



Women in Power Dynamics: Drive for a World of Equality

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Abstract

India, with a population exceeding 1.2 billion (Census 2011), sex ratio - 940 females per 1000 males. Women constitute 48.6% of the population, yet their representation in decision-making and policy formulation remains disproportionately low. Despite gender equality being central to Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG5), India is lagging in achieving this target by 2030. The objective of the study is to identify the persistent gender disparities in the administrative levels of the education sector, where key policies are shaped. The study highlights that just 8% representation in the 12-member committee responsible for the National Education Policy 2020. Regulatory bodies such as AICTE, NCTE, CBSE, NBA, and ICSSR show less than 25% female participation in top-level management. This underrepresentation undermines efforts to promote gender equity through education and delays progress toward a more inclusive and sustainable society. The findings underscore the urgent need for increased female involvement in educational governance to ensure that gender equality is not only advocated but structurally embedded in policy-making processes.

Keywords: gender equality, women in politics, managerial skill, decision making

Introduction

India is a vast country with a 1,210,854,977 population (Census 2011), the second highest in the world. The sex ratio of this highly populated country is an important factor in determining the population of females. 940 females per 1000 males is the sex ratio of India as per the report of the census 2011, which has increased compared to the previous Census data 2001. The data reveal that 48.6% of the total population consists of females. The country's half population comprises females. The needs and demands of this half of the



population are therefore to be considered the most important issue for the development of the country. Females need to be treated equally to males to maintain equality for sustainable development (SDG5). Gender equality is a core foundation for a sustainable future. Over the last decades, progress in attaining gender equality has been observed, but it remains insufficient to achieve the goal by 2030 (SDG5), and India is not an exception (Dhar, 2018; Razavi, 2016). In India, various policies and effective measures are being formulated from the state level to national level to accelerate the progress and development of women to achieve sustainable development goals (Sahoo & Lenka, 2024). In that context, it is significant to throw light on the participation of females to comprehend whether half of the population has equal representation at the top-level administration for policy formulation and implementation. Education is the backbone of any society and it creates a better society in which we live in (Behrman, 1997). Since independence, many education policies and committees have been formed to update the education system and to bring changes as per the need. “Gender equality is embedded in government policies and is widely recognized as a prerequisite for achieving the development goals,” is mentioned as a foreword by Dr. Shailja Sharma, Director General of the Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation (MoSPI, 2022). Many social policies aim to reduce gender inequality by creating flexible and tolerant societies where every individual is respected and valued (Sustainable Development Goals Report 2021). For making an inclusive society, ensuring women with equal opportunities at every level of administration will enable full and active participation of women. This study will focus on women’s role and involvement at the principal administrative tier with special reference to the educational sector. To reduce the gender gap in the educational sector, various provisions are made in different educational policies. However, ensuring meaningful involvement of women in decision-making structures is pivotal to addressing gender disparities. The study on women’s participation in administrative tiers, politics, policymaking and power building is notable to put forward the voice of women towards the world.

Objectives

The objective of the study is-

- To find the percentage of women at top level of administration in education sector in India. The participation of women is different regulatory bodies of education sector.



- To know the percentage of women in parliament (both houses) of India after independence. In a parliamentary form of government, a bill or policy passes by both houses of parliament to make a law. Members of both houses pass education policies as well. In this context, it is significant to know the percentage of women in both places.

Methodology

The descriptive research is based on the available secondary data on various website and from the government report.

Women in Both Houses

In 2018, women accounted for approximately 23.8% of parliamentarians worldwide. A year earlier, just 31 nations had achieved the milestone of having at least 30% female representation among their ministers (Tymkin, 2023). According to the World Bank Report, in India, women hold only 13.7 percent of seats in parliament. The percentage is quite low in comparison to many other countries in the world (World Bank Group, 2023). India is a democratic country, and the parliamentary system is a democratic form of government in which the party with the greatest representation in the parliament forms the government (Britannica, 2019). India's parliamentary system comprises two chambers: the Lok Sabha (House of the People) and the Rajya Sabha (House of States). The Lok Sabha functions as the lower house, with its members directly elected by the citizens, while the Rajya Sabha serves as the upper house, where members are chosen through an indirect electoral process. Both houses together make the parliamentary system. A government can make decisions only while it has the support of the parliament. Therefore, the members of both houses have the power to bring overall changes in the nation. For the welfare of women and for their protection various legislations have been formulated by Indian Government since independence which are shown in the *Table 1* below.

Table1: Women related Legislation in India

Act	Year
The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) act	1956
The Dowry Prohibition Act	1961
The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act	1986
The Commission of Sati	1987
The National Commission for Women Act	1990

Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act	2005
The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (PREVENTION and REDRESSAL) Act	2013
The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act	2013
The Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill introduced in the Lok Sabha	2021

Source: Ministry of Women & Child Development, Women related Legislation.

Besides the legislation in favour of women, it is pertinent to discuss the imperative involvement of women in policy making. A bill must pass by both houses of parliament for making a law. The member of both houses have central role in law making. Therefore, the number of women in both houses determines the percentage of women’s involvement in decision making process regarding the legislation of women. In 1957, in Lok Sabha there were 22 women. The number increased to 78 in 2019 (Figure 1). Still the percentage is low in compared to total population. Last 5 General Election data shows that 9 per cent women were elected in Lok Sabha in 1999, eventually the number rose to 14.4 per cent in 2019 (Figure 1). However, only 14 per cent women representatives in Lok Sabha are notably low. 48 per cent women’s population is represented by only 14 per cent females in parliamentary house indicate the existence of gender inequalities in administrative level.

Figure 1: Number of women elected in Lok Sabha:

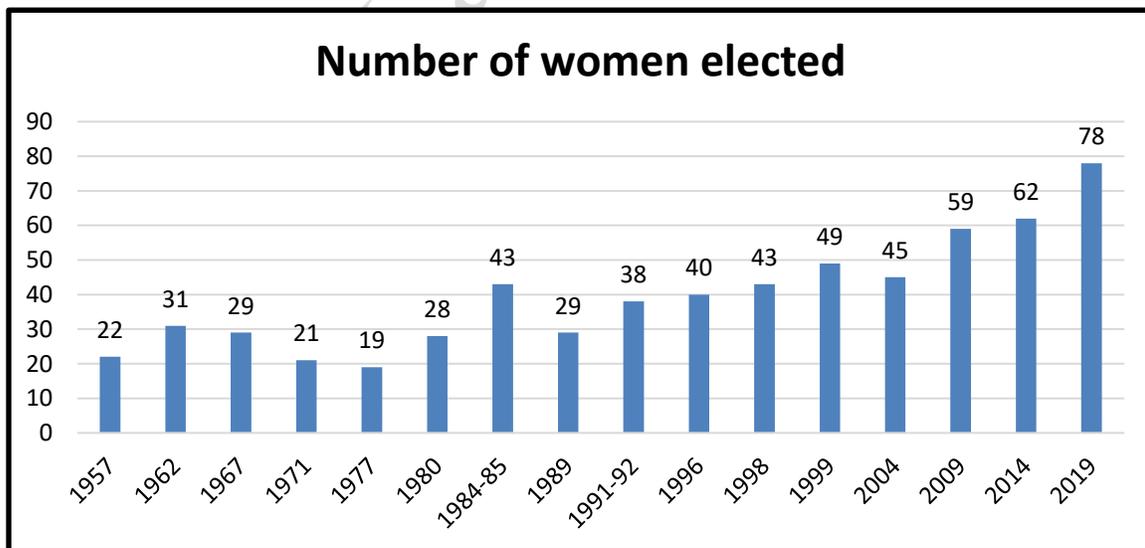


Table 2: Number and percentage of women elected in last General Election to Lok Sabha :

Year of General Election	Total Seats	Women (In Number)	Women (%)
1999	543	49	9.0
2004	543	45	8.3
2009	543	59	10.9
2014	543	62	11.4
2019	543	78	14.4

Table 3: Number and percentage of women elected in last General Election to Rajya Sabha :

Year	Number of Women	Percentage of Women
2012	24	9.8
2014	31	12.8
2016	27	11.0
2018	28	11.4
2019	26	10.83
2021	29	12.24

Compared to 2014, women representatives in Rajya Sabha remains the same in 2021 (12 per cent) (Table 2). Members of both houses of parliament are considered as law making body and fewer women representatives in both houses gives a thought on the existing gender disparities in India.

Education Policies and Women

It is universally true that, for the development of a country, the education system plays an important role. After gaining independence in 1947, India established several education commissions to reform the colonial education system and develop comprehensive policies addressing national educational challenges. India's first education commission of independent India was The University Education Commission (1948-49). Since then, many commissions have been developed to meet the demand of the time. National Education Policy, 2020 is the latest among them. Women education and equal opportunities were mentioned in all education policies to promote gender equalities in society through the education system. For the development of women's education, many committees were formed on women's education since independence

(Table 4) and the committees were chaired by women to keep the demand of women to the nation. On the contrary, the education policies are led by males except the National Education Policy, 1968, which was led by the former and only female prime minister of India (Table 3). From the above data, it is considered that the committees especially formed for women were led by women. Women’s participation is restricted to a special arena (women-related issue). In the general context, women have less participation in politics. In a democratic society, the legislature plays a vital role in raising debates and discussions on a wide variety of aspects of governance and in demanding accountability from the government. Therefore, equal participation of women in the legislature will reduce the gender disparity at the top level of administration and will promote gender equality.

Table 3: Education Policies of India and its chairman in post-independence:

Education Policy	Year	Chairman / Led by
University Education Policy	1948	Dr S. Radhakrishnan
Mudaliar Commission	1952-53	Dr. Lakshmanaswamy Mudaliar
Kothari Commission	1964-66	D.S. Kothari
National Education Policy	1968	Government of India led by Indira Gandhi
National Policy on Education	1986	Government of India led by Rajiv Gandhi
National Education Policy	2020	Dr. K Kasturirangan

Table 4: Committees on Women Education since Independence:

Committees on Education (Women)	Year	Chairman/Led by
National Committees on Women’s Education	1958	Shrimati Durgabai Deshmukh
National Council for Women’s Education	1959	Shrimati Durgabai Deshmukh
Hansa Mehta Committee Report	1962	Smt Hamsa Mehta
Bhaktavatsalam Committee Report	1963	Smt. M. Bhakta

Table 5: Members of National Education Policy 2020

Sl.No.	Name	Designation	Gender
1	Mahes Chandra Pant	Chancellor, NIEPPA	Male
2	Govind Prasad Sharma	Chairman, National Book Trust	Male
3	Najma Akhtar	Vice Chancellor, Jamia Millia Islamia	Female
4	T V Kattimani	Vice Chancellor, Central Tribal University of Andhra Pradesh	Male
5	Milind Kamble	Chairperson, IIM Jammu	Male
6	Michel Danino	Guest professor, IIT Gandhinagar	Male
7	Jagbir Singh	Chancellor, Central University of Punjab, Bathinda	Male
8	Manjul Bhargava	Mathematician (Indian origin, American)	Male
9	M K Sridhar	Trainer, Social activist	Male
10	Dhir Jhingran	Founder director, Language and Learning Foundation (LLF)	Male
11	Shankar Maruwada	Co-founder and CEO, Ek Step Foundation	Male

The National Education Policy 2020 committee had only one female member out of twelve (8%), highlighting gender bias at the administrative level despite education policies being meant for all. While the government has launched several initiatives for girls—such as Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Sukanya Samridhi, Balika Samridhi Yojana, CBSE Udaan, and the National Scheme of Incentive to Girls for Secondary Education—the minimal female representation in policymaking reflects an unequal social attitude toward women’s emancipation in the 21st century.

Participation of Women in various Educational Bodies

Involvement of Women in the administration of NCERT

As per Indian constitution, the power of governance has been distributed in three forms- Union List, Concurrent List and State List. Union list includes central power, State list consider the power of state government and Concurrent list includes the power to be

considered by both the Central and State governments. Education is in the concurrent list. Central Government has its separate body to administer the education system. NCERT (National Council of Educational Research and Training) is a Central autonomous body to improve school education. School is the place where future of the nation is nurtured. Engagement of female teachers (48.7 Lakh) is higher than male teachers (46.3 Lakh) in the country (U-DISE 2021-22). According to U-DISE Report 2021-22, in upper primary level 36.9 lakh male teachers are present and the number of female teachers is 47.6 lakhs which significantly higher than male teachers. The previous year U-DISE Report 20-21 also shows that female teachers' number 49.2 Lakh out of 96.8 lakhs was higher than male teachers. As a central autonomous body, maintaining quality in the school education system and ensuring the welfare of teachers are of utmost importance (NCERT). To train and to conduct research related to the issue of teachers (majority of the teachers is female) it is paramount to find the number of females present in senior functionaries of NCERT. 15 senior functionaries of NCERT consist of 12 males and 3 females. 20% women's participation in functionary level in central school education system is notably low. It does not make women equitable in administrative and functionary level (**Table 6**).

Table 6: Senior Functionaries of NCERT:

Name	Designation	Gender
Prof. Dinesh Prasad Saklani	Director, NCERT Chairperson, NCTE(Additional Charge)	Male
Prof. Sridhar Srivastava	Joint Director	Male
Prof. Pratyusha Kumar Mandal	Secretary	Male
Prof. Amarendra P Behera	Joint Director, CIET	Male
Sh. Deepak Paliwal	Joint Director, PSSCIVE	Male
Prof. Anjum Sibia	Dean (Academic)	Female
Prof. Dinesh Kumar	Dean (Research)	Male
Prof. Gouri Srivastava	Dean (Coordination)	Female
Prof. S.V. Sharma	Principal, RIE Ajmer	Male
Prof. Jaydip Mandal	I/C Principal, RIE Bhopal	Male
Prof. P. C Agarwa	Principal, RIE Bhubaneswar	Male



Prof. Y. Sreekanth	Principal, RIE Mysore	Male
Dr. Flourette G Dkhar	In-charge Principal, RIE Shillong	Female
Sh. Subhash Chander	I/C CAO & IFA	Male
Sh. Madan Singh Yadav	Vigilance Cum Security Officer(VSO)	

UGC and its Members

To ensure quality in higher education, the government of India forms various functionary bodies and UGC is one of the autonomous bodies among them. Promotion and co-ordination of university education is one of the prior functions of UGC. This commission consist of eight members (*Prof. Mamidala Jagadesh Kumar, Prof. Deepak Kumar Srivastava, Shri K. Sanjay Murthy, Shri Sanjay Prasad, Prof. (Ms.) Sushma Yadav [F], Prof. E. Suresh Kumar, Prof.(Dr) M K Sridhar, Dr Shivaraj*). Among eight members, only one female member determines the low involvement of women in decision making process in higher educational functionary bodies.

NBA (National Board of Accreditation) and involvement of Women

In technical education, NBA (National Board of Accreditation) plays significant role to ensure quality and relevance in technical education in India. The NBA has implemented updated accreditation processes, parameters, and criteria that align with leading global standards and are designed to evaluate the outcome-based effectiveness of technical education programmes. With a modern outlook this regulatory body came into existence in 2010. The general council of NBA consists of 19 members. 1 out of 19 members is female in general council of NBA. 5% female representative at top level management in technical education addresses the gender disparity in high ranking job in India.

ICSSR (Indian Council of Social Science Research)

For the development of the country, research in every field is paramount (Singh A. 2021). Research not only in the field of science and technology but also in social science must be encouraged to promote innovation and new ideas. Keeping that in view, ICSSR (Indian Council of Social Science Research) was established to promote and review the progress in social sciences in the country. The chairman of ICSSR is Dr. J K Bajaj (Male) and member secretary is Prof. Dhananjay Singh (Male). There are 9 Non-Ex-Officio members of ICSSR. Except Prof. (Retd.) Sheila Rai and Prof. Gita Dharmapal rest are male. Existence of only 2



females among 11 council members does not promote gender equality in research in social science. To remove gender inequalities, to promote women participation in research and in higher studies the involvement of women in various committees and councils members is significant. Almost half of the population of the country is female. Henceforth, women's face and name must be put forward to encourage other women in the country to make them feel that there are not intellectually inferior.

Participation of women in decision making and leadership creates equal opportunity for men and women both. To ensure women's perspectives are meaningfully reflected in decision-making, they must engage equally with men across all domains—from personal and community settings to national and international platforms (Linda & Miranda, 2005). A noticeable gender disparity remains evident in women's involvement in leadership and decision-making roles across all tiers of educational administration. In India, the low involvement of women in decision making and administrative process portrays women inferior as well as lack of managerial skill.

Other Regulatory Bodies in Education Sector

Besides NCERT and UGC, other educational bodies play different role in education system like AICTE (All India Council of Technical Education), NCTE (National Council of Teachers Education), NCF (National Curriculum Framework), and NCFTE (National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education). The chairpersons of most of the aforementioned educational bodies are male (Chairperson of AICTE- Prof. T. G. Sitharam, Chairperson of NCTE- Mohd. Akhtar Siddiqui, Chairperson of CBSE- Nidhi Chibber) except the chairperson of CBSE, a female.

Few Suggestions for improvement of the Situation

- *Digital skill Enhancement*

The 21st-century tech revolution has transformed every sector, making digital access essential. In India, empowering women—who make up half the population—with digital skills is crucial for national progress. Promoting female participation in technology and addressing barriers like gender-based digital violence are vital. National and global bodies like UN, UNESCO, and UNICEF must work to close digital gaps and create inclusive tech that supports women's full potential in society and the workplace.

- *More Participation in STEM Discipline*

There are very few government schemes that expressly aim to balance the skewed gender ratio in STEM disciplines, and the few initiatives by non-profit organizations that do are not implemented pan-India; therefore, their impact remains localized to a few states. The need for STEM education and inclusive and transformative technology is therefore crucial for more participation of women in leadership and management positions.

- Short-term reservation or quota systems to support to command of women into all levels of political spheres.
- Community and administration leadership and political involvement, preparing workshops and training for girls and women at the ground level, school level.
- Strengthening the active participation of girls and women in humanitarian interventions, efforts to prevent conflict, and processes aimed at building sustainable peace.
- Building a violence-free environment to be practised, where women could enjoy their involvement and activities without any discrimination.
- More allocation of budgets to health and education is needed to increase the participation of women in various health and education sectors.

Further Scope of the Study

The study highlights the low representation of women in top-level educational administration, emphasizing the need to examine gender participation across other sectors like industry, technology, and crisis management. Globally, women hold only 20% of jobs in science and tech fields and just 25% of leadership roles in major tech firms. To address gender disparity, broader research is needed across medical, technical, and commercial domains. In order to mitigate gender disparity, every possible area should be well studied to get a clear perception of the persisting gap in terms of gender. The current study details very few specific regulatory bodies of education from secondary to higher education. A field study can be done in the future to find out the percentage of women as Vice-Chancellors in India, and a comparative study can be done region-wise to get a view of which region promotes equal opportunities for women in high-level administration, as universities are the highest place to obtain a degree and education.

Conclusion

Women's involvement in decision-making remains largely confined to women-centric issues, with their representation in India's legislature and administration disproportionately low



compared to their 48% share of the population. Despite schemes promoting women's education, limited involvement in governance hinders true empowerment. Only 10–12% of top educational administrators are women, reflecting persistent gender bias since independence. The Ministry of Education's 12-member National Steering Committee includes just one woman, underscoring continued disparity even after 75 years. Achieving SDG4 and enhancing girls' educational attainment requires women's presence across all governance levels. In a democratic country like India, participation of women in politics may help to bring positive changes and the issues of women can be resolved if more females voices are added. Less number of female in Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha indicates unequal association of women with politics. The power of women in politics can be a game changer in a country like India. More number of involvements of women in parliament, administration, various councils and committees will practically promote gender equality in the country. If women do not get equal opportunities, they will remain as inferior in a dominated country like India. The scope must be created for half of the population of the country to exhibit their talent and potential of them.



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