

Muslim Women and Indian Politics

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Abstract

In the areas of social, political, economic, cultural, and other development endeavors, women are among the most vulnerable groups. The patriarchal and feudal structures prevent women from being fully empowered in the various areas of growth. Women are still demonstrating positive signs of empowerment in many areas of development, despite the fact that it has been a more difficult job to free them from various forms of social evils against them. Similar to how women's empowerment in all religions reveals startling data that even today, a group of people is being neglected by their traditional taboos in economic activity, employment, and education. Muslims make up the second-largest group in the world, but neither their male nor their female peers are given equal consideration in terms of development. Muslim traditionalists have a misconception that they are unwilling to teach their women because most of their male peers are engaged in business activities such as working in stores, food stalls, vendors, etc. Even if Muslim women are well educated, it can be difficult for them to locate a suitable husband within the Muslim society. The majority of Muslim women are frequently prevented from attending education because the masculine gender imbalance can be corrected. Every Muslim man and Muslim woman is required by the Prophet Mohammed to pursue information, but these statements are only made on paper and not in practice. As soon as Muslim women get puberty their involvement in education has condensed as they are married at the early age for their Muslim men. According to the Census data of religious communities 2011, Jains with 94.9% literates are followed by the Christians, whose literacy rate is 84.5%. The Buddhists have 81.3% literates, the Sikhs 75.4%, the Hindus 73.3% and the Muslims 68.5%. Likewise Jain women also lead in the literacy charts with a literacy rate of 92.9%, followed by Christians (81.5%), Buddhists (74%), Sikhs (70.3%), Hindus (64.3 %) and Muslims (62%) (Newpost 2015).

Key words: Muslim, Politics, India, Women etc.

Muslim people have the edging share of working population of 33% among religious communities in India. This is poorer than the nation's normal working contribution rate of 40%. In the working involvement of Muslim women also stands low down in work force. Women's contribution is now 15% for Muslims and Sikhs, and still poor at 12% among Jains. Amongst Hindus presently 27% working women, whereas it is 31% in Christians and 33% in Buddhists. Some minor faiths fall in 'Other Religions'. These are generally tribes from peninsular India and the northeastern states of India. Their participation rates are distinctly diverse from further communities. Almost 48% of members of this segment work more than any of the nation's six foremost religious communities. Women's working contribution is also maximum in tribal communities, nearly 44% (Varma 2016). In Islam, women are permitted to occupy governmental office. There are no passages in the Qur'an that forbid women from having leadership roles (Rahman 2012). As long as they are not doing so at the expense of their greater obligations of raising and caring for their families, there is nothing in the authentic sources of Islam that prohibits women from running for political offices if they are confident in their knowledge and credentials to make a difference. Islam regards a woman's position as a mother as the highest responsibility she can ever carry out; nothing else can take its place. This must always be emphasized. There is nothing in Islam that would prevent her from playing this important role, though, if her participation in politics does not. (Kutty 2004).

Objectives of the Study

- To study the profile of Muslim women.
- To analyze the career of Muslim women.
- To study the hurdles which are restricting Muslim women political participation.

Obstacles faced by Muslim Women in Political Participation

1. Lack of Support
2. Restrictions from Religious Party
3. Economically Vulnerable
4. Lack of Awareness
5. Lack of Education
6. Lack of Political Knowledge
7. Cultural Values
8. Lack of Institutional Support
9. Misinterpretation of Religion
10. Male Dominance etc.

The Ahmedabad Jama Masjid's Imam Shabbir Ahmed Siddiqui issued an order earlier this month prohibiting Muslim women from receiving electoral ballots. He asserted that Islam forbids women from participating in public life and, as a result, forbids them from running for office, participating in political campaigns, or even going to churches to worship.

The Saachar Committee Report noted that the main cause behind the demoralized status of Muslim women is the backwardness of Muslims in the socio- profitable sphere. They've lagged behind other persuasions due to social factors like poverty, low earnings, low rate of knowledge, and shy avenues of employment. In a study called The changing half A study of Indian Muslims, it was set up that rather than the religious factors alone, other structural and institutional paradigms like customs, traditions, moral systems, patriarchy, the misconception of Islamic principles, lack of tone- action or alleviation, and lack of support from manly members concertedly hinder the prospects of women to borrow new values and conform to the changing terrain.

The question is whether or not designated seats for women will come a reality, will their opinions be heard? Will their input be included simply on paper or also on a substantial base? also, will all these sweats lead to significant advancements in the socioeconomic status of Muslim women?

We've formerly seen reservations for women in original governance proving to be ineffectual. The reason relies on confined customs, patriarchal practices and ignorance. In Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh men accompany and help women mukhiyas. Still, one has to look at the situation rationally. It's a structural problem. The root cause for this is the socio- profitable status which also contains ignorance, lack of confidence and training of these women representatives. Since utmost women are illiterate and don't have any training in handling specialized issues and fiscal deals, they've no option but to take backing from manly family members.

Muslim women are among the most vulnerable groups; they warrant chops, are uninstructed, and are subject to artistic and religious restrictions. Indeed if they engage in the decision- making process of Muslim organisations, they may be obliged to give religious/ customary advice. It may profit Muslim women to some position, but it'll not help them acclimatize to changing world situations. Reservations for women in government bodies or organisations are made to increase women's participation and give them with a chance to make opinions in a historically patriarchal society

There are colorful factors which restrain the political participation of Muslim women. There are colorful myths and artistic tapes which restrain their participation in politics. Originally, Muslim women warrant their support from family members, community, political party and others. On the other side the political party which is possessed only for Muslim community also restricts Muslim women participation in politics. Muslim women don't have sound profitable background to dispute in election and only a many are successful by fighting the odds of feudal and patriarchal setup. While assaying the profitable background utmost of the Muslim women are economically vulnerable. Lack of mindfulness about politics is also one of the constrains for Muslim women political participation. Education plays an important part in the commission of Muslim women political participation. In general numerous of the Muslim community don't allow Muslim women to be largely educated as utmost of the manly counterparts aren't largely educated and engage themselves in business. Lack of political knowledge were political socialization isn't possible within the Muslim community. Utmost of the manly counterparts also don't have strong political interest which doesn't make Muslim women also not apprehensive about political knowledge. Substantially the community party which has coalition with major political party controls the Muslim franchise. On the other side artistic values plays an important part in confining Muslim women in politics where fatwa is most common in confining women. Institutional support can make stronger political participation of women whereas Muslim women warrant from the support institutions like Ngo's.

Historically in Islamic societies, the women's part has been within the home, which has limited and created obstacles for womanish leaders. Muslim women face a double bind-- discerned against both as women and as Muslims. "In terms of accretive demarcation-- being a Muslim and being a woman-- there is a compounding effect for sure, " said Gilles Verniers, a political wisdom professor at Ashoka University and co-director of the Trivedi Centre for Political Data(TCPD). " The usual walls to entry that apply to all women, apply indeed more explosively to Muslim women. "

As we looking at the past data, we come across some very worrying statistics:-

1. Five of the 16 Lok Sabhas since Independence have had no Muslim women members, and their number never crossed four in the 543-seat lower house of parliament.
2. Till time out of 29 states, 24 have no Muslim women in the Assembly.
3. At present, only 4 of 543, or 0.7% members of the Lok Sabha are Muslim women, who embrace 6.9% of the national population.
4. Since the Independence about 612 women have been selected to 16 Lok Sabhas, of them about 21 have been Muslim Women.

5. India has 14 Muslim-dominant Lok Sabha constituencies and in totaling, there are 13 constituencies where Muslims consist of more than 40% of the population. There are sum of 101 seats where Muslims formulate more than 20% of the population.
6. India's 2019 elections saw a record number of women politicians in the lower house of parliament: 78 were elected, or 14 percent of the legislative body. But it didn't progress across the board. The lower house's representation of Muslim women went way down, from four before the May contest to just one, Sadja Ahmed.
7. The picture is not much different at the state level. Less than 8% women are represented in the state Assemblies. Muslim women are almost negligible. In Assam Legislative Assembly, there are 14 women members, of whom only one is a Muslim woman.
8. So far as states are concerned, of 29 states and 7 Union Territories only three states are headed by women as chief minister, but none of them is a Muslim. Out of the Governors and Lt Governors/Administrators of 29 states and seven Union Territories, only two are women, but there is no Muslim woman.
9. At present there are about 36 Lok Sabha committees out of which only three are headed by women and none of them is headed by a Muslim woman. Similarly, in Rajya Sabha there are at present 12 standing committees (others are joint committees), none of which is headed by a Muslim woman.
10. Of the 16 Lok Sabhas we never saw a Muslim woman Speaker and in Rajya Sabha no Muslim woman occupied the post of Chairman. Of the eighteen times deputy chairmen's post in Rajya Sabha saw four occasions when a Muslim woman was the incumbent. Interestingly, on all these four occasions only one, Najma Heptullah, was there.

Nonetheless, we do have some stories of muslim women in politics that inspire and pave the way towards a further inclusive society, like, Shamina Shafiq who's the General Secretary of the All India Mahila Congress(AIMC), the women's sect of the Indian National Congress(INC). She hails from a middle class Muslim family in Sitapur, Uttar Pradesh and is a former member of the National Commission for Women (NCW). In 2009, she decided to be the change she wanted to see in Indian politics.

While sitting and reading a review whose caption was about a political leader who couldn't read or write, Shamina at that moment passed a comment about it to her hubby saying that how can similar people be representing us in the congress to which her hubby replied that it was people like her who sit at home and complain and don't do anything about it. That's when Shamina made up her mind and took up her first post as the State Secretary of the Uttar Pradesh Mahila Congress.

Muslim women who have chosen to enter politics, despite religious and socio- profitable walls are an exception and not the norm. In a popular country, there should be fair representation of all people. The need of the hour is to have further Muslim women in the congress which will insure a lesser say that this nonage group will have.

Conclusion

The political participation of Muslim women is still a corner yet to be achieved to guarantee them in political commission. Muslims have separate political parties and political pressure groups but there's a huge quorum of Muslim men compared with women. The colorful obstacles like lack of education and mindfulness, artistic values, networking, profitable reliance, patriarchy, feudal setup, poverty, Islamic laws, etc. If they're ready to share in politics also the religious taboos and artistic taboos doesn't allow them to represent themselves politics. Only Muslim women with strong profitable background and strong exposure in the public are representing themselves in politics. The main reason for low political participation of Muslim women in politics is the patriarchal structure of society. Our traditions and culture, view the participation of women in politics against the generally accepted part of women as woman, partner, etc. The patriarchal values have pacified and disempowered Muslim women utmost of the Muslim women are viewed as woman and partner to look after children and the manly counterparts also suppose them to be like this. They don't like their women to enter into politics and wish them to be subservient to them. There are certain ways to make Muslim women to share in politics like creating political knowledge and mindfulness, leadership development, affirmative action, training and mindfulness of Muslim women, change in value system etc.

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