics: Experiences From India**

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### **Abstract**

*The role of women in development is most intimate related to the goal of comprehensive socio-economic development, and is a strategic question for the development of all societies. Any development strategy which neglects the need for enhancing the role of women cannot lead to comprehensive socio-economic development. The point of departure is to recognize the role of women as a dynamic factor and the valuable asset for the overall process of development. Despite concerted efforts to improve the position of women in the Indian society, the overall social status of women continues to be low with lower socio-economic status and minimal representation in political spheres. However, the visible disparities in socio-economic indicators have often been addressed through a planned model of development involving special focus on women but without any proud outputs, and political empowerment was left for the legislatures to decide on. The inability of the legislatures to look upon the importance of political empowerment of women resulted in their present state. But there is no denying the fact that political empowerment has been on the agenda of successive government's right from the time of independence but could not be achieved in the real sense. India is the second most populous country in the world with women constituting about 48.26 percent of its population. Surprising is the fact that such a large percent of population is represented by only 10.8 percent of women in the Indian parliament, which is still too far from the objective of maximum women representation at the political arena. Political activism of women in India has its root reaching far back into colonial era when freedom movement allowed the participation of all the subjects without any gender bias. However after independence the participation of women in the formal political process has lagged behind that of men. With present government promising to provide 33 percent reservation for women in state and central legislature bodies, women have marched a long distance, from politically inactive to politically alert citizens. An attempt would be made in the present paper to analyze and understand the political stature of women in present day India by focusing on the political participation of the women after the independence of India which would provide an insight into the evolution of women as a potential political player in the political arena of India. Simultaneously, the paper would try to analyze how maximum political*

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*participation of women can be a vehicle to achieve the women  
empowerment in India. .*