



Role of Social Media in Political Participation of Women in India with Reference to Lok Sabha Election 2024

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Abstract-- The political participation is a fundamental aspect of democracy, reflecting the involvement of citizens in the political process. Women's participation in politics is particularly important for achieving gender equality, inclusive governance, and social justice. India, being the world's largest democracy, has witnessed gradual progress in women's political representation over the years. The social medias have created new spaces for political engagement, especially for women. The 2024 Lok Sabha Election highlighted both achievements and challenges regarding women's participation in electoral politics. 800 women candidates contested the 2024 Lok Sabha elections out of more than 8,300 total candidates. This represented around 9.6% of all contestants. Despite being a slight improvement in the number of women candidates compared to earlier decades, women remained significantly underrepresented among political nominees. The increasing participation of women voters demonstrates their influence in determining electoral outcomes and shaping public policy.

Keywords-- democracy, political process, gender equality, social justice, public policy, social media.

I. INTRODUCTION

The political participation is a cornerstone of democracy, enabling citizens to influence governance and decision-making processes. In India, women constitute nearly half of the population, yet their participation in politics has historically been limited due to socio-cultural, economic, and institutional barriers. Over the last decade, the rapid growth of social media has transformed political communication and participation across the country. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter (X), Instagram, WhatsApp, and YouTube have created new spaces for political engagement, especially for women. Social media has reduced dependence on traditional political structures and media, allowing women to voice opinions, organize movements, and engage with political leaders directly. This assignment examines the role of social media in promoting political participation among women in India. It analyzes how social media contributes to awareness, empowerment, mobilization, and representation while also addressing challenges such as online harassment, misinformation, and the digital divide. Women's participation in elections is a key indicator of a healthy democracy.

India, being the world's largest democracy, has made noticeable progress in increasing women's involvement in the electoral process. The 2024 General Elections once again highlighted both the achievements and ongoing challenges faced by women in Indian politics. While more women voted and contested elections, their representation in decision-making positions still remains limited.

II. POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Political participation refers to the involvement of individuals in activities related to political processes, governance, and decision-making. These activities include voting, campaigning, contesting elections, participating in protests, engaging in political discussions, and influencing public opinion. For women, political participation goes beyond voting; it includes leadership, policy advocacy, grassroots activism, and digital engagement. In the Indian context, women's participation is influenced by education, caste, class, religion, and access to resources. Social media has emerged as a significant factor reshaping the nature and scope of political participation.

III. SIGNIFICANCE OF WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Greater participation of women in politics strengthens democracy by ensuring diverse perspectives in policymaking. Women representatives often focus on issues such as education, healthcare, gender equality, child welfare, and social development. Increased representation can help create more inclusive and responsive governance. The high turnout of women voters in 2024 demonstrates that women are increasingly becoming a decisive force in Indian elections. Their active involvement can encourage political parties to nominate more women candidates and support gender-balanced leadership.

Despite constitutional guarantees of equality, women in India remain underrepresented in political institutions. Although women actively participate as voters, their presence in legislative bodies and executive roles is comparatively low. Patriarchal norms, lack of financial resources, family responsibilities, and social restrictions often discourage women from entering politics.



The introduction of reservations for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions marked a significant step toward inclusion. However, representation at the state and national levels remains limited. In this context, social media offers alternative pathways for participation by enabling women to engage politically without traditional gatekeepers.

IV. WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE LOK SABHA ELECTION 2024

The 2024 Lok Sabha Election was the first general election held after the passage of the Women's Reservation Act, 2023, which aims to reserve one-third of seats in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies for women. Although the law is yet to be implemented, it generated significant discussion about women's representation in politics. According to election data, approximately 800 women candidates contested the 2024 Lok Sabha elections out of more than 8,300 total candidates. This represented around 9.6% of all contestants. Despite being a slight improvement in the number of women candidates compared to earlier decades, women remained significantly underrepresented among political nominees.

One of the most remarkable features of the 2024 election was the high turnout of women voters. Women recorded a voter turnout of about 65.8%, slightly higher than the turnout of male voters, which stood at 65.6%. This reflects the growing political awareness and active engagement of women in India's democratic process. The increasing participation of women voters demonstrates their influence in determining electoral outcomes and shaping public policy. The election resulted in 74 women being elected to the 18th Lok Sabha, accounting for approximately 13.6% of the total 543 members. Although this represents one of the highest numbers of women MPs in Indian history, it is slightly lower than the 78 women elected in the 2019 Lok Sabha election. The decline indicates that greater voter participation by women has not yet translated into proportional political representation. Several prominent women leaders won their constituencies, including experienced politicians and first-time candidates. Political parties such as the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Indian National Congress (INC), and All India Trinamool Congress (TMC) fielded women candidates, though their overall numbers remained limited.

V. INFLUENCES OF SOCIAL MEDIA TO WOMEN

India is one of the largest users of social media globally. Affordable smart phones, low-cost internet, and digital initiatives have contributed to the widespread adoption of social media across urban and rural areas. Social media platforms have become important sources of news, political information, and public debate. For women, especially young and educated users, social media provides access to political content that was previously unavailable or inaccessible. These platforms allow women to learn about political rights, government schemes, and social issues affecting their lives. Today's, social media has become as a tool for political participation of people especially women in India. Social media role is ever increasing and becomes part and parcel of Indian politics. The major roles of social media in improving women political participation are listed below:

1. Political Awareness

One of the most important roles of social media is increasing political awareness among women. Through online platforms, women can follow political leaders, activists, journalists, and organizations. Information about elections, policies, protests, and legislative developments spreads quickly and widely. Hash tag campaigns, online discussions, and live political events help women understand political issues and form opinions. Social media also enables women to compare political ideologies and evaluate leaders, thereby promoting informed participation.

2. Empowerment and Expression of Women's Voices

Social media empowers women by providing a platform for self-expression and political dialogue. Women can articulate concerns related to gender inequality, violence, education, employment, health, and representation. These platforms challenge traditional power structures by allowing women to participate without intermediaries. Campaigns such as #MeTooIndia, #PinjraTod, and online advocacy for women's safety demonstrate how social media amplifies women's voices. Such movements have encouraged political debates and pressured authorities to respond to gender-related issues.

3. Mobilization and Activism

Social media plays a crucial role in mobilizing women for collective political action. Online platforms facilitate the organization of protests, awareness campaigns, and community initiatives.



Women activists use social media to coordinate efforts, share resources, and mobilize support across regions. Digital activism has enabled women from diverse backgrounds to participate in political movements. It has also helped bridge geographical boundaries, allowing women to connect and collaborate at the national and international levels.

4. Electoral Participation

During elections, social media becomes a key medium for political engagement. Women voters use social media to access information about candidates, party manifestos, and voting procedures. Online discussions and campaigns encourage women to participate actively in electoral processes. Women politicians increasingly use social media to communicate directly with voters. These platforms allow them to present their achievements, address public concerns, and counter negative stereotypes often promoted by traditional media.

5. Women Politicians

Social media has become a strategic tool for women politicians in India. It enables them to build personal brands, connect with constituents, and gain visibility. Women leaders use social media to highlight issues related to women and marginalized communities. By bypassing traditional media channels, social media allows women politicians to control their narratives. This has contributed to greater recognition and acceptance of women leaders in Indian politics.

6. Grassroots Political Participation

At the grassroots level, social media has empowered women to engage in local governance and community politics. Women involved in Panchayati Raj Institutions use social media to share information about development projects, government schemes, and local issues. WhatsApp groups and Facebook pages have become important tools for communication and coordination in rural areas. These platforms help women participate in decision-making and community mobilization.

VI. CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN ON POLITICS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Despite its benefits, social media presents several challenges for women's political participation. Online harassment, trolling, cyber bullying, and threats are widespread issues. Women who express political opinions often face gender-based abuse, discouraging participation.

Misinformation and fake news also pose risks, as women may be targeted with false narratives and character assassination. Additionally, the digital divide limits access for women in rural and economically weaker sections.

1. Digital Divide and Accessibility Issues

While social media usage has grown, access remains unequal. Factors such as lack of digital literacy, limited internet connectivity, and economic constraints restrict women's participation. Rural women and older women are particularly affected by these barriers. Bridging the digital divide is essential to ensure inclusive political participation. Digital education and infrastructure development are necessary to empower women across all sections of society.

2. Impact on Democracy and Gender Equality

Social media has contributed to making Indian democracy more inclusive by amplifying women's voices. It has encouraged political dialogue, participation, and awareness among women. By highlighting gender issues, social media has influenced public discourse and policy debates. However, online participation must translate into real-world political representation and policy change. Sustainable impact requires institutional support and social acceptance of women's leadership.

3. General Election 2024

Women candidates who contested the 2024 elections showed strong performance in many constituencies. Their success demonstrated that women can effectively connect with voters and manage political campaigns when given equal opportunities. However, the overall number of women elected to the Lok Sabha remained limited, highlighting the need for structural reforms. The major problems faced of women in General Election 2024 in real politics are listed below:

a. Gender Bias and Patriarchy

Indian politics is still influenced by patriarchal thinking. Women politicians often face doubts about their leadership abilities and are judged more harshly than men.

b. Limited Party Support

Political parties often hesitate to give tickets to women candidates, especially in "winnable" constituencies. Women are sometimes fielded only to fulfill symbolic representation.

c. Financial Constraints

Elections require significant financial resources. Many women lack access to funds, political networks, and donors, making it difficult to run competitive campaigns.



d. Criminalization and Violence

Women in politics face harassment, threats, online abuse, and character assassination. Fear of violence discourages many capable women from entering politics.

e. Family and Social Pressure

Balancing political life with family responsibilities is a major challenge. Social expectations often force women to prioritize household duties over political careers.

f. Lack of Grassroots Opportunities

Although women participate actively in local governance (Panchayati Raj), they find it difficult to move from local politics to state or national-level leadership.

VII. CONCLUSION

Social media plays a transformative role in enhancing political participation among women in India. It provides platforms for awareness, expression, mobilization, and leadership, helping women overcome traditional barriers to political engagement. While challenges such as online harassment and digital inequality persist, the overall impact of social media is positive. With improved digital access, education, and legal protections, social media can further empower women and strengthen democratic participation in India.

Encouraging responsible and inclusive digital engagement will be crucial for achieving gender equality in political representation. The 2024 Indian elections showed that women are increasingly active as voters and political participants. However, real political power remains unevenly distributed. While legal reforms like the Women's Reservation Act offer hope, true equality will require changes in party policies, social attitudes, and safety conditions. Empowering women in politics is essential not only for gender equality but also for strengthening Indian democracy as a whole.

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