**Women Leadership in Contemporary Scenario: A Study with Reference to Indian Context**

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**Abstract**

According to the Census 2011 women represent half of the population of India. Feminism has been emerged as the major movement globally in 21st century. Various government initiatives have been executed to up bring women in the forefront with comparison to men. But if we look into the matter of women leadership with reference to Indian context, we find that the scenery is a bit different from what it must be in terms of population index. In our research we aim to investigate the women leadership scenario in Indian subcontinent with some fields restricted to government, politics, economy, maintaining family, decision making in family, media and entertainment etc. Our study also help in understanding possible reasons for such low women representation in leadership and provide some preventive as well as remedial steps to adopt.

**Keywords:**

Indian Subcontinent, Feminism, Government Initiatives, Population Index, Women Representation

**Introduction**

India has always been the land of Unity in Diversity. So far as the gender diversity in leadership is concerned, it quite much differs from contemporary perspective in the subcontinent. If we talk about the various fields of leadership in which women have registered noteworthy position then only few names would be revealed. Though the background of the country has always been in support of the women power in leadership as we can have Sarojini Naidu as the first woman president of Indian National Congress, Indira Gandhi as the first female prime minister, Kiran Bedi as the first female IPS, Pratibh D. Patil as the first female President, Nirmala Sitharaman as the first full time female finance minister in India and so on.

Women friendly policies and government initiatives have been taken to provide equal opportunities to women for leadership. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) also consists of achieving gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls. In contrast to that women are far away from the leadership representation in different sectors in India. In our study we have collected data from the previous researches in the field of women leadership and also from government websites.

Despite having ample history of women leadership and strong footprint left by the eminent women leaders of India, in this study we have attempted to sketch a portrait on reasons of the lacking women leadership in contemporary scenario narrowing it down to the reference of Indian context with the following sections for discussion.

**Women Leadership in India’s Politics and Government**

Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha are supposed to be the temples of Democracy in India where politicians across the nation represents their leadership. See what is the current scenario in terms of women representation in the government below :-

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **House** | **Women (%)** | **Men (%)** | **Total** |
| Lok Sabha | 81 (15.03%) | 458 (84.97%) | 539 |
| Rajya Sabha | 29 (12.28%) | 207 (87.72%) | 236 |

**Table 1.Women representation in Indian politics**

According to the Economic Survey of India there are 4118 members of legislative assemblies (MLAs) across the country including 28 states and 8 union territories in which only 9% are women.

Female representation in government posts is also significantly very poor. According to The Indian EXPRESS female participation in various central government jobs is as low as 10.93% out of total 30.87 lac employees.

**Actions Needed**

In India though the provisions have been made to bring women in politics but even if a woman is elected as MP, MLA or even Sarpanch then also they don't work fairly. In place of them their husband or male partners perform all their works and affairs and we the common people let it happen without showing any protest or regret that is why women don't enjoy the perks and duties of leadership. There is a dire need of alertness and both in the elected one and in the voters who vote. But even the voters vote for the sake of her male spouse is the main problem. They even don't recognize a woman as their leader and we need to address this for the actual women representation in leadership keeping in mind that “Leaders are made not born”.

**Women Leadership in Indian Economy**

In terms of women's participation in the economy of the nation India has secured 139th rank among the 145 countries (BBC News Hindi). Apart from the government and private sector jobs women in the country have also been engaged into independent vendors, small and big business entrepreneurs and in SHGs (Self Help Groups), especially the rural women. They also help in boosting our country's economy by taking care of homes, washing clothes and utensils, cooking foods to us and looking after children and aged ones in the family. By using following data we can have some pictures of women's role in the economy.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Fields** | **Women** | **Men** |
| Work Force | 25.5% | 53.26% |
| In Urban | 15.4% | 30% |
| Farming | 63% | - |

**Table 2.Women contribution in Indian Economy**

**Essential Factors**

Women in our country are not less in any academic, physical or intellectual quality. They always show their excellence in every field whether it is about games and sports, higher education, technical knowledge, space and engineering or any other field of competence with men. Mostly, women resign their jobs after marriage and never come again. If her husband is well earning then she doesn't even think about her career or passion for work. Only those women who are independent and have no male spouse in the family to earn continue in their work. There is not enough safety and salary provided to women in the country excluding government sectors. Seven percent of women in the country face gender discrimination and sexual exploitation at the work place. These are some issues to redress for the better atmosphere of economic activity of women in our country.

**Role of Women in Maintaining Family**

It has been years in our country that the task of maintaining a family, always go to the female members. The role of maintenance starts, right from her marriage till her last breathe. At first she bears a children then she feed them and look after their extensive needs as well as her husband and in-laws in the family. Indian daughters are taught by their mothers how to take care of the family properly and those who are not taught, tend to believe bad cultured. Even the working women plays major role in maintaining the family. Thus working women play double role in the family which is quite multitasking in nature. We can also say that this is the only field in which men are lacking behind the women.

**A Slight Change in the Scenario**

Now a day things are a bit changing because of feministic approach at the emergence. Women are also becoming self centric and career oriented so they keep house maid and care takers for maintaining their family. And instead of actively participate in the family maintenance they only play administrational roles. In recent days because of the effect of globalization and the impact of MNCs women are focusing on their career more than ever. In this way they are leaving behind the prevailing dogmas in the contemporary society and moving ahead toward more career centric and so called productive activities.

**Participation of Women in Making Decision in Family**

Indian families are highly patriarchal traditionally in terms of making decision in the family. Women are left far behind, when it comes to make any decision in the family. There are several reasons behind that of which one is that wives are always less educated than husbands and if the wife is more educated and qualified then too she is only allowed to give her opinion but the final decision has to be made by the man. Women are supposed to be highly emotional and fragile in nature is also a cause for their less involvement in decision making. Due to their familiarity with the outer world and muscle power, men feel free and confident while making any decision. Even the women member in the family rely more trust upon men while making decision. Women are making decisions only if they are single parents in the family and if their children are too young to do so. Thus in this scenario too men are highly recommended in Indian society.

**Position of Women in Media and Entertainment**

Women in the field of Media and Entertainment are highly on demand since many years of its existence especially in the field of advertisement, news, TV commercials and films. With their untiring effort and multitasking roles though they have registered quite remarkable place in the various field of media and entertainment yet we fail to have significant numbers which could compete with men in this field too. Several media houses and news channels commoditize women for their benefits. Whether it is a film or news channel debate women are always there but not just because of their talent in that particular field but for the source of physical beauty and sex appeal. From safety pin to commercial buildings if there is something to sell, there will be a woman always to please the eyes of a man who can gaze her physical beauty.

We can see it clearly that the women are highly presented in the entry level of the media and entertainment but when it come the higher levels of administration and leadership they are lacking far behind. Though there are some women doing well in posts like producer/director in the field of entertainment like Meera Nair, Gauri Shindey, Nandita Das, Tanuja Chandra, Konkana Sen Sharma etc. but they are not dominating the male representation in this particular field.

**Need of the Hour**

In today's male dominated society we need to change the perspectives of ours that women are not only made for the representation of sexual lust and physical beauty. We need to add some preventive action plans in our education sector as well in our society. We must look upon the other brighter side of the women's characteristics like modesty, carefulness, affectionate, and full of nature which is far superior to her materialistic and commoditized appearance. We need to enhance gender diversity to produce utmost from women\*s participation.

**Research Method**

In this research we have applied Qualitative Approach in finding the data from different sources like government websites of Loksabha and Rajyasabha, Press Information Bureau of India, Census of India, and few private sector companies and platforms like McKinsey&Company, Drishti IAS and BBC News Hindi etc.

**Conclusion**

There are obviously enough initiatives from the government, from the public and the private sectors as well which have been taken to balance the gap of leadership of men and women in almost every field of life. Feminism has also made its impact globally. Women are now more educated and career oriented. They are also much serious about their dreams and passion but it is getting very difficult to digest the leadership of women in the male dominant and patriarchal atmosphere around us.

In a recent document of IMF (International Monetary Fund) it has been said that if the work force of women in India equals to that of the males, then the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) will increase up to 27% and it will be a very big achievement for the country. What we need to do is to focus more on strengthening the roots of education, beliefs and competence towards giving the equal chance of representation to the women not only in India but also in the world.

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