

**WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS IN PUNJAB: A COMPARATIVE
STUDY OF 2012 AND 2017 ASSEMBLY ELECTION**

*A Dissertation submitted to the School of Arts and Languages in partial fulfillment of
the degree of Master of Arts in Sociology*

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Phagwara, Punjab (India)
April 2017**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Through this column, I would first like to thank God for giving me the strength and patience in making this research project a success.

I also take this opportunity to thank Lovely Professional University for introducing such research ventures in the syllabi of the Masters Programme as it has enabled me to learn more about the field realities with respect to my area of interest. I would also like to thank all the faculty members of the Sociology Department for their moral support and also the extra assistance which have been provided in guiding me throughout the research study. I would also like to thank all the participants who were cooperative enough to provide me with the required information needed for the careful execution of this study. I would also like to thank my family and friends for their moral support which gave me the strength and courage to complete my Dissertation work.

Lastly, I would like to give special gratitude to my supervisor, Dr Muhammed Madappalli under whose guidance this entire research has come out to be a success. It was due to his tireless efforts for which this Dissertation work has been completed well on time.

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DECLARATION

I hereby state that the thesis entitled “*Women’s Participation in Politics in Punjab: A Comparative Study of 2012 and 2017 Assembly Elections*” submitted to the Lovely Professional University, Phagwara, Punjab in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts in Sociology is a record of original research work done by me during the academic year 2016-17 under the supervision and guidance of *Dr. Muhammed Madappalli* and it has not previously formed the basis for award of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship or other similar title to any candidate of any university.

Date: 29/04/2017

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled “*WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS IN PUNJAB: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF 2012 AND 2017 ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS*” submitted by YommiHangma Rai bearing the registration no 11510207 has been completed under my guidance and supervision. The present dissertation is the result of her original work, investigation and study. No part has ever been submitted for any other degree or diploma at any University. The dissertation is fit for the submission of partial fulfilment for the award of the degree of M.A. in Sociology to the Lovely School of Arts and Languages, Lovely Professional University, Phagwara, Punjab.

Date: 29/04/2017

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CHAPTER – 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Politics: Understanding and Importance

Politics has been derived from the Greek word *Politika*, which means "cities affair", it means process of decision making which concerns every members of the society. Looking at it from a narrow perspective, it means achieving and exercising positions of governance which is an systematized control over a community of humans which mostly refers to a state. Politics, on the other hand can also be defined as the distribution of power and resources which is being practised within a specific community.

Politics include things like upholding or imposing an ideology to people, negotiation with other political issues, formulating and enforcing law and order, and using force to maintain law and order, including competition against the opponents. Politics is present in various social levels, ranging from primitive tribal societies and methods of governance to modern governments of sovereign nations.

A political system is an arrangement of structures which defines legal political measures within a particular society. There are two kinds of politics and they are :

- **Formal Politics:** Formal politics involves operating under a constitutional system of governance and public institutions. It contains political parties, forming public policies and formal discussions about foreign policies and war.
- **Semi-formal Politics:** Semi formal politics refers to politics that function in a government, these are associations that govern small bodies. Student associations, student political parties, or any general association that represents a homogenous group of people with an objective.

Politics which is informal can be understood as alliance formation, exercising of power and protecting and rooting on distinct ideas or objectives that are common among the members. Generally, this may include anything that affects the daily life of oneself, or the management of an office or household, or how the influence of one person or group affects the other. Informal Politics in essence relates to everyday life, hence the idea that "politics is everywhere".

As responsible citizens, It is crucial that politics be taken seriously because it effects everyone directly or indirectly. Also, more crucial is the importance of having a political opinion and an opinion about

matters that effects the wellbeing of a citize. Polities is way more complicated that just the government in power and the laws they make. Every decision taken impacts its stake holders.

One reason as to why we should care about politics is because we need to know what is going on around us. Another reason we should care about politics is because we should have a voice in what will happen. Everyone should have a say in what will happen, because as members of the society we all live together, and it would not be fair if someone was left out. Also, each vote makes a difference in the ways that we live opinion. The manner in which we cast our vote will affect many people, and their everyday life.

1.2. Politics in India

India is governed by and under a Constitution, which provides for a parliamentary form of government, guarantees the basic rights of citizens, prohibits discrimination on the basis of religion, caste, sex, or place of birth, and demarcates the areas of jurisdiction of the union and state governments. The Constitution also provides for an independent judiciary consisting of a single integrated system of courts, with a supreme court at the top, to administer union and state laws.

Our Constitution realises that a true democracy requires not only equality but also justice. As a result of this two-fold ideal only provides .for secluding equality of status and opportunity by prohibiting discrimination by the state on grounds of religion, race, sex etc., but at the same time makes special provision for the promotion of the interest of the backward and weaker sections of the people, in whose case equality of status and opportunity may not be adequate to secure their wellbeing as a part of the general welfare of society. Social justice requires abolition of all sorts of inequities which result from inequalities of wealth and opportunity, race, caste, religion and title. Thus, the provision for humane condition of work, maternity relief, leisure and cultural opportunities to every individual, prevention of exploitation of child in labor and industry, provision for free primary education :for all, the promotion of the educational and economic interests of the backward classes, banning of forced labor are all programs of social justice held out by our Constitution.

1.3. Political participation: Meaning

Participation in political decision-making is an essential element of every political system - large or small, developed or developing. Political participation has dual roles to perform. On the one hand, it lends legitimacy to the political, system, on the other hand, it ennobles men by encouraging their self-

esteem, self-efficacy, a sense of dignity and values. Moreover, participation in political decision-making has led to an articulation of the developmental problems of individuals, their aspirations and fulfilment.

Political participation, as popularly understood, is involvement in politics. Politics according to David Easton, is the process of 'authoritative allocation of values for the society' and political participation refers to popular attempts or activities designed to influence this allocation of values. In other words, political participation is the involvement of groups and individuals at various levels in the political system. According to Almond, "it is the involvement of members of it in the society in the decision-making process of the system, Integration into the political system involves a person's understanding of the system, active participation and continuous involvement in the affairs of the political system.

It variously refers to Membership and office bearing in political organizations, communication activity, attempts to exercise power etc. political participation is more a defense of individualists and classical liberalists who explain political participation as a means to an end such as the better defense of individual and group interests. This theory was advocated by classical republicanism of the 18th century, conservative particularism of the German thinker Justus Moser, the utilitarian views of James Mill and the modern Pluralism of Robert Dahl, These theorists consider political participation as a Natural Right instrumental in resisting all kinds of despotism. Justus Moser finds that political participation is instrumental in the prevention of modern despotism of centralized bureaucracy.

1.4. Importance of women's participation in politics

Women are lacking behind and are also underrepresented not only in higher positions like holding office, civil service, private sector or academics but also as voters. Starting from the local level to the global level, leadership of women and participation in politics are restricted and they are not as independent as the men. This occurs time and again in spite of their proven track record of their consistent performance in leadership roles and as leaders who bring about change, and their right to be equally represented in a democratic government.

Women face various obstacles when it comes to participate in political life. Some laws and institutions that are discriminatory in nature act as structural barriers which limits women's to run for office. The gaps in capacity which means that women are less likely to have education than men, contacts and resources which are necessary to become effective leaders.

The participation of women in all spheres of public life is essential to develop and advance women fully. If the level of participation rates increases it will also be beneficial for women which will also encourage other women to participate in public life and help in crushing down harmful labels and expectations that act as a strong negative wall for women's ability to play a central role in public life, including the processes of peace-building.

Since women have been historically marginalized in all the spheres of social life, to uplift their overall status, women must be well represented at the level of policy formulation and implementation, because politics is an important arena for decision making. Individuals who hold official positions in government get to decide how to allocate scarce resources. Politicians make political decisions that may help some people at the expense of others. On the other hand, political power is valuably good. Politicians hold power over other social institutions such as the family or the education and are able to codify particular practices into law. They have the power to enforce their decisions, sometimes with force. Moreover holding a political position is to hold a position of authority. That is why, if women are not around when decisions are made their interests may not be served

1.5. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Thainikodi and Sugirtha (2007) in their study opined that women at every socio-political level find themselves under presented in parliament and from decision making levels. Throughout the world, women face many problems and obstacles when it comes to participation in politics. This is because of the existing social and economic structures and not forgetting political structure too. Most women themselves are not willing to engage themselves in elections and also in holding public offices which makes their participation in the state legislatures and other political areas not very significant. They also state that women's participation as voters, candidates and campaigners in equal proportion with the men still remains a distant dream. They have to realize the value of their political role.

Rajeshwari Deshpande (2011) talks about women's participation in the election of 2004 about the issues which relate to their participation in public and politics which she regards as a positive pointer towards women's empowerment and strengthening in politics in the future. She also writes that it is not clear whether these pointers would serve to mobilize women over the decisions on social and economic problems, where women of different social groups have differences in their opinions. It can also be said that women act as a single unit in some particular respects and in some other respects, they do not. She concludes by saying that gendered actuality thus appears to be a covered reality.

In the article ‘Political participation of women in India’ by Manuka Khanna she talks about how India started its journey with liberty, equality and justice as its most important ideals which made the women of India feel secure because it gave them a sense of security with promises of equal treatment, survival and gender justice. She writes that in the present times the women are gaining consciousness of their autonomy and capacity to act as full citizens and that the role of women needs to be recognized in the social, political and economic context. She also says that the inclusion of women is needed in the political process because if not done so then the decisions taken may result in policies only reflecting the perspective of male and may not be in the interest of women. In this article Manuka talks about the dual works done by women that is doing the domestic works and also working outside in some of the cases which doesn’t allow the women folk to participate in politics. She adds that politics in India is mostly associated with the exercise of authority, physical strength and a competition that is unhealthy and that is the reason why women do not prefer to associate themselves in this field.

The author also talks about the influence of family which is the most important social influence in the life of a woman. The father, brother or husband is the one who determines her identity. The cost of elections which is a major burden usually becomes a problem and the family does not support the female member in this case and this is one of the reasons why they fail to participate in politics because they do not own land or any kind of property to support themselves. She says that the position of women should be strengthened and equal participation of women is required. However the most significant change will happen only when women realize that they are equally at par with men.

RenuSethi in her article ‘Determinants of women’s active political participation’ raises two fundamental questions which are 1) whether male dominance of power processes derives from female preference or male imposition or both and 2) whether male dominance is natural or conventional. She writes that the fact of few women participating in upper level politics where decision are made cannot determine their low level of participation. She also says that the subordination of women by the male is another explanation of low level of political participation of women. RenuSethi strongly believes that the discussion of women’s political participation in India would not be complete without mentioning their active participation in the pre-independence era. Women were depended for the success of the movement by the men folk. By their participation in political movement, she says, the Indian women helped themselves with their liberation struggle.

She mentions that the participation of women in politics depends upon the attitude the women folk have towards politics the attitude of the family and most importantly the attitude that the society has. She talks about contemporary women who feel that the idealism which characterized politics during the freedom struggle has decreased largely. She adds that the problem of illiteracy, dependency of women when it comes to economy and the backwardness of majority of women who live in rural areas are some reasons that brings paucity of women in politics. When it comes to the context of Indian political culture greater participation of women can be expected but the reality is different. She writes that only by effective campaigning can change the social attitudes, if not structural changes needs to be done.

“Female political participation and health in India”, an article by Suzanne Gleason begins with her exploring of the factors that influence the decision of participation and it also focuses on why there is gender gap in the political participation. She writes about the costs of voting which include the time involved in receiving information and visiting the polls which is seen to be lower for the people with higher education level and those who do not care much about the value of time. She also talks about the vote of an individual which is more likely to matter when there is a small voting constituency. Although the individuals know that their vote will play a minor role in decision making yet their votes can still change the outcome of any election. She points out that wealth and social status is what determines eligibility in politics.

Lack of money and little control over the household are some primary concerns which stops them from running in the office. Apart from that, district characteristics also play a major role in female candidature. She writes that when a district is small, there are high chances of women to overcome the lack of resources and so the representation of women are more in small districts. To conclude she writes that the political and economic atmosphere which are common to all districts within the state determine the political participation of women.

Susheela Kaushik in her edited book *Women's Participation in Politics* (1993) gives the view that the lack of sufficient participation of women in politics and at the decision-making levels, as the offshoot of their poor social and domestic status and their exclusion from important positions and levels of power. Any analysis of women’s political participation in politics in India hence, would have to mix together a few components like (a) the amount, level and nature of women's participation in the political processes of India, by way of both formal and non-formal institutions (b) the impact and significance of such

participation for women's rights and living conditions and (c) types of feminist issues raised in the course of this participation.

Ranjana Kumari noted in her edited book titled *Women in Politics* (1990) that in many ways the oppression has increased with a decline in the proportion of women in decision making processes and their increasing marginalisation from the work process. In 1990, for the creation of National Commission of Women, she argued that women must work towards creating a forum or a platform to make their voices heard and give greater visibility to women's issues. In order to come together as a homogeneous body, women need to know not only about the findings and reports of some studies and research projects on women, but also about the realities of women's problems on the ground.

1.6. OBJECTIVES

- To compare the women participation in assembly election of year 2012 and 2017 in Punjab.
- To analyse the factor responsible for low participation in assembly election if any.
- To provide suggestions to improve the women participation in Politic

1.7. SCOPE OF STUDY

Women's economic subjugation results in denial of social justice and human rights to them. Political participation brings power to women and creates confidence and self-efficacy in them. Upon political participation depends emancipation, welfare and development of women too. Similarly, political participation of woman would bring to them political power in an egalitarian and democratic society like India. Political participation of women would create confidence in them and would help them to form groups to raise voice, articulate and aggregate women specific demands and to covert social outputs from women-specific inputs.

Women are better half of the population, throughout the world women are deprived in all dimensions including political as well as socio-economic aspects. Therefore, the political participation and empowerment of women in Punjab in the assembly elections of 2012 and 2017 covers not only political participation of women but also explore social and economic partiality that stops the advancement of women.

This research problem looks into the issue of low female participation in the assembly election process when compared to the male counterparts in Punjab. The study compares the women's political

participation in assembly election of Punjab in 2012 and 2017. It investigates the effects of women's political participation on gender relations in the context of the Punjab state.

1.8. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The requisite data for the study “women's political participation in Punjab: A comparison of 2012 and 2017”, the method of data collection that was used was secondary data collection. The information collected were from the electronic media. Time was not an issue due to the easy access of the internet and the newspapers. However, to trust the sources fully was an issue and so many data were collected from different sources to check the genuinity. The data were collected through newspapers, journals, election manifestos, books and other print media.

Though it was a cheaper way of collecting data because there was not much travelling and field trips done, some of the information were either outdated or did not match the other sources. The researcher also did some interview and asked the women simple questions which they could answer with ease but language was a huge barrier since the interviewees could not understand English. But with the help of a translator, the interview was a success. The collected information was analysed through generation of tables and percentages.

CHAPTER – 2

WOMEN'S STATUS AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN INDIA

To Andre Beteille, the current definition of empowerment is - *“Empowerment is about social transformation. It is about radical social transformation; and it is about the people - ordinary, common people, rather than politicians, expert and other socially and culturally advanced persons, above all, it is about power, although the concept of power contained in it is generally left unspecified”* (Beteille, 1999). The traditional patriarchal society has nurtured the idea that women are both physically and mentally not equal with man and hence their place should be within the private domain as against the public domain, which is meant for man. This gender-based role, on the one hand limits the role of women in the society and, on the other hand it goes against the democratic principle of rights and equality. Therefore the concept of women's empowerment has led to a serious discourse about the status of woman.

2.1 Status of women in ancient India

Women's status in ancient India was highly valued and respected but it slowly began to deteriorate with the passage of time and mentality of people towards women. Earlier in the Vedic times, women were given a lot of respect and honor in the Indian society. They were given equal opportunities like that of the men to develop themselves socially, mentally and ethically. They were completely free to choose their own path in the life and select a life partner for themselves. They got similar training like that of men and even complete education before marriage including military training for the safety of their own. However, the status of women in the Indian society got deteriorated in the middle ages because of various evil practices against women.

The projection of the level of freedom given to women during those days in taking part in public activities points out the status that was enjoyed by women during Vedic period. Women in the Vedic period were never compelled to observe “purdah”. They even enjoyed freedom in selecting their own life partners. They could educate themselves and even widows were allowed to remarry without much obligations. Divorce was however not permissible to them but having said that, even men did not have the right to divorce their wives. Women were given complete freedom in family matters and were treated as “Ardhanginis”.

In homes, women were given superior position to that of men, as they were treated as the embodiment of goddess of wealth, strength and wisdom. It was said that a house where women were not respected was a cursed place and that one which accorded respect and reverence to women turned into a place of happiness and prosperity. In the words of Manu, women are neglected, all rites and ceremonies are The marriages of girls used to take place at a fairly advanced age, the normal time being the age of 16 or 17. Educated brides had naturally an effective voice in the selection of their partners in life. There were no seclusion of women. They used to move freely in society, often even in the company of their lovers. Very often there were love marriages which were later blessed by the parents also. Woman occupied a prominent position in social and religious gatherings. Women had an absolute equality with men in the eye of religion. Marriage, in fact, was a religious necessity to both man and woman. The position of the wife was men and women. A widow had a right to remarry, and under certain circumstances, woman could marry even if her husband was alive. The practice of sati was not in vogue.

It may thus be said that in Vedic India, women did not face much a great level of discrimination but rather enjoyed an honourable place in the society. They were given absolute rights relating to social as well as religious matters and only few rights in the economic and political arena. They were not treated as inferior or weaker than men, but were treated to be equal with men.

Gradually, practices such as polygamy, sati pratha, dowry system, female infanticide, etc became dominated which gave rise to the male dominated country. Great Indian leaders had worked a lot to emancipate the status of women in the Indian society. Because of their hard work, bad practices against women in the Indian society were banned to a great extent. Government of India also implemented various effective laws regarding safety and empowerment of the women. The position of women became inferior when they supposed to be plaything of man. Women became almost slave of man passions and forced to live behind purdah. They were left their rights of education and property.

Evil practices such as Sati, and Devadasi among some communities have been banned in modern India but these practices are still found in some remote parts of India. The purdah system, child marriage, dowry etc are still prevalent in India. Women are still expected to cover their heads in front of the male members in the family especially in front of the male in-laws and elders. Muslim women still practice the purdah system and they are also not allowed in some areas of the house.

2.2 Women during British rule

During the British Rule, many reformers such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra, Jyotirao Phule fought for the betterment and emancipation of women. Though the Britishers tried to bring equality between men and women and also tried to make things better for the womenfolk, not much could be done to bring up the status of women in India. Though there were many lady freedom fighters among whom the most renowned name would be the queen of Jhansi (Rani Laxmi Bai) the status of women during that time was still poor.

However again in the independent India, women are enjoying perfect equality with the man. They are no longer a slave of man's passion and not living at the mercy of man. They are raising their voice and help in shaping the destiny of country. In the past few millennium, various great changes has occurred in the status of women in India. There has been promotion of equal sex rights to a great extent in the recent decades.

A lot of improvement in the status of women in India can be seen after the independence. Women started enjoying equality with men in the society gradually. Women have all the rights and privileges in every areas equally with that of men. The Constitution of India has given equal rights, privileges and freedom that are enjoyed by the men for years. Despite the discrimination, subjugation and exploitation against women, they now feel much emancipated and free. Almost half area and population in India is covered by the women so the development of the country depends upon the status of both sex equally. We can imagine that time when fifty percent of the population was not given equal opportunities and rights and even restricted to perform many activities in the society. Now-a-days, women are getting top positions in various fields of life such as some have been great political leaders, social reformers, entrepreneurs, business personalities, administrators, etc.

However, all these are not enough to state that the status of women in India has changed or has improved. Indian women are now being well conscious about their rights and privileges in various fields and are being more conscious about their professional career (socially, politically, economically and educationally) by following all their responsibilities towards family.

2.3 Modern women

The women in the contemporary time are interested in the social issues, and they are trying hard to improve the social status of women at large. The increase in awareness and education has inspired

women to come out of the four walls of the home and take active participation in the societal activities. Traditionally, we see that Indian women existed because of the family and for the family.

Women are actively participating in the democratic process and elections which is quite more impressive in enhancing their status. The participation of women in any area of work is increasing day by day than men such as the number of women voters which is increasing and is more than men voters on the days of polling. Women have started participating as daughters, sisters, wives, mothers, grandmothers, etc in various fields like socio-economic, political, educational, scientific and other nation- building activities. They are working very hard in professional performances as well as household responsibilities in a very active manner. Even after a great level of improvement in the status of women in India, they are still exploited and abused in many ways like rape, sex discrimination, and are also victims of many crimes.

When it comes to independent India, a lot of things have changed when we look back at the hands of time. Women started coming to the forefront and taking the centre stage in all matters be it political, educational or other matters. Women also started participating actively in matters of the society and also started receiving quality education. They became aware of their rights and also started safeguarding their rights when necessary. If we see the current position of women in India now we can say that it has improved a lot. Women folk can be seen everywhere and in all fields, women lead political parties, they also participate in defence and in building peace among the nation.

Many feminist activism also came up like the ban of alcohol which is related to violence against women, the strict actions and protests against rape and not only that but also punishment against domestic violence came up and these activisms have been successful upto a great extend. Though the rate of literacy among the women has increased over the past years, the literacy rate of women is still less as compared to that of the literacy rate of men. We can see that women are denied education after passing a certain standard or year. Most females are not sent to schools and other educational institutions after they pass their 8th or 12th. Contrary to that, a large number of women in India work be it in allied industrial sectors or as agricultural labourers.

Despite the fact that the status of women has improved in India, there are many crimes and cases of violence among women at large. Every now and then cases of rape, acid –attacks, domestic violence and bride- burning are reported which shows that women are still not fully safe and secured in their own homes. Dowry is one of the major practices in India which causes family disputes between in-laws ,

cases of domestic violence and also other violence which are reported as ‘‘kitchen incidents’’. Female foeticide, forced abortion, rape, and other crimes are very common in most of the villages which makes India a dangerous place for the women to live in.

Though some women enjoy their rights upto a great extend there is another side of reality where the women of the low castes are treated very cruelly. All the dirtiest works are to be carried out by the women of the lower caste as and they are also victims of rape and other harassments. Women population of India is still less as compared to that of men because people still want male child in the family.

2.4 Women and politics in India

The status of women is one of the most important issues among the social scientists. Over the years, they have devoted time and effort to assess the problems related to women and to study the quality of change in the status of women in the society. Because, the nature of a social organization, the degree of its civilization and the amounts of fair play and justice can be measured by the overall status enjoyed by women in that social organization. The society in which women are ill- treated subordinated and exploited, is a society fit to be called as the society of savages. This relationship between males and females establishes the stability. Better the relationship, more stable and civilized is the society.

Political status of women indicates their freedom and equal opportunities in exercising their political rights. That is to say, political status of women may be understood through their freedom and equal opportunities of selecting representatives by voting as well as getting selected themselves as representatives along with the social recognition to them for their valuable contribution in overall political process. It does not mean merely the representation in central and state legislatures, rather it should mean ensuring adequate space for women in the process of decision making within the lowest form of social organization, i.e., family to the highest form of social organization i.e., state. Thus, political status of women is directly related to the decision making process. Unless woman is more closely associated with this process equality and justice to woman cannot be achieved.

Having said that Women’s participation in politics is still not very impressive. The majority of women are uninterested when it comes to politics and this is clear by their low participation in voting, in public protests, and also in public disputes. Even if there are women participants, they belong to the elite group or have an already existing political family. Some of the studies suggest that women see politics as a power game of the elite class and the people who are economically well to do. The women who are

poorer are more inclined towards earning their daily bread rather than the broader questions of women's development and national politics.

A higher voting percentage is found among the women belonging to rural areas also women with poor background, while the women who are educated and live in urban areas have a lesser turnout as compared to that of the women who live in rural areas. Thus, participation in voting alone cannot be regarded as a reliable indicator of political awareness. Women vote on the basis of whom their men are supporting or their votes are either being bought by the politicians.

India, we all know is the largest democracy in the world, has only 59 women representatives out of 545 members in Lok Sabha, while there are 25 female MPs in the 242-member Rajya Sabha. India falls lowest when it comes to the number of women representative in the parliament. Although the Constitution of India has removed gender inequalities among caste and gender, the discrimination faced by women is still the same which behaves like a barrier for women when they want to participate in politics as leaders. Prejudiced attitudes act as limitations for the Indian women along with very little or no access to information and resources. Women, thus rely on family or village members for receiving information and the members who inform them are typically men.

Lack of leadership experience is also seen in women because majority of the women folk are burdened with domestic activities and household duties. The burden of household duties is one of the major reason why many women in India do not participate anywhere outside their homes. Unlike men, there are very less opportunities for women to get involved in organizations to learn and experience leadership skills. There is just a small public space for the women folk as men majority of the political arena have been dominated by men for many years in India.

2.5 Women and politics in Punjab

To study the status and position of women in Punjab province, there is an imperative need to analyze the social conditions first. Many social evils were prevalent which restricted the overall development of the women. Some socio-religious reform movements also came forward in the nineteenth century to help the government in removing these evils and tried to implement these laws in their respective regions. Female infanticide was quite common in the region.

The empowerment of women is an important issue in our society. The ultimate aim of empowering women is to provide an increased awareness of their rights, duties and equal participation in all spheres

of life. So far as political participation is concerned, it is a process by which women participate in the functioning of Government. It is not merely right to vote but also includes their representation in politics, their involvement in decision making process of governance. The Indian Constitution is firmly grounded in the Principles of Liberty, Fraternity, Equality and Justice. But these provisions have not translated into the intended status for women in Country, be it in the economic or political front.

In Punjab women are more or less interested in decision making bodies and many issues are left unattended. The study reveals that their participation in politics as voters, candidates, campaigners and office holders in political parties, on an equal footing with men still remains a dream. They have yet to realize the value of their political life.

Chapter –3

Women’s participation in politics in Punjab: Field reality

Punjab has 22 districts and 117 constituencies. The list of the constituencies are as follows:

Constituency No.	District	Constituency
1	Pathankot	Sujanpur
2	Pathankot	Bhoa
3	Pathankot	Pathankot
4	Gurdaspur	Gurdaspur
5	Gurdaspur	Dina Nagar
6	Gurdaspur	Qadian
7	Gurdaspur	Batala
8	Gurdaspur	Sri Hargobindpur
9	Gurdaspur	FatehgarhChurian
10	Gurdaspur	Dera Baba Nanak
11	Amritsar	Ajnala
12	Amritsar	Raja Sansi

13	Amritsar	Majitha
14	Amritsar	Jandiala Guru
15	Amritsar	Amritsar North
16	Amritsar	Amritsar West
17	Amritsar	Amritsar Central
18	Amritsar	Amritsar East
19	Amritsar	Amritsar South
20	Amritsar	Attari
21	Tarn Taran	Tarn Taran
22	Tarn Taran	Khem Karan
23	Tarn Taran	Patti
24	Tarn Taran	Khadur Sahib
25	Amritsar	Baba Bakala
26	Kapurthala	Bholath
27	Kapurthala	Kapurthala
28	Kapurthala	SultanpurLodhi
29	Kapurthala	Phagwara

30	Jalandhar	Phillaur
31	Jalandhar	Nakodar
32	Jalandhar	Shahkot
33	Jalandhar	Kartarpur
34	Jalandhar	Jalandhar West
35	Jalandhar	Jalandhar Central
36	Jalandhar	Jalandhar North
37	Jalandhar	Jalandhar Cantt
38	Jalandhar	Adampur
39	Hoshiarpur	Mukerian
40	Hoshiarpur	Dasuya
41	Hoshiarpur	Urmar
42	Hoshiarpur	Sham Chaurasi
43	Hoshiarpur	Hoshiarpur
44	Hoshiarpur	Chabbewal
45	Hoshiarpur	Garhshankar
46	Nawanshahr	Banga

47	Nawanshahr	Nawanshahr
48	Nawanshahr	Balachaur
49	Rup Nagar	Anandpur Sahib
50	Rup Nagar	Rup Nagar
51	Rup Nagar	Chamkaur Sahib
52	S.A.S. Nagar	Kharar
53	S.A.S. Nagar	S.A.S. Nagar
54	Fatehgarh Sahib	BassiPathana
55	Fatehgarh Sahib	Fatehgarh Sahib
56	Fatehgarh Sahib	Amloh
57	Ludhiana	Khanna
58	Ludhiana	Samrala
59	Ludhiana	Sahnewal
60	Ludhiana	Ludhiana East
61	Ludhiana	Ludhiana South
62	Ludhiana	Atam Nagar
63	Ludhiana	Ludhiana Central

64	Ludhiana	Ludhiana West
65	Ludhiana	Ludhiana North
66	Ludhiana	Gill
67	Ludhiana	Payal
68	Ludhiana	Dakha
69	Ludhiana	Raikot
70	Ludhiana	Jagraon
71	Moga	Nihal Singh Wala
72	Moga	BaghaPurana
73	Moga	Moga
74	Moga	Dharamkot
75	Firozpur	Zira
76	Firozpur	Firozpur
77	Firozpur	Firozpur Rural
78	Firozpur	Guru HarSahai
79	Fazilka	Jalalabad
80	Fazilka	Fazilka

81	Fazilka	Abohar
82	Fazilka	Balluana
83	Muktsar	Lambi
84	Muktsar	Gidderbaha
85	Muktsar	Malout
86	Muktsar	Muktsar
87	Faridkot	Faridkot
88	Faridkot	KotKapura
89	Faridkot	Jaito
90	Bathinda	RampuraPhul
91	Bathinda	BhuchoMandi
92	Bathinda	Bathinda
93	Bathinda	Bathinda Rural
94	Bathinda	Talwandi Sabo
95	Bathinda	Maur
96	Mansa	Mansa
97	Mansa	Sardulgarh

98	Mansa	Budhlada
99	Sangrur	Lehra
100	Sangrur	Dirba
101	Sangrur	Sunam
102	Barnala	Bhadaur
103	Barnala	Barnala
104	Barnala	Mehal Kalan
105	Sangrur	Malerkotla
106	Sangrur	Amargarh
107	Sangrur	Dhuri
108	Sangrur	Sangrur
109	Patiala	Nabha
110	Patiala	Patiala Rural
111	Patiala	Rajpura
112	S.A.S. Nagar	DeraBassi
113	Patiala	Ghanaur
114	Patiala	Sanaur

115	Patiala	Patiala
116	Patiala	Samana
117	Patiala	Shutrana

Table 3.1: List of the 117 constituencies in Punjab.

Source: "Election commission of Punjab 2012."

Out of these 117 constituencies 93 females contested in the 2012 elections but only 14 of them won the seats. The names of the winners in the elections of 2012 are as follows:

Name of constituency	Name of candidate	Name of the party	Age	Educational qualification	Husband's occupation	Assets	Category
Bhoa (SC)	SeemaKumari	BJP	41	5 th pass	Agriculturist	31lacs+	General
Dina Nagar	Arunachaudhary	INC	63	Graduate professional	Retired additional	5crore+	SC
Qadian	Charanjitkaurbajwa	INC	59	Graduate	Lawyer	22lacs+	General
Amritsar East	Navjot Sidhu	BJP	51	MBBS	MLA, Commentator, TV artist, retired. Cricketer	22crore+	General
Bholath	Bibi Jagir Kaur	SAD	60	BA, B.Ed	Dead	13crore+	General

Sham Chaurasi	Mohinder Kaur Josh	SAD	67	10 th pass	Retired, agriculturist	3crore+	SC
NawanShahr	Guriqbal Kaur	INC	58	Graduate	Former member of Punjab legislative aseembly	80lakhs+	General
Nihal Singh Wala	Rajwinder Kaur	SAD	37	12 th pass	Govt. employee	45lacs+	SC
Muktsar	Karan Kaur	INC	68	Graduate	Agriculturist	119crore+	General
Lehra	Rajinder Kaur Bhattal	INC	74	Graduate	Dead	5crore+	General
Mehal Kalan	Harchand Kaur	INC	57	10 th pass	Retired. officer	29lacs+	SC
Malerkotla	F. NesaraKhatoon	SAD	59	BA	Chairman Punjab WAKF Board	1crore+	General
Ghanaur	Harpreet Kaur Mukhmailpura	SAD	55	Class 12	Agriculturist	6crore+	General
Shutrana	Vaninder Kaur Loomba	SAD	51	Post graduate	Serviceman in transport department	11crore+	General

Table3.2: List of the women who participated and won the assembly elections of 2012.

However only 6 women candidates managed to win in the 2017 elections out of the 81 female contestants and they are:

Name of constituency	Name of candidate	Party	Age	Educational qualification	Husband's occupation	Assets	Category
Dina Nagar	Aruna Chaudhary	INC	63	Graduate Professional	Retired. additional	5crore+	SC
Talwandi Sabo	Baljinder Kaur	AAP	33	Post Graduate		3lacs+	General
Malerkotla	Razia Sultana	INC	53	10 TH PASS	Govt. Servant	10crore+	General
Batindha rural (sc)	Rupinder Kaur Ruby	AAP	31	Post Graduate		1lac+	SC
Jagraon	Saravjit Kaur	AAP	46	Post Graduate	Govt. teacher	8lacs+	SC
Ferozpur rural (sc)	Satkar Kaur	INC	40	12 TH PASS	Agriculturist	21lacs+	SC

Table3.3: List of candidates who participated and won the assembly elections of 2017

CHAPTER – 4

DATA ANALYSIS

Inorder to analyse the data I have taken five parameters and they are:

- Party
- Category
- Age
- Educational qualification
- Husband's occupation and
- Family assets (declared).

Table 4.1 to 4.5 will show the data of the different parameters

4.1 Party wise seats won

PARTY	2012	2017
BJP	2	NIL
INC	6	3
SAD	6	NIL
AAP	NIL	3

Table 4.1: party- wise seats won in the elections of 2012 and 2017.

The table above shows that in the year 2012 SAD(ShiromaniAkali Dal) and BJP (Bhartiya Janata Party) combined had won by capturing 8 seats in total whereas Indian National Congress

had captured 6 seats which is two seats less than BJP and SAD combined. But we see that there is a drastic change in the elections of 2017 where Indian National Congress came into power by winning 3 seats and AamAdmi Party with 3 seats as well. Through this table we also come to know that the ruling party that is BJP SAD have been replaced by Congress. Infact BJP and SAD didn't win any seats among the 6 seats during the elections of 2017 in Punjab.

4.2 Category wise seats won

Category	2012	2017
General	9	2
SC	5	4

Table 4.2: category wise seats won in 2012 and 2017.

The finding shows that 9 of the women winners belonged to the general category and only 5 belonged to the SC category which gives us a clear view that most of the members of the winning party belonged to the general category that is BJP and SAD combined. However there is a change in the number of winners belonging to the SC category in the year 2017 as the majority of the winners that is 4 out of 6 belong to the SC category whereas only 2 winners belong to the general category. This data gives us a clear information that the women who belonged to the general category are mostly from BJP and SAD and vice-versa.

4.3 Age of the participants

AGE	2012	2017
31-40	1	3

41-50	1	1
51-60	8	1
61-70	4	1
71-80	1	NIL

Table 4.3: Age of the participants who won the assembly elections of 2012 and 2017.

When it comes to age we see that in the year 2012 there is only 1 candidate who belongs to the age group of 31 to 40, 1 again from the age group of 41 to 50, and the highest number of candidates are from the age group of 51 to 60 followed by the age group of 61 to 70 with a number of 4 candidates and lastly one candidate from the age group of 71 to 80. However we see half of the candidates belonging to the age group of 31 to 40, that is 3 out of 6, one from the age group of 41-50, one from the age group of 51 to 60 and one from the age group of 61 to 70. By looking at the data we can say that more young women have participated and won the elections of 2017 in Punjab.

4.4 Educational qualification

Educational Qualification	2012	2017
Upto 10 th pass	3	1
12 th pass	2	1
Graduate	7	1
Post Graduate	1	3
Professional courses	1	NIL

Table 4.4: The educational qualification of the participants who won the assembly elections of 2012 and 2017.

The table above shows the educational qualification of the candidates in both the year 2012 and 2017. It can be seen that in the year 2012, three candidates were just 10th pass or even below, two candidates were 12th pass and majority of the candidates were graduates that is seven of them, one post graduate and one MBBS. Whereas in the year 2017 we see a change in the educational qualification of the candidates(winner) where half of the candidates that is three out of six are post graduates where one of them is pursuing Phd. There is only one candidate who is 10th pass, one candidate who is 12th pass and one graduate. Hence if we compare the data of 2012 and 2017 we can say that the year 2017 has candidates with higher educational qualification.

4.5: Occupation of the husband

Occupation	2012	2017
Agriculturist	4	1
Retired	3	1
Dead	1	NIL
Govt employee	2	2
Others	4	NIL

Table 4.5: The occupation of the husbands of the candidates who won in the assembly election of 2012 and 2017

In a patriarchal society the occupation of the husband becomes a major aspect to take into account and especially when it comes to politics because a lot of money is needed to contest in the elections. We see that in the 2012 elections, 4 out of 14 candidates' husbands were agriculturists, 3 of them were retired, 2 were government employees and 3 others were engaged in other jobs while one of the candidate was a widow. When it comes to the elections of 2017 we find that two of the candidates are unmarried, the husbands of two candidates are government employees, one agriculturist and one of them has retired

already. We come to know that all the husbands of the candidates were working in one field or the other and none of them are unemployed.

4.6: Assets of the candidates

Assets	2012	2017
Below 20 lacs	None	3
21 lacs to 60 lacs	3	1
61 lacs to 1 crore	1	none
1 crore to 50 crores	8	2
50 crores and above	1	None

Table 4.6: Assets of the candidates who won in the assembly elections of 2012 and 2017.

We find that in the 2012 elections out of the 14 winners none of the winners’ assets were less than 20 lakhs. 3 people’s assets were above 21 lakhs but below 60 lakhs whereas the majority people, that is 8 out of 14 had an asset of more than 1 crore but less than 50 crores and lastly one of the candidates had an asset of more than 100 crores. On the contrary when we look at the 2017 elections we see that half of the candidates, that is 3 out of 6 candidates had an asset of less than 20 lacs, 2 candidates with an asset between 1 crore to 50 crores and one candidate with an asset between 21 to 60 lakhs. Here the important thing that is to be noted is that the candidates having assets of less than 20 lakhs are unmarried but the rest are married.

The above tables from table 4.1 to 4.5 shows that the women candidates who won in the 2012 assembly elections were much older as compared to the candidates of the year 2017 and we also see that the candidates of the year 2017 are much more qualified than the candidates of the year 2012. We all know that India is a patriarchal society and so is Punjab, so we clearly see the influence of the jobs of the

husbands in determining the economy and assets of the household. It is also true that the two women who are unmarried have the lowest assets but they are also highly qualified educationally.

Although the sex ratio of Punjab shows less female population, the percentage of female voters was clearly higher than male voters in the just-concluded assembly elections in the state. With Punjab recording a high voter turnout of 77.4 percent, the female voters were in the lead with 78.14 percent turnout. In comparison, only 76.69 per cent of male voters exercised their franchise. Out of the 1,98,78,654 registered electors in Punjab, there were 1,05,03,108 male and 93,75,546 female voters.

The overall voting percentage in the state was a little lower than the 78.57 percent votes polled in the previous assembly elections in 2012. However, the number of votes polled this time was much higher than the votes polled in 2012, as the number of voters in the state increased by nearly 22 lakh this time.

However a very huge difference in the number of voters can be seen, that is 1,53,80,942 voters casted their votes this time compared to 1,38,92,749 (of 1,76,82,363 voters)of last time. In the 2012 assembly elections also, the percentage of women who voted, at 79.1 percent, was slightly higher than the male voters at 78.09 per cent. While women voters have been strongly and actively participating in the democratic process, major political parties have hardly given them fair representation this time around which can be seen by the number of tickets that were provided to them. Among the 1,145 candidates who confidently contested for 117 assembly seats, only 81 were women among that huge number of 1,145 which clearly indicates the prevalence of patriarchy among the political parties.

So to say, Congress fielded only 11 women candidates. Shiromani Akali Dal, which was the ruling party contested 94 seats but gave tickets to only five women candidates. The Akali Dal`s alliance partner, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which contested 23 seats, gave only two tickets to women which is lower than that of the tickets given by Shiromani Akali Dal. The alliance, thus, had only seven women contesting the election. The AamAadmi Party, the new entrant in Punjab`s political scene, fielded nine women among its 112. Also, there were only 32 women among the 304 independents. Women constitute nearly 47 per cent of the over 12.98 electors in Punjab

CHAPTER – 5

CONCLUSION

Punjab as a state of India is known as the land of five rivers and has a particular pattern of culture, tradition, polity and economy based on its historical, and socioeconomic and political settings. The 74th constitutional amendment has not only provided a new panorama to urban bodies through devolution of power but also has become a democratic apparatus with voice of all including urban women to assert their rightful share in the process of urban governance. It is a legislative step to empowering women and to train them for the next higher step in the decision making process with an expectation of gradual rise of women's political participation in future.

Political participation is a vital link towards the total empowerment of women. With that empowerment will create a balanced environment with gender just polity and she will be at par with men as partner and equal participant in the progress of the society. However this upsurge of women's power in urban governance with the pace of urbanization and industrialization requires introspection for understanding the ground realities in the course of their actual performance. As empowerment signifies the extent of autonomy and choice in one's life style there is a need for measuring the degree, dimension and nature of participation of women councillors to understand whether their participation is spontaneous or induced one, and how far the role performance is effective and genuine

In India, the constitutional provisions, social laws and judicial provisions are in a direction of changing the status of women from merely being a mother or housewife to an active citizen having rights' and duties in the political system and in the process of decision-making as well as building the nation. From this point of view as well as from feminist consideration which is based on the concept of equality, rights and identity of women, participation of women in the political process has assumed a core area of study in social sciences and in gender studies. Modern gender studies have rightly emphasized upon the women's participation in economic development as well as in political decision- making which would lead to establish the concepts like 'women in development' and 'empowerment of women'.

Social variables like age, education, income, occupation etc. result in differential impacts of environment in learning. Political socialization is nevertheless a determining factor for participation of the individual in the political process, which is an indicator of participatory political culture on which democracy flourishes and becomes more strengthened. Political socialization also creates political

efficacy and there is a close link between political efficacy and political participation. While the former refers to the individuals perceptions of his/her effectiveness on politics, the latter manifests itself in his/her actual involvement in those activities by which members of a society share in the selection of rulers and, directly or indirectly in the formulation of public policy. It is a psychological disposition of an individual towards the political objects like the system, the issues and the process. As women constitute half of country's population, their involvement in the decision-making process is needed for the progress of democracy, society and building of the nation. Moreover, the equality, development and empowerment of women are closely linked with the shaping and sharing of power as well as in making and taking political decisions for allocation of values for the society

The Indian Constitution guarantees political equality, or in other words, equal right of participation in the political process of the country to all citizens irrespective of sex or occupation etc. But still women's participation in politics is found marginal. However, several indicators of political participation have been selected in order to find out the extent of women's involvement in politics. Membership of voluntary associations, groups and organizations, though a non-political one, has got its impact upon the political behaviour of the individual.

When it comes to Punjab we know that Punjab is the most developed state in India but has one of the lowest female population which is lower than the national average. Though we see that the female voters were more in percentage compared to that of the male voters, there is a very huge difference in the number and percentage of seats won in both 2012 and 2017. In Punjab only six women candidate out of the 81 who contested in the election could win the seat, which means only 5% of female became a part of the 117-seat assembly. However in the year 2012, 14 out of 93 women candidates had won, which was 15% of the total women candidates nominated. It is clear that the percentage of the women in the assembly has fallen to half, with only 7.5% women candidates out of their total being elected this time.

It will not be wrong to say that education, occupation of the husband, financial support plays a major role in determining the participation of the women in politics. All these variables play a very important role because when one talks of elections, it is impossible to go on without talking of the financial status of a candidate. During election campaigns a lot of money is needed and one cannot do away without spending a huge amount of money and so, in the scenario of Punjab it is evident that the women who have participated have a huge amount of declared assets which makes them capable in contesting the elections.

There are also many variables which adds to the low participation of women in politics. They are:

Psychological variables:

This refers to the degree to which the females are interested and concerned about politics and public spheres. Punjab as a patriarchal society gives more importance to the male members and look at politics as a platform for males and this effects the women folk upto a great extent. The societal behavior also plays a major role in shaping the women to become leaders. Family and child-care responsibilities lead to role conflicts during the youth. The women who are interested in pursuing a career in politics enter the political sphere at a later age when they have fulfilled their responsibilities towards the family hence the data shown in *table 4.3* gives an evidence of women participating in the later years and the younger women who are into politics are unmarried which again shows that familial responsibilities also plays an important role. This creates a greater problem for them as they have to devote more energy and struggle hard in order to compete with the men who have made an early start.

Social variables:

Social variables such as age, education play an important role in determining the participation of the women folk in politics. All these factors may act as a barrier the participation differently in different political and cultural contexts, and their effect on participation may not be stable. In general, women with higher education and higher socio economic status have easier access to politics than the uneducated and the persons of lower status (*refer table 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6*).

Practices such as female seclusion and sex segregation and division of labour among the family members itself and many other aspects of gender relations strongly contribute to the shaping of the ideology of women towards politics. The women are often discouraged from participating due to social and familial constraints and responsibilities of being a “female”. Men usually do not encourage women to vote, unless they want votes for the candidate of their choice. Women themselves are also reluctant to go for voting since they have too many household chores. Further, repeated pregnancies, lactation, too many siblings to look after and extremely poor health status also act as barriers for the women folk to participate in the elections.

Economic variables:

Economic status or financial status plays one of the most important role in determining a woman's chance of participating and winning in the elections because one needs to be financially and economically secure for one cannot spend all his/her assets during the campaigning of elections as there is no guarantee of whether the person will win or not.. Thus, the cost of the elections is a major hindrance to the participation of women since majority of women lack control on financial resources and families usually do not support them. In case they work within the home their work is regarded as "invisible" or "duty" and is not considered to be significant. A woman's position becomes vulnerable due to increasing unemployment and exploitation, in the form of unequal pay (wage gap) for equal work among males and females. Consequently, she does not have a substantial reserve which she can spend on her campaign and so there are less number of female participants in elections because even if they want to contest these factors pull them back from moving towards the forefront.

Empowerment of women has no universal definition. It is different for different sections of women in different regions. But in general, women empowerment means having control over her own body and actions and independent to take decisions about her own life, and access to all those facilities which a man can have without any restrictions. Woman becomes economically independent when she is able to take up economic activity successfully. And able to make and act on the economic decisions made by her.

Women should be given equal education like that of men because getting an education can change one's perspective of the outside world. Education plays a major role in shaping the future of a person and so through education, the women will realise the importance of participation in various fields which will empower them and also give them a stage to voice their opinion and improve their condition.

Also the root cause of women's oppression in India is patriarchy, which has suppressed their legitimate position and made them totally defenceless. The unrealistic way in which women are depicted in literary works and films by male chauvinists, and the misinterpretation of women in epics and scriptures contributed much to the poor self image, suffering nature, and lack of assertiveness on the part of women. Women should also be given equal importance and opportunities to work outside their homes and be employed so that they can be economically secured and independent. Economic status becomes an important aspect when it comes to politics and so when women are economically independent, they can stand for themselves and empower other women too.

Women should also be given equal access to participate and make decisions in social, political and economic life of the nation. It should also be seen that gender perspective in the development process is maintained. Other things like equal access to healthcare, quality education at all levels, care and vocational guidance, employment and equal wage for equal work on par with men are also very important. Changing social attitudes and community practices by active participation and involvement of both men and women should also be done. Lastly and most importantly, there should be elimination of discrimination and all forms of violence against women and girl child.

Finally, efforts should be made to make the mindset of the women folk free from inhibitions of inferiority complex and to erase the memory of social stigma attached to them from time immemorial.

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