

**POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF URBAN AND RURAL
WOMEN: A CASE STUDY OF NAWANSHAHR
CONSTITUENCY OF PUNJAB**

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Political Science

By

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2025

DECLARATION

I, Hardeep Kaur, declare that the work exhibited in the thesis entitled “POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF URBAN AND RURAL WOMEN: A CASE STUDY OF NAWANSHAHR CONSTITUENCY OF PUNJAB” in fulfilment of degree of **Doctor of Philosophy (Ph. D.)** is outcome of research carried out by me under the supervision of Dr. Manvendra Singh, working as Professor in the School of Liberal and Creative Arts (Social Sciences and Languages) of Lovely Professional University, Punjab, India. In keeping with the general practice of reporting scientific observations, due acknowledgements have been made whenever work described here has been based on findings of other investigators. This work has not been submitted in part or full to any other University or Institute for the award of any degree.



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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the work reported in the Ph.D. thesis entitled “POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF URBAN AND RURAL WOMEN: A CASE STUDY OF NAWANSHAHR CONSTITUENCY OF PUNJAB” submitted in fulfillment of the requirement for the award of degree of **Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)** in the Political Science, is a research work carried out by Ms. Hardeep Kaur, Registration No: 41900566, is bonafide record of her original work carried out under my supervision and that no part of thesis has been submitted for any other degree, diploma or equivalent course. Her thesis reveals her unique work and is worthy of consideration for the award of the degree of Ph.D. (Political Science).



Dr. Manvendra Singh

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	i
CERTIFICATE	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iv-vi
LIST OF TABLES	vii-xiv
LIST OF FIGURES	xv
LIST OF APPENDICES	xvi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xvii-xviii
ABSTRACT	xix-xxiii
Sr. No	CONTENTS
	Page No.
1	Chapter 1: Introduction
	1-72
1.1	Introduction
	2
1.2	Conceptual Framework of Political Participation
	3
1.3	Theoretical framework
	5
1.4	Historical Background
	7
1.5	Representation of Women in the Indian Legislature
	9
1.6	Statement of the Problem
	14
1.7	Review of Literature
	16
1.8	Thematic Analysis of Review of Literature
	58
1.9	Research Gap
	62
1.10	Research Objectives
	62
1.11	Research Questions
	63
1.12	Research Methodology
	63
1.13	Nature and Scope of Study
	70
1.14	Significance of the Study
	71
1.15	Conclusion
	72

2	Chapter 2: Political Participation of Women in Punjab	73-98
2.1	Introduction	74
2.2	Socio-Demographic Profile of Punjab	74
2.3	India's Freedom Struggle: Perspective from Punjab Women	77
2.4	Analyzing the Political Participation of Women of Punjab	81
2.5	Electoral Trends in the 2024 Lok Sabha Elections in Punjab	86
2.6	Comparative and Critical Analysis of Women's Representation in Indian Politics: The Paradox of Punjab	92
2.7	Women's Political Empowerment in Local Governance: Insights from Punjab	94
2.8	Conclusion	97
3	Chapter 3: Comparative Analysis of Urban and Rural Women's Political Participation in Nawanshahr Constituency, Punjab	99-168
3.1	Introduction	100
3.2	Socio-Political Profile of Nawanshahr Constituency	101
3.3	Data Interpretation and Analysis	106
3.4	Socio-Demographic Profile of Respondents of Nawanshahr Constituency	108
3.5	Political Awareness Among Urban and Rural Female Voters of Nawanshahr Constituency	113
3.5.1	Analysis of Political Awareness by Social Category	131
3.6	Status of Political Participation of Urban and Rural Women	132
3.6.1	Analysis of Political Participation by Social Category	152
3.7	Factors Affecting Women's Political Participation	154
3.7.1	Analysis of Factors Affecting Women's Political Participation by Social Category	167
3.8	Conclusion	168

4	Chapter 4: Challenges Confronting Elected Female Representatives in Nawanshahr Constituency, Punjab	170-240
4.1	Introduction	171
4.2	Socio-Demographic Profile of Elected Women Representatives	172
4.3	Political Awareness Among Elected Women Representatives of Nawanshahr Constituency	177
4.4	Political Participation among Elected Women Representatives of Nawanshahr Constituency	189
4.5	Perspective Regarding Reservation Policy	207
4.6	Challenges faced by Elected Women Representatives	210
4.7	Social Category Data Analysis: A Critical Appraisal	225
4.8	Political Perception of Key Respondents	226
4.9	Unique Migration Patterns among Youth in the Doaba Region	237
4.10	Conclusion	239
5	Chapter 5: Findings. Results and Suggestions	241-271
5.1	Introduction	242
5.2	Objective Wise Analysis	243
5.3	Research Questions Answerability/Validation	251
5.4	Pearson Co-Relation Analysis	256
5.5	Political Participation of Women: Critical Analysis Based on Social Category	260
5.6	Rural–Urban Divide in Women’s Political Participation: Evidence from Nawanshahr Constituency of Punjab	262
5.7	Limitations of the Study	266
5.8	Suggestions	267
5.9	Conclusion	269
	Bibliography	i-xiii
	Appendices	xiv-lxxiv

LIST OF TABLES

Table No.	Title	Page No.
1.1	Representation of Women in Lok Sabha Since 1952	10
1.2	Representation of Women in Both Houses of Parliament (As of June 2024)	11
1.3	Percentage of Elected Women to State Assemblies in India (As of June 2024)	12-13
1.4	Sample Size Distribution	66
1.5	Sample Size Representation	67
1.6	Composition of Elected Representatives of Nawanshahr Constituency	68
2.1	Representation of Women in the Punjab Legislative Assembly Since 1967	82
2.2	Representation of Punjabi Women in Lok Sabha Since 1952	83-84
2.3	Representation of Female MPs of Punjab in the Rajya Sabha Since 1952	85
2.4	Gender-Wise Voter Turnout in Punjab During Lok Sabha Elections 2024	86-87
2.5	Voting Percentage in 2024 Lok Sabha Elections in Punjab	88-89
2.6	Comparative Representation in PRIs (As of 2020)	95
2.7	Women's Representation in ULBs of Nawanshahr Constituency	96
3.1	MLAs from Nawanshahr Assembly Constituency	102-103

3.2	Male- Female Voting percentage in various elections in Nawanshahr Assembly Constituency	105
3.3	Respondent's Place of Residence	108
3.4	Age-wise distribution of Women	109
3.5	Respondents Social Category	109
3.6	Religion-wise Distribution of Respondents	110
3.7	Respondents Educational Status	111
3.8	Respondents Monthly Income	111
3.9	Respondents Marital Status	112
3.10	Knowledge about the first female Prime Minister of India	113-114
3.11	Knowledge about the current President of India	115
3.12	Knowledge about the Current Chief Minister of Punjab	116-117
3.13	Knowledge about the female Chief Minister of Punjab	117-118
3.14	Knowledge about your current MLA of Nawanshahr Constituency	119
3.15	Knowledge about the name of the present M.P. from Anandpur Sahib Constituency	120
3.16	The authority responsible for conducting the Parliament and State Legislative elections	121-122
3.17	Awareness about the terms of the members of Lok Sabha	122-123
3.18	Knowledge about the minimum age for contesting elections of the Panchayat/ Municipal Council	124
3.19	Knowledge about the number of Assembly Constituencies in Punjab at present	125

3.20	Knowledge about the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments	126
3.21	Knowledge about the provision of reservation of seats for women in local bodies according to the Indian Constitution	127
3.22	Knowledge about women's welfare schemes launched by the Government	128
3.23	Knowledge about the ruling party at the center	129-130
3.24	Interest in politics	133
3.25	Casting votes regularly in different elections	133-134
3.26	Reason for casting votes	134-135
3.27	Influence on the decision of casting votes	135-136
3.28	The frequency of referring to the election manifestos of political parties before casting a vote	136-137
3.29	Willingness to Contest Elections	137-138
3.30	Reasons for not contesting elections	138-139
3.31	Membership in any political party	139-140
3.32	Participation in meetings of the general body	140
3.33	Frequency of Speaking in Meetings	141
3.34	Participation in Political Debates and Discussions	142
3.35	Participation in Political Campaigning	143
3.36	Reasons for Participation in Activities Related to Political Campaigning	144
3.37	Reasons for Non-Participation in Political Campaigning	145

3.38	Meeting Elected Representatives (M.L.A/ M.P/ M.C/ Sarpanch)	146
3.39	Participation in any Protest against a Government Policy	147
3.40	Reasons for non-participation in Political protest	148
3.41	Participation in any boycott	149
3.42	Participation in any march or rally	150
3.43	Filing of any petition	151
3.44	Use of Social Media for Political Activities	151-152
3.45	Gender Stereotypes impact women's political participation	154-155
3.46	There are Gender gaps in political interest and political awareness.	156
3.47	Low Educational status has adverse impacts the political awareness and engagement.	157
3.48	Economic constraints hinder Women's inclusion in politics.	158-159
3.49	The religion of a candidate impacts the Women's voting behaviour.	159-160
3.50	Caste impacts the participation of women in various political activities.	161
3.51	Women with Political backgrounds have more chances to succeed in elections.	162-163
3.52	Social media platforms (Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, YouTube, Blog, etc.) can positively influence women's political participation	163
3.53	Family Restriction due to a conservative mindset prevents women's Participation in non-electoral activities	164-165

3.54	Patriarchal culture and social norms restrict the political participation of women.	166
4.1	Marital Status of Respondents	173
4.2	Respondent's Place of Residence	173
4.3	Respondents' Age-wise Distribution	174
4.4	Respondents Social Category	175
4.5	Respondents Religion-Wise Distribution	175
4.6	Respondents Educational Status	176
4.7	Distribution of respondents according to Monthly Income	177
4.8	Knowledge regarding the Minimum age to contest Elections of the Panchayat/ Municipal Council	178
4.9	Knowledge Regarding Lok Sabha Elections held till Date	179
4.10	Knowledge regarding the term of a member of Lok Sabha	180
4.11	The authority responsible for conducting the Parliament and state legislative assembly Elections	181
4.12	Knowledge regarding the year of the reorganization of Punjab	182
4.13	Knowledge regarding the number of Assembly Constituencies in Punjab	183
4.14	Knowledge about the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments	184
4.15	Reading of the Panchayat Raj Act/ Municipality Act	185
4.16	The percentage of seats reserved for women in the local bodies of Punjab at present	186

4.17	Knowledge about the Sources of income of the Panchayat/ Municipal Council	187
4.18	Knowledge about the Quorum of meetings of the Panchayat and Municipal Council	188
4.19	Information regarding the year of contesting the first election	189
4.20	How many times, and for which seat, did you contest the election	190
4.21	Factors that helped you enter politics	191
4.22	The reason behind contesting in the election	192
4.23	Involvement of family members in politics	193
4.24	Attitude of family members toward women's involvement in politics	194
4.25	Membership of any Political Party	195
4.26	Participate in party meetings and express your opinion in party meetings	196
4.27	Participation in meetings of the Panchayat/Municipal Council	197
4.28	Boycott of the meetings Panchayat/ Municipal Council	198
4.29	What methods are adopted by female representatives to maintain contact with people of the Ward/ Panchayat?	199
4.30	Main Grievances of People in your Panchayat/Municipal Council	200
4.31	Resolving Grievances of People in your Panchayat/Municipal Council	201

4.32	Participation in Training Programs	202
4.33	Participation in protests against government policy	203
4.34	Raising issues related to women's development in meetings of the Panchayat/ Municipal	204
4.35	Participation in debates and discussions in the panchayat / Municipal Council	205
4.36	Who makes decisions in the meetings of the body you represent?	206
4.37	Reservation of Seats for Women in Local Bodies	207
4.38	Reservation and Upliftment of Women	208
4.39	Reservation and Proxy Politics	209
4.40	Female representatives belonging to the lower caste encounter caste-based discrimination	210-211
4.41	The use of muscle and money power is a significant barrier for female candidates	212
4.42	Due to male domination at all levels of politics, women representatives are not consulted before major decisions are made	213
4.43	Women representatives face non-cooperation from male colleagues and officials	214
4.44	Due to the burden of household and childcare responsibilities, women representatives cannot devote equal time to political activities as compared to men.	215
4.45	A large number of women are forced to contest elections only to act as custodians of the seats vacated by their	216

	husbands and other male family members due to the forced reservation policy.	
4.46	Women representatives face interference from family members in their work	217
4.47	Voters prefer to elect a male candidate as compared to a female.	218
4.48	There is a lack of awareness among elected female representatives about their duties and privileges due to low educational status	219
4.49	Fear of violence and Verbal Abuse discourages the engagement of women representatives in political activities.	220
4.50	Gender bias in political parties is the major hurdle to women's political participation.	221
4.51	Female representatives encounter economic limitations as a result of the unequal allocation of grants/ Funds.	222
4.52	Lack of training and political experience is a major challenge.	223
4.53	Societal and cultural norms restrict the political inclusion of female representatives.	224
4.54	Gender-Wise Distribution of Key Respondents	227
4.55	Age-wise Distribution of Key Respondents	227
4.56	Profession of Key Respondents	228
4.57	Designation of Key Respondents	228

LIST OF FIGURES/CHARTS

Figure/ Chart No.	Title	Page No.
2.1	Map of Punjab, India	75
2.2	Female Voting Percentage in Punjab Legislative Assembly Elections	81
2.3	Punjab State Electoral Profile	91
3.1	Overview of Nawanshahr Constituency	101
3.2	Nawanshahr District Electoral Profile	105

APPENDICES

Appendix	Description	Page No.
Appendix I	Cover Letter	xv
Appendix II	Scheduled Questionnaire for Urban and Rural Female Voters	xvi-xxvi
Appendix III	Questionnaire for Elected Women Representatives	xxvii-xxxvii
Appendix IV	In-Depth Interview for Key Respondents	xxxviii-xxxix
Appendix V	List of Places Visited	xl
Appendix VI	List of People Contacted for Validating the Content of the Questionnaire	xli
Appendix VII	List of Paper Publications	xlii-xliiii
Appendix VIII	List of Conferences Attended/Papers Presented	xliv- xlv
Appendix IX	Conferences /Seminars/Webinars attended	xlvi-xlviii
Appendix X	List of Short-Term Courses/FDPs Attended	xlix-l
Appendix XI	Other Achievements	li

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Description
SBS NAGAR	Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar
MC	Municipal Councilor
AC	Assembly Constituency
PC	Parliamentary Constituency
INC	Indian National Congress
BJP	Bharatiya Janta Party
BSP	Bahujan Samaj Party
SAD	Shiromani Akali Dal
IND	Independent
Gen	General
SC	Scheduled Caste
OBC	Other Backward Classes
M	Male
F	Female
CEO Punjab	Chief Election Officer, Punjab
ECI	Election Commission of India
PRI	Panchayati Raj Institutions
MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly
MP	Member of the Parliament
GP	Gram Panchayat

GoI	Government of India
GoP	Government of Punjab
ULB	Urban Local Bodies

ABSTRACT

The study investigates the multifaceted dimensions of women's political participation in the Nawanshahr Constituency of Punjab, a region characterized by a distinct socio-political fabric influenced by caste dynamics, rural-urban disparities, and varying levels of socio-economic development. Despite constitutional mandates and reservation policies aimed at bolstering women's presence in political institutions, their active engagement remains inconsistent and often symbolic. This research delves into the structural, cultural, economic, and institutional factors that shape women's political engagement in electoral and non-electoral domains. It explores how socio-economic status, education, digital access, caste identity, and patriarchal constraints collectively impact the political agency of women in both urban and rural settings. Nawanshahr, with a considerable female electorate, provides a relevant context to evaluate the effectiveness of political reservation, policy interventions, and the actual empowerment of women leaders beyond mere representation.

The core objectives of this research include: To analyse the status of political awareness among women of Nawanshahr Constituency of Punjab; To compare political participation of urban and rural women of Nawanshahr Constituency of Punjab; To investigate the factors influencing women's political participation in Nawanshahr; To explore the challenges faced by elected female representatives in Nawanshahr Constituency of Punjab.

To accomplish these objectives, the following research questions has been addressed; identifying the factors influencing women's political participation in Nawanshahr; analyzing the role of socio-economic status in political engagement; assessing the status of political awareness among urban and rural women; examining women's performance in Panchayat, Municipal, and State Assembly elections since 2003; measuring women's involvement in conventional (voting, contesting, campaigning) and unconventional (protesting, contacting officials, online activism) political activities; evaluating the impact of reservation policies; and understanding the challenges experienced by elected female representatives. These objectives are interlinked to offer a holistic understanding of the gendered political landscape of

Nawanshahr Constituency and provide grounded recommendations for enhancing democratic inclusivity.

To address these questions, the study employed a mixed-methods approach based on an explanatory sequential design. The research began with quantitative data collection through structured questionnaires administered to 360 randomly selected female voters across urban and rural areas of Nawanshahr, using stratified sampling based on caste and locality, and age. A further 40 key informants—including elected female representatives, administrative officials, social workers, and members of political parties—were engaged through in-depth interviews to enrich the data with qualitative insights. The sample of 400 respondents was drawn from a total of 86,470 registered female voters in the constituency, as per the 2022 electoral roll, using Taro Yamane's formula for sample size determination. Urban respondents were selected from the Nawanshahr and Rahon municipal areas, while rural respondents were taken from 10 villages using purposive sampling. The primary data collection was supplemented by secondary data from books, journals, electoral commission records, Census data, and government archives.

The analysis utilized descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and thematic interpretation to draw meaningful patterns from the data. SPSS software was used to evaluate quantitative responses, while interview transcripts were coded manually to identify recurring themes. The correlation analyses revealed several key insights. Firstly, marital status and political interest showed a negligible negative correlation, suggesting that marital roles neither significantly enhance nor restrict women's political engagement. A more significant finding emerged from the strong negative correlation between habitation (urban or rural) and social media usage for political purposes, underscoring the digital divide. Urban women were significantly more active on political platforms online, thereby enjoying greater exposure to political discourse. Age was weakly but positively correlated with awareness of electoral authorities, indicating that older women have slightly better knowledge about formal political institutions. Interestingly, education did not strongly correlate with awareness of the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts, suggesting that even educated women may lack civic education on institutional reforms aimed at women's political empowerment.

A particularly revealing finding was the negative correlation between income levels and willingness to contest elections. Women with higher incomes were less inclined to participate as candidates, possibly due to professional commitments, fear of social backlash, or satisfaction with informal influence. Conversely, women from SC backgrounds, particularly in urban areas, displayed higher aspirations to contest elections, likely influenced by the confidence afforded by reservation policies. The study found significant caste-based disparities in political knowledge and activity. General category women consistently outperformed SC and OBC women in political awareness indicators, such as identifying national political leaders or understanding legislative mechanisms. For instance, only 18.3% of urban SC women and 6.1% of rural SC women were aware of the 73rd/74th Amendments, compared to 25% of urban General category women. Digital participation followed a similar pattern, with rural SC women the least active on social media platforms for political engagement.

In terms of political participation, SC women in urban areas were more likely to express willingness to contest elections (15%) compared to General (8.8%) and OBC (7.2%) women. This shift reflects a growing empowerment among marginalized groups within urban contexts, possibly due to increased access to political literacy and urban-centric reservation benefits. Yet, rural SC women remained heavily underrepresented in all forms of political discourse and activism. Many never participated in political debates (31.7%) or campaigns (26.1%). Notably, high participation in protests showed relatively equal involvement across caste categories in rural settings, suggesting grassroots activism as a more inclusive space for women. This finding points to the potential of protest and community mobilization as gateways for broader political inclusion.

The study also highlighted significant factors that impede women's political participation. These include economic dependency, lack of family support, illiteracy, patriarchal norms, and the prevalence of proxy politics. SC women reported the highest levels of discrimination and barriers. Urban OBC women were most affected by gender stereotypes, while rural SC women faced the strongest patriarchal resistance, particularly regarding political involvement without male supervision. Reservation policies have undeniably facilitated descriptive representation, with SC/ST women

comprising 40% of elected posts in the constituency. However, qualitative findings suggest that reservation alone is insufficient. Around 30% of respondents reported proxy political practices, where elected women serve as figureheads while male family members exercise actual authority. Discrimination and exclusion persist post-election, with 26.67% of SC/ST women representatives reporting caste-based prejudice in their political journey, most intensely in rural settings.

Female representatives reported numerous challenges after getting elected. These include systemic marginalization by male-dominated institutions, lack of training on governance and lawmaking, limited access to resources, and societal scrutiny. Many are not taken seriously by their peers or the community and are rarely consulted on critical matters. Fear of public speaking, poor understanding of administrative procedures, and intimidation by political rivals further hinder their performance. Scheduled Castes (SC) women representatives faced structural barriers caused by persistent societal inequalities, regardless of they have constitutional provisions that reserve seats for them. The psychological burden of managing both domestic responsibilities and public duties without adequate support exacerbates stress and disillusionment among elected women, often discouraging sustained participation.

In light of these findings, the study proposes several recommendations. First, civic and political education must be institutionalized at the grassroots level, with targeted programs for women in rural and marginalized communities. Second, government and non-government organizations should create leadership training workshops, legal literacy camps, and mentorship programs for aspiring and elected women leaders. These should be made accessible in local languages and culturally sensitive formats. Third, the digital divide must be addressed by expanding affordable internet access and conducting training on the use of digital platforms for political purposes. Fourth, electoral bodies should monitor and penalize proxy representation through mandatory disclosures and community feedback mechanisms. Fifth, political parties should be mandated to allocate a fixed percentage of leadership positions to women and support their election campaigns through funding, security, and public endorsements.

Therefore, at large, the political participation of women in the Nawanshahr Assembly Constituency remains a complex interplay of empowerment and exclusion. While the reservation Policy has created a numerical presence, substantive empowerment is still lacking, especially for rural and lower-caste women. The urban-rural divide, entrenched caste hierarchies, limited digital access, and patriarchal norms act as intersecting axes of marginalization. Nevertheless, the aspirations among urban SC women, active protest participation across castes, and growing use of social media for political purposes provide hopeful trends. A multi-pronged strategy that goes beyond reservation—encompassing education, digital literacy, institutional reforms, and sociocultural transformation—is essential for fostering genuine political agency among women. This study contributes valuable empirical insights to the discourse on gender and politics in India and offers actionable pathways for creating an inclusive, participatory democracy in Punjab and beyond.

Key Words: *Development, Empowerment, Participation, Reservation, Transformation, Governance, Representation*



CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

As women consist of almost half of the world's population. This segment of society requires due attention in the system and an appropriate share in the political process. Democracy cannot accomplish its objective if women do not have equal opportunities to participate in the government's decision-making process. Women should be equal partners in nation-building and political development. The political participation of women is crucial for the empowerment of women. The political participation of women is an essential prerequisite for gender equality and legitimate democracy. It facilitates the direct engagement of women in public decision-making. It is a method of ensuring better accountability towards women. However, it is extremely unfortunate that women are in an inferior position to men in almost all societies of the world. The degree of equality and freedom that women have in shaping and sharing political power can be used to describe their political involvement.

Political participation is an important part of the democratic political system. Political participation is a method by which people participate in political processes and activities. The success of a democratic political system depends upon the nature and degree of political participation among the citizens of the country, regardless of caste, colour, sex, and religion. In a democracy, the term political participation means the approval and withdrawal by the people to those whom they have given the right to govern. It implies that rulers shall rule only with the consent of the people, and the masses must be taken into confidence while performing their duties for society and the people's welfare. Political participation involves the active role of citizens to exercise their political voice by expressing their policy preferences to the state. The primary purpose is to bring about the desired changes in the form of political decisions. The term 'Political Participation' has a broader meaning. It is not just about the 'Right to Vote' but is simultaneously associated with participation in the decision-making process, political activism, political consciousness, etc.

Participation in the political process has been the subject of sustained interest in Political Science since the days of Plato. Aristotle defined a citizen as one who is involved in the administration of justice and holds office. The Declaration of the French Revolution of 1789 also declares that all citizens have the right to participate in the formulation of law personally or by their representatives. According to Marx, human freedom can only be fully realized through universal political participation. The behavioral revolution, which rejuvenated the academic discipline of Political Science in the fifties and sixties of the nineteenth century, focused on the study of political behavior, voting behavior, and the electoral process. To streamline the participation of all in the governance structure, gender quotas have been put in place.

Gender quotas have gained popularity and have been implemented in many countries to promote gender equality. A more equitable political landscape for women is one of the primary goals of this comprehensive reform (*Kim, J., & Fallon, K. M., 2023*). As per the data of UN Women's review of the National Legal Framework as of 1 January 2023, 88 countries have enforced gender quotas for local elections. The issue of gender disparity in political engagement is prevalent in India. In general, there is a consensus in India that, despite quotas and other institutional arrangements, the outcome of women's actual participation and their visibility in leadership roles are insignificant. In this context, the present chapter is aimed at exploring the fundamental tenets of political participation, research objectives, research methodology, and literature review. The data has been organized according to suitable themes, ensuring that the subject matter remains coherent.

1.2 Conceptual Framework of Political Participation

Political participation is a process by which people participate in political activities such as getting membership of political parties, holding election campaigning, attending party meetings, communicating with political leaders, contesting the elections, demonstrations, membership in representative bodies, influencing decision-making bodies, and other related activities. *Santhanam (1993)* defines “participation as a commitment on the part of the individual towards all forms of action by which the individual can take part or play role in the operation without being conscious of the

socio-economic barriers, to achieve certain common goals in a group situation”. McClosky, H. (1968) defined political participation as “those voluntary activities by which members of a society share in the selection of rulers and directly or indirectly in the formation of public policy.”

Schonfeld, W.R. (1975), in his review paper “*The Meaning of Democratic Participation*,” has mentioned ten types of activities of political participation. “These include; i) Running or holding, public or party office; ii) Belonging to a party or other political organization; iii) Working in an election; iv) Attending political meetings or rallies; v) Making a financial contribution to a party or a candidate; vi) Contacting a public official; vii) Publicly expressing a political opinion to convince others; viii) Taking part in political discussion, ix) Voting and x) Exposing oneself to political stimuli.” In this context, Political Participation can be referred to as the voluntary participation of the public in the political process to influence public policy directly or by affecting the selection of people who make policies.

Political participation includes different types of conventional political activities such as voting, helping a political campaign, membership in a political party, donating money to a candidate, contacting officials, holding party positions, contesting elections, membership in representative bodies, and unconventional political activities like petitioning, protesting, demonstrations, supporting boycotts, and other related activities. However, the conception of political participation is inclusive in terms of gender, i.e., women shall play a parallel role in the affairs of the state. Political participation of women does not only mean the participation of women in the electoral and administrative process. Participation of women in all voluntary activities, including voting, supporting political groups, communicating with legislators, disseminating political views and opinions among the electorate, and other related activities, affects the political process.

Patricia Hill Collins (2000), in her book “*Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment*,” argues that mainstream feminist theories fail to account for the intersectional nature of women’s experiences, including race, class, and gender, which are significant factors that influence women's political participation. Dorothy E. Smith (1987), in her book “*The everyday world as*

problematic: A feminist sociology,” examined the role of social structures and practices in shaping women's political participation. *Joan Acker*, in her book “*Women and Public Policy: A Revolution in Progress*,” examined the interplay of race, caste, gender, and cultural attitudes in the political arena and the formation of public policy. *Conway, M. M. (2001)* highlights that Patriarchal culture and social norms, combined with limited occupational and educational opportunities, are responsible for the low percentage of women in public offices.

- Family care responsibilities and the time required to acquire skills for a political career are also responsible for women’s low rate of elected office holding.
- Women act as gatekeepers in deciding which candidates can successfully run for public office. Many potential female candidates may be discouraged from entering a nominating contest in the preliminary selection process.

1.3 Theoretical framework

Different approaches related to the political participation of women have different perspectives. These approaches consider women as an integral part of society and grant them equal rights. The following are some approaches:

Participatory Democracy theory: It is a process of collective decision-making that combines elements from both direct and representative democracy. This theory aims to strengthen the local governments and increase the people's participation in civil society, as well as provide opportunities to males and females for the use of national referendums and policy initiatives. Every person who is directly or indirectly affected by these decisions. Thus, participatory democracy theory increases people’s engagement in the decision-making process, and people must be involved in every political issue.

Feminist Theory: Feminist theories address women's rights in the context of gender equality. The feminist political theory was propounded in the West during the women's liberation movement of the 1960s and 1970s. One of the key demands of the feminist movement was women’s right to participate in politics and decision-making. In 1861,

John Stuart Mill was first called about women's suffrage. In his work "*The Subjection of Women*," he examined the condition of women in society and the benefits to society of granting women the same political and legal rights as men. The feminist theory describes the role of women based on different ideologies such as liberalism, Marxism, and radicalism.

Liberal Feminism: During the first part of the twentieth century, the liberal approach was prominent. This approach advocates individual freedom, equal opportunity, and equal political rights for women. Women should be allowed to compete with men. The subordinate position of women in society is a result of their economic dependence on males. The economic independence of women is a prerequisite for women's empowerment.

Marxian Feminism: The Marxian theory is based on the concept that an increase in surplus leads to various forms of exploitation in society. They are strongly opposed to private property. It links women's oppression to the capitalist system of production and the division of labour consistent with this system. This approach advocates that women's exploitation and oppression will stop immediately with the elimination of private property. Countries with communist systems provide equal opportunities to both males and females for participation in all aspects of life. The state guarantees to create environments that encourage women's inclusion in production, the state, and public life, including their role as housewives.

Radical Feminism: The primary goal of the radical approach is to enhance the number of women in the economic and political spheres. Women are struggling for their economic, political, and civil rights as part of this movement. The psychological and economic dependence of women upon male members is a significant contributor to the inferior position of women in society.

Gender Role Theory: This theory emphasizes the importance of socialization in determining women's political participation. It argues that gender roles are socially constructed and women are socialized to believe that politics belongs to males only. There is a wide gender gap in attitudes and political attitudes. Therefore, it is required to change existing gender stereotypes that hinder women's political inclusion.

Sociological Feminist Theory: The sociological feminist theory offers a framework for understanding the intersections of gender and power in society. A group of scholars, including *Patricia Hill Collins*, *Dorothy E. Smith*, and *Joan Acker*, who developed this theory, argue that mainstream feminist theories fail to account for the intersection of gender with other social factors. It highlights the importance of socialization in shaping women's political participation. This perspective focuses on various factors such as institutional design, cultural attitudes, gendered division of labor, and uneven access to resources that can hinder women's political inclusion. It also emphasizes intersectionality, which identifies that women's experiences are not uniform but rather shaped by their other social identities, such as race, class, and nationality, etc.

India is a democratic country that adheres to the liberal model. So far, the liberal and racial, and sociological approaches to women's political engagement are relevant in India. However, the Marxian approach is not used in Indian structures because the Indian constitution does not properly incorporate Marxian ideology.

1.4 Historical Background

Women's Political Participation: International Perspective

Women in many countries had to struggle to acquire their voting rights. From a historical point of view, it can be observed that women were completely deprived of the right to vote in ancient Greece and the Republic of Rome at the end of the 18th century. The demand for equal political status for women started in the 18th century. New Zealand became the first country in the world to provide voting rights to women in 1893. In the 19th century, women had to struggle for equal political rights. American women were the first in the world to fight for their right to vote. Women in the United States obtained voting rights in 1920. Until 1832, in the UK right to vote was granted to a few women based on property and education. In 1872 movement for women's voting rights became a national movement. In 1928, through the Representation of the People Act, voting rights were granted to all citizens above the age of 21. Germany granted the right to vote and contest the election to women in 1918. Voting rights for women were provided in 1949 by the Constitution of India. Pakistan granted women

suffrage in 1956. In Switzerland, women were enfranchised in 1971. Saudi Arabia granted voting rights to women in 2015. Participation of women in Legislative bodies is not satisfactory worldwide, despite there being an increase in their participation as voters. There is a gender gap in other conventional and unconventional political activities globally.

Women's Political Participation: Indian Perspective

During Vedic period and post-Vedic period: In ancient India, during the Vedic times, women enjoyed equal status with men in social, political, religious, and educational spheres of life. In the post-Vedic period, there was evidence of sati pratha, the dowry system, and polygamy, which led to the downfall of the status of women. Women were forbidden to study the Vedas. In this period, women were always protected by the males of their families. During the Buddhist era, inequalities between males and females were eliminated. There was no difference in the education given to female nuns and males.

Status of Women in Medieval period: In the eleventh century, when Muslims invaded India, there was a downfall in the position of women, although some of the women were actively involved in political activities. Shah-Turkan, wife of Iltutmish ruled over Delhi during AD 1211-1236. Many women like Razia Begum, Chand Bibi, Tara Bai, and Ahaliya Bai Holker left their enormous track for their ruling capabilities. The eleventh century could be considered the darkest age, due to the existence of the horrible practices of child marriage, sati, parda, polygamy, etc.

Status of Women in Modern period: During the British era, the situation of women in India was the most horrible due to the existence of social evils like child marriage and the sati system. Social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Dayananda Saraswathi, Swami Vivekananda, etc, made efforts for the uplift of women through the abolition of social evils. Later in the Gandhian era, many women participated in the freedom struggle. Membership of the Indian National Congress was also open to women. Annie Besant was the first female to be elected president of the Indian National Congress. The right to vote was granted by the Government of India Act, 1935, to all women above 21 years of age who met the conditions of property and education. Sarojini Naidu was actively involved in the Indian National Movement. A large number

of women actively participated in the non-cooperation, civil disobedience, swadeshi, and salt satyagraha movements led by Gandhi.

Constitutional provisions regarding the participation of women in post-independent India: After independence, the Constitution of India granted the adult franchise to all its citizens without any discrimination. The Preamble of the Indian Constitution, Fundamental Rights, and Directive Principles guarantee the rights and safety of women.

- Article 14 of the Constitution guarantees equality before the law and equal protection of the law within the territory of India.
- Article 15 of the Constitution prohibits discrimination on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth.
- Article 15(3) empowered the state to make special provisions for the benefit of women and children.
- Article 16(1) guarantees equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment in any office under the State.
- Article 17 of the Constitution abolishes Untouchability.

The Directive Principles of the State Policy regarding women are as follows:

- Article 39(a) provides the right to an adequate means of livelihood for all citizens. Article 39(d) provides equal pay for equal work for both men and women. Article 39 (e) has provisions for securing the health and strength of workers, men and women, and not to abuse the tender age of children.
- Article 243-(D) (2) states that 1/3 of the total number of seats reserved under clause (1) shall be reserved for women belonging to the Scheduled castes and the Scheduled Tribes.
- Article 325 prohibits making special electoral rolls on the grounds of religion, race, caste, or sex. Article 326 of the Indian Constitution guarantees political equality.

1.5 Representation of Women in the Indian Legislature

The representation of women in the Indian legislature has shown a gradual increase over the decades, albeit with fluctuating trends. Since the independence, the

government has adopted an inclusive approach aimed at paving the way for women and other marginal communities in the different strata of governance. In this context, the current section sheds light on the representation of women in the legislature of India.

Table 1.1: Representation of Women in Lok Sabha Since 1952

Lok Sabha	Total Number of Seats	No. of Female MPs	Percentage of Female MPs
1 st Lok Sabha (1952)	489	22	4.5 %
2 nd Lok Sabha (1957)	494	27	5.5 %
3 rd Lok Sabha (1962)	494	34	6.8 %
4 th Lok Sabha (1967)	523	31	5.9 %
5 th Lok Sabha (1971)	521	22	4.2 %
6 th Lok Sabha (1977)	544	19	3.4 %
7 th Lok Sabha (1980)	544	28	5.1 %
8 th Lok Sabha (1984)	544	44	8.1 %
9 th Lok Sabha (1989)	529	28	5.3 %
10 th Lok Sabha (1991)	509	36	7.1 %
11 th Lok Sabha (1996)	541	40*	7.4 %
12 th Lok Sabha (1998)	545	44*	8.0 %
13 th Lok Sabha (1999)	545	48*	8.8 %
14 th Lok Sabha (2004)	543	45*	8.2 %
15 th Lok Sabha (2009)	543	59	10.9 %
16 th Lok Sabha (2014)	543	61	11.2 %
17 th Lok Sabha (2019)	543	78	14.4 %
18 th Lok Sabha (2024)	543	74	13.6%

Source: Election Commission of India. * Including one nominated female member

Table 1.1 presents a chronological overview of the representation of women in the Lok Sabha from 1952 to 2024. The data reveal a gradual but uneven increase in the number and percentage of female Members of Parliament (MPs) over the decades. In the early years, particularly in the 1950s and 1960s, female representation was

extremely low. For instance, in the 1st Lok Sabha (1952), there were only 22 female MPs out of 489 seats, constituting a mere 4.5%. This pattern persisted through the subsequent elections in the 1960s, with slight fluctuations but no significant increase. A notable shift begins to emerge in the 1980s and 1990s. The 8th Lok Sabha (1984) saw a notable rise with 44 female MPs, amounting to 8.1%, marking the beginning of a more substantial presence of women in Parliament. This upward trend continued into the 1990s, with the 11th to 14th Lok Sabhas showing gradual increases, reaching a peak of 48 female MPs (8.8%) in the 13th Lok Sabha (1999). The 21st century brought more significant strides in female representation. The 15th Lok Sabha (2009) marked a milestone with 59 female MPs, comprising 10.9% of the total seats. This trend continued in subsequent elections, with the 17th Lok Sabha (2019) recording 78 female MPs, representing 14.4%. However, the most recent data from the 18th Lok Sabha (2024) shows a slight decrease in the percentage of female MPs to 13.6%, despite the absolute number of female MPs remaining relatively high at 74. Therefore, it can be inferred from the above discussion that while there has been a discernible upward trajectory in the representation of women in the Lok Sabha over the decades, progress has been uneven, with periods of stagnation or minor setbacks. The 21st century has generally seen more significant gains, although sustaining and furthering this progress remains a critical challenge for achieving gender parity in Indian politics.

Table 1.2: Representation of Women in Both Houses of Parliament (As per June 2024)

S. No.	Name of the House	Percentage of Women MPs
1	Lok Sabha	14.94 %
2	Rajya Sabha	14.05 %

Source: Ministry of Law and Justice

As per the data of the Ministry of Law and Justice, the representation of women in both houses of the Indian Parliament, as shown in Table 1.2, indicates a nearly equal proportion in terms of percentage. In the Lok Sabha, women MPs constitute 14.94%, while in the Rajya Sabha, they make up 14.05%. This data reflects a balanced

representation compared to historical trends, underscoring a gradual but significant increase in female participation in legislative roles. However, achieving parity remains a continuing challenge, emphasizing the ongoing importance of policies and initiatives aimed at promoting gender diversity and inclusivity in India's parliamentary democracy.

Table 1.3: Percentage of Elected Women to State Assemblies in India (As of June 2024)

S. No.	Name of State / Union Territory	Year of Last General Election to the Legislative Assembly	Percentage of Seats Won by Women
1	Andhra Pradesh	2019	8.00 %
2	Arunachal Pradesh	2019	5.00 %
3	Assam	2021	4.76 %
4	Bihar	2020	10.70 %
5	Chhattisgarh	2018	14.44 %
6	Goa	2022	7.50 %
7	Gujarat	2017	7.14 %
8	Haryana	2019	10.00 %
9	Himachal Pradesh	2017	5.88 %
10	Jammu and Kashmir	2014	2.30 %
11	Jharkhand	2019	12.35 %
12	Karnataka	2018	3.14 %
13	Kerala	2021	7.86 %
14	Madhya Pradesh	2018	9.13 %
15	Maharashtra	2019	8.33 %
16	Manipur	2022	8.33 %
17	Meghalaya	2018	5.08 %

18	Mizoram	2018	0 %
19	Nagaland	2018	0 %
20	Odisha	2019	8.90 %
21	Punjab	2022	11.11 %
22	Rajasthan	2018	12.00 %
23	Sikkim	2019	9.38 %
24	Tamil Nadu	2021	5.13 %
25	Telangana	2018	5.04 %
26	Tripura	2018	5.00 %
27	Uttarakhand	2022	11.43 %
28	Uttar Pradesh	2022	11.66 %
29	West Bengal	2021	13.70 %
30	NCT of Delhi	2020	11.43 %
31	Puducherry	2021	3.33 %

Source: Ministry of Law and Justice

Table 1.3 provides a snapshot of the representation of women in state assemblies across India as of June 2024, highlighting varying degrees of gender diversity in legislative bodies. The data reveals a range of percentages from different states and union territories following their respective last general elections. States such as Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and West Bengal stand out with higher percentages of seats won by women, ranging from 12.35% to 13.70%. In contrast, states like Mizoram and Nagaland reported 0% representation by women in their legislative assemblies. Overall, while some states have made strides in achieving greater gender parity in politics, disparities persist across the country, underscoring the need for sustained efforts to enhance women's participation and representation in state-level governance.

1.6 Statement of the Problem

Equal participation of women in the decision-making process is essential for the success of a democratic political system. Political engagement of women is a prerequisite for women's empowerment. In recent years, there has been an increase in the level of participation of women as voters, but the representation of female legislators in Parliament and State Assemblies is exceptionally low compared to male legislators. Women are considered less competent than men due to gender stereotypes. Gender disparity in political interest and political awareness impacts political participation (Verba, S., Burns, N., & Schlozman, K. L., 1997). Women are underrepresented in conventional and unconventional political activities, such as helping a political campaign, membership in a political party, contacting officials, petitioning, protesting, holding party positions, contesting elections, and influencing decision-making.

Punjab is a prosperous state, but due to the patriarchal culture of Punjabi society, politics is regarded as a masculine activity, and women are considered unsuitable for politics. It is assumed that they should be confined to the domestic sphere (*Kaur, S., 2010*). As far as the socio-economic and political participation of women in Punjab is concerned, they are in a motionless, accorded position that is significantly secondary and inferior to men. There are very few women in Punjab who participate in political decision-making. Decisions of women representatives are influenced by male members of their families. They are treated as Rubber stamps by male members. Despite Constitution provisions such as the 73rd and 74th Amendment's participation of women is negligible in the decision-making process (*Hust, E., 2004*). Thus, there is a broad gap between the Constitutional status provided to women and their actual position in society (*Kaur, A., 2019*). Thus, it is evident from the above facts that the level of political participation of urban and rural women in Punjab is not satisfactory because political participation is not merely related to casting votes.

This study focuses on the Nawanshahr Constituency, located in the Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar district, Punjab. There are some persuasive reasons for choosing the Nawanshahr Constituency of Punjab to study the political participation of urban and rural women. S.B.S. Nagar District is considered one of the advanced districts of

Punjab. It has the 2nd ranking in Punjab with a sex ratio of 954 (*Census 2011*). It has a higher literacy rate of 80%. Nawanshahr has received national media attention (e.g., *The Indian Express*, *Hindustan Times*) for its women-centric governing style. It is considered the most women-empowered district of Punjab, as most of the administrative and government departments are headed by women officers (Chaudhry, 2012). Key administrative positions have been or are currently held by women. Nawanshahr district has a distinguished record of female deputy commissioners. Despite the rarity of female representation in state government, this district has achieved a notable milestone with the appointment of six female Deputy Commissioners: Bhawna Garg (2007), Shruti Singh (2010), Tanu Kashyap (2012), Anandita Mishra (2014), Sonali Giri (2017), and Dr. Shena Aggarwal (2020). At present key bureaucratic positions are occupied by women for instance Avneet Kaur (Additional Deputy Commissioners), Dr. Akshita Gupta (Sub-Divisional Magistrate Nawanshahr), Mrs. Ravinder Kaur (District Education officer), Mrs. Kanchan Arora (District Child Protection Officer), Mrs. Sonia Angrish (Chairman welfare Committee), Mrs. Vandana (District sports Officer), Mrs. Nidhi Sinha (Block Development Officer), Ms. Priya Sood (District and Sessions judge). The inclusion of women in governmental and community leadership positions makes it advantageous to examine top-down effects on grassroots political engagement. There has been a significant increase in women's voting turnout compared to men over the last few years. During the Punjab Assembly election 2017, in the Doaba region, the "voting percentage of women was around 8.51 percent higher than men in Nawanshahr district, which represents the highest difference in the male-female voting ratio in the state. While 1,87,401 women voted against 1,78,794 men out of a total of 4,73,144 electors in the district, including 2,29,137 women and 2,44,003 men, as 81.79 percent of women voted against 73.28 percent of men in the district" (*Chaba, A., A. 2017*). Women remain excluded despite their substantial contributions to the electoral process, with men predominating in executive and leadership positions in politics (*Kakar, M. M., Rahim, M., & Ali, S., 2023*). Women's involvement in political campaigning, protesting, contacting officials, and holding party positions is not very satisfactory.

Mrs. Guriqbal Kaur, w/o Parkash Singh, former Member of the Punjab Legislative Assembly, was the only female Member of the Legislative Assembly from the Nawanshahr Constituency in the Punjab Assembly election 2012 since 1952. She contested elections on the Congress party ticket. Nawanshahr falls under the Anandpur Sahib Parliamentary constituency. She was able to secure the office of MLA because of her political background. Ambika Soni was a single-woman candidate from the Anandpur Sahib Parliamentary constituency who contested elections on a Congress party ticket during the 16th Lok Sabha election in 2014, but she couldn't manage to win the election. The purpose of this research is to examine the political engagement of women in different socioeconomic contexts. Nawanshahr is an ideal location for comparing the political participation of urban and rural women due to its socio-cultural diversity, accessibility to both urban and rural areas, historical relevance, and ability to shed light on the unique challenges and opportunities that women encounter in various political contexts. This research has the potential to address gaps in political participation and empower women in both urban and rural contexts. Therefore, this study attempts to analyze the political status of women and various challenges faced by elected female representatives of S.B.S Nagar district with special reference to Nawanshahr Constituency.

1.7 Review of Literature

This part of the chapter provides us with a brief description of the literature about women's political participation. A review of the literature is the basis for deciding the research problems, selecting the research objectives, and formulating the research questions. It can never be understood in isolation from the work that has already been done on the problem, which is directly or indirectly related to a study proposal by researchers. Many studies have been carried out at international, national, and state levels by different researchers in the field of political participation of women. To attain a comprehensive understanding of the research problem and form a framework of study, a sincere attempt is made to review the existing literature on the concept of the political participation of women from an international perspective, the Indian Perspective, and the Punjab Perspective of Political Participation of Women.

A. Studies on Political Participation of Women: A Global Perspective

Nuss, S. (1982), in her article “Women in Political Life: Global Trends,” tries to explore data from 62 countries regarding women’s representation in the legislature and executive branch at the local and national levels. It incorporates data from developing countries like Africa, Asia, Latin America, etc., along with data from developed countries of Europe and North America. The study indicates that women are more represented in the executive branch than in Legislative bodies at local and national levels. The data reveals that women globally have a high percentage in elected offices at the local level as compared to the national level. Furthermore, the study highlights a close relationship between the extent of women’s representation in the local offices, the executive branch, and the foreign affairs department. Women’s political participation throughout the world is low.

Medoff, M. H. (1986), in his study “Determinants of the Political Participation of Women,” examines the influence of interest groups, ideology, and the role of campaigning resources on female political participation in the state legislature. The author highlights the status of women in the United States of America from 1960-1980. This study reveals that being married is negatively associated with female political participation due to social customs and the stability of marriage. Due to access to economic resources and sensitivity towards women's issues, working mothers are strongly inclined towards female political participation. Religious beliefs and educational attainment are two ideological factors that influence the attitudes of women toward political engagement. The religious attitudes of fundamentalist Christian groups harm the political participation of women. Educated females are more inclined towards women candidates. The Success of a candidate depends upon the accessibility to campaign resources such as money, people, and time. Female candidates perform better in the small constituency as they can overcome the shortage of campaign funds by raising them over time and with volunteers.

Ross, M. H. (1986), in the paper “Female Political Participation: A Cross-Cultural Explanation,” the author tries to explore social mechanisms linked with gender-related political involvement and exclusion based on the investigation of data from 90 preindustrial societies. The present study highlights statistically and conceptually

independent factors of female political participation. These factors consist of the involvement of women in the political decision-making process and organizational positions that are controlled or reserved for women. This study reveals that social structure, psychological, cultural, and behavioral variable also influences female political participation.

Thomas, S. (1991) paper “The Impact of Women on State Legislative Policies” explores the relationship between the percentage of women in the state legislatures and their political priorities. The author studies the impact of women on policy formation based on the data collected from the representatives of the lower house of the 12 State legislatures of the United States. This study reveals that there are gender differences in the types of priority of the bills introduced in the state legislature. Women prefer to introduce bills associated with women, children, and family welfare. Women are more successful than men at passing these types of bills.

Huddy, L., & Terkildsen, N. (1993) in their article “Gender Stereotypes and the Perception of Male and Female Candidates” reveal that “female candidates are better equipped for compassionate issues such as education, health care, social welfare, women’s issues” etc. and men are better to deal with issues related to military and defense, foreign policy and economy. Based on data collected from 297 undergraduate students at New York State University at Stony Brook, this paper provides two alternative explanations for stereotypes of gender traits and stereotypes of gender beliefs. Gender-trait stereotypes stress the gender-related personality traits of a candidate. Gender-belief stereotypes focus on differences in the political beliefs of male and female candidates. The study reveals that there was strong support for the trait approach. Typical masculine traits are considered more central to politics than typical feminine traits, especially at the executive and national levels. Female candidates are considered more liberal and democratic than male candidates. They can handle social issues in a better way. There is limited support for the belief-based approach with gender expectations of the political views of the candidate.

Verba, S., Burns, N., & Schlozman, K. L. (1997), in this study, “Knowing and Caring about Politics: Gender and Political Engagement,” explain that gender disparities in political interest, the extent of political awareness, and efficacy impact political

participation. The author analyzes female political participation based on data collected from 2517 follow-up interviews conducted by a university in the United States. This paper highlights that women are less active in politics than men due to a lack of political interest and political awareness. Resources and Political engagement are two factors that foster political activity. Variables such as income and job level do not affect the various components of political engagement. Political interests, efficacy, and political knowledge of voters are impacted by resources such as education level and civic skills. Women politicians have general consequences for the political engagement of women.

Matland, R. E. (1998), in his article “Women's Representation in National Legislatures: Developed and Developing Countries,” reveals that women are under-represented in national legislative bodies across the world. The author highlights the representation of women in 24 advanced industrialized democratic countries and 16 democracies in low-developed countries from 1980-1997. The study indicates that the gap between industrialized democracies and LDC democracies has widened during the study period. The author highlights the “impact of various Political, Socio-economic, and Cultural variables on the representation of women in legislative bodies.” The author tries to test existing models against the latest data from developed countries and then implements these models in developing countries. In OECD democracies, factors such as the proportional representation electoral system, the contribution of women in the workforce, the cultural status of women, and the development level of a country, etc., all contribute positively to the representation of women, but in less developed countries, none of these have a positive effect. The level of development of a country impacts women’s political representation.

Kenworthy, L., & Malami, M. (1999), in their study “Gender Inequality in Political Representation: A Worldwide Comparative Analysis,” explore the determinants of diversity in the representation of females in the national legislatures across 146 nations in 1998. This study points out that earlier studies focusing on developed democracies have emphasized the influence of political factors, but socio-economic and cultural factors are more important in less developed countries. The current study shows that political, socio-economic, and cultural factors have equal importance. It also highlights different variables such as the electoral system, the timing of women's suffrage, cultural attitudes of the society,

and the contribution of women in professional occupations that impact differences in the political representation of women around the world.

Conway, M. M. (2001), in her essay entitled “Women and Political Participation,” explores the extent to which women participated in voting and holding offices in the USA. The author highlights that the voting turnout of women is increasing, despite that their representation in Legislative bodies is less than compared of men. She tries to explain women’s political participation based on various approaches. The sociological theory emphasizes that patriarchal culture and social norms, combined with limited occupational and educational opportunities, are responsible for the low percentage of women in public offices. She highlights that family care responsibilities and the time required for the acquisition of skills for a political career are also responsible for women’s low rate of elected office holding. This paper also highlights the role of women as gatekeepers in deciding which candidates can successfully run for public office. In the preliminary selection process, many potential female candidates may be discouraged from even entering in nominating contest.

Sanbonmatsu, K. (2002), in her article “Gender Stereotypes and Vote Choice,” highlights the relationship between voting behavior and gender stereotypes. The author focuses on gender schema theory. The present study is based on data collected from 455 residents of Ohio, a state in the Midwestern region of the USA, from March-April 2000. This study highlights “three measures of voting behavior: gender stereotypes, voters’ baseline gender preference, and a hypothetical voter choice question.” The author argues that many voters prefer to vote for male than female or female candidates rather than male candidates. Gender preferences can be described based on the gender and political knowledge of voters. Voting behavior can be explained based on “gender stereotypes about traits, beliefs, and issue competency of the candidate.” Male candidate preferences can be explained by “negative stereotypes about the traits of a female candidate”. It is assumed that males can handle political issues more efficiently. These gender preferences affect voting behavior.

Paxton, P., & Kunovich, S. (2003). “Women's Political Representation: The Importance of Ideology.” This article discovers how gender stratification leads to a low level of political participation of women at the national level. This study highlights that

there is a strong influence of gender ideology on the existence of women representatives in the national legislature. The impact of the ideology is stronger than the effect of political, social-structural variables. Structural explanations predict that the educational achievement and participation of women in the workforce will positively affect the representation level of female candidates. Proportional-representation party-list system helps to enhance women's political engagement. Structural factors represent women's supply in politics, and political factors represent demand, but ideological factors affect both the supply of and demand for women in politics simultaneously. Ideological beliefs can impact women's decision to hold political office despite their education level or career. Ideological beliefs can also influence the likelihood of voters accepting women as elected politicians.

Atkeson, L. R. (2003), in a study, "Not All Cues Are Created Equal: The Conditional Impact of Female Candidates on Political Engagement," highlights a gender gap in political engagement. This study focuses on Senate and gubernatorial elections in the USA based on American National Election Studies from 1990-1998. It reveals that contextual factors play an essential role rather than resources in determining gender differences in the political arena. It highlights that office-holding and campaigning in a competitive electoral environment can create different contextual cues for female citizens. Women are less politically aware than men. Representation of women is low both in the national legislature and the executive branch. A visible and competitive female candidate promotes a high level of involvement of female citizens in political discussion, commenting on political parties and other political issues. The competitive intergender contest promotes the political engagement of female citizens. Females in states with viable female candidates are more politically involved than females in states with male-male competitive candidates.

Karp, J. A., & Banducci, S. A. (2008), in their present paper, "When Politics is Not Just a Man's Game: Women's Representation and Political Engagement," investigate women's participation in politics based on data from a comparative analysis of electoral systems across 35 countries. This paper highlights that the political attitude and political engagement of women are influenced by the election of women in the national legislature. It also discusses that there are gender disparities in political attitudes and

political commitment. Women are less interested in politics than men. The level of women's political engagement is influenced by the existence of women as candidates or as legislators. There is a relationship between female candidates and social issues. Female candidates prefer to campaign on social issues. Females are more interested in a political campaign when female candidates compete.

Zetterberg, P. (2009), in his paper "Do Gender Quotas Foster Women's Political Engagement? Lessons from Latin America", explains that gender quotas have no impact on political activities and attitudes of women based on data collected from the Latinobarómetro 1996 and 2005 survey from approximately 10000 women in seventeen Latin American countries. The author tries to examine the impact of three political attitudes: political trust, Political knowledge, and political interest. It also examines three modes of activities, such as campaigning activities, political contacts, and protest activities. Gender quotas do not seem to be related to an increase in political involvement among women in Latin America. Due to limited information about gender quota laws, there is a lack of positive impact on women's political engagement. On the other hand, protest activity has a positive relationship with the quota system. In Latin America, gender quotas neither influence the contacts of women with representatives, political parties, or public officials, nor increase women's participation in political parties and campaigning activities.

Coffé, H., & Bolzendahl, C. (2010) in presents paper "Same Game, Different Rules? Gender Differences in Political Participation", authors try to explore gender gaps in political participation based on data from the 2004 International Social Survey Program (ISSP) module on the citizenship of 18 advanced democracies, including Austria, Flanders, France, Germany, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Great Britain, Ireland, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the USA. This study shows that demographic and attitudinal characteristics have different impacts on the political participation of males and females. Social, economic, and political resources also impact institutional political activities like voting and party membership. This paper also highlights a gender-based description of three types of political activism: private activism, collective activism, and political contacts. Private activism and collective activism depend upon economic resources and the availability

of time. The findings of the study reveal that women are less likely to be involved in political activities due to lower access to social and economic resources. Men are more likely to join a political party, participate in a demonstration, attend political meetings, and maintain political contacts than women. Women who take up greater household responsibilities with work may be less inclined to contact politicians. On the other hand, women are more likely to be involved in activities such as signing petitions, boycotting, and donating money to social and political groups.

Fox, R. L., & Lawless, J. L. (2011), in their article “Gendered perceptions and political candidacies: A central barrier to women's equality in electoral politics,” reveal gender differences in the assessment of the self-efficacy of a potential candidate to run for political office. It indicates traditional gender roles, due to which women are still hesitant to engage in the electoral arena despite professional credentials, economic autonomy, and political experience similar to men. Women underestimate their political skills, political traits, and ability to campaign. They regard themselves as not qualified to participate in the electoral environment as compared to men.

Ruedin, D. (2012) in his paper “The Representation of Women in National Parliaments: A Cross-national Comparison” examines the impact of institutional and cultural, and other factors, on the proportion of women in national Parliament based on data taken from the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU, 2006) of 131 countries including 22 countries in Western Europe, the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand as one region, 5 Nordic countries, 17 countries in Eastern Europe, 24 in Asia and the Pacific, 7 in the Middle East, 24 sub-Saharan countries, and 32 countries in Latin America. It highlights that the electoral formula and voluntary gender quotas may play a key role in representing women in the national legislature. The supply of qualified candidates who come forward as candidates can also increase the proportion of women in Parliament. It implies cultural issues, especially views on women in political leadership roles, are the most important when considering female representation. These cultural factors are influenced by regional and religious differences and the development level of a country. Women are more likely to have seats in the national legislature in nations with more favourable views of female politicians. In Nordic countries, the proportion of women in Parliament is highest. In India, party, political

reasons, and resistance in attitudes are hurdles to the increase in the representation of women in Parliament.

Broockman, D. E. (2014), in the present paper, “Do Female Politicians Empower Women to Vote or Run for Office? A Regression Discontinuity Approach,” the author tries to investigate the causal relationship between the participation of women in voting and the presence of women in office. This study highlights that the presence of more women candidates and female officeholders helps to reduce the gender disparities in the political participation of other women by allowing them to vote or run for office. The findings of this study reveal that electing more women in the United States general elections has no visible causal effect on the political engagement of other women. In India, the election of women politicians significantly reduces gender disparities and has empowering effects on the inclusion of women in office-holding.

O'Brien, D. Z. (2015) present research article "Rising to the top: Gender, Political Performance, and Party Leadership in Parliamentary Democracies" examines gendered leadership patterns across 71 political parties in 11 parliamentary democracies, including Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Japan, New Zealand, Sweden, the United Kingdom between 1965 and 2013. It highlights that males and females have different access to party leadership. Male occupies major party leadership positions. The selection of women to party leadership positions is based on the political performance of the party. Political parties exhibit gender prejudice when it comes to seat distribution. This study indicates that women are more likely to enter politics initially in minor opposition parties and those who are losing their share of seats. Females have to face many challenges to acquire and maintain top leadership positions. Female leaders are more likely to hold office when their party gains seats, but they are more likely to leave their post in an unfavourable electoral trajectory.

Beauregard, K. (2016), in her article “Women’s Representation and Gender Gaps in Political Participation: Do Time and Success Matter in a Cross-national Perspective?” tries to explore the influence of representation of women on the political behavior of males and females based on a comparative analysis of the electoral system of 20 advanced industrialized democracies. In order to comprehend gender disparities in a variety of political activities, this article demonstrates that long-term variables of

female representation are more important than short-term ones. The length of time of women's presence in the political system helps in monitoring the impact of women's representation on gender differences, rather than short-term impacts such as the presence of women in the legislature and executive in a specific year. This study indicates that policies reflecting women's preferences may require time for implementation. More time spent by women politicians in the decision-making process influences female voters and increases women's political participation. Women cabinet members focus on women-oriented policies. This study shows that the nature of the political activity is important in analyzing the impact of women's representation. Political activities like protest, campaigning, and voting require a lower level of political resources than working with others, contacting politicians, and political persuasion.

Bhalotra, S., Clots-Figueras, I., & Iyer, L. (2017), in their study "Pathbreakers? Women's electoral success and future political participation," investigated the low proportion of female candidates as a significant proximate obstacle to the participation of women in political office. There is an increased tendency for the incumbent woman to re-contest than the male. It indicates a decrease in the number of new female candidates after a women win an election reflects institutional barriers. This problem is more severe in states with persistent gender disparities and male-headed political parties. There are many reasons for gender inequality in leadership positions, such as low political ambition, family commitments, lack of female role models, parties, and voters' preferences for a male candidate. It suggests that Economic, institutional, or policy incentives may be implemented to encourage the introduction of new women into the political field.

Carreras, M. (2017) in the present study, "High-Profile Female Executive Candidates and The Political Engagement of Women: A Multilevel Analysis", the author tries to explore the impact of prominent female executive candidates in national elections on the political engagement of women by analysis of aggregate and individual-level data of Comparative Electoral Systems surveys of more than 101 national elections in different countries including Brazil, Denmark, Finland, Germany, New Zealand, Panama, Philippines, South Africa, etc. and from several waves of the

AmericasBarometer surveys between 1996 and 2013. There is a noticeable disparity in the visibility of female politicians running for national executive positions compared to other female politicians. Female candidates are expected to emphasize issues that matter to women, which can help them connect with female voters. On the other hand, women Prime Ministerial and presidential candidates tend to focus on masculine issues such as foreign affairs, defence, and the economy during their campaigns rather than on issues related to women. This study found no correlation between the presence of prominent female candidates and increased political participation among women.

Anyango, B. O., Alupo, B. A., & Opoku, M. P. (2018), in their paper entitled “Women in Politics in Kenya: An Analysis of Participation and Barriers,” explored the extent of women’s political participation in Kenya from a sociological perspective. Cultural norms play a significant role in determining the political status of women. Social norms restrict women from mainstream political activities. It indicates male dominance in political decision-making, and Women don’t get support from fellow women in politics. Due to Political violence, female politicians are losing interest in politics. Lack of funds prevents females from being able to afford expensive political campaigning, and the media converges compared to men.

Ditonto, T., & Mattes, K. (2018), in their present paper entitled “Differences in Appearance-Based Trait Inferences for Male and Female Political Candidates,” try to analyze the performance of a candidate in the election based on three traits: competence and appearance, and threat. This study focuses on experimental data from US state and local elections. Due to existing gender stereotypes, female candidates are considered less competent and threatening as compared to male candidates. Physical attractiveness can positively influence and predict the election results of female candidates. Appearance matters more than competence for female candidates, except in mixed-gender contests where female candidates are perceived to be more capable than their male opponents.

Morgan, J., & Hinojosa, M. (2018), in their research “Women in political parties: Seen but not heard,” explores the representation of women in political parties based on major political parties in 18 Latin American Countries during 2009. Representation of women is less at the highest levels of authority, both as party leaders and as candidates

for and representatives in national-level public office, as compared to men. Some Latin American parties have applied gender quotas to internal leadership posts to deal with the issue of the under-representation of women in the political field, but women face discrimination within political parties. Political parties pay little consideration to women's issues while framing policies.

Kim, J. (2019), in the present study, “Direct Democracy and Women's Political Engagement,” the author highlights the existence of direct democracy that promotes gender equality in the political arena in Sweden. This study examines how direct democracy can develop women’s confidence in their political influence. Direct democracy makes the political decision-making process transparent. Direct democratic experience can equip women with the skills and resources for political activism. The low political participation of women can lead to the formation of policies that are biased toward the preferences of women and can strengthen gender inequality in socio-economic areas.

Kjaer, U., & Krook, M. L. (2019) tried to analyze the influence of voter bias and elite bias on women’s political representation based on data from local elections in 2009 in Denmark and found evidence of elite bias against women. Females are discriminated against during the nomination process. Political parties rank women lower than their male counterparts due to the predominance of males in the selection panel. However, the attitude of voters remains positive towards women candidates.

Hessami, Z., & Da Fonseca, M. L. (2020), in their research paper “Female Political Representation and Substantive Effects on Policies: A Literature Review,” describe the significant impacts of women’s representation on policies across different countries. This paper also provides various reasons for the underrepresentation of women in the political arena, such as a lower inclination of women to run for public offices due to social norms and traditional gender roles, voter bias against female candidates, and gender biases against women by party leaders. Women’s representatives are more interested in issues related to women, children, and health than male legislators. In developing countries such as India representation of women in local governance and state legislature leads to high expenditure on public goods, especially in the areas of education and health. In developed countries, like the US, Italy, Spain, etc., the higher

representation of women has not influenced public policy as measured by expenditure patterns. However, the latest evidence shows that the representation of women has prompted changes in parliamentary debate. This study also highlights that more representation of women leads to improvement in institutional quality by reducing corruption.

Grasso, M., & Smith, K. (2021), in their study “Gender inequalities in political participation and political engagement among young people in Europe: Are young women less politically engaged than young men?” made a comparative analysis of gender disparities in electoral and non-electoral activities participation of young people of Europe based on data collected from 9 European countries in 2018. Young women are more involved in petitioning, boycotting, and social movements than in conventional activities. Young men are more actively involved in online political activities and institutional activities related to political parties and organizations, such as contacting politicians, attending meetings, and donating money to parties, than women.

Prodip, M. A. (2021) in his article “Cultural Obstacles to Women’s Political Empowerment in India and Bangladesh: A Comparative Perspective” makes a comparative analysis of the cultural barriers faced by reserved female candidates in the Gram Panchayat in India and the Union Parishad in Bangladesh based on data collected from the Nadia district of West Bengal in India and the Rajshahi district of Bangladesh between July 2018 and February 2019. This study highlights that Patriarchal norms of family and society are responsible for excluding females from the political arena in local bodies of India and Bangladesh. In India, women do not face Patriarchal behaviors in the workplace. In Bangladesh, patriarchal norms and male domination are severe problems faced by women in the workplace. Proxy representation is one of the major hurdles to women's political representation in India. Many female representatives advocate joining politics to fulfill the desires of husbands who have lost their seats due to the rotation of seats. Whereas in Bangladesh, female members do not act as proxies of their husbands in the decision-making process. Religion does not act as a hurdle to active female participation in both countries. This paper concludes with the suggestion

that women should raise their voices against male dominance to create an environment to promote women's political empowerment.

Bjarnegård, E. et al. (2022) revealed that violence is used by candidates to get an advantage over their opponents. Women politicians in Sri Lanka experienced election-related physical and psychological violence, such as false rumors, degrading talks, etc, during the 2018 local elections. Electoral violence is a deliberate attempt to lessen the political influence of female politicians. Some elected women faced psychological and physical violence from their husbands. Their husbands spread fake rumors about their characters to restrict women from political activities.

Carrión-Yaguana, V et al. (2022) examined prevalent gender stereotypes during legislative elections in 2013 and 2017 in Ecuador. Despite a 50% gender quota and strong enforcement mandate, the low representation of females in the National Assembly seems more likely to discourage women's inclusion in political activities. Among Ecuadorian voters, same-sex voting tendencies can be seen; the influence of females voting for women is greater than that of men voting for women. Non-compliance of Political parties with gender quotas is another major hurdle. Political parties are reluctant to nominate women for top positions on the Ballot. Women's political engagement is considered a threat to the hegemony of males, and violence is used as a weapon to prevent women from entering the political field.

Farmanullah, S. A., Khan, Y., Ali, R. N., & Khan, R. M. (2022) in, "Factors Influencing Women's Electoral Participation in District Mardan (Pakistan): An Empirical Analysis of The Public Perception with Regard To 2018 General Elections" analyzed all those factors that affect women's electoral participation in District Mardan with reference to 2018 General Elections. It revealed that Pakhtun culture, lack of political interest and awareness, lack of family cooperation, the burden of household responsibilities, and economic dependency among women are barriers to women's electoral participation as voters.

Garcia-Hernandez, A., Grossman, G., & Michelitch, K. (2022), in their study "Gender Gap in Politician Performance and its Determinants," explored the gender difference in the performance of political leaders based on original data collected from 50 districts of Uganda. Female legislators encounter many difficulties while performing

their duties. Social and political factors such as politically biased seat allocation, size of the constituency, Low education, economic status, and lack of political experience are the most prevalent barriers to the political representation of women. Informal exclusion from political networks reduces the reserved seat women's influence and ability to hold power within legislatures, which is extremely crucial for one's performance in job activities that require high-level interaction with peer legislators.

Houle, N. (2022) highlighted that males were more involved in public activities that require direct contact with others. There were no substantial gender disparities when it came to offline petitions, but women preferred to sign online petitions at higher rates than men because they could be done fully confidentially. It indicated that women tend to prefer private activities. It revealed that women tend to be less interested in politics compared to their male counterparts.

Kroeber, C., & Hüffelmann, J. (2022) analyzed gender disparities in the allocation of prestigious portfolios in the study of ministerial careers in 27 European countries between 1990 to 2018. Male ministers frequently acquire the most powerful portfolios, such as finance, economy, and international affairs, even without any prior executive experience, whereas their highly qualified female politicians have fewer chances to attain higher positions. The majority of women took charge of family, social affairs, health, or justice portfolios as these are considered more compatible with female traits.

Laurison et al. (2022) in their study examined the impact of race, class, and gender on patterns of voters in presidential elections from 2008-2016. It found a strong correlation between income and White voter turnout, but it showed a noticeably different pattern among Black voters. The class disparity in voting is not statistically significant among Black voters. Voting is more prevalent among Black people than White people. Low-income Black citizens are more inclined to vote compared to their White counterparts. A persistent gender disparity between Black men and women is observed. It is discovered that Black women with the lowest incomes vote at considerably greater rates than any other race-gender combination in this income range.

Le Barbanchon, T., & Sauvagnat, J. (2022), in their article "Electoral competition, voter bias, and women in politics," highlighted that voters' attitudes toward women and the local gender wage gap are inversely related to the proportion of female candidates

in French parliamentary elections. Males are considered more efficient political leaders than women. Female candidates receive fewer votes in municipalities with larger gender wage differences. Political parties are more likely to select male candidates than female candidates. Voters' preference for males is a significant contributor to the under-representation of women in the political sphere.

Liu, S. J. S. (2022) conducted a study "Gender gaps in political participation in Asia" based on data collected from 13 countries in East and Southeast Asia and reported a considerable gender difference in various political activities, but the voting turnout of females is almost equal to or more than men. There are wide gender disparities in political campaigning and protest due requirement of the high cost, time, high risk, and more efforts to mobilize the public for these activities.

Mercedes, N. C. et al. (2022) in their research "Attitudinal Analysis of Women's Political Participation in Ecuador: Social and Legal Perspectives" reveal that there are various regulations of gender equality in Ecuador but despite that, there is a marginal representation of women as mayors, urban and rural councilors as well as in parliament during the 2019-2021 elections due to existing gender stereotypes.

Cheema, A., Khan, S., Liaqat, A., & Mohmand, S. K. (2023) revealed that women's engagement in political activities is frequently limited where men have control over resources and decision-making processes. This encompasses restrictions imposed on women's mobility, reliance on males for resources such as transportation and time, and the necessity of male companionship for ensuring safety. It suggests that the active involvement of males in various initiatives can lead to the enhancement of women's political inclusion.

Coffé, H., Helimäki, T., & von Schoultz, Å. (2023) indicate that women and men have distinct patterns in campaign strategies in Finland. Female candidates have a greater inclination towards participating in positive campaigning as compared to their male counterparts. Positive campaigning focuses on the candidate or party's reputation. Female candidates emphasize vision, policy, and positive characteristics to convince voters that they are the best candidates. In contrast, male candidates demonstrate a higher tendency to actively participate in negative campaign strategies voluntarily. It is well recognized that men often choose more aggressive and critical approaches in their

campaign strategies due to the process of socialization and the impact of gender stereotypes.

Endo, Y., & Ono, Y. (2023), in the study “Opposition to Women Political Leaders: Gender Bias and Stereotypes of Politicians Among Japanese Voters,” highlight the attitudes of Japanese voters towards women political leadership. There are gender biases against women’s leadership. It found that Japanese voters preferred women politicians for childcare, declining birthrate, education, social welfare, and health care. On the other hand, male politicians are considered better equipped to handle issues of immigration, fiscal deficit, crime, economy, diplomacy, and national security.

Kim, J., & Fallon, K. M. (2023) explore the impact of gender quotas on the perception of female politicians using multilevel modeling on 87 nations. It suggests that the acceptance of women in politics is positively impacted by party quotas. The implementation of quotas by political parties to enhance the representation of women in politics contributes to a better level of support and recognition for women in leadership positions. It indicates that the apparent effects of national quotas on public opinion may be considerably restricted. Therefore, whereas national quotas might improve perceptions of women in politics to some extent, these impacts might not be as large as those of party quotas.

Lippmann, Q. (2023), in the current research “Persistence of incumbents and female access to political positions,” examines the variability in the overall proportion of female voters and its correlation with the margin of votes received by the incumbent candidate during the 2014 municipal elections in France. It reveals that the presence of incumbents contributes to the continuation of same-sex leaders within municipalities over a period of time. Incumbency, however, considerably lowers the number of municipalities where women have historically come to power by 19–24% between municipalities, while not affecting the flow of women into politics. It indicates that women face negative consequences during the tenure of a female incumbent, leading to a significant prevalence of male mayors as their replacements due to gender biases by voters and political institutions. It also provides valuable insights into the fact that women are less willing to participate in political activities due to Social, family, and

cultural norms that are responsible for leading to the replacement of female incumbents by men.

Springer, F., Klein, M., & Lüdecke, Y. (2024), in their study “The Impact of Party Quotas on Women’s Political Ambition,” discovers that the quota size partially increases the likelihood of women who are going to join a party due to their political ambitions, including their desire to reach a public or party office. There is a statistically significant relationship between the quota target and the proportion of female party members. These findings strongly suggest that while considering whether or not to join a party, women consider the level of intra-party competition for political positions.

B. Political Participation of Women: Indian Perspective

Sethi, R. (1988), in her article “Determinants of Women’s Active Political Participation,” tries to explore various determinants of political participation of women, such as educational access, political rights provided by the Constitution, and their participation in all aspects of social life. She highlights the participation of women in the freedom struggle. She adds that the illiteracy and economic backwardness of rural women are the main reasons for the low level of women’s political participation. The extent of political engagement of women depends upon the political attitude of women and the attitude of the family. The role of political parties is another important determinant that influences the political participation of women. Political parties tend to ignore women’s claims when nominating candidates for elections. Political participation of women should be greater, but the reality is different in the Indian context. Special efforts need to be made to provide women with equal political status as men. Parties should make deliberate efforts to place women in party organizations as well as in external leadership positions. She also highlights that a change in social attitude must be brought about by an effective campaign and, if necessary, by structural changes.

Chattopadhyay, R., & Duflo, E. (2004), in their article “Women as Policy Makers: Evidence from a Randomized Policy Experiment in India,” authors use data from 265 village councils in West Bengal and Rajasthan to study the impact of women’s leadership on decision-making. It highlights that the reservation of one-third of the seats

for women has a positive impact on investment in infrastructure relevant to women's needs. It shows that the gender of politicians influences policy decisions. In West Bengal, women complain more frequently than men about drinking water and roads. The most common issues raised by men in West Bengal were roads, irrigation, drinking water, and education. The female Pradhan elected under the reservation policy invests more in drinking water and roads. In Rajasthan, women complain more often than men about drinking water but less often about roads. A female Pradhan in a Gram Panchayat is reserved for women to invest more in water as compared to investment in roads. Most of the elected female Pradhan act as a proxy for their husband. This paper highlights that the reservation of seats influenced the quality of public goods provided.

Hust, E. (2004). In her book “Women’s Political Representation and Empowerment in India: A Million Indira’s Now?” attempted to examine the impact of gender quotas after the introduction of the 73rd Amendment to the Indian Constitution in 1992 on the presence of women in Panchayati Raj Institutions with special reference to Balipatna and Gania blocks of Orissa. Due to the patriarchal setup of Indian society, politics is considered a male affair, and women are supposed to be confined to the domestic sphere in most Indian villages. As a result of gender quotas, the presence of SC women is higher in local bodies as compared to women from a higher category. High-status families in both blocks are reluctant to introduce women to the political arena. Most of the elected women representatives with a Political background act as proxies of male members of the family. Due to household responsibilities and cultural reasons, most of the panchayat functions are performed by male members of the family. In Panchayats, males have more autonomy in the decision-making process as compared to their female counterparts. Women, when entering the male-dominated political arena they face non-cooperation on the part of Political parties and bureaucrats. Low level of education, lack of public exposure, and personal autonomy due to structural discrimination, and this culturally intentional separation of the male and female worlds prevents women from becoming politically active.

Devi, D., & G. Lakshmi. (2005), in their article “Political empowerment of women in Indian Legislature: A Study,” highlighted that equal participation of women and men in the political process is an essential requirement of democracy and society. Women’s

involvement in the legislative decision-making process is much less than men's, despite the Constitutional provisions on gender equality. In this study, the authors tried to make a detailed analysis of the performance of women in the Lok-Sabha since 1952 and focused on under-representation in ministerial positions. Equal representation of women in the decision-making process is a fundamental prerequisite for the empowerment of women.

Hazarika, S. (2006), in her article “Political Participation of Women and The Dialectics of 73rd Amendment,” reveals that the status of women in the North East is better than the rest of India. The author tries to comprehend the dialectics of the 73rd Amendment and women’s political participation through a case study of three districts of Assam: Sonitpur, Cachar, and Nalbari. The study highlights that there is a lack of awareness among women of Assam about the 73rd Amendment. This study also explains that elected female representatives act as proxies for men’s opinions. Participation of women in political decision-making is still less compared to men due to a lack of confidence, a lack of family support, the burden of family responsibilities, and the conservative mindset of society. These obstacles can be removed by improving education, economic status, and the level of awareness of women regarding their problems and rights. This study strongly advocates raising awareness, training, and capacity building of both males and females as the primary step to implement these democratic measures.

Vissandjee et al. (2006) present a study, “Women’s Political Participation in Rural India: Discerning Discrepancies Through a Gender Lens,” which makes a gender-based analysis of the political participation of rural women of the Junagadh district of Gujarat. This study reveals the differences between female and male perceptions regarding persistently low levels of female political participation. According to males, women do not even attend panchayat meetings due to household responsibilities and a lack of awareness. Electoral campaigns have less impact on women than on men. Male members of the family also influence females’ decision to cast a vote. Females are not allowed to participate in political discussions. Older women have more opportunities to participate in political activities than younger women. Lack of access to formal education and limited social interactions, lack of political awareness, and the burden of

household responsibility are barriers to women's political engagement. Limited physical mobility may also hinder women's political participation. They have to seek permission from family members before stepping out of the house. Gender-biased social norms assign a lower status to women than men. Lack of support from family also influences women's political involvement.

Thainikodi, A. & Sugirtha, M. (2007), in their article "Status of women in politics," examine the political status of women at the international, national, and regional levels. This study explores how women find themselves underrepresented in parliament all around the world. Women who want to participate in politics face many obstacles due to existing social and economic regimes and political structures. This study also highlights various social, economic, psychological, and political obstacles. This paper highlights the political participation of women in South Asian countries. In the Indian context political career of a woman depends upon her family background. Women are reluctant to get involved in political activities, which leads to the under-representation of women in Parliament and the state legislature. Women need to realize the importance of political participation.

John, M. E. (2007), in her paper "Women in Power? Gender, Caste and the Politics of Local Urban Governance," focused on outcomes of reservation based on caste and gender in the municipal corporations of Delhi and Bangalore during 2002-2003. It highlighted the problem of Proxy women and the rationale for the reservation of critical masses of women in the political arena. It explored proxy women standing in for their husbands or male family members due to the rotation of reserved seats. It also discussed that some female candidates were forced by their husbands to contest elections against their will. In Bangalore, both male and female councilors favour caste-based reservations for women to enter the political arena. In Delhi, councilors assumed that qualities of women, such as honesty and the ability to get more work done, should be a basis for the reservation of seats for women rather than caste-based reservation. The author highlighted the requirement of re-evaluation of the existing situation to ensure significant participation of women in urban local governance and implementation of reservation of seats for women in State Assemblies and the Union Parliament.

Khanna, M. (2009), in the article “Political Participation of Women in India,” highlights the factors responsible for the gap between the 'de jure' and 'de facto' status of the political participation of Indian women. The political engagement of women is very low despite India's Constitution providing equal political rights to women. Constitutional provisions provide women with equal opportunities to enter the male-dominated political arena. This paper describes social-economic, political, and psychological variables that affect female political participation. This article concludes that the political participation of women is necessary because women can be effective agents of change, and they can contribute to the development of the nation. This cannot be achieved only by enhancing the number of female leaders, but by ensuring that female leaders recognize problems and solve these problems efficiently. Women should realize that they are legally equal to men.

Makwana, R. (2009), in his paper entitled “The Role and Crisis of Women Leaders at the Village Panchayat: Concerns of Gujarat Women,” highlights various socio-economic and political issues faced by elected women of Panchayati Raj institutions of Junagadh District of Gujarat. Women sarpanches faced obstacles like conservative approach, family responsibility, lack of co-operation from the family, Patriarchal culture, lack of experience of Panchayat work, lack of knowledge about Panchayat acts, rules, and regulations, and non-co-operation from the district and state-level politicians. He tries to analyze the level of progress in socio-economic status, freedom, and women's empowerment that have occurred after representing the panchayats. The study reveals that elected members are treated with respect by others. They managed to bring a sense of equality to the family. This study indicates the involvement of elected female representatives in the implementation of development programs.

Deshpande, R. (2009), in her article entitled “How Did Women Vote in Lok Sabha Elections 2009?” provides a unique window to comprehend the nature of Indian females' participation during Lok Sabha polls, which helps to analyze their voting patterns. This study highlights that Indian women do not always cast their votes based on gender. They act as gender-independent beings from political dynamics at the social and regional levels. This study highlights that the gender advantage enjoyed by Congress across India does not specify steady and crucial support for the party or its

policies. The election campaign took place without focusing on women's problems, and no one tried to mobilize women's voters politically. None of the political parties encouraged more participation of women in elections.

Kaul, S., & Sahni, S. (2009) in their study "Study on the Participation of Women in Panchayati Raj Institution," the authors try to examine the level of participation of women elected representatives in Panchayat and various problems faced by them based on the interviews of 33 women Panchayat representatives from two districts of Jammu and Kathua in 2007. The findings of the study revealed that there is an increase in women's political participation with the implementation of the 73rd amendment, but male members of the Panchayat do not treat female elected representatives with respect. They have to face non-cooperation based on gender discrimination. Many female representatives complained that their suggestions were not taken into consideration and were not consulted before making decisions due to male dominance in the decision-making process. This study also revealed that lack of support from family and the burden of household responsibilities are the main hurdles in the work of female representatives of the Panchayat. Most of the female panchayat representatives make their decisions under the pressure of their husbands. This research also reveals that female representatives did not receive any support from government officials and the administration.

Pandit, L. (2010), in her article "Political Leadership of Women: Constraints and Challenges," the author reveals the importance of women's political participation in strengthening democracy. Women must participate in the decision-making process so that their demands can be included in the national agenda. The level of women's political participation has been quite low, regardless of the increase in literacy and the level of political consciousness of women. Despite the number of Constitutional provisions representation of women is not adequate. This paper highlights the various challenges faced by women due to socio-economic and psychological variables. Reluctance and the lack of awareness among the political parties to place women in higher decision-making positions are the major reasons for the low representation of women in the legislative bodies. To empower women in a real sense, it is essential to

eliminate the barriers to women's empowerment. This would be an important step towards a more inclusive policy.

Rai, P. (2011), in “Electoral participation of women in India: Key determinants and barriers,” the author attempts to assess the political participation of women from a historical perspective. This paper reveals that women’s participation in the elections and pre-election campaigns is increasing noticeably, but women’s representation in the national and state legislature is less than compared of men. The study highlights that the determinants affecting women’s participation as voters are different from women as campaigners. The best predictor for the participation of women in voting is the "vote matters" factor, while the strongest predictor for election campaign activities is women's "interest in politics”. This study also analyzes various obstacles to women’s participation, and the paper concludes that the reservation of women in Legislative bodies and their adaptation to leadership positions in political parties and government will be helpful in bridging a serious gender gap.

Shrivastava, R. (2011), in her paper “Minority Representation of a Political Majority Group: Women in Democratic Process,” provides an overview of women’s political empowerment in the Indian context. This paper highlights that the low numerical strength of women in legislative bodies is a crucial issue. In elected bodies, women are a very small minority group; therefore, they become the “silent minority” over time. It reveals the inferior political status and subordinate position of women in Indian society. It also shows the reluctance of women to identify their rights to participate in activities related to national development. The reservation of seats for women in local bodies provided opportunities for the political engagement of women. Women candidates face many difficulties regardless of which party they belong to. This paper shows that the women elected to the Indian Parliament comprise hardly 10 percent of the total seats. This paper suggests that the government should adopt some measures to improve the position of women in Parliament and the State Legislature. Participation of women in formal and informal political processes will lead to a better quality of life for them.

Clots-Figueras, I. (2011), in the present paper, “Women in politics: Evidence from the Indian States,” aims to highlight the causal effects of women’s political representation in state legislatures, both in general seats and SC/ST seats, on public

goods, public policy, and expenditure. The author uses panel data collected on female candidates from the 16 major states of India, including Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal from 1967-2000. This study reveals that women belonging to SC/ST and the general category were underrepresented in all states during 1967-2000. Women legislators have different effects on expenditures, public goods, and policy decisions than their male counterparts. This paper studies the impact of gender on general and SC/ST female candidates because they have different policy preferences. This study reveals that women lawmakers in seats reserved for lower caste and disadvantaged tribes invest more in health, primary education, and women-friendly laws. On the other hand, upper-caste female lawmakers have no impact on women-friendly policies. They invest in higher education and reduce social expenditure.

Chary, M. (2012), in “Women and political participation in India: A historical perspective,” the author presents the history of women's political participation in India and various constitutional provisions made by the government of India to secure equal rights for women. This study reveals that women have no place in the political arena as decision-making partners. Participation of women in grassroots-level democracy is very high, but their participation in Parliament and State Legislative bodies is not satisfactory. It also shows that other formal institutions have not recognized the contribution of women. The author outlines social-economic and political disparities faced by women in the political arena that affect women's political participation. It also discusses various initiatives taken by state governments.

Rai, S. M. (2012) the present paper “The Politics of Access: Narratives of Women MPs in the Indian Parliament,” highlights the impact of family networks, participation in social and political movements, membership of political parties, and quotas on women's representation in parliament based upon interviews of female Members of Parliament. The family remains an important source of support to women accessing Parliamentary politics. The family supports women in many ways by providing political capital and emotional support or by helping with household and childcare responsibilities. The Political parties also prefer to recruit females from political family backgrounds. For

women who do not belong to a political family background, their participation in social and political movements helps them acquire the necessary skills to enter the political arena. However, women's membership in a political party is affected by their father's or husband's reputation and political position. Gender quota helps women to gain access to the political arena at the local level. Still, in the national legislature, there is no provision for a gender quota for women.

Kapoor, M. & Ravi, S. (2014), “Women Voters in Indian Democracy: A Silent Revolution.” In this article, the author analyses the political participation of women by comparing the turnout of female and male voters in the state legislature elections from 1962 to 2012. This study highlights a consistent and rapid reduction in gender bias in voting during the period. The present study finds that this decline in the gender bias of voters is only due to the dramatic increase in the participation of women in the elections since 1990, whereas the participation of men remains unchanged. This phenomenon can be observed in all states of India.

Chadha, A. (2014), in her article “Political Participation of Women: A Case Study in India,” tries to discuss the historical perspective of political participation by women at the global as well as the national level in India. She highlights various constitutional provisions for women's empowerment. Despite these provisions, women are seriously marginalized in other areas of decision-making. This seems to be paradoxical in the Indian context, where women have entered the professions and civil services much more than in other South Asian countries. The participation of women as voters is almost the same as that of men. Women are still unable to obtain a share equivalent to men in the organizational decision-making process. The bill that proposes gender quotas is a step towards the inclusion of women in politics by representing them in the highest elected bodies nationally and regionally.

Prasad, D. R. (2014), in his study “Women empowerment in urban governance in India,” reveals that the reservation of seats for women would enhance their active participation in the electoral process and be helpful in the democratization of the political process. Urban local bodies help to train women to hold positions of power at the state and national levels. Political empowerment of women is a critical component for enhancing women's socioeconomic standing and attaining overall development.

Deininger, K., Jin, S., Nagarajan, H. K., & Xia, F. (2015) the present paper, “Does Female Reservation Affect Long-term Political Outcomes? Evidence from Rural India,” highlighted the impact of gender disparities on women’s political reservations based on a survey of 233 Indian villages conducted in 2007. Out of a total of 233 villages, 55 villages were taken from the north, 37 villages from the east, 75 villages from the west, and 66 villages from southern India. This study found that reservation leads to a downfall in the quality of political leaders, but gender quotas contribute to increasing the scope and nature of political engagement of women and their willingness to contribute to public goods. This study highlighted that the short-term effects of reservation are different from the long-term impacts.

Lal, D., Ojha, A., & Sabharwal, N. (2015), in their study “Issues of Under-representation: Mapping Women in Indian Politics,” explore that under-representation of women in the Indian parliament is the main challenge for Indian democracy. This article provides data on women elected to the Indian parliament from 1957 to 2014. The data indicate an increasing level of performance of women as active voters. The number of female candidates has increased, but the representation of women in parliament is still very low. Social, cultural, and domestic constraints are responsible for the low participation of women. This analysis emphasizes that women have proved their ability to win seats, but political parties are still resistant to giving tickets to female candidates. Parliament remains male-dominated in opinion and person. Political parties that are ideologically committed to the objective of political equality should actively offer opportunities for women to increase the number of women in Parliament. Female representatives can reduce the gap between the representation of opinion and the person. Women’s representation in the Lok-Sabha will lead to improvement in policymaking and better governance.

Borooah, V. & Tagat, A. (2015) in their study “Political Participation in Rural India: A Village Level Study,” attempted to analyze the involvement of rural women in Indian politics based on village-level data collected from 8652 households consisting of 25,995 respondents from the Rural Economic and Demographic Survey 2006 covering 18 Indian states. This study revealed that the majority of married women from lower castes who were economically dependent cast their votes under the influence of their

husbands in local-level elections than women of the upper caste. The gender gap was observed in the involvement of males and females in the decision-making process at the panchayat.

Banerjee, R. (2017) analyzes the issue of time management of elected women councilors in urban governance based on data collected from 38 women councilors in Darjeeling, Balurghat, Raniganj, and Chinsurah cities of West Bengal. Women representatives have the double burden of household responsibilities and the responsibilities of a local representative. They attempt to fulfill the demands of voters, particularly women in their area. Most of the female councilors try to adopt policies related to the welfare of women. They are capable of developing new ideas and bringing women's issues to the forefront of public discussion. Participation of women in urban governance will create additional spaces for women in governance for the efficient and optimum use of resources.

Priebe, J. (2017), in the present paper “Political Reservation and Female Empowerment: Evidence from Maharashtra, India,” focuses on the impact of reservation policy on female political empowerment. The study reveals that the level of political empowerment of females residing in areas ruled by a female sarpanch is higher. It indicates that there is a positive influence of a female sarpanch on the political engagement of women belonging to lower socio-economic strata only. Gender quotas are effective tools for reducing gender inequalities and providing opportunities for the political empowerment of underprivileged women. The level of political participation and empowerment of women is a significant instrument to influence the delivery of public services.

Kalaramadam, S. (2018) studied that the reservation policy helps in enhancing women's political representation. Elected women representatives face difficulty in attending late-night meetings due to household responsibilities. Women representatives don't receive any support and guidance from their male counterparts. There is male dominance in high administrative and political positions due to patriarchy. Caste-based discrimination and gender harassment, including verbal violence, and lack of experience are significant contributors to low political participation. It reveals

reservation of seats for SC and ST prevents the efficient individual from occupying the seat.

Iyer, L., & Mani, A. (2019), in this study, “The Road Not Taken: Gender Gaps along Paths to Political Power,” data has been collected from Uttar Pradesh on the extent to which males and females engage in electoral and non-electoral activities. This study reveals that the gender differences in non-electoral activities, including petitioning, campaigning, contacting officials, attending meetings, etc., are higher than those compared to electoral activities. There are no gender disparities in voting, but females are lagging behind in candidacy and political campaigning. This study also highlights that there are gender disparities in knowledge about political institutions, processes, and self-assessed leadership skills. It also reveals that the presence of a female pradhan does not influence the non-electoral participation of women. This paper suggests that a wide range of policy tools beyond quotas needs to be considered to promote the political engagement of women to achieve the objective of women’s welfare.

Sharma, E. (2020) “Women and Politics: A Case Study of Political Empowerment of Indian Women” in the present study the author focuses on urban middle-class working women from the top 10 metropolitan cities of India to recognize five major determinants such as “access to information and political awareness, Political environment, legal environment, support of family, personal ambition and internal motivation” that influence political empowerment of women. This study reveals that family responsibilities, under-representation in legislative bodies, and exclusion from political parties are the main reasons for low political empowerment among women. This study also highlights that the generation gap influences women’s political empowerment because women of younger age have more knowledge and political consciousness than women of older age, but marital status does not influence the extent of women’s political empowerment in India.

Spary, C. (2020), in her research article "Women Candidates, Women Voters, and the Gender Politics of India's 2019 Parliamentary Election," focuses on women's role as candidates and as voters in the 17th Lok Sabha election 2019. This article examines the gateway role of political parties in determining women's political participation and the gendered challenges faced by women during the election campaign. These factors are

responsible for the underrepresentation of women. In 2019, the BJP nominated women candidates in 13% of party seats contested, and the Congress Party fielded 12% of women candidates. Two regional parties, the BJD in Odisha and the Trinamool Congress in West Bengal, announced party gender quotas for the parliamentary election in the absence of progress on reserved seats and gender quota legislation. There is a low number of women in the political parties in South Indian states, the North East, and many smaller states and UTs. Incidents of gender-based violence against female candidates have been characterized as a "toxic election" and are expected to further prevent women's entry into politics. The Gender voting turnout gap closed in 2019, with about 67% turnout among female voters, which influences party responsiveness to women voters. However, women are underrepresented in state and national legislatures. Women's representation in the national legislature is still 14.4% of the total seats.

Hoque, A. (2020), the present study, "Political Empowerment of Women through Panchayati Raj Institutions in India," highlighted that despite all constitutional provisions, there is no change in the social and political status of women. Reservation of seats for women due to the implementation of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act 1992 enhanced their participation in Panchayati Raj Institutions. In states like Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, and Tripura, women have more than 33 percent representation in panchayats. It also explored the negative impact of reservations that are responsible for the low political participation of women. The majority of elected female representatives did not attend the meeting regularly. They do not participate in the decision-making process of panchayats due to male dominance. They act as "Rubber Stamps" for male members of their family because the majority of panchayat functions and decisions are performed by their husbands and other male members on their behalf. There are various hurdles, such as a lack of education, a repressive patriarchal culture, a lack of awareness about the Panchayat Act, and the functioning of panchayat and caste structures that adversely affect women's political empowerment.

Varghese, T. (2020), in her paper "Women's Political Participation and Leadership in India: Examining the Challenges," discovered the challenges of the political participation of women based on data collected from 25 female panchayat heads of the

Idukki district of Kerala. Political representation leads to more freedom to make decisions in homes and communities. Cultural norms and patriarchy continue to hinder women's political engagement. The burden of domestic responsibilities restricts more women from pursuing a career in politics. Gender-based violence and verbal harassment prevent women from political inclusion. Gender division in political parties for higher political positions prevents women from maintaining their compliance in politics. Low economic status, lack of party affiliation, unity between representatives, and lack of family support are some challenges faced by women representatives.

Ahmed, M., & Moorthy, R. (2021), in their study “Gender inequality in Assam: factors affecting women’s political participation in electoral politics,” examined the extent of women’s involvement in various political activities and the major factors affecting women’s political participation in Assam. It reveals a huge gap in the number of elected male and female representatives in Parliamentary as well as state legislative elections since 1951. Women don’t receive financial assistance from political parties to contest elections. Generally, Women are perceived as unsuitable for political leadership. Lack of economic resources, low educational level, and Social, cultural, and psychological factors are barriers to women's political participation.

Rani, S. (2021), in her study, tries to explore women’s role as voters and as representatives. It highlights that the majority of women cast their votes according to the decisions of male members of the family. In the case of female contestants, most campaigning-related expenditures were controlled by male family members. The use of money and muscle power is very common in elections due to these reasons most of the women from the SC community are forced to cast for a particular candidate. Women who occupy seats in local bodies have to face social-cultural and institutional obstacles as voters and as elected representatives. Marriage and household responsibilities restrict the mobility of female representatives while using their political rights. Most of the panchayat work is performed by the husbands of SC female sarpanches. Many female sarpanches face non-cooperation from district officials. This study also highlights the perception of males about women's political inclusion.

Chandrakala, A., & Limbadri, R. (2022), in their study “A study of women’s political participation in a gram panchayat: With special reference to Chowdoor gram panchayat,

Mahabubnagar District, Telangana State,” indicated adequate women's political engagement in Panchayat elections. Women remain uninterested in assembly and parliamentary elections. Women are disadvantaged by a male-dominated society, culture, and education.

Choudhury, T., & Devi, J. R. (2022), in their article “Empowerment of Women Through Urban Local Governance with Special Reference to Guwahati Municipal Corporation, Assam,” analyzed the extent of women’s participation in urban local governance and the challenges faced by women representatives in Guwahati Municipal Corporation. The majority of women representatives were not aware of the source of funds and the schemes of urban development. Many of them were elected first time on seats vacated by male members of their families due to the reservation of seats for women as per the 74th Amendment. The majority of them participate regularly and raise problems of people in their ward in meetings. Local people are more likely to contact male family members of the female representative to resolve their problems. Lack of experience, lack of cooperation from the public, party members, members of the municipal corporation, burden of domestic responsibilities, and the dominating attitude of fellow male members are some of the major obstacles faced by women representatives.

Kaur, K. P., & Philips, A. Q. (2022), in their study “A Moveable Benefit? Spillover Effects of Quotas on Women’s Numerical Representation,” analyzed the data on state legislative assembly elections in India from 1977 to 2018 and found that social cultural norms and gender biases at party level while nominating candidates are obstacles for women running for elections. It highlights that gender quotas at the local level have potential impacts on the representation of women in higher-level governance. Women’s inclusion in local-level governance gives them exposure to political life as well as the chance to form political networks and develop an electoral base. It provides qualified and experienced female candidates to contest for state-level elections. Reservation quotas in local governance can also reduce party biases towards women. Quotas can change voters' perceptions in favour of women.

Maitra, P., & Rosenblum, D. (2022) analyze the effects of female political reservation and reveal that the adoption of the gender quota had appreciable positive effects on the

political engagement of women both at the national and state levels, while having quite distinct patterns of effects. Reservation at the local level of governance helps women to gain political experience. Upstream effects of female reservations first move to state elections and then to national elections.

Patel, T., Romani, L., Oberoi, P., & Ramasamy, C. (2023) in their research, “Gender role encapsulation as resistance to patriarchy: women politicians’ work and gender equality in India,” This study reveals that women occupying leadership positions encounter plenty of obstacles along their political careers in Tamil Nadu. A significant obstacle arises from the societal pressure to conform to traditional gender norms and assume prescribed familial duties and obligations. Several female council presidents have reported that they were motivated to run for council elections due to the influence of male family members, in order to fulfill their own political ambitions. This phenomenon restricts female autonomy and may lead to tension between family life and political activism.

Prillaman, S. A. (2023). Examines the impact of SHGs on women’s Political participation in rural India. There are gender gaps in non-electoral political activities due to a lack of autonomy within the home, fear of social sanctions, limited financial resources, and restricted access to knowledge and civic competencies. The limited representation of women in political spheres can be linked to the gendered nature of political networks and the varying levels of Political engagement between men and women in patriarchal societies. According to this study, the involvement in women's SHGs will improve women's political participation through expanding their social networks, encouraging group-based collective action, and enhancing civic skills.

Prillaman, S. A. (2023), in the book chapter “ Patriarchy, Inequality, and the Political Lives of Rural Indian Women,” discovers that women are confined to the domestic sphere due to the pervasive and deeply ingrained patriarchal social order in rural India. As a result of patriarchal norms, violence against women has become socially acceptable. It highlights the notable difference in the level of political participation of males and females.

Goyal, T. (2024), in the study “Local political representation as a pathway to power: A natural experiment in India,” demonstrates that women's greater participation in local

politics affects party elite responsiveness and grassroots activist networks in both top-down and bottom-up ways based on an experiment in Delhi. Local female political leaders are more likely to recruit other women as grassroots activists, building a devoted network that supports them. They can indicate their networks to party leaders with their increasing visibility. Women can influence party elite nominations, promotions, and patronage by showing their grassroots support and organizing skills.

Kumar, S., & Ghosh, A. K. (2024), in their article “Elected Women Representatives in Local Rural Governments in India: Assessing the Impact and Challenges,” highlight that there is variation in the political careers of males and females due to the socioeconomic and demographic profile of EWRs. The low level of education drastically influences women’s performance in the office. The female panchayat members spend more time on domestic work than the male representatives. First-time elected female representatives rely on the opinion of male family members due to a lack of training or experience, in contrast to their male counterparts. Female candidates are less likely to run for an unreserved seat in the subsequent election, and their seats will no longer be considered reserved. Women acquire fewer tickets in male-dominated political circles because they are seen as less likely to win elections. It recommends that the state governments build an institutionalized framework to supervise the work of women legislators to prevent male intervention. Safety and awareness of female candidates and legislators should be a prime responsibility of the government.

Kamala, K (2024), in the research paper entitled “Shaping the Future: Women's Empowerment Through Political Participation in India,” highlights the traditional and cultural norms that often hamper women's mobility and political agency. Financial limitations, lack of education, limited employment prospects, male dominance in the political decision-making process, and threats of violence can prevent women from participating in politics. Women from marginalized communities have limited access to the political field. Gender stereotypes reinforce discrimination against women leaders.

Yoganandham, G et al. (2024), in their paper “Political Preferences, Voting Patterns, Affiliations, and Views of Women Workers in Tamil Nadu's Construction Sector-An Assessment,” sheds light on Political Preferences, voting patterns, and political

affiliations of women workers in the Vellore District of Tamil Nadu. It highlights that women encounter gender-based discrimination in political opportunities. Lack of awareness, limited access to resources, and societal norms discourage women from engaging in politics and seeking leadership positions. This study suggests that Education, empowerment, and gender equality are crucial to women's political participation. Tamil Nadu has become more equitable and democratic by eliminating barriers to participation and adopting inclusive policies.

C. Political Participation of Women from Punjab's Perspective

Kaur, H. (2008), in her article "Role Performance of Women Leaders at Grassroots Level—A Case Study of Kharar Block of Ropar District in Punjab," explored the level of political participation of women of Kharar Block Samiti and Gram panchayat-based on female representatives in 8 Block Samiti and 16 Gram panchayats. This study revealed that different variables like caste, education level, and economic status impact the political participation of women. Women above 40 were more interested in politics. Landless scheduled caste women had representation in the local bodies of Kharar. It also explored women's sarpanches and raised issues related to the welfare of women. It highlighted a low educational level of female leaders at the grassroots level, which acts as a major barrier to managing the affairs of the panchayat. Most of the female representatives do not participate in meetings of the panchayat and Block Samiti. The level of Women's participation in the decision-making process is low compared to men due to socio-cultural norms of society, domestic responsibilities, and a lack of interest in politics.

Singh, D. P. (2008), in his article "Impact of 73rd Amendment Act on Women Leadership in Punjab," tried to explore the socio-economic profile of contestants and the reasons for the participation of women in the election. For this purpose, data were collected from 8 female representatives from 3 villages, namely Kalyan, Rakra, and Chaura of Patiala Tehsil of Punjab. It was observed that all the female elected representatives were married. The marital status of women acts as an important determinant of women's participation in rural politics. It also indicated equal representation of female representatives of SC and the Upper category, but a lack of

representation of women belonging to OBC. Elected women of SC were economically dependent on upper-caste people, which impacted their political empowerment. The education level of female representatives was not satisfactory. It revealed that the attendance of women in panchayat meetings and their participation in the decision-making process was not satisfactory due to the burden of household responsibilities, which led to proxy participation by the husband. The data indicated that the main reason for contesting elections was the reservation of seats for women in local bodies. Around 87% of elected women were not aware of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment and their responsibilities as representatives. Illiteracy, lack of family support, and lack of experience were constraints in the political empowerment of women.

Kaur, A. (2009), in her research paper “Recent Trends in Legislative Leadership of Shiromani Akali Dal in Punjab (1997-2007)” highlighted the socio-economic and political profile of legislators of Shiromani Akali Dal in Punjab during the three consecutive State Assemblies’ elections from 1997 to 2007. The study revealed that the Shiromani Akali Dal was dominated by old and middle-aged legislators belonging to rural areas and the jat-Sikh community. It explored that the representation of female legislators in the Shiromani Akali Dal was marginal due to social-economic conditions and the conservative nature of society. It revealed that the percentage of female legislators in the Shiromani Akali Dal was only 6.7% in 1997, 7.3% in 2002, and 4.1% in 2007. The representation of female legislators is affected by the political status of male members of their families in their respective constituencies. This study revealed representation of females in the political arena is negligible compared to men, and there is a tendency to re-nominate the same women candidates.

Kaur, S. (2010), in her paper entitled “Issue of Women’s Empowerment in Punjab: A Critique,” the author explains the concept of women's empowerment and the emerging need for women's empowerment. She highlights economic, educational, health, demographic, and political indicators of women’s empowerment. The author tries to investigate women’s status in Punjab based on data available from reliable sources. Due to strong patriarchal values, women in Punjab are facing discrimination in all spheres, even though Punjab is a highly developed state from an economic point of view. Rural women are lagging in all fields than their urban counterparts. There are high gender

disparities in literacy rate, workforce participation, and income. The patriarchal perspective of society, which considers women inferior to men and prohibits their involvement in decision-making processes, is one of the key obstacles. There is bias and discrimination against women in political parties, which restricts their ability to run for office and maintain influential positions. This paper also highlights that women are almost invisible in law-making, law-application, and adjudication functions. This problem requires a universal approach that allows women's empowerment and contributes to the development of society.

Kaur, G., & Dhindsa, P. K. (2014). The present paper, "Political Empowerment of Women regarding Panchayati Raj Institutions in Punjab," analyzes the political empowerment of women sarpanches based on primary data collected through interview schedules from 105 female sarpanches of Amritsar, Muktsar, and Jalandhar districts of Punjab. The findings of the study revealed a low level of awareness in female sarpanches regarding Panchayati Raj and its functions. Overall participation of female sarpanches in the decision-making process was negligible compared to male sarpanches. They act as dummies, and major panchayat decisions were taken by male members of their family on behalf of female sarpanches. This study highlighted the impact of caste, education, experience, and family income on women's political empowerment. Educated women sarpanches were more politically active than uneducated females. Women representatives belonging to the general category and with higher family income have more confidence to tackle the public due to access to resources. Experienced female sarpanches can handle Gram Panchayat issues more efficiently. This study explored that female sarpanches of the Jalandhar district were more politically empowered and aware than the other two districts.

Kaur, V., & Siwach, R. K. (2014), in the paper "Women Empowerment in Punjab: A Study of Malwa Region," examine the empowerment of women in the Mansa Municipal Council of Punjab based upon data collected from 7 elected women councilors and 70 female respondents from 7 wards of Mansa Municipal Council. This study reveals that 67% of female respondents do not know schemes for women's empowerment. It shows that low female literacy rates, cultural attitudes, conservative mindset, and lack of family support are some of the social barriers to women's political

empowerment. It also highlights the lack of family political background, the lack of political awareness among women, and a male-dominated political system are major political hurdles to women's empowerment. The study concludes that a faulty education system, the patriarchal setup of society, and gender biases are major reasons for the exclusion of women from the political arena at the grassroots level as well as the national level.

Rahila (2017), in her Ph.D. thesis “Political Participation of Sikh and Muslim Women in Punjab: A Case Study of Malerkotla Constituency,” studied the impact of socio-economic factors such as age, education level, caste, and religion on the political inclusion of Sikh and Muslim women. It revealed that young, educated women have more political consciousness and are more involved in political activities as compared to women of other age groups. Low levels of education, lack of financial resources, and lack of political awareness and interest are major barriers to the political engagement of both Muslim and Sikh women. The majority of women are reluctant to contest elections due to household responsibilities and family restrictions. Participation of Muslim women in election campaigning is better than Sikh women.

Singh, R., & Kaur, R. (2018), in their study “Performance of Women Representatives in Gram Panchayats in Punjab: A Case Study of Mansa District,” shed light on the impact of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment on women’s representation in the Mansa district of Punjab. It reveals that the performance of female members in Gram Panchayats was impacted by the dominant influence imposed by established rural elites. A limited number of female Sarpanches were new to their positions, whereas most of the women hailed from families of former Sarpanches or Panches. Women residing in rural areas encounter various obstacles such as long-standing cultural restrictions, societal disparities, and gender prejudice, which intensify their marginalization within the realm of politics. They frequently encounter emotions of inferiority, and their socioeconomic status hinders their progress towards empowerment. It suggests that considerable efforts should be made to secure women's participation at all levels of governance.

Kaur, A. (2019), in her article “Role, Perception & Problem of Women Legislators of Punjab,” reveals the marginal representation of women in the decision-making bodies

of Punjab. This study deals with the role of women legislators in their constituency, the perception of women legislators about their political participation, and the problems being faced by women legislators in performing their duties. Social and political leadership remains male-dominated due to the patriarchal structure of society. The conservative mindset of society creates an obstacle in the path of women's involvement in political activities. Although women have started to take part in politics, Many Women legislators of Punjab have to face many social, economic, and administrative problems, like a lack of finances, a lack of family support, and household burden, and hesitate to go outside at night due to the conservative mindset of people. The study explores how female legislators always try to solve problems through democratic means. Some female legislators participated actively in political decision-making matters. Female legislators indicate a healthy attitudinal change in the character of a male-dominated society.

Kaur, G., & Kaur, V. (2019). The authors in their paper “Development and Participation: Women Sarpanchs in Punjab” examine the performance of women sarpanches in rural development and the obstacles faced by them based on data collected from female sarpanches of different districts of Punjab. In Punjab, it is assumed that women should be confined to the domestic sphere due to the patriarchal setup of society. The reservation of seats for women in local bodies was a step forward to the upliftment of women. Female sarpanches from different districts of Punjab performed well in the fields of health and education by organizing medical camps, building dispensaries, and building schools. They have also worked well on infrastructure development projects like repairing roads, building a hospital, playgrounds, a community palace, a stadium, and parks, etc. It also reveals a lack of awareness in some female sarpanches about the Panchayati Raj Act and its functioning, they are used as rubber stamps by male members of the family. There is male dominance in the decision-making process. Dalit female sarpanches are mistreated by people belonging to the upper caste. Administrative corruption also adversely affects the performance of female sarpanches.

Singh, G. et al. (2019) in their book “Socio-Economic Conditions and Political Participation of Rural Woman Labourers in Punjab” attempted to analyze socio-

economic conditions and level of political participation of rural female labourers based on data collected from 1017 rural women labourers of 29 villages from four districts namely Amritsar, Jalandhar, Mansa and Fatehgarh Sahib of Majha, Doaba and Malwa regions of Punjab in 2016-2017. It explored that the majority of rural female labourers were illiterate, unskilled, and socially and economically weak. 99.51 % of respondents belong to the SC or BC category; therefore, they faced caste-based discrimination and physical harassment at the workplace by so-called high-class people. High-caste employers often use abusive language. This study revealed that about 95 % of respondents had no political interest or political awareness due to illiteracy, the burden of the household, and workplace responsibilities. Around 92% of respondents in the sample do not even know the name of the Chief Minister of Punjab, the Prime Minister, or the President of India. They had no idea about women's representation in the center and state legislature. It was observed that most of these women cast their votes in elections under the influence of a senior male member of the family, employers, or religious leaders. They never participated in political campaigning nor were willing to contest the election due to a lack of economic resources, lack of free time, and the patriarchal setup of society. Most families of elected panchayat representatives were economically dependent on higher caste people. As a result of this dependence, Dalit female sarpanches act as dummies. Higher caste people interfere with the work of these women. This study revealed Political participation of Dalit rural women laborers is negligible due to male dominance in rural politics.

Kaur, R. (2019), in her article "Political Awareness among Dalit Women and their Participation in Rural Local Bodies in Punjab," tries to explore how the socioeconomic background, caste, gender difference, and patriarchal culture adversely impact the political engagement of elected Dalit female representatives. It implies an increase in political awareness, although the majority of women are hesitant to participate in political decision-making. Most of the functions related to the panchayat are performed by male family members of female sarpanches. The majority of people directly approach the husbands of female representatives to resolve their problems. There is male dominance in the political decision-making process.

Kaur, P. (2020) in her study “Right to Political Representation and 73rd Amendment Act: The Critical Assessment of Participation of Women in Panchayati Raj Institution in Punjab” highlights issues of women representation in the panchayats of Punjab based on data collected from 400 respondents belonging Dalit and general category from 48 panchayats of Amritsar, Muktsar and Jalandhar districts of Majha, Malwa and Doaba region. It reveals that reservation in panchayats leads to the political empowerment of women. Dalit women are more politically empowered through reservation in the Panchayati Raj Institution. Female representatives of the general category, as well as the Dalit category, perform well in local rural governance. Female representatives of Dalit and the general category believe that the patriarchal nature of society, considering women as a vote bank, and the lack of women’s participation in decision-making are major hurdles to women's empowerment. It also highlights that female representatives want to adopt initiatives like voter education programs and women polling officers to identify female voters to increase women's voter turnout. This study shows that despite various initiatives taken by the government, women are underrepresented in both houses of Parliament.

Kaur, R. (2020), in her thesis “Political Participation of Upper Caste and Dalit Caste Women: A Comparative Study of Bathinda Rural Assembly Constituency,” examined the role of social-economic determinants regarding women's political engagement in the political field. It revealed that married women are more politically engaged due to the reservation policy. Family restrictions are a barrier to the political participation of unmarried women of both the Upper and Dalit communities. The majority of elected representatives have a political family background. Women from the Dalit community don’t have a political interest. Due to the reservation policy, Dalit women have more opportunities to be elected as representatives.

Kaur, A. (2020), in her book “Gender and Politics: Perception and Participation,” tried to examine the role of women in Punjab politics from a gender perspective based on interviews of female Members of the Punjab Legislative Assembly during 2013-2016. It indicated that the representation of women as Members of the Legislative Assembly is negligible. The participation of Punjabi women in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha is also not satisfactory. It was observed that due to cultural stereotypes, politics is

considered a high-profile masculine activity, and women are assumed to be unsuitable for it. It highlighted that the position and performance of Punjabi women in the Political arena depend upon the economic status and political background of the family, as the majority of female politicians belong to political families. Most of the female leaders could only be contacted through male members of the family. Lack of economic resources, the burden of household responsibilities, lack of family support, and the patriarchal culture of Punjabi society are major reasons for the exclusion of women from politics as leaders. Most female politicians complained about the inactive role of women's wings of political parties regarding women's inclusion in politics. It also highlighted the lack of interest among female sarpanches of their respective constituencies.

Kaur, J. (2022), in her study “Political Awareness Among Rural Women of Punjab: A Case Study of Sangrur District,” analyzed the impact of political awareness on the political empowerment of women among rural women in the Sangrur district of Punjab. The majority of females don’t even cast their votes regularly. Many of them cast their votes according to the directions of male family members. They don’t even know the name of the constituency, MLA, or MP. Participation of women in non-electoral activities like rallies, dharnas, strikes, and demonstrations is negligible. Low political awareness, a patriarchal society where women are considered unsuitable for politics, low access to resources, Lack of experience, male dominance in the political arena, caste-based discrimination, and negative attitude of political parties and administration are some of the major barriers to women's political empowerment.

Kahlon, S., & Thakur, S. (2023), in their book chapter “Women in Punjab politics: Missing, voiceless, inactive,” argues that while women in Punjab have participated in almost every significant social, religious, and political mass movement, they have rarely created a strong feminist voice or an indigenous feminist discourse in the state. In Punjab, patriarchal traditions, money, violence, religion, caste, and dynastic politics create a power matrix that silences, inactivates, and excludes women from politics, making them economically and socially disadvantaged. It argues that while women in Punjab have participated in almost every significant social, religious, and political mass movement, they have rarely created a strong feminist voice or an indigenous feminist

discourse in the state. In Punjab, patriarchal traditions, money, violence, religion, caste, and dynastic politics create a power matrix that silences, inactivates, and excludes women from politics, making them economically and socially disadvantaged.

1.8 Thematic Analysis of Review of Literature

The thematic analysis of the reviewed literature highlights recurring patterns in women's political participation across international, national, and state contexts. By organizing findings into five themes—representation, voter behavior, barriers, quotas, and party gatekeeping—this analysis offers a structured understanding of systemic challenges and progress. Examining parallels and contrasts across levels enables a nuanced assessment of how cultural, socio-economic, and institutional factors shape women's political empowerment.

Representation in Legislative and Executive Offices

Globally, women remain severely underrepresented in legislatures and executive offices. Research highlights that proportional representation systems are more favorable to female inclusion compared to majoritarian systems (*Matland, 1998; Kenworthy & Malami, 1999*). Nordic countries stand out with higher women's representation, supported by welfare structures and progressive norms, but these remain exceptions (*Ruedin, 2012*). Quota policies are common worldwide, yet their impact varies depending on enforcement and cultural acceptance. While women hold relatively more positions at local government levels, their presence diminishes significantly in national and executive offices, where male dominance persists.

In India, women's representation in Parliament and State Legislatures remains critically low, hovering between 10–14% despite high voter turnout (*Spary, 2020*). The success of 33% reservation in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) has not translated to higher-level bodies (*Lal et al., 2015*). Political parties act as gatekeepers, often reluctant to nominate women or relegating them to weak constituencies, while the Women's Reservation Bill remains stalled. As a result, women remain a “silent minority” in national and state politics.

Punjab reflects the same trend of underrepresentation, with women comprising only 4–7% of its Assembly (*Kaur, 2009*). Strong patriarchal norms and Jat-Sikh male dominance marginalize women, while dynastic politics provides the main entry route for female legislators (*Kaur, 2019*). Thus, structural and cultural barriers confine women largely to symbolic roles.

Voters, Voting Behavior, and Political Engagement

A consistent gender gap in political engagement exists worldwide. Women often report lower political knowledge, interest, and efficacy compared to men (*Verba et al., 1997*). However, this varies by activity: women engage more in informal or “private” activism such as petitions and boycotts (*Coffé & Bolzendahl, 2010*), while men dominate formal activities like party membership. The presence of viable female candidates significantly boosts women’s political discussions and participation, serving as role models (*Atkeson, 2003; Karp & Banducci, 2008*).

India has witnessed a “silent revolution” with women’s voter turnout rising to match or exceed men’s (*Kapoor & Ravi, 2014*). Yet, autonomy is limited as rural women’s voting choices are often influenced by male family members (*Deshpande, 2009*). Participation in campaigning or contacting officials remains low (*Iyer & Mani, 2019*), and gender-blind campaign strategies overlook women’s concerns (*Borooah & Tagat, 2015*). This highlights a paradox: women are active voters but not yet autonomous political actors.

In Punjab, female voter turnout has increased, but awareness is weak. Rural and Dalit women show alarming political illiteracy, with little knowledge of leaders or institutions (*Singh et al., 2019; Kaur, J., 2022*). Votes are often directed by husbands, employers, or religious figures, while non-electoral participation is negligible. Thus, women remain passive participants shaped by patriarchal and caste hierarchies.

Barriers and Challenges

Women face cultural, socio-economic, and institutional barriers globally. Culturally, politics is often defined as a masculine sphere, with women stereotyped as

compassionate and men as strong (*Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993*). Socio-economically, women bear a “double burden” of domestic work and limited access to financial capital, restricting their ability to campaign. Institutionally, political parties exhibit elite bias in candidate selection, while incumbency advantages favor men, leaving women at a systemic disadvantage (*Kjaer & Krook, 2019*).

Patriarchy underpins barriers in India. Norms confine women to the private sphere, while illiteracy and economic dependency reduce agency (*Hust, 2004*). Political parties act as gatekeepers, often nominating women in unwinnable constituencies. Proxyism in Panchayati Raj—where elected women are controlled by male relatives—is common (*John, 2007*). Violence, harassment, and intimidation further deter women from political participation, reducing their autonomy and confidence.

Punjab’s barriers are rooted in its patriarchal Jat-Sikh culture, which emphasizes male dominance in public life (*Kahlon & Thakur, 2023*). Dalit women face dual discrimination: caste-based oppression and gender marginalization, even when elected (*Singh et al., 2019*). Rural laborers dependent on high-caste employers face political control over their choices. Even elected women lack awareness, while bureaucratic and male colleagues’ non-cooperation weakens their effectiveness, reducing them to “rubber stamps.”

Impact of Quotas and Reserved Seats

The impact of gender quotas varies globally. In Latin America, quotas showed little effect on broader engagement due to weak enforcement and low public awareness (*Zetterberg, 2009*). Conversely, voluntary party quotas in Europe improved perceptions of female leaders (*Kim & Fallon, 2023*). Effectiveness depends on design, such as placement mandates and enforcement. While quotas are necessary for rapid numerical gains, they remain insufficient without cultural and institutional reforms.

India’s landmark 33% reservation in Panchayati Raj Institutions has transformed grassroots politics. Studies show women leaders prioritize water, health, and education, producing measurable improvements in governance outcomes (*Chattopadhyay & Duflo, 2004*). Yet proxyism undermines genuine empowerment,

as husbands often exercise control (*John, 2007*). The absence of similar quotas in higher legislatures reflects entrenched resistance within political elites, despite grassroots success.

Punjab's Panchayat reservations increased women's numbers and led to some developmental initiatives in health, education, and infrastructure (*Kaur & Dhindsa, 2014*). However, caste hierarchies shape outcomes: upper-caste, educated women enjoy relative autonomy, while Dalit women often face harassment and symbolic roles. Proxy culture remains widespread, with many female Sarpanches serving as figureheads. Thus, quotas create opportunities but are constrained by entrenched patriarchy and caste oppression.

Political Parties as Gatekeepers

Political parties are crucial gatekeepers controlling women's access to power. Globally, they exhibit "elite bias," preferring male candidates seen as more electable (*O'Brien, 2015*). Women are often relegated to soft portfolios or nominated in unwinnable constituencies. Leadership positions remain male-dominated, with women more likely to rise in minor or declining parties. Even quota compliance is often symbolic, limiting transformative impact.

In India, political parties are the most significant institutional barrier to women's representation (*Spary, 2020*). Despite women's growing electoral strength, parties rarely nominate them in winnable seats, preferring dynastic candidates. Women's wings within parties exist but play limited roles in leadership promotion. The failure to pass the Women's Reservation Bill exemplifies male resistance within party structures to share power, perpetuating systemic exclusion.

Punjab's political parties are dominated by male Jat-Sikh elites who rarely nominate women. Female MLAs remain in single digits, with most emerging from political families (*Kaur, 2019*). Party women's wings lack real power, offering minimal pathways for leadership development. This entrenched gatekeeping ensures that women remain excluded from meaningful representation, reinforcing patriarchal dominance in the state's political culture.

1.9 Research Gap

The review of literature is done by consulting and reviewing various books, articles in journals, newspapers, famous magazines, government archives, and various already published theses. The research gap has been reached according to the studied literature. Based on the review of literature, it is found that many studies have been conducted on the political participation of women at the grassroots level, national level, and international level, but

- No comprehensive study has been conducted to compare the political participation of urban and rural women in Punjab.
- There is a dearth of studies to compare the level of political awareness of urban and rural women in the S.B.S. Nagar district of Punjab.
- The existing studies did not craft a detailed account of the participation of women in various conventional and unconventional political activities, such as political campaigning, protesting, etc., in Punjab.
- No study has been conducted to analyze the performance of women of Nawanshahr Constituency in urban and rural bodies and State Legislative Assembly elections.
- The existing studies did not provide information regarding the impact of women's political participation on policy preferences in this region.

The study aims to fill this research gap by analyzing various factors affecting women's political participation and comparing the level of political participation and political awareness of urban and rural women in the Nawanshahr Constituency of Punjab.

1.10 Research Objectives

The research objectives of the study are as under:

- To analyse the status of political awareness among women of Nawanshahr Constituency of Punjab.
- To compare the political participation of urban and rural women of Nawanshahr Constituency of Punjab.

- To investigate the factors affecting women's political participation in Nawanshahr Constituency of Punjab.
- To explore the challenges faced by elected female representatives in Nawanshahr Constituency of Punjab.

1.11 Research Questions

To accomplish the above-mentioned objectives, this work has addressed the following research questions:

- What are the various factors which are affecting the political participation of women in the Nawanshahr Constituency of Punjab?
- What is the impact of socio-economic status on the political participation of women in Nawanshahr Constituency?
- What is the status of political awareness among urban and rural women of Nawanshahr Constituency?
- What has been the performance of women of Nawanshahr Constituency in Municipal Council, Panchayat elections, and State Legislative Assembly elections since 2003?
- What is the level of participation of urban and rural women in conventional and unconventional political activities such as election campaigning, protesting, and contacting officials, etc.?
- How does reservation policy has impacted the political participation of women?
- What are the challenges faced by elected female representatives of this region?

1.12 Research Methodology

This part of the chapter deals with the research methodology adopted for the present study. Research methodology deals with the strategies a researcher employs when designing a study that ensures reliable and accurate outcomes that accomplish the objectives and address the questions of the investigation. According to *Murthy &*

Bhojanna (2009), "Research methodology is the blueprint of a study". According to *Somekh and Lewin (2005)* "Research methodology is both "the collection of methods or rules" that researchers employ in their work and the "principles, theories, and values" that underpin their research strategy. The terms "methodology" and "methods" are frequently used interchangeably in research but both are distinct concepts. Methodology is "a set of principles and ideas that inform the design of a research study." Methods, on the other hand, are "practical procedures used to generate and analyze data" (*Birks and Mills, 2011*).

According to *Kothari (2004)*, research methodology is the systematic analysis of all the methods and approaches adopted in a field of study to address a research problem, whereas research methods are tools and techniques employed by the researcher while investigating their research problem. In this chapter entire research methodology has been described. The purpose of this research is to investigate the political participation of urban and rural women in the Nawanshahr Constituency of Punjab. Research methodology covers research design, size of sample, sampling techniques, sources of data, methods of data collection, and selection of various research tools for analysis of data have been described to provide a detailed description of the research work.

Research Design: The term "research design" describes the entire strategy used to conduct research. It is a framework developed to address specific research issues. According to *Kothari (2004)*, the research design is the conceptual framework by which the research is carried out; it serves as the blueprint for data collection, measurement, and analysis. The study is *exploratory and descriptive*. The primary focus is given to exploring women's inclusion in electoral and non-electoral activities. It will explore various factors influencing the political participation of urban and rural women. It is based on an explanatory sequential mixed method design, in which both qualitative and quantitative methods have been adopted to collect relevant information from primary and secondary sources. It starts with quantitative data collection and analysis and then follows up with qualitative data collection and analysis, which leads to interpretation (*Creswell, John. W., & Creswell, J. David., 2023*).

Universe of the study: A Universe of the study refers to a population that represents the entire group of units or informants of the data relating to the problem under study. This study is confined to the Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar district. The universe of this research will be the Nawanshahr Constituency of Punjab. The total population of the Nawanshahr Constituency is 217260 (Census 2011). The total number of registered voters in Nawanshahr constituency is 177400, consisting of 90921 male voters and 86470 female voters, and 09 transgenders. (<https://eci.gov.in/files/file/14165-punjab-general-legislative-election-2022/>)

Sampling: Sampling refers to the selection of a subset of the entire population for study. The sample is a part of the population that represents the characteristics of the population; therefore, the conclusion drawn based on the selected sample will apply to the population. The sample population of this research has been drawn from the Nawanshahr Constituency. As this study is confined to women's political inclusion, only female voters have been taken for sampling.

Sample size: Taro Yamane's formula is used to determine the sample size. This method was formulated by the Statistician “Taro Yamane” in 1967 to determine the sample size of a finite population (Yamane, T., 1967; Farmanullah, et. al, 2022). The statistical formula devised by Taro Yamane is as below: $n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$, where

“n” = required sample size,

N = Total population under study

e = Margin of error (MoE), i.e., = 0.05 based on the research condition.

$$n = \frac{86470}{1 + 86470 (.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{86470}{1 + 86470 (0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{86470}{217.175}$$

$$n = 398.149$$

$$n = 399$$

The study utilized a sample size of 400 respondents, determined using Taro Yamane's Formula, from a population of 86470 registered female voters in Nawanshahr Constituency.

Sampling method

- The stratified random sampling method has been used to select respondents for data collection.
- The population has been divided into strata based on locality, caste, and Age.
- The sample size is 400 respondents.
- These 400 respondents who are eligible voters have been further classified into common residents and key informant categories, consisting of 360 common people and 40 Key people.
- 360 common people have been taken from both urban and rural areas of the Nawanshahr Constituency.
- 40 Key people consist of Members of the Legislative Assembly from the Nawanshahr constituency, administrative officials, elected/ contested members of Panchayat and members of the Municipal council, social workers, and Academicians.

Table 1.4: Sample Size Distribution

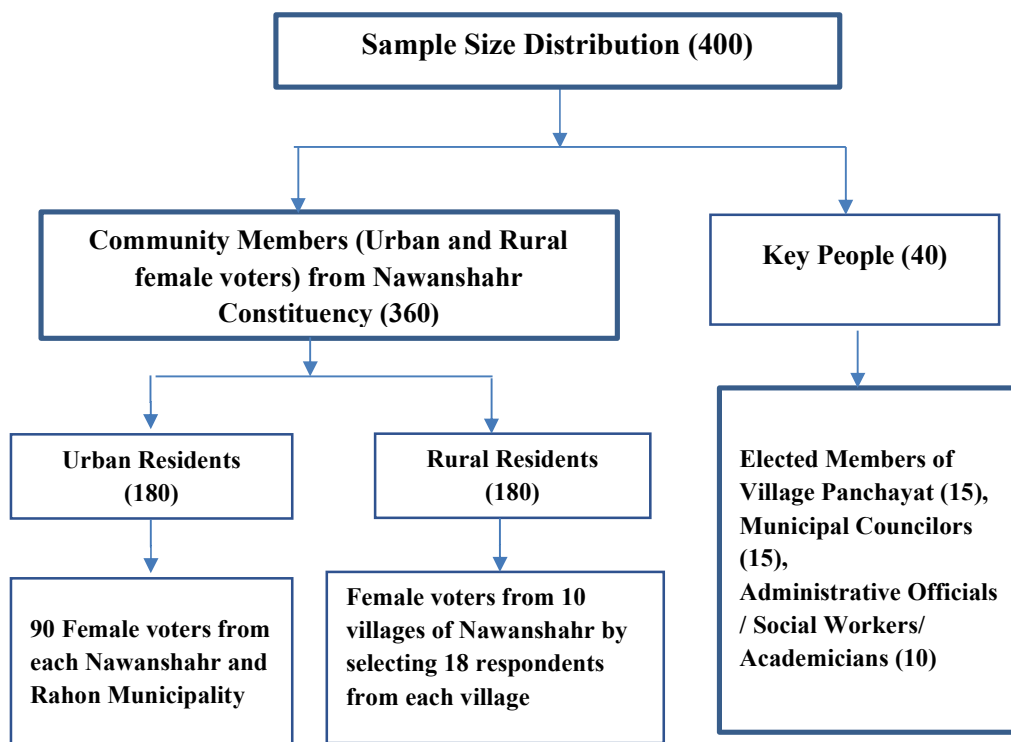
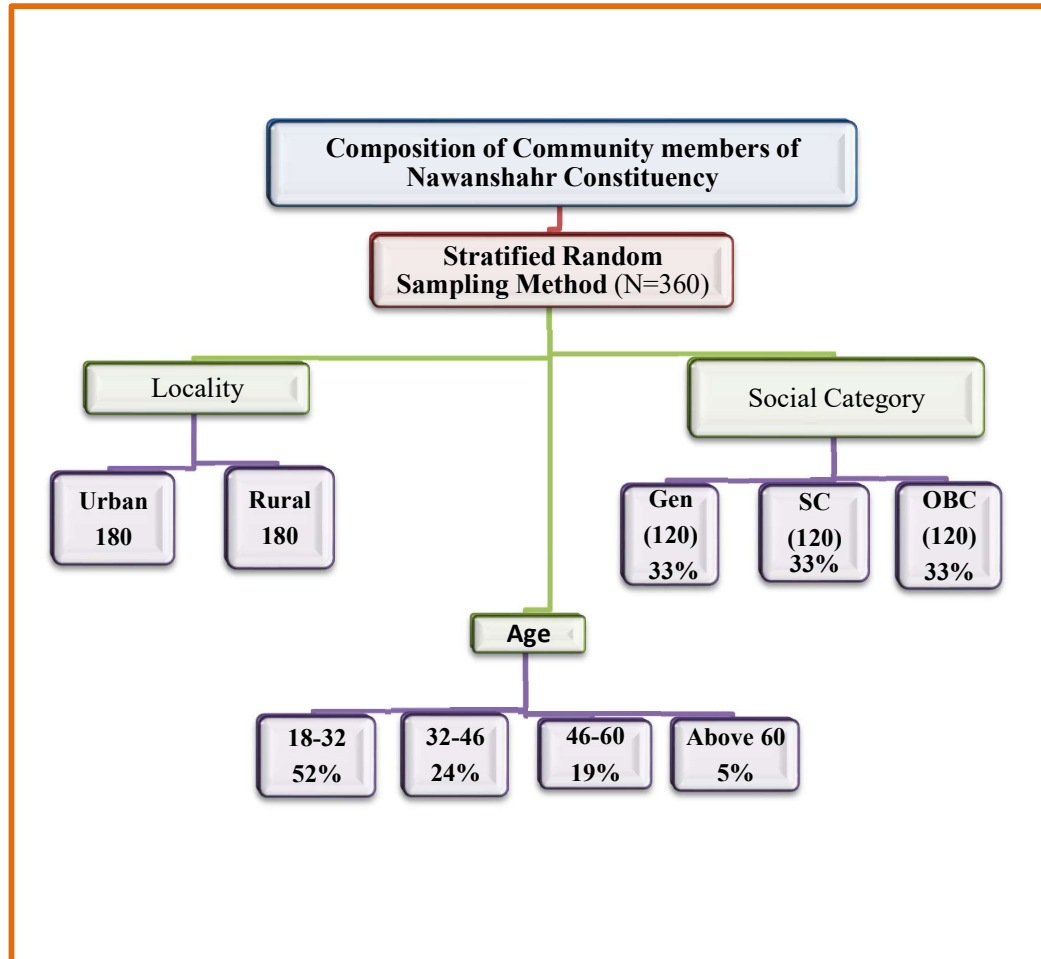


Table 1.5: Sample Size Representation



Sampling of Urban Respondents

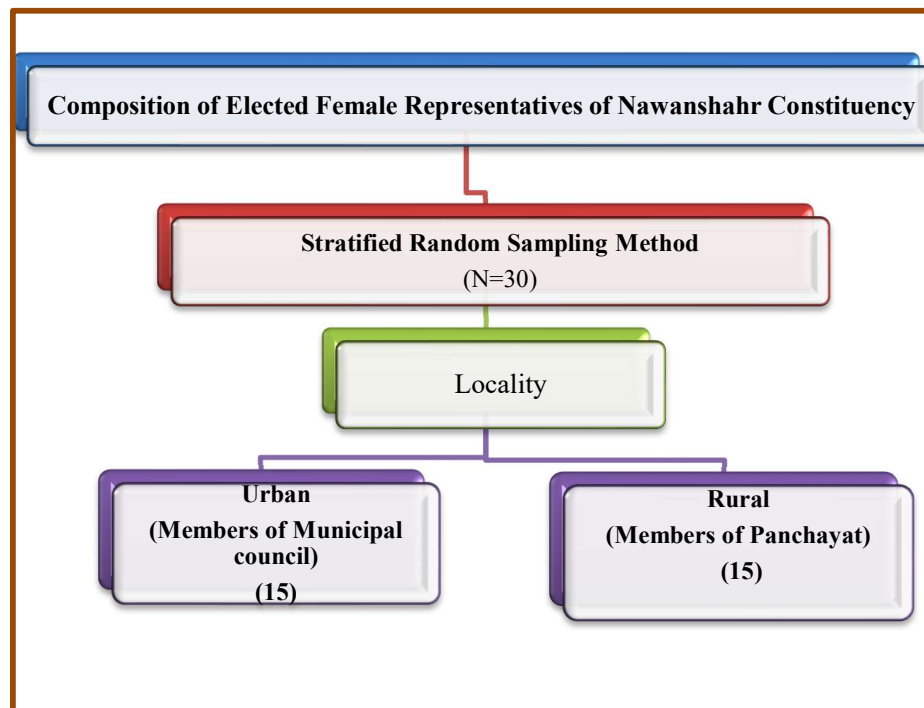
- Nawanshahr and Rahon city areas have been taken for urban sampling.
- 180 urban female respondents were taken from Nawanshahr and Rahon Municipal Council areas, selecting 90 respondents from each area.
- These respondents were further classified into different strata based on social category.
- 90 respondents from the Nawanshahr Municipality area were taken from 19 wards of the city by selecting 30 respondents from General, SC, and OBC each.

- Similarly, from the Rahon Municipality area, 90 respondents were taken from 13 wards of the city by selecting 30 respondents from each category.

Sampling of Rural Respondents

- 10 villages of Nawanshahr Constituency have been taken for rural sampling based on the Purposive Sampling method.
- 180 rural respondents were selected from 10 villages of the Nawanshahr Constituency by choosing 18 female voters from each village.
- The 18 respondents from each village were classified on the basis of social category by selecting 6 respondents from each category.

Table 1.6: Composition of Elected Representatives of Nawanshahr Constituency



Data Sources and Tools: For the purpose of the research, primary and secondary sources have been used.

Secondary data: In the initial stage of research, secondary data has been collected from various books, journals, newspapers, government archives,

encyclopedias, and various already published and unpublished theses to gain knowledge about women's political participation. For a detailed profile of the study area, data were collected from the Census of India, the District Statistical Office, and the government's handbook of Nawanshahr. Reports of the Election Commission of India were used to examine the level of political participation of women.

Primary data: The present study is exploratory and descriptive. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were implemented to collect information from the urban and rural female voters from the Nawanshahr Constituency of S.B.S Nagar district.

Data Collection Tools

Structured Questionnaire Schedule: A structured questionnaire schedule has been used to collect quantitative data from the common people who were eligible voters of the Nawanshahr Constituency, consisting of female respondents from both urban and rural areas. The questionnaire comprised of standardized closed-ended questions. Some of the questions were dichotomous in nature. 5-point Likert Scale is used to measure the perception of respondents regarding factors affecting Political participation and challenges faced by elected female representatives. The questionnaire has been arranged in both English and Punjabi for the ease of the respondents.

Questionnaire: Qualitative data has been collected through a questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of both structured and unstructured questions. The questionnaire has been used for collecting data from elected female representatives on quantifiable variables like age, educational qualification, caste, religion, economic status, political awareness, and level of participation in the political field, etc. To extract information, the questionnaire was translated into the Punjabi language for the ease of the respondents. Later on, the responses of the respondents were translated into English.

In-depth Interview: A separate interview schedule has been prepared to collect information from key informants consisting of officials from the district administration, Social Workers, Previously Contested candidates, Members of Any Political Party, and Academicians, etc., regarding factors affecting women's political participation, and the level of political participation and awareness of women of Nawanshahr constituency.

Analysis of Data: The data collected from primary sources has been analyzed using tools such as the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. Descriptive statistics such as Percentages, ratios, and proportions, and wherever required, suitable charts, graphs, and diagrams have been used. Qualitative data from in-depth interviews will be transcribed, translated into English wherever needed, and analyzed. All the subject matter has been presented under appropriate themes, keeping in view the coherence of research objectives and subject matter.

1.13 Nature and Scope of Study

Nature of Study: This study is exploratory and analytical in nature. It analyzes the political participation and awareness of urban and rural women of the Nawanshahr Constituency because there is a connection between political awareness and political participation. An attempt has been made to explore the performance of women in various conventional and unconventional political activities, such as political campaigning, protesting, and boycotts etc. The present study analyzes the performance of urban and rural women in local body elections and State Legislative Assembly elections since 2003, with special reference to the Nawanshahr Constituency. It examines the impact of reservation policy on women's political participation and empowerment. Largely, the study investigates and explores various factors affecting women's political participation in the Nawanshahr Constituency of Punjab. It also explores the challenges faced by elected women representatives in this Constituency.

Scope of Study: This study is focused on the Nawanshahr Constituency located in the Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar district, Punjab. This district was formerly known as Nawanshahr District. It falls under the Doaba Region. Nawanshahr became sixteen

districts of Punjab on 7 November 1995 by clubbing the Nawanshahr Tehsil of Jalandhar District and Balachaur Tehsil of Hoshiarpur District during the S. Harcharan Brar government, with the strong effort of the late S. Dilbagh Singh, Former Cabinet Minister and the then Member of the Legislative Assembly of Nawanshahr (*Hans, S. J., 2006*). This study aims to analyze the political participation and awareness of urban and rural women of the Nawanshahr Constituency of Punjab. Nawanshahr and Rahon Municipal Council areas and 10 villages of Nawanshahr Constituency have been selected for this study.

1.14 Significance of the Study

This study makes a comparative analysis of the political participation and the level of awareness of urban and rural women.

- It is expected that the study will help the government to identify the actual reasons behind the exclusion of women from the political arena at the local level.
- It is also assumed that the micro-level analysis will help in providing some ideas to customize the public policy for the political empowerment of women at the macro level.
- Therefore, the present study is particularly significant in creating awareness among urban and rural women about their importance in the decision-making bodies.
- It is significant because there is a dearth of a comprehensive study on the political participation of women in urban and rural areas in the Nawanshahr Constituency of Punjab.
- This study has the potential to encourage more women to get involved in politics and strengthen their voices in both urban and rural areas.
- This study will be significant for researchers, scholars, and others who seek information on the political participation of women. Hence, it is quite relevant to reveal reliable information regarding the political status of urban and rural

women and various challenges faced by elected representatives in the Nawanshahr Constituency of Punjab.

1.15 Conclusion

In exploring the political participation of women in the Nawanshahr district of Punjab through a mixed-method research approach, several insights emerge that resonate with the broader trends seen in Tables 1.1 to 1.3. Historically, women's representation in Indian politics has seen incremental improvements, as highlighted by the evolution from 4.5% in 1952 to peaks of 14.4% in the Lok Sabha by 2019. This trajectory mirrors efforts at the national level to enhance gender diversity in Parliament, reflected in the nearly 15% representation of women in both houses as of June 2024. However, when focusing on the Nawanshahr district, the mixed-method research reveals nuanced challenges and opportunities. Qualitative data underscores cultural and societal barriers that have historically restricted women's political engagement, such as traditional gender roles and patriarchal norms. These qualitative findings are complemented by quantitative data illustrating disparities in electoral participation and representation at local levels. Additionally, varying degrees of gender diversity across Indian state assemblies. While some states like Chhattisgarh and West Bengal have made notable strides with up to 13.70% representation of women, others like Mizoram and Nagaland still report 0%, highlighting regional disparities in political inclusivity. Although there is evident progress in increasing women's political representation in India, including in the Nawanshahr district, significant challenges persist. Mixed-method research underscores the need for targeted interventions addressing socio-cultural barriers, enhancing political education and empowerment initiatives, and promoting inclusive policies. Sustained efforts across local, state, and national levels are crucial to achieving more equitable gender representation and ensuring that women's voices are fully integrated into decision-making processes at all tiers of governance.



CHAPTER 2

EVOLUTION OF WOMEN'S POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT IN PUNJAB

CHAPTER 2

EVOLUTION OF WOMEN'S POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT IN PUNJAB

2.1 Introduction

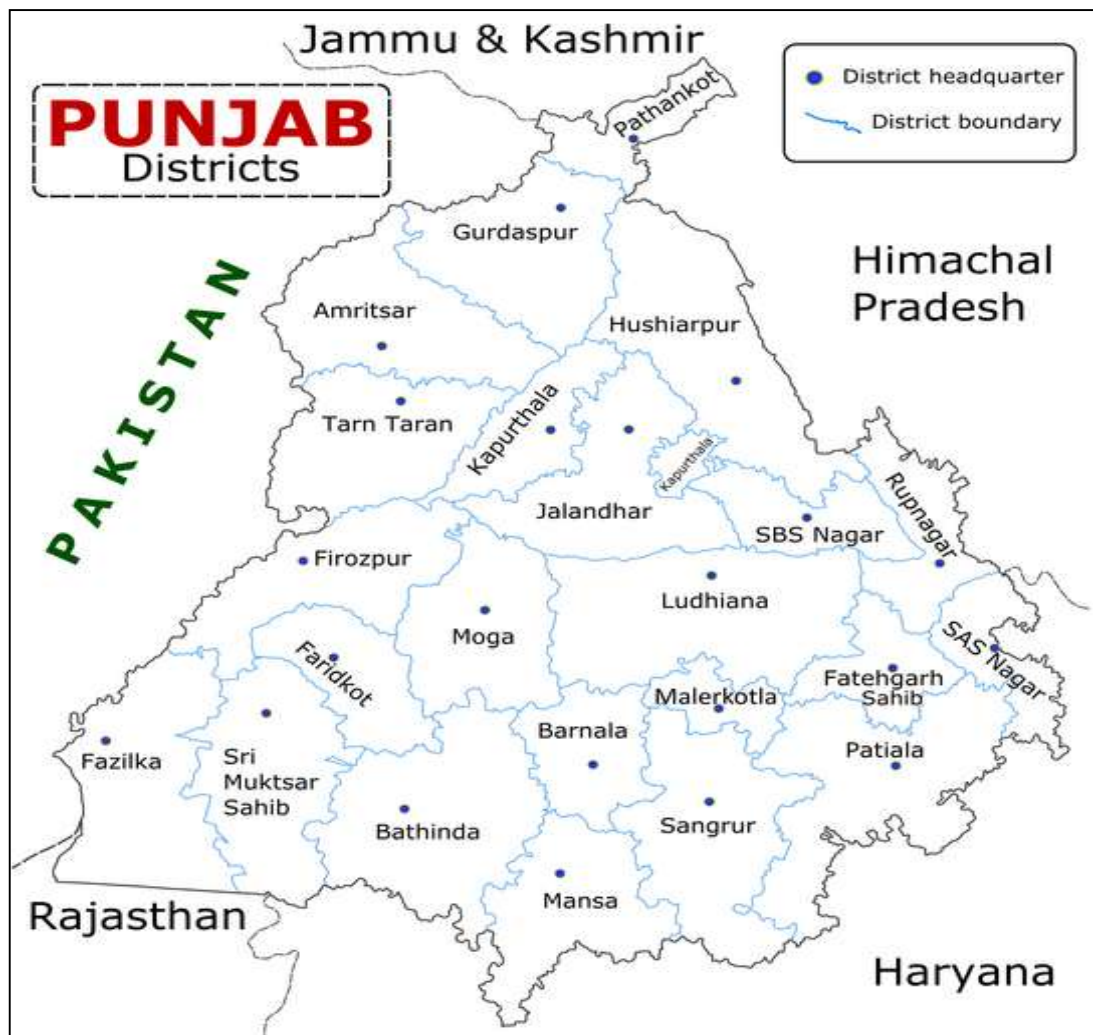
In the realm of Punjab's political landscape, the participation of women has evolved significantly, yet remains a subject of critical inquiry and ongoing transformation. Historically, Punjab, like many regions in India, has navigated complex socio-cultural dynamics that have shaped the roles and representation of women in politics. While traditional patriarchal norms have posed formidable challenges, the state has also witnessed progressive shifts towards greater gender inclusivity in governance and decision-making. This chapter explores the multifaceted dimensions of women's political engagement in Punjab, examining both the barriers they confront and the strides made toward substantive equality. The journey of women's political participation in Punjab reflects broader national trends but is uniquely influenced by the state's distinct socio-political context. From grassroots activism to legislative roles, women in Punjab have carved out spaces for themselves amidst a traditionally male-dominated political arena. In this context, the present chapter delves into the strategies employed by women leaders, the impact of policy initiatives aimed at enhancing gender parity, and the persistent hurdles that hinder full and equal participation. By critically analyzing these aspects, the researcher aims to illuminate the complexities and achievements in women's political empowerment within the specific context of Punjab, shedding light on both the triumphs and challenges that define their journey towards inclusive governance.

2.2 Socio-Demographic Profile of Punjab

Before delving into the intricacies of the political journey of women in Punjab, it becomes important to outline the socio-demographic profile of the state. Punjab derived its name from the five rivers that flow through this area, viz., the Sutlej, Beas, Ravi, Chenab, and Jhelum. Punjab is divided into 3 regions: Majha, Malwa, and Doaba,

consisting of 23 Districts. Punjab is an economically developed state in India. Punjab, situated in northwestern India, is known for its agricultural productivity, vibrant culture, and significant contributions to the country's economy. Punjab is in northwest India between 29°30' N to 32°32' N latitude and 73°55' E to 76°50' E longitude. It is one side linked with bordered by Pakistan on the west and bordered by four Indian states - Jammu and Kashmir on the north, Himachal Pradesh on its northeast, and Haryana and Rajasthan on its south (<https://punjab.gov.in/know-punjab/>).

Diagram/Chart 2.1: Map of Punjab, India



Source: https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Punjab_district_map.png

According to the census of 2011 total population of Punjab was 27743,338, consisting of 1463945 males and 13103873 females. The average sex ratio in Punjab is 895 females per 1000 males. The literacy rate is 75.84%, consisting of 80.44% of the male literacy rate and 70.73% of the female literacy rate as per the Census 2011. Punjab has a population that is predominantly Punjabi-speaking and Sikh-majority. Hindus and other religious minorities also contribute to the state's diverse population. The state has a relatively high population density compared to many other Indian states, reflecting its fertile agricultural lands and economic opportunities (*Census, 2011*).

Agriculture has traditionally been the backbone of Punjab's economy, with the state known as the "*Granary of India*" due to its extensive wheat and rice production. However, there has been a shift towards diversifying the economy with growth in industries such as textiles, manufacturing, and services. This economic diversification has contributed to Punjab's overall development. Since Independence, Punjab has achieved notable economic advancement despite the setbacks it faced in 1947. The state contributes nearly two-thirds of the nation's food grain production and a third of its milk production, playing a crucial role in India's food security. As the leading producer of wheat, Punjab has been instrumental in the success of the Green Revolution, a pivotal agricultural initiative. Despite comprising less than 2.5% of India's population, Punjabis are among the most prosperous communities in the country, with a per capita income double the national average (<https://punjab.gov.in/known-punjab/>).

Punjab experiences a well-balanced climatic cycle with distinct seasons of summer, monsoon, and winter, each offering unique experiences. Summers, spanning from mid-April to late June, are characterized by intense heat. The monsoon season, from early July to late September, brings abundant rainfall, particularly in the foothills of the Himalayas, making the region fertile. Areas farther from the hills experience lower rainfall and higher temperatures. Winter begins in October and becomes notably cold from December onwards, coinciding with major festivals such as Lohri, Holi, Mohalla, Diwali, and Dussehra. The period from October to March is considered the optimal time to visit Punjab due to the pleasant weather conditions. (*ibid*)

Chandigarh, a union territory, functions as the capital for both Punjab and Haryana. It stands as one of India's early planned cities post-independence and is

situated attractively at the foothills of the Shivalik range. Chandigarh is renowned as a pioneering experiment in urban planning and modern architecture in twentieth-century India. Conceived as the vision of India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, it was meticulously planned by the renowned French architect Le Corbusier. Punjab comprises 23 districts, encompassing a total of 168 statutory towns and 69 census towns, resulting in a total of 237 urban settlements. Major cities in Punjab include Mohali, Ludhiana, Amritsar, Patiala, and Jalandhar. The Punjab region has historical significance as one of the world's earliest civilizations, the Indus Valley Civilization, which flourished across much of its expanse. Ancient cities like Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, integral to this civilization, now lie within the modern-day Pakistani province of Punjab (*ibid*).

2.3 India's Freedom Struggle: Perspective from Punjab Women

The Punjabis were known for their daring adventures, spirited struggles, and devotional courage. These virtues did not exist only among their traditional men but also among their women. The women of Punjab had an equal share in the rebuilding of India through Kuka, Nirankari, Arya Samaj, Dev Samaj, Congress, and Akali movements, and played an equally commendable role in the freedom struggle against the British. The women of the Punjab participated in the freedom movement in large numbers and made their valuable contributions to the national cause. The wives, daughters, and sisters of the prominent Congress leaders of Punjab came forward and took a keen interest in Gandhi's passive resistance against the Rowlatt Act and participated in almost all the programs of fasting and meetings.

In the early period of history, the role of women in Punjab was largely confined to religious and social spheres. But as circumstances changed, the women of Punjab demonstrated qualities of courage, bravery, and sacrifice. This is borne out by many an account of valiant women who took an active part in the social and political life of Punjab before the British accession of the state. The role of Punjabi women as commanders on the battlefield is no less glorious. Sada Kaur, the mother-in-law of teenaged Ranjit Singh, shadowed her son-in-law in all his major engagements against the Afghans, especially after the Afghans had routed the Marathas at Panipat and had

become so powerful that the Mughal throne survived but only under their duress. She is remembered as one of the greatest generals of her time, even in the Afghan records. Rani Daya Kaur ruled Khanna after the death of her husband, Hari Singh. Rani Sahib Kaur, sister of the infant ruler Sahib Singh of Patiala, successfully defended her brother's Kingdom against the attacks of the Marathas, Afghans, and European adventurers like George, Thompson, and chased them away from the battlefield.

During the struggle for independence in Punjab, women like Sarla Devi Choudharani, Mrs. B.N. Sen, and Rani Harnam Singh started organizing themselves into political units. Their activities were not confined to the upliftment of women. Rather, they started collecting funds for securing the release of political prisoners like Lala Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh, who were deported to Mandalay jail in 1907. This could safely be described as the beginning of women's interest in the nation's politics. The Jallianwala Bagh Tragedy in Amritsar was a tragedy of rare magnitude that changed the entire political situation in Punjab. Immediately after this incident, a curfew was imposed, and the dead and the dying were left to suffer the whole night at the mercy of dogs and vultures. This curfew subjected many women in Amritsar to mental torture as they could not get any help for locating their husbands, sons, and other relatives who lay parched, weltering in their own blood and mangled limbs.

History gives the account of a lady named Ratan Devi who, despite the curfew order of General Dyer, stayed all alone during the frightful night on 13th April, among hundreds of dead and dying with a bamboo stick in her hand to protect her dead husband from jackals and vultures. She spent the whole night in the Bagh with her husband's cold head in her lap. The women of the Punjab did not remain passive in the Non-Cooperation Movement. During the tours, Gandhi was accompanied by Sarla Devi Choudharani of Lahore. Sarla Devi Choudharani also addressed several meetings to promote Swadeshi poetically in June and July 1920, exhorting women to show valour in the face of repression. The participation of the Punjabi women in the Non-Cooperation Movement in 1920-22, recalls Mamohini Sehgal, was a sort of training programme for the future Satyagraha programme of 1930-34 and 1940-42. The women helped the movement by boycotting, picketing by collecting funds, and directing the movement as war dictators.

The First Punjab Ladies Conference was held on the 6th and 7th of December 1922. Nearly 2000 women attended it. This conference was presided over by Kasturba Gandhi and Radha Devi, the wife of Lala Lajpat Rai. Several women leaders from Punjab played a prominent role in the Non-Cooperation movement. Among these were Sarla Devi Choudharani, Mrs. Duni Chand, Amtu Salam, Pushpa Gujral, Gauran Devi, Satya Devi, Amar Kaur, Manmohini Sehgal, and Usha Devi. At several places, the women organized processions and meetings to demonstrate the ideology of Swadeshi and urged the people to complete a boycott of foreign clothes. Harnam Kaur Bhattal actively participated in all the Satyagrahas. She was arrested several times. She said, "Lahore jail had become our second home". The first phase of the Civil Disobedience Movement began in April 1930.

The Punjab Provincial Congress committee made every effort to generate enthusiasm among the people of Punjab. Many conferences were convened at different places, but the Gujranwala Conference (April 1930) deserves special mention. During his conferences, a letter along with a box containing glass bangles was received by Maulana Zafar Ali Khan, President of the Conference, in which the women asked the men to put on bangles if they could not liberate India. The interest taken by the women of the Punjab in the Civil Disobedience Movement from all social backgrounds was particularly noticeable. Besides their leadership, women's participation numbers had exceeded expectations in processions and meetings. The participation of women grew all the more when their men were arrested. Their wives, daughters, and sisters took their places to fill the vacuum. The participation of women in *hartals*, processions, flag hoisting ceremonies, and meetings was a regular feature of the Civil Disobedience Movement.

The women of Punjab participated actively in the boycott of foreign clothes, picketing of foreign clothes shops, picketing of religious places, the Legislative Assembly, educational institutions, and liquor shops. In the campaign for the boycott of foreign goods, women delivered inspiring speeches exhorting people to follow the programme of boycott program. At Amritsar, while addressing a public meeting, Sita Devi said, "Every Englishman prefers his country-made goods; then why should Indians not use their goods?". In the Civil Disobedience Movement (1930-34), a

prominent woman of East Punjab, Bhag Devi, wife of Lala Dhuni Chad, actively participated in the picketing of foreign clothes shops at Ambala and other places in the Punjab. She organized picket lines several times in front of religious places to prevent the entry of those wearing foreign clothes. She persuaded the people to use khaddar. In July 1930, she also took part in the picketing of the Assembly Hall at Shimla and suffered Lathi blows. In 1937, Bhag Devi was elected as a member of the Punjab Legislative Assembly. In December 1940, she courted arrest at Lahore and was sentenced to nine months' imprisonment.

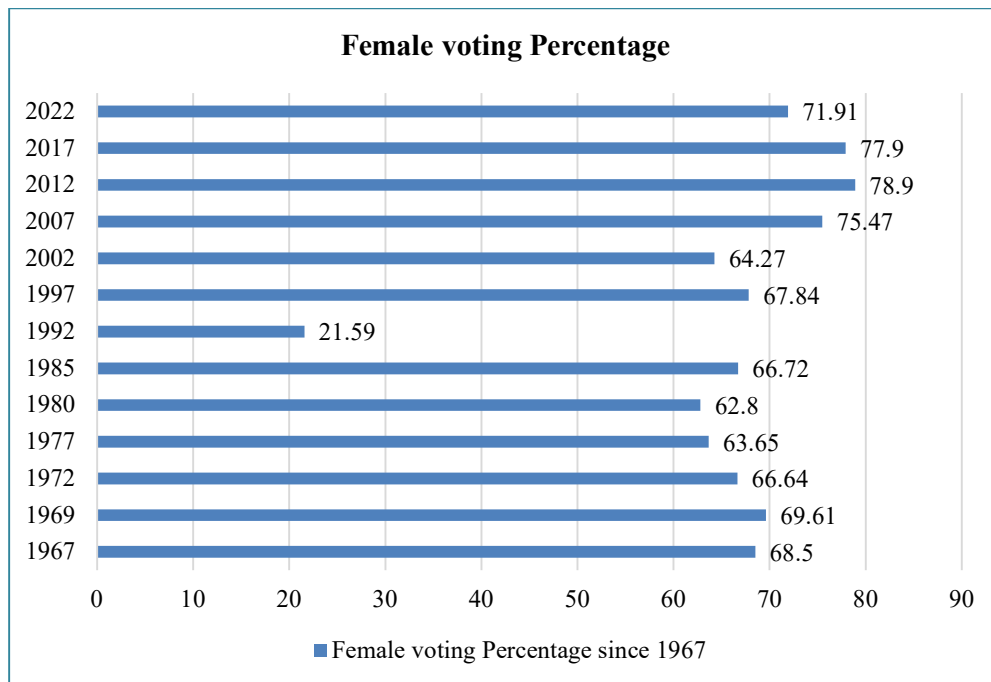
In the Quit India Movement (1942), the women of the province had shown their full enthusiasm. Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur, a staunch disciple of Mahatma Gandhi, was jailed in 1942 during the Quit Indian Movement. She played a leading role in the conference campaign for the women's franchise. In Shimla, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur took a leading part in organizing meetings and processions. She addressed several public meetings and supervised the dissemination of Congress literature, including dispatching the appeals to government servants for a sympathetic attitude towards the national cause. In 1944, Veer Bala Sangh was organized in Hoshiarpur by Sarla Prashar. It was organized to inspire and train the women of the province to play an effective role in the attainment of independence. The Sangh also played an important role in the collection of national funds by staging dramas.⁸⁹ In 1947, she organized relief camps for the refugees at Hoshiarpur.

Women of Punjab participated in all the activities, ranging from distributing pamphlets to running secret presses, courting arrests, and living in the unhygienic and solitary conditions of the jails. History bears evidence of how a sizeable number of women during India's independence struggle participated in the struggle for freedom and fought against the British. Women's participation in the National Movement produced a set of capable and distinguished women leaders like Rajkumari Amrit Kaur (First Union Health Minister), Rameshwari Nehru, Manmohani Sehgal, Dr. Parkash Kaur, Sarla Prashar, Pushpa Gujral, and Dr. Sushila Nayyar. All these women played a prominent role in independent India.

2.4 Analyzing Political Participation of Women of Punjab

Political participation has two important manifestations, i.e., participation as a voter and participation as a contestant. In this context, the present section outlines the political participation of women in Punjab from both perspectives.

Diagram/Chart 2.2: Female Voting Percentage in Punjab Legislative Assembly Elections



Source: Election Commission of India (<https://eci.gov.in>)

Due to the patriarchal setup of Indian society, women are often treated as inferior to men. Punjab is an economically developed state, despite that women are confined to household activities due to social and cultural attitudes. Women's political participation in the Punjab Legislative Assembly is low compared to men's. The franchise right was granted to women in Punjab in 1926 by the Provincial government. The proportion of women in the federal and state governments has remained incredibly low. The first election to the Legislative Assembly of Punjab was held under the Government of India Act of 1935. The percentage of female voters was 33.56%. The Punjab Legislative Assembly was established under the Constitution consequent upon the first elections in 1952. The Punjab State Legislature became bicameral and

encompassed two Houses - Vidhan Sabha and Vidhan Parishad. The Legislative Council of Punjab was abolished on 1st January 1970, and as a result, the Legislature of Punjab was transformed into a Unicameral Legislature. After independence, the election of the Punjab Legislative Assembly was held in 1952. In this election, five female candidates won seats out of 13 women contestants, which was 3.24% of the total strength of the house. After the reorganization of Punjab on 1st November 1966, the first Punjab Legislative Assembly elections were held in 1967.

Table 2.1: Representation of Women in Punjab Legislative Assembly Since 1967

Year of Election	Total number of candidates	Number of women candidates	Total number of seats	No of successful Women candidates	Percentage of Women Legislators
1967	602	8	104	1	1 %
1969	471	8	104	0	0 %
1972	468	12	104	6	5.76 %
1977	682	18	117	3	2.56 %
1980	722	19	117	6	5.12 %
1985	857	33	117	4	3.41 %
1992	557	22	117	6	5.12 %
1997	693	52	117	7	5.98 %
2002	923	71	117	8	6.83 %
2007	1073	56	117	7	5.12 %
2012	1078	93	117	14	11.96 %
2017	1145	81	117	6	5.12 %
2022	1304	93	117	13	11.11%

Source: Election Commission of India

The above Table depicts the representation of women in the Punjab Legislative Assembly since 1967. It indicates that during the 1967 legislative assembly elections, only one female candidate won a seat out of 8 female contestants. The number of female members of the Legislative Assembly in the Vidhan Sabha reached the lowest point in

1969 when no woman was chosen. In the Punjab Assembly election 2012, out of these 117 constituencies, 93 females contested the elections, but only 14 of them won the seats. In the Punjab Assembly election 2017, out of these 117 constituencies, 81 females contested the elections, but only 6 of them won the seats. The last Assembly elections in Punjab were held in February 2022, when out of these 117 constituencies, 93 females contested in the elections, but only 13 of them won the seat, which was only 11 percent of the total strength of the House (<https://www.eci.gov.in/>). Although the percentage of voting among women in Punjab witnessed a positive trend, the same goes for the opposite side in terms of their representation in the state legislative assembly. Despite these improvements, the overall percentage remains relatively low over the entire period, indicating ongoing challenges in achieving gender parity in Punjab's legislative representation (Kaur, A.,2020).

Table 2.2: Representation of Punjabi Women in Lok Sabha Since 1952

Year	Total No. of Candidates	No. of Women Candidate	No. of Parliamentary Constituencies in Punjab	No. of Successful Women Candidate	Names of female MPs
1952	101	1	15	1	Subhadra Joshi
1956	78	0	17	0	Nil
1962	107	0	22	0	Nil
1967	75	3	13	2	Mohinder Kaur Sardarni Nirlep Kaur
1971	83	2	13	0	Nil
1977	79	1	13	0	Nil
1980	146	3	13	2	Gurbinder Kaur Brar Sukhbans Kaur Bhinder
1984	74	5	13	1	Sukhbans Kaur Bhinder
1989	227	12	13	3	Sukhbans Kaur

					Rajinder Kaur Bulara Bimal Kaur Khalsa
1992	81	4	13	2	Sukhbans Kaur Santosh Chowdhary
1996	259	17	13	2	Sukhbans Kaur Satwinder Kaur Dhaliwal
1998	102	9	13	1	Satwinder Kaur Dhaliwal
1999	120	14	13	2	Santosh Chowdhary Preneet Kaur
2004	132	10	13	2	Preneet Kaur Paramjit Kaur Gulshan
2009	218	13	13	4	Santosh Chowdhary Maharani Preneet Kaur Paramjit Kaur Gulshan Harsimrat Kaur Badal
2014	253	20	13	1	Harsimrat Kaur Badal
2019	278	24	13	2	Harsimrat Kaur Badal Preneet Kaur
2024	302	26	13	1	Harsimrat Kaur Badal

Source: Election Commission of India (1952 to 2024)

Table 2.2 presents an overview of the representation of Punjabi women in the Lok Sabha from 1952 to 2024. Initially, in 1952, out of 101 candidates, only Subhadra

Joshi succeeded, marking a solitary female presence amidst 15 parliamentary constituencies in Punjab. The subsequent decades saw varied participation, with notable strides in 1989 when three women—Sukhbans Kaur, Rajinder Kaur Bulara, and Bimal Kaur Khalsa—were elected, reflecting a significant increase from earlier years. However, overall representation remained sporadic, with some years, like 1971 and 1977, witnessing no successful female candidates. Progress was evident in 2009 and 2019, with four and two successful candidates, respectively, including names like Harsimrat Kaur Badal and Preneet Kaur. Despite these gains, the intermittent success and varying participation rates highlight ongoing challenges in achieving sustained gender equity in Punjab's representation within the Lok Sabha over the decades. From the given data, it can be inferred that the representation of women from Punjab in the Lok-Sabha is marginal compared to men.

Table 2.3: Representation of Female MPs of Punjab in the Rajya Sabha Since 1952

S. No.	Name of Female MP	Affiliated Political Party	Tenure
1	Amrit Kaur	Indian National Congress (INC)	20 April 1956- 2 April 1958 3 April 1958- 6 February 1964
2	Mohinder Kaur	INC	3 April 1964- 24 February 1967
3	Sita devi	INC	10 April 1972 -23 March 1974
4	Amarjit Kaur	INC	3 April 1976-2 April 1982 3 April 1982-2 April 1988
5	Rajinder Kaur	Shiromani Akali Dal	10 April 1978-9 April 1984
6	Gurcharan Singh	Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)	7 June 2001-4 July 2004
7	Sukhbans Kaur Bhinder	INC	26 June 2004-15 December 2006
8	Ambika Soni	INC	30 March 1976- 2 April 1980 5 July 2004- 4 July 2010 5 July 2010- 4 July 2016 5 July 2016- 4 July 2022 5 July 2022 till date

Source: <https://sansad.in/rs>

Table 2.3 presents a comprehensive overview of female representation from Punjab in the Rajya Sabha since 1952, detailing their political affiliations and tenures. The data highlights the dominance of the Indian National Congress (INC) in providing opportunities for female MPs, with significant contributions from figures like Amrit Kaur, Mohinder Kaur, Sita Devi, Amarjit Kaur, Sukhbans Kaur Bhinder, and Ambika Soni. These women served multiple terms, indicating both their longevity in politics and the party's sustained commitment to female representation over decades. The inclusion of Rajinder Kaur from the Shiromani Akali Dal and Gurcharan Singh from the Bharatiya Janata Party demonstrates periods of diverse political affiliations among female MPs from Punjab. Notably, Ambika Soni's extended tenure from the 1970s to the present day underscores her enduring influence within the Congress party. Overall, Table 2.3 underscores the evolving landscape of female representation in Punjab's Rajya Sabha seats, reflecting both continuity and occasional shifts in political affiliations over the past decades.

2.5 Electoral Trends in the 2024 Lok Sabha Elections in Punjab

In this section, the electoral trends in the context of the 2024 Lok Elections have been analyzed with special reference to Punjab.

Table 2.4: Gender-Wise Voter Turnout in Punjab During Lok Sabha Elections 2024

State	PC No.	Name of PC	Elector male	Elector Female	Elector Third Gender	Total Electors	Voter male	Voter Female	Voter others	Total voters
Punjab	1	Gurdaspu r	848885	756283	36	1605204	549258	520995	14	1070267
	2	Amritsar	845434	765766	63	1611263	487101	416086	19	903206
	3	Khadoor Sahib	876281	791449	67	1667797	540201	503033	14	1043248

4	Jalandhar	859688	794273	44	1654005	507439	480046	23	987508
5	Hoshiarpur	830840	770942	44	1601826	467823	474930	13	942766
6	Anandpur Sahib	904050	828097	64	1732211	550382	523159	31	1073572
7	Ludhiana	937094	821386	134	1758614	580754	476484	36	1057274
8	Fatehgarh Sahib	823339	729196	32	1552567	527776	442986	21	970783
9	Faridkot	842184	751768	81	1594033	545227	464384	26	1009637
10	Firozpur	880617	789343	48	1670008	604833	514317	17	1119167
11	Batinda	870014	781140	34	1651188	615563	529659	19	1145241
12	Sangrur	824001	732554	46	1556601	548270	457759	19	1006048
13	Patiala	944300	862044	80	1806424	616927	532462	28	1149417
Total		11286727	10174241	773	21461741	7141554	6336300	280	13478134

Source: Election Commission of India

Table 2.4 provides a comprehensive view of gender-wise voter turnout in Punjab during the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, offering insights into the electoral landscape across its 13 parliamentary constituencies (PCs). This dataset not only highlights the sheer scale of electoral participation but also underscores regional variations in voter turnout and gender representation. Analyzing these figures provides valuable insights into the electoral behaviors and demographic dynamics crucial for understanding political engagement and representation in Punjab's democratic framework. Punjab, with a total of 21,461,741 electors, demonstrated a near-even split between male (11,286,727) and female (10,174,241) electors, alongside a small number from the third gender category (773). Patiala emerged with the highest number of electors at 1,806,424, while Fatehgarh Sahib recorded the lowest at 1,552,567, reflecting varying constituency sizes and demographic compositions. In terms of voter participation, a total of 13,478,134 individuals exercised their voting rights. Male voters constituted 7,141,554, female voters accounted for 6,336,300, and the third gender

category saw 280 participants. This data underscores significant engagement in the electoral process, despite marginal representation from the third gender group.

Voter turnout varied noticeably across Punjab's constituencies. For instance, Firozpur demonstrated robust male participation with 604,833 male voters, while Patiala exhibited notable female turnout with 532,462 female voters. Constituencies like Ludhiana demonstrated inclusivity with 134 third-gender voters, suggesting efforts toward broader participation. Conversely, Anandpur Sahib and Gurdaspur displayed a balanced turnout between male and female voters, showcasing diverse voting behaviors across regions. Constituencies like Patiala and Batinda also recorded substantial voter turnouts, reflecting active participation from both male and female voters. Conversely, constituencies such as Faridkot and Fatehgarh Sahib, while also showing significant participation, exhibit slight variations in gender-specific voter turnout ratios. This gender-specific analysis holds critical implications for electoral strategies and policies. It emphasizes the importance of tailored outreach efforts to ensure equitable participation across all demographic groups. Policymakers, electoral observers, and analysts can leverage such insights to foster inclusive electoral practices and enhance democratic representation in Punjab and beyond. Continued attention to these dynamics is essential for advancing democratic principles and ensuring comprehensive voter engagement in future electoral processes.

Table 2.5: Voting Percentage in 2024 Lok Sabha Elections in Punjab

State	PC No	Name of PC	Voter Turnout Percentage			
			Male	Female	Third Gender	Total
Punjab	1	Gurdaspur	64.70 %	68.89 %	38.89 %	66.67 %
	2	Amritsar	57.62 %	54.34 %	30.16 %	56.06 %
	3	Khadoor Sahib	61.65 %	63.56 %	20.90 %	62.55 %
	4	Jalandhar	59.03 %	60.44 %	52.27 %	59.70 %
	5	Hoshiarpur	56.31 %	61.60 %	29.55 %	58.86 %

	6	Anandpur Sahib	60.88 %	63.18 %	48.44%	61.98 %
	7	Ludhiana	61.97 %	58.01 %	26.87 %	60.12 %
	8	Fatehgarh Sahib	64.10 %	60.75 %	65.63 %	62.53 %
	9	Faridkot	64.74 %	61.77 %	32.10 %	63.34 %
	10	Firozpur	68.68 %	65.16 %	35.42 %	67.02 %
	11	Batinda	70.75 %	67.81 %	55.88 %	69.36 %
	12	Sangrur	66.54 %	62.49 %	41.30 %	64.63 %
	13	Patiala	65.33 %	61.77 %	35.00 %	63.63 %

Source: <https://elections24.eci.gov.in/eci-updates.html>

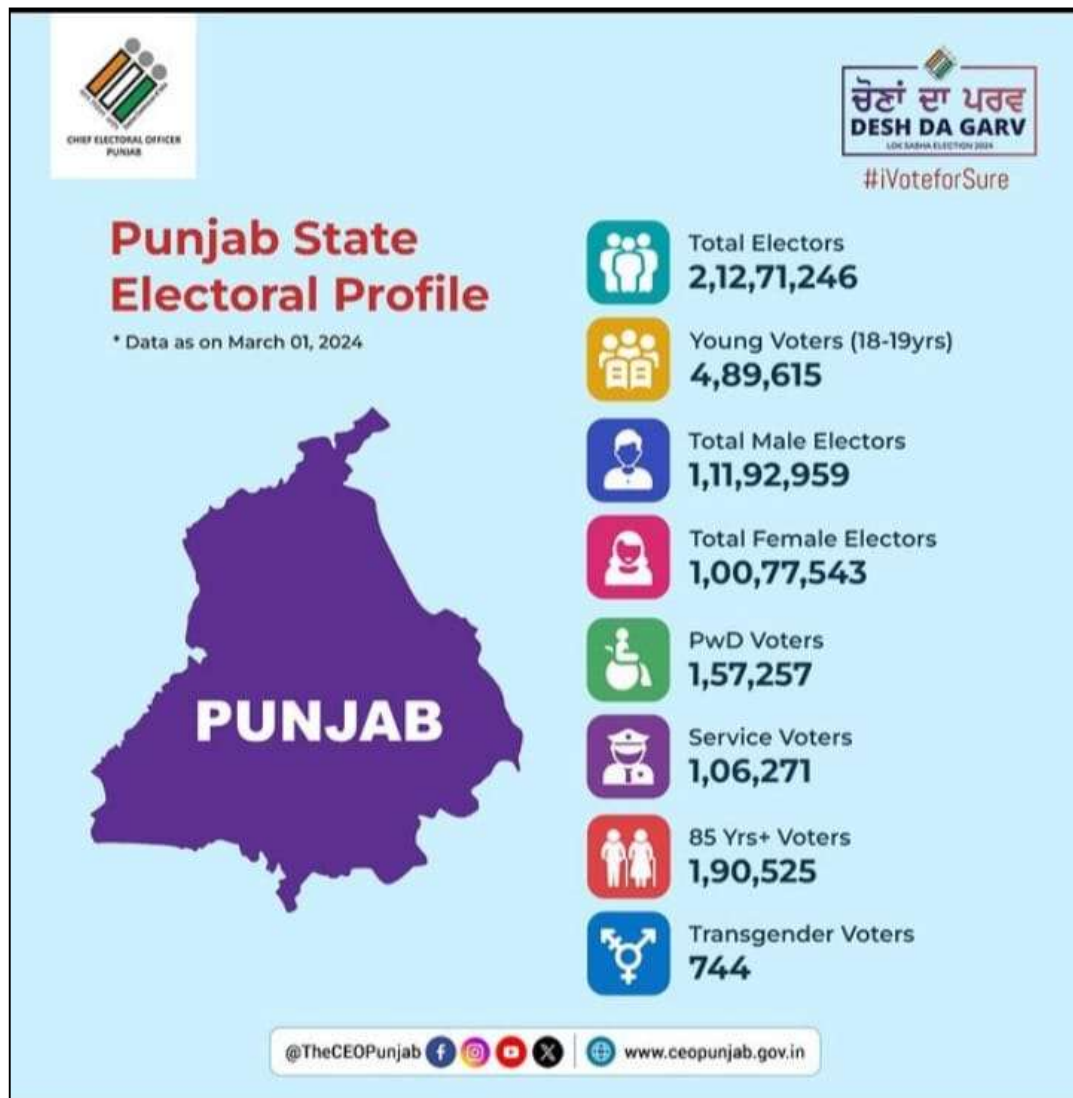
Table 2.5 provides a detailed breakdown of voting percentages during the 2024 Lok Sabha elections across Punjab's 13 parliamentary constituencies. This data offers insights into the gender-specific voter turnout rates, showcasing varying levels of participation across different demographics. In the 2024 Lok Sabha elections in Punjab, the constituency of Bathinda emerged with the highest male voter turnout percentage at 70.75%, underscoring robust civic engagement among male voters in this region. Following closely behind was Firozpur, where 68.68% of male electors participated in the electoral process, demonstrating significant voter turnout. Conversely, certain constituencies exhibited lower male voter turnout percentages, highlighting potential areas for targeted voter engagement efforts. For instance, Amritsar recorded a turnout of 57.62% among male voters, indicating a comparatively lower level of participation. Similarly, Hoshiarpur saw 56.31% male voter turnout, suggesting another area where voter outreach strategies could be intensified to enhance participation rates.

Gurdaspur stood out with the highest female voter turnout percentage of 68.89% during the 2024 Lok Sabha elections in Punjab, underscoring significant participation among female voters in this constituency. Following closely behind was Bathinda, where 67.81% of female electors engaged in the electoral process, reflecting robust

civic engagement. In contrast, Amritsar and Hoshiarpur exhibited lower female voter turnout percentages, echoing trends observed in male voter participation in these constituencies. Amritsar recorded a turnout of 54.34% among female voters, indicating a comparatively lower level of participation. Similarly, Hoshiarpur saw 61.60% female voter turnout, suggesting another area where voter outreach strategies could potentially be enhanced to bolster participation rates among women. Fatehgarh Sahib reported the highest turnout among the third gender category at 65.63%, indicating significant participation in this constituency. Khadoor Sahib and Anandpur Sahib also saw notable third-gender voter turnout percentages, albeit from smaller demographic groups.

Across the constituencies, male voter turnout ranged from 56.31% in Hoshiarpur to 70.75% in Batinda, highlighting significant engagement among male voters throughout Punjab. Female voter turnout also showed variations, with percentages ranging from 54.34% in Amritsar to 68.89% in Gurdaspur, indicating active participation across different regions. The third gender category, although smaller in numbers, participated with turnout percentages ranging from 20.90% in Khadoor Sahib to 65.63% in Fatehgarh Sahib, demonstrating diverse levels of engagement across constituencies. Notably, constituencies like Jalandhar and Bathinda recorded higher overall voter turnout percentages, reflecting robust participation from all gender categories. Conversely, constituencies such as Amritsar and Hoshiarpur exhibited lower turnout percentages, suggesting potential areas for targeted voter outreach and engagement efforts in future elections. The analysis of voting percentages in Punjab's 2024 Lok Sabha elections reveals nuanced patterns of voter engagement among male, female, and third-gender voters. This data not only informs strategic electoral planning but also underscores the imperative of fostering inclusive democratic processes that cater to diverse demographic groups.

Diagram/Chart 2.3: Punjab State Electoral Profile



Source: www.ceopunjab.gov.in

Based on the data retrieved from the official website of the Chief Election Office, Punjab, as of 1st March 2024, Punjab has a total of 2,12,71,246 electors. This includes 1,11,92,959 male voters, 1,00,77,543 female voters, and 744 voters belonging to the transgender category. Additionally, there are 4,89,615 young voters aged between 18 to 19 years, indicating significant participation from this demographic. Senior voters, aged above 85 years, constitute 1,90,525 individuals, reflecting the inclusion of elderly voters in the electoral process. Furthermore, there are 1,57,257 Persons with

Disabilities (PwD) voters, highlighting efforts to facilitate accessibility and participation among differently-abled individuals in Punjab's democratic processes.

2.6 Comparative and Critical Analysis of Women's Representation in Indian Politics: The Paradox of Punjab

The journey of women's political representation in India since independence is a narrative of paradoxical progress, marked by incremental gains at the national level juxtaposed with deeply entrenched barriers at the state and local levels. The state of Punjab, often hailed as economically developed, presents a microcosm of this national struggle, revealing a significant disconnect between women's participation as voters and their representation as elected leaders. This analysis critically examines the comparative landscape of women's representation across the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, and State Assemblies, with a dedicated focus on Punjab's unique and often contradictory position.

The trajectory of women's representation in the Lok Sabha, as detailed in Table 1.1, is one of slow, non-linear progress. From a meager 4.5% in the first Lok Sabha (1952), the percentage of women MPs remained in the single digits for over four decades. A significant jump occurred in 1984, likely influenced by the sympathy wave following Indira Gandhi's assassination, propelling representation to 8.1%. However, it took until 2009 to consistently cross the 10% threshold. The 2019 elections marked a historic high with 78 women MPs (14.4%), though the 2024 figure of 13.6% indicates this progress is not yet stable or irreversible. This glacial pace over 72 years underscores the resilience of patriarchal structures within political parties and the electorate.

As of June 2024, Table 1.2 reveals a striking similarity in women's representation between the two houses of Parliament: 14.94% in the Lok Sabha and 14.05% in the Rajya Sabha. This near-identical figure suggests a systemic issue beyond electoral dynamics. The Rajya Sabha, whose members are elected by state legislators, reflects the gender biases inherent in the state assemblies themselves. The lack of a significant difference indicates that the problem is not merely about winning popular votes but is rooted in the unwillingness of political party machineries, both at the

national and state levels, to field and promote women candidates, whether in direct or indirect elections.

Table 1.3 offers a crucial comparative lens, placing Punjab's performance against other Indian states. With 11.11% women MLAs (elected in 2022), Punjab sits near the middle of the pack, performing better than states like Gujarat (7.14%), Andhra Pradesh (8%), and Kerala (7.86%) but lagging behind front-runners like West Bengal (13.70%), Chhattisgarh (14.44%), and Bihar (10.70%). This mid-table status is paradoxical for a state with robust development indicators. It suggests that socio-economic development alone is insufficient to dismantle cultural and patriarchal barriers to political leadership for women, a phenomenon often described as the "Asian paradox" in gender studies.

Table 2.1 chronicles a history of neglect for women's representation in the Punjab Vidhan Sabha. For decades following the 1967 elections, the number of women MLAs languished between 0% and 6.83%. The elections of 2012 and 2022, where women's representation jumped to nearly 12%, appear as outliers rather than an established trend, as the 2017 elections saw a sharp regression to 5.12%. This volatility reveals a tokenistic and inconsistent approach by major political parties in Punjab—the Congress, the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)—who field women candidates sparingly and often from vulnerable or unwinnable seats.

The data in Tables 2.2 and 2.3 paint a picture of elite dominance in Punjab's national-level representation. Table 2.2 shows that Punjab has consistently sent between 0 to 4 women to the Lok Sabha, with prominent names like Harsimrat Kaur Badal (SAD), Preneet Kaur (Congress), and Sukhbans Kaur Bhinder (Congress) featuring repeatedly. This indicates a tendency to rely on political dynasties or the wives and daughters of established male leaders. Similarly, Table 2.3 on the Rajya Sabha reveals a very small club of women representatives, dominated by long tenures of figures like Ambika Soni. This reinforces that the pathway for an ordinary woman without political lineage to achieve high office in Punjab remains exceptionally narrow.

The most compelling data for Punjab lies in the stark contrast between voter turnout and representation. Tables 2.4 and 2.5 from the 2024 Lok Sabha elections are revelatory. In every single parliamentary constituency, the female voter turnout either

surpassed or was nearly equal to the male turnout. For instance, in Hoshiarpur, 61.60% of women voted compared to 56.31% of men. This high and enthusiastic participation as voters dismantles any stereotype of Punjabi women being uninterested in politics. However, this high participation has not translated into demand for or acquisition of political power. The same electorate that votes in large numbers does not elect women in comparable numbers, highlighting deep-seated cultural biases against women as leaders.

However, the core of the issue lies in the structural and cultural barriers within Punjab's political ecosystem. First, political parties are inherently patriarchal institutions, controlled by male leaders who are reluctant to cede power or nominate women outside of familial connections. Second, women candidates face immense challenges related to a lack of financial resources, muscle power, and perceived electability, which parties use as excuses not to field them. Third, societal norms continue to view politics as a "dirty" and male-dominated sphere, discouraging women from pursuing political careers and causing voters to hesitate before voting for them.

Therefore, it can be inferred from the above discussion that the comparative analysis between India and Punjab, and between different legislative bodies, unequivocally demonstrates that voluntary action by political parties has failed for over seven decades. The abysmal figures, especially when contrasted with stellar voter turnout, make a compelling case for structural intervention. The recently passed Women's Reservation Act, which seeks to reserve one-third of seats in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies for women, is the necessary catalyst for change. For Punjab, this law holds the potential to break the cycle of tokenism and force parties to seek out and empower a diverse array of women leaders. Without such a mandated quota, the paradoxical gap between women's participation as voters and their representation as leaders in Punjab and across India is likely to persist for generations to come.

2.7 Women's Political Empowerment in Local Governance: Insights from Punjab

India's experiment with grassroots democracy through Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) has been central to deepening representation, particularly for

women. Nearly 65 percent of India’s population resides in rural areas, making PRIs crucial for governance and welfare delivery. Initially, women’s participation was negligible, such as in Maharashtra (1978), where out of 320 women in panchayat samitis and zilla parishads, only six were elected. The landmark 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1993 transformed this by mandating one-third reservation of seats and chairperson posts for women, including within the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe categories. Over time, 20 states, including Punjab, expanded this quota to 50 percent. This reform has propelled women into leadership at an unprecedented scale: as of 2020, India had 31.87 lakh PRI representatives, of which 14.53 lakh (about 46%) were women. States like Madhya Pradesh (1.96 lakh women), Maharashtra (1.28 lakh), and Uttar Pradesh (3.04 lakh) lead numerically, while Kerala and Goa show strong proportions. India now ranks among the top countries globally in terms of elected women representatives at the local government level.

Table 2.6: Comparative Representation in PRIs (As of 2020)

Region	Total PRI Representatives	Elected Women Representatives (EWRs)	Share of Women (%)
India	31,87,320	14,53,973	45.6 %
Punjab	1,00,312	41,922	41.8 %

Source: Ministry of Panchayati Raj, 2020

Punjab mirrors both the achievements and challenges of this trajectory. According to PIB (2020), Punjab has 1,00,312 PRI representatives, of whom 41,922 are women, reflecting the successful enforcement of the 50 percent quota. Women today occupy positions as Sarpanches, panchayat members, and Zilla Parishad leaders across the state. Yet, substantive representation remains contested—issues like proxy leadership by male relatives, lack of administrative training, and patriarchal resistance continue to limit their effective participation. Nonetheless, Punjab has also witnessed remarkable cases of women spearheading village sanitation drives, school improvements, and health awareness campaigns, demonstrating the potential of

reservations to alter grassroots politics. The evolution of local government in Punjab underscores that while constitutional mandates ensure numerical presence, the next challenge lies in building capacity, autonomy, and institutional support to transform women’s symbolic entry into effective governance.

While PRIs represent rural self-governance, Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) form the backbone of urban democratic administration under the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1993. These include municipal corporations, municipal councils, and nagar panchayats, which manage local services such as sanitation, water supply, infrastructure, and town planning. Just like PRIs, women’s reservation provisions apply here as well, and in Punjab, ULBs have become a significant platform for women’s participation in political life. However, compared to rural institutions where reservation has dramatically expanded women’s presence, ULBs show a more mixed and gradual trend.

In the Nawanshahr constituency, election data highlights this dynamic. In the 2015 elections, the Nawanshahr Municipal Council had 19 wards, with 10 males and 9 female councilors, while Rahon (13 wards) elected 7 males and 6 female councilors, suggesting near parity. By the 2021 elections, women’s representation in Nawanshahr declined slightly, with 11 males and 8 female councilors, while Rahon retained the earlier ratio of 7 men and 6 women.

Table 2.7: Women’s Representation in ULBs of Nawanshahr Constituency

Year	ULB Name	Total Wards	Male Councilors	Female Councilors
2015	Nawanshahr	19	10	09
	Rahon	13	07	06
2021	Nawanshahr	19	11	08
	Rahon	13	07	06

Source: Data Collected by Research While Visiting the MC Offices in-Person

This micro-level evidence demonstrates that while Punjab’s PRIs have achieved large-scale participation of women due to constitutional mandates, ULBs exhibit slower

and less consistent progress. Women have entered councils in substantial numbers, but the decline in Nawanshahr in 2021 indicates the fragility of gains in urban contexts, where competitive politics, party dominance, and entrenched patriarchal structures often limit women's ability to sustain representation. Thus, ULBs in Punjab show both the promise and the limitations of extending grassroots empowerment to urban spaces.

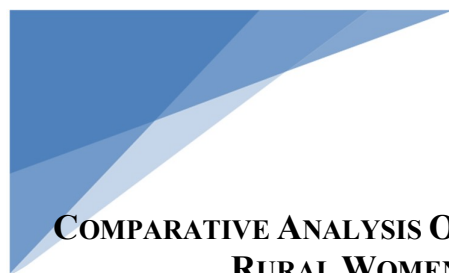
In the above milieu, reservation has thus emerged as one of the most important tools for women's empowerment in India. Women, who constitute half of the population, continue to work under a male-dominated socio-political structure, and despite having rights to vote, contest elections, and seek education and employment, their opportunities remain constrained. The 73rd and 7th Amendments have acted as milestones in guaranteeing women's entry into formal political spaces, ensuring that their voices are heard in institutions of decision-making. Although the above-mentioned perspectives highlight that reservation has secured women's entry into politics, the broader goal of empowerment requires education, skill-building, and social change so that women can effectively exercise their political agency.

2.8 Conclusion

The landscape of women's political participation in Punjab reveals a dynamic interplay of progress and persistent challenges. Over the years, women have increasingly asserted their presence in political spheres, from local governance to state-level policymaking. This journey has been marked by notable achievements such as increased representation in legislative bodies and the implementation of policies aimed at advancing gender equality. However, the road to full inclusion remains fraught with obstacles, including entrenched patriarchal attitudes, socio-economic disparities, and systemic barriers within political parties. These factors continue to impede women's access to leadership roles and influence within decision-making processes.

Moving forward, addressing these challenges demands a concerted effort from various stakeholders, including political parties, civil society, and government institutions. Initiatives focusing on education, economic empowerment, and affirmative action are crucial in dismantling barriers and fostering a more equitable political

environment. Moreover, enhancing awareness and fostering a supportive societal discourse around gender equality can contribute to shifting cultural norms and perceptions. By building on the gains achieved and advocating for sustained reforms, Punjab can aspire towards a future where women's political participation is not only normalized but celebrated as a cornerstone of inclusive and effective governance. The data also underscores varying levels of engagement across Punjab's constituencies, emphasizing the need for inclusive electoral practices to enhance participation rates among all demographic groups.



CHAPTER 3

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF URBAN AND RURAL WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN NAWANSHAHR CONSTITUENCY, PUNJAB

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3.1 Introduction

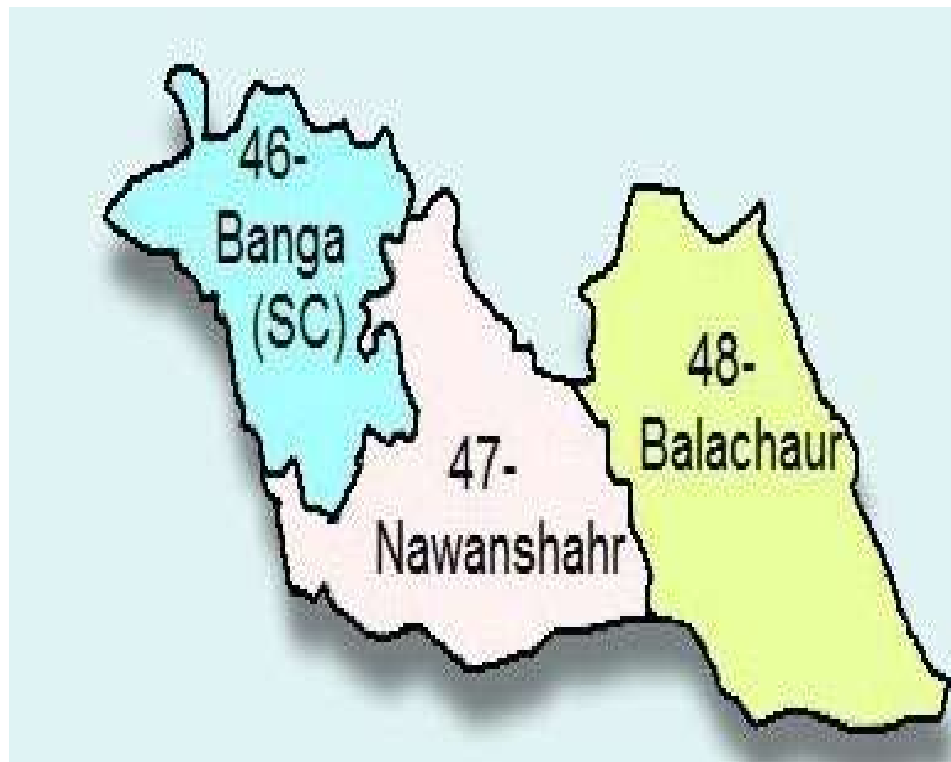
The political landscape of the Nawanshahr constituency in Punjab presents a fascinating juxtaposition between the political participation of urban and rural women. Situated in the heart of the state, Nawanshahr embodies the diverse socio-economic and cultural dynamics that characterize both urban centers and rural hinterlands. Urban women in Nawanshahr, much like their counterparts in other urban areas, navigate a landscape shaped by educational opportunities, employment prospects, and access to civic amenities. Their political engagement often reflects issues such as urban infrastructure development, healthcare accessibility, and women's rights in professional spheres. Conversely, rural women in Nawanshahr contend with distinct challenges rooted in agrarian life, where agricultural policies, land rights, and rural development initiatives significantly impact their livelihoods and well-being. Their participation in politics is shaped by community structures, traditional roles, and the intersecting influences of caste and class dynamics within rural society.

This chapter explores the nuanced dimensions of political participation among women in Nawanshahr constituency, examining how urban and rural contexts intersect with gender to shape their experiences and opportunities in governance. It delves into the strategies employed by women leaders in both settings, the impact of local policies on their empowerment, and the persistent barriers that hinder their full and equal participation in political processes. By unpacking these complexities, we aim to illuminate the unique challenges and potentials for enhancing gender inclusivity in political representation within Nawanshahr, thereby contributing to broader discussions on women's empowerment in regional politics.

3.2 Socio-Political Profile of Nawanshahr Constituency

Nawanshahr Constituency, designated as Sr. No. 47, is one of the 117 constituencies in the state of Punjab, India. It is situated within the Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar District and falls under the jurisdiction of the Anandpur Sahib Lok Sabha constituency. Covering a total area of 371.96 square kilometers, Nawanshahr has a diverse population totaling 108,829 individuals as per the 2011 Census data. Among these, 55,351 are male residents and 53,478 are female residents. The literacy rate in Nawanshahr is recorded at 70%, with 75% literacy among males and 66% among females. The district headquarters, Nawanshahr City, is centrally located within this constituency. Nawanshahr Constituency includes two urban areas governed by municipalities: Nawanshahr City itself and Rahon Town. Additionally, the constituency comprises 146 villages, contributing to its vibrant socio-economic fabric (*ceo.gov.in*).

Image 3.1: Overview of Nawanshahr Constituency



Source: ceopunjab.gov.in

Table 3.1: MLAs from Nawanshahr Assembly Constituency

Year of Election	Total candidates	Number of Male candidates	No. of women candidates	Name of the winner	Gender	Category	Party of the successful candidate
1951	20	20	0	Gurbachan Singh	M	Gen	INC
				Bishna	M	Gen	INC
1957	7	7	0	Jagat Ram	M	Sc	INC
				Hargurand Singh	M		INC
1962	4	4	0	Jagat Ram	M	SC	INC
1967	3	3	0	Dilbagh Singh	M	Gen	INC
1969	3	3	0	Dilbagh Singh	M	GEN	INC
1972	2	2	0	Dilbagh Singh	M	GEN	INC
1977	6	6	0	Jatinder Singh	M	GEN	SAD
1980	9	9	0	Dilbagh Singh	M	GEN	IND
1985	6	6	0	Dilbagh Singh	M	GEN	INC
1992	5	5	0	Dilbagh Singh	M	GEN	INC
1997	7	6	1	Charanjit Singh	M	GEN	IND

2002	9	9	0	Parkash Singh	M	GEN	INC
2007	10	9	1	Jatinder Singh Kariha	M	GEN	SAD
2012	11	9	2	Guriqbal Kaur	F	GEN	INC
2017	9	9	0	Angad Singh	M	GEN	INC
2022	10	9	1	Nachhatar Pal	M	SC	BSP

Source: Data compiled from ECI Reports (eci.gov.in)

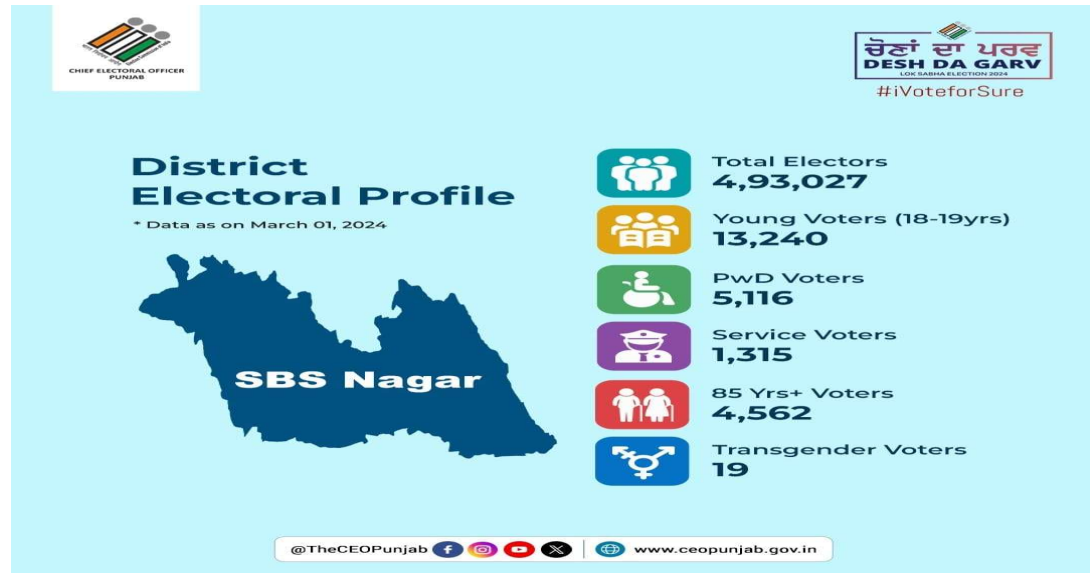
The electoral history of Nawanshahr constituency, spanning from 1951 to 2022, reflects both continuity and transformation in Punjab's broader political landscape. Early contests were characterized by robust participation, such as the 20 candidates in the inaugural 1951 election, yet they also revealed a striking absence of women. Male candidates monopolized the political space for decades, underscoring entrenched patriarchal norms that constrained women's access to public office. During this period, the Indian National Congress (INC) consolidated its dominance, with leaders such as Dilbagh Singh repeatedly securing victories between 1967 and 1992. His repeated success demonstrated not only personal charisma but also the strength of INC's organizational machinery. Even when the number of candidates fluctuated—from a high of 20 in 1951 to just 2 in 1972—the absence of women signaled a broader exclusion from formal politics. Thus, the initial decades of Nawanshahr's electoral history highlight the overwhelming dominance of men and the delayed entry of women into electoral competition, despite gradual democratization elsewhere in the state.

By the late 20th century, Nawanshahr's political dynamics began to diversify, reflecting both voter realignments and the gradual weakening of the INC's monopoly. Independent candidates such as Charanjit Singh in 1997 broke through the dominance of established parties, signaling voter disillusionment with mainstream political actors. Similarly, the rise of regional and alternative parties like the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), which secured a win in 2007, reflected Punjab's shifting political loyalties and identity-driven politics. These developments paralleled broader socio-economic

changes, such as agrarian distress and rising youth aspirations, which reshaped voter priorities. Although women remained underrepresented as candidates, their occasional presence on ballots—from 1997 onwards—indicated the beginnings of a slow but significant shift in the gendered composition of politics. The persistence of male winners in this period suggests that structural barriers—including party nomination practices, financial constraints, and cultural expectations—continued to marginalize women. Nonetheless, the late 1990s and 2000s represent a transitional phase where Nawanshahr’s electoral space opened up to greater contestation and pluralism.

The election of Guriqbal Kaur in 2012 marked a watershed moment in Nawanshahr’s history, not as an isolated gesture of inclusivity but as part of the broader, evolving political dynamics of Punjab. Her victory as the first female MLA must be understood within the context of increasing debates around gender quotas, women’s leadership, and demands for more inclusive decision-making structures. While she remains the only woman to have secured the seat so far, her success reflects how political openings for women are shaped by shifting party strategies and voter receptiveness to change. The more recent victory of Nachhatar Pal from the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) in 2022 further underscores a constituency in flux, moving away from long-standing INC dominance toward greater political diversity. Taken together, these trends demonstrate that Nawanshahr’s politics are shaped not only by party competition but also by the gradual recognition of women as legitimate actors in decision-making processes. Although women’s representation remains limited, the 2012 breakthrough signals the potential for deeper structural change in Punjab’s political landscape.

Image 3.2: Nawanshahr District Electoral Profile 2024 as per the data of the CEO, Punjab



Source: ECI (eci.gov.in)

Table 3.2: Male-Female Voting percentage in various elections in Nawanshahr Assembly Constituency

Elections	Female Voting Percentage	Male Voting Percentage
Punjab Assembly election 2017	81.76 %	73.70 %
Lok Sabha elections 2019	69.96 %	63.63 %
Punjab Assembly election 2022	73.79 %	67.90 %
Lok Sabha elections 2024	63.37 %	57.78 %

Source: <https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/jalandhar/in-nawanshahr-women-hold-key-to-power-372031> & For Lok Sabha Election 2024 data collected from District Election office, S.B.S Nagar.

According to district administration data, women have consistently shown higher voter turnout compared to men across various elections, including the 2017 Assembly, 2019 Lok Sabha, Zila Parishad, and 2022 Assembly elections, and the recently concluded Lok Sabha Election 2024. In 2017, women's voter turnout was notably higher than men with a difference of eight percentage points. Specifically, women recorded a turnout of 81.76%, whereas men's turnout was 73.70%. In the 2022 Assembly elections, 177,669 women (73.79%) exercised their voting rights, whereas 174,393 men (67.90%) participated. Analyzing specific constituencies, Balachaur had the highest turnout of women voters at 73.77%, followed by Banga and Nawanshahr with 69.39% and 69.37%, respectively. In the Lok Sabha Election 2024, female voting turnout was 63.37%, whereas the male voting percentage was 57.78%. Despite this increase in female voting percentage, women's inclusion in state legislatures is not satisfactory. (*Kaur, A., 2022*).

District administration officials view the increased participation of women in voting as a positive development. However, political analysts offer a contrasting perspective, attributing this trend to Nawanshahr's status as a hub for Non-Resident Indians (NRIs). They suggest that significant migration from villages to countries like Canada, Australia, England, and America has reduced the male voter turnout. According to one observer, many households in the villages have at least one member who has migrated abroad, either legally for studies or work or illegally. This demographic shift, combined with a notable decrease in first-time voters compared to the 2017 elections, underscores the complex socio-political dynamics influencing voter behavior in the region (*ibid*).

3.3 Data Interpretation and Analysis

Data analysis is defined as the process of gathering, examining, cleaning, modifying, and interpreting data to retrieve relevant information, validate conclusions, and assist in decision-making (*Brown & Kudyba, 2014*). It is essential across various fields, including business, science, and social science, where it serves as a foundation for drawing meaningful conclusions from collected data (*Pruneau, 2017*). *John Tukey (1962)* elaborated on data analysis by describing it as a suite of procedures for

interpreting data, techniques for analyzing results, and planning data collection to enhance precision and accuracy. This broad definition underscores the importance of not only analyzing data but also ensuring that data collection and preparation are optimized for effective analysis.

According to *Creswell (2009)*, data analysis is critical because it allows researchers to thoroughly examine both quantitative and qualitative data. This stage is where the raw data is transformed into information that can be used to derive conclusions and make decisions. Without proper data analysis, the raw data remains inert and uninformative. The selection of data analysis tools is driven by the nature of the data being analyzed. For quantitative data, statistical tools such as the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences have been employed to transform numerical data into interpretable charts and graphs. For qualitative data (key respondents), thematic analysis or content analysis might have been used to identify patterns or themes. In the above context, the present study outlined the detailed analysis of 360 respondents, 180 rural and 180 urban habitations. The data for the present study has been collected through a questionnaire schedule and in-depth interviews. The key here is to ensure that the data collection process is representative of both rural and urban areas.

Data analysis in the context of the Nawanshahr constituency involves a systematic approach to understanding and interpreting data from both rural and urban respondents. By applying appropriate statistical and qualitative techniques, the researcher has uncovered valuable insights that inform decision-making and policy development. The insights gained from the data analysis will help in making informed decisions. This segmentation allows for more effective and targeted interventions. Considering the magnitude of the research and research questions, the data has been presented under appropriate themes, keeping in view the coherency of the subject matter. The key inferences drawn from the data have larger implications and relevance in the Nawanshahr constituency in particular and the State of Punjab in general.

3.4 Socio-Demographic Profile of Respondents of Nawanshahr Constituency

The socio-demographic profile of respondents in the Nawanshahr constituency provides a comprehensive overview of the eligible female voters, analyzing various factors such as age, education, caste, marital status, religion, residential area, and income. This detailed examination seeks to understand how these socio-economic variables influence political awareness and political inclusion among women. By segmenting the voter population based on these dimensions, the study aims to uncover patterns and disparities that affect political engagement and representation. For instance, it investigates how educational attainment correlates with political knowledge, how marital status might impact political participation, and how income levels and residential areas influence access to political resources and opportunities. This analysis is crucial for tailoring strategies that enhance political inclusion and address the specific needs of different demographic groups within the constituency.

Table 3.3: Respondents' Place of Residence

Place of Residence	Frequency	Percentage
Urban	180	50%
Rural	180	50%
Total	360	100%

The data presented in Table 3.3 shows an equal distribution of sample size between urban and rural places of residence, with each category comprising 50% of the total sample. For the present study, 180 respondents (urban female voters) were selected from Nawanshahr and Rahon municipalities. While 180 respondents (rural female voters) were selected from villages of the Nawanshahr constituency. This suggests a balanced representation of both urban and rural populations within the dataset. Analysis could focus on exploring demographic differences, socioeconomic factors, and correlations within the context of the study or survey conducted.

Table 3.4: Age-wise distribution of Women

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
18-32	186	51.67 %
32-46	87	24.17 %
46-60	68	18.88 %
60-74	19	5.28 %
Above 74	0	0%
Total	360	100%

The age-wise distribution of respondents (women voters) shows a varied pattern across different age groups. The majority, 51.67%, fall within the 18-32 age bracket, indicating a significant representation of younger women in the sample. The 32-46 age group constitutes 24.17%, suggesting a considerable presence of women in their early to mid-adult years. Women aged 46-60 account for 18.88% of the total, reflecting a smaller but notable segment in middle adulthood. Those in the 60-74 age range make up 5.28%, indicating a minority representation of older adults in the dataset. Notably, there are no respondents above 74 years old in this sample. This distribution highlights a predominantly younger to middle-aged demographic, warranting further analysis into factors such as generational trends, health behaviors, and societal roles that may influence these patterns within the context of the study or survey conducted.

Table 3.5: Respondents' Social Category

Social Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gen	120	33.333%
OBC	120	33.333%
SC	120	33.333%
Total	360	100%

The distribution of respondents across social categories shows an equal representation among General (Gen), Other Backward Classes (OBC), and Scheduled

Castes (SC), each comprising 33.333% of the total sample. This balanced distribution suggests a deliberate effort to ensure a proportional representation of different social groups within the present study. The analysis could focus on understanding the socioeconomic backgrounds, educational attainment, and access to resources or opportunities among these groups to identify potential disparities or patterns. Further investigation might explore how social category influences political perspectives and outcomes.

Table 3.6: Religion-wise Distribution of Respondents

Religion of respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Hindism	219	60.83 %
Sikhism	138	38.33 %
Islam	2	0.56 %
Christianity	1	0.28 %
TOTAL	360	100%

The religion-wise distribution of respondents shows a predominant presence of Hindus, comprising 60.83% of the total sample. Sikhs constitute a significant minority at 38.33%, indicating a diverse representation within the dataset. Muslims and Christians make up a very small proportion, with 0.56% and 0.28%, respectively. This distribution underscores the religious diversity within the studied population, with Hindus and Sikhs being the primary religious groups represented. The analysis could explore how religious affiliation correlates with various social, cultural, and economic factors within the context of the study or survey. It might also delve into differences in beliefs, practices, and community dynamics among different religious groups, potentially influencing political perspectives.

Table 3.7: Respondents' Educational Status

Educational Status	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterate	6	1.67 %
Primary	31	8.61 %
Matriculation	73	20.27 %
Sr. Sec	69	19.17 %
Graduate	129	35.83 %
Postgraduate	50	13.88 %
Doctorate	2	0.56 %
TOTAL	360	100 %

The distribution of respondents according to educational status reveals a diverse range of educational backgrounds within the sample. Graduates constitute the largest group at 35.83%, followed closely by matriculants at 20.27% and senior secondary completers at 19.17%. Postgraduates make up 13.88%, reflecting a notable proportion with advanced educational qualifications. Primarily educated individuals represent 8.61%, while doctorate holders and illiterates each constitute a small fraction at 0.56% and 1.67%, respectively. This distribution highlights a varied educational landscape, suggesting a broad spectrum of academic achievements and qualifications among the respondents.

Table 3.8: Respondents' Monthly Income

Monthly Income	No. of respondents	Percentage
Below 20000	165	45.84 %
20001-40000	149	41.39 %
40001-60000	32	8.89 %
60001-80000	7	1.94%
Above 80000	7	1.94 %
TOTAL	360	100 %

The distribution of respondents according to monthly income reveals a diverse economic landscape within the sample. The majority of respondents, 45.84%, report incomes below Rs. 20,000, indicating a significant portion of the population falls within lower income brackets. Additionally, 41.39% report incomes ranging from Rs. 20,001 to Rs. 40,000, suggesting a substantial middle-income segment. Those earning between Rs. 40,001 and Rs. 60,000 comprise 8.89%, while respondents earning Rs. 60,001 to Rs. 80,000 and above Rs. 80,000 each represent 1.94%. This distribution underscores varying levels of economic disparity and highlights the prevalence of lower to middle-income households within the surveyed population.

Table 3.9: Respondents' Marital Status

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Married	189	52.5 %
Unmarried	163	45.28 %
Divorced	1	0.28 %
Widow	7	1.94 %
TOTAL	360	100 %

The distribution of respondents according to marital status shows a varied representation within the sample. The majority, 52.5%, are married, indicating a predominant marital status among the respondents. Unmarried individuals constitute 45.28%, reflecting a significant proportion who have not married. Widows account for 1.94% of the sample, while divorced individuals are the smallest group at 0.28%. This distribution suggests a range of marital statuses within the surveyed population, with married and unmarried individuals comprising the majority. In this context, the present study has explored how marital status influences the political participation and political knowledge of respondents.

3.5 Political Awareness Among Urban and Rural Female Voters of Nawanshahr Constituency

In the present section, political awareness among urban and rural female voters of the Nawanshahr constituency has been presented. The analysis is based on data that was collected from 360 respondents of the Nawanshahr Constituency of Punjab. The study, conducted in Nawanshahr Constituency of Punjab, aimed to uncover the differences in political engagement and awareness between these demographic groups (rural and urban female voters). The findings shed light on the varying degrees of political knowledge, participation, and interest among urban and rural women, providing valuable insights into the dynamics shaping electoral behavior and civic engagement in this region. All the subject matter has been presented under appropriate themes, keeping in view the coherence of the subject matter.

Table 3.10: Knowledge about the first female Prime Minister of India

First Female Prime Minister of India	No. of Urban respondents			No. of Rural respondents			Total and Percentage
Indira Gandhi	173 (48.05 %)			114 (31.66 %)			287 (79.72%)
	Gen. 60 (33%)	OBC 56 (31%)	SC 57 (31.6%)	Gen 39 (21.6%)	OBC 38 (21%)	SC 37 (20%)	
Sonia Gandhi	1 (0.28 %)			6 (1.67 %)			7 (1.95%)
	Gen 0 (0%)	OBC 1 (0.5%)	SC 0 (0%)	Gen 0 (0%)	OBC 4 (2.2%)	SC 2 (1.1%)	
	0			3			3

Sushma Swaraj	(0 %)			(0.83 %)			(0.83 %)
	Gen 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	Gen 1 (0.5%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 2 (1.1%)	
Ambika Soni	0 (0 %)			0 (0 %)			0 (0 %)
	Gen 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	Gen 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	
Don't Know	6 (1.67 %)			57 (15.83 %)			63 (17.5 %)
	Gen. 0 (0 %)	OBC 3 (1.67%)	SC 3 (1.67%)	Gen. 14 (7.7%)	OBC 19 (10.5%)	SC 24 (13%)	
TOTAL	180 (50 %)			180 (50 %)			360 (100%)

The data on knowledge about the first female Prime Minister of India reveals that a significant majority, 79.72% of respondents, correctly identify Indira Gandhi as the first female Prime Minister. This recognition is higher among urban respondents, with 48.05% (173) [including Gen. 60 (33%), OBC 56 (31%) and SC 57 (31.6%)] correctly identifying her compared to 31.66% (114) [including Gen. 39 (21.6%), OBC 38 (21%) and SC 37 (20%) of rural respondents. There is a smaller proportion who incorrectly attribute this role to Sonia Gandhi (1.95%) or Sushma Swaraj (0.83%), with minimal differences between urban and rural responses for these options. A notable portion of respondents, 17.5%, either do not know or did not provide a response, with rural respondents more likely to indicate uncertainty (15.83%) compared to urban respondents (1.67%). This distribution highlights varying levels of awareness about significant political figures across urban and rural populations, suggesting opportunities

for targeted educational initiatives to enhance knowledge about historical figures and their contributions to Indian politics.

Table 3.11: Knowledge about the current President of India

Current President of India	No. of Urban respondents			No. of Rural respondents			Total and Percentage
Pranab Mukherjee	1 (0.28 %)			1 (0.28 %)			2 (0.55%)
	Gen 1 (0.5%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	Gen 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 1 (0.5%)	
Pratibha Devi Patil	0 (0 %)			9 (2.5%)			9 (2.5%)
	Gen 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	Gen 2 (1.1%)	OBC 5 (2.8%)	SC 2 (1.1%)	
Droupadi Murmu	137 (38.05%)			31 (8.61%)			168 (46.67%)
	Gen. 55 (30.5%),	OBC 40 (22.2%)	SC 42 (23.3%)	Gen. 13 (7.2%)	OBC 6 (3.3%)	SC 12 (6.7%)	
Ram Nath Kovind	6 (1.67 %)			16 (4.44 %)			22 (6.11%)
	Gen 1 (0.5%)	OBC 3 (1.7%)	SC 2 (1.1%)	Gen 5 (2.8%)	OBC 6 (3.3%)	SC 5 (2.8%)	
Don't Know	36 (10 %)			123 (34.16 %)			159 (44.17 %)
	Gen. 4 (2.2%)	OBC 17 (9.4%)	SC 15 (8.3%)	Gen. 39 (21.7%)	OBC 43 (23.9%)	SC 41 (22.8%)	
TOTAL	180 (50 %)			180 (50 %)			360 (100%)

The data on knowledge about the current President of India shows varying levels of awareness among respondents. Droupadi Murmu is identified as the current President by 46.67% of respondents, with a significant difference between urban

38.05% (137) [including Gen. 55 (30.5%), OBC 40 (22.2%) and SC 42 (23.3%)] and rural 8.61% (31) [including Gen. 13 (7.2%), OBC 6 (3.3%) and SC 12 (6.7%)] recognition. Ram Nath Kovind is recognized by a smaller proportion, 6.11%, with slightly higher recognition among rural respondents (4.44%) compared to urban respondents (1.67%). Pranab Mukherjee and Pratibha Devi Patil are incorrectly identified or not recognized, each receiving minimal responses. A substantial portion of respondents, 44.17%, indicate they do not know the current President, with rural respondents more likely to express uncertainty (34.16%) compared to urban respondents (10%). This distribution underscores disparities in knowledge about current political leadership across urban and rural populations, suggesting a need for enhanced civic education and awareness campaigns to improve understanding of key governmental figures among the public.

Table 3.12: Knowledge about the Current Chief Minister of Punjab

Current Chief Minister of Punjab	No. of Urban respondents			No. of Rural respondents			Total and Percentage
Captain Amrinder Singh	0 (0 %)			0 (0 %)			0 (0 %)
	Gen 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	Gen 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	
Charanjit Singh Channi	0 (0 %)			0 (0 %)			0 (0 %)
	Gen 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	Gen 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	
Parkash Singh Badal	0 (0 %)			0 (0 %)			0 (0 %)
	Gen 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	Gen 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	

Bhagwan t Singh Mann	179 (49.72%)			178 (49.44 %)			357 (99.17%)
	Gen 60 (33.3%)	OBC 60 (33.3%)	SC 59 (32.8%)	Gen 60 (33.3%)	OBC 58 (32.2%)	SC 60 (33.3%)	
Don't Know	1 (0.28 %)			2 (0.55%)			3 (0.83 %)
	Gen 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 1 (0.5%)	Gen 0 (0%)	OBC 2 (1.1%)	SC 0 (0%)	
TOTAL	180 (50 %)			180 (50 %)			360 (100%)

The data on knowledge about the current Chief Minister of Punjab indicates a high level of awareness among respondents regarding Bhagwant Singh Mann, with 99.17% correctly identifying him as the current Chief Minister. Both urban and rural respondents show almost equal recognition, with 49.72% and 49.44%, respectively. There are no respondents who incorrectly identify or mention previous Chief Ministers such as Captain Amarinder Singh, Charanjit Singh Channi, or Parkash Singh Badal. Only a very small percentage, 0.83%, indicates they do not know the current Chief Minister, with urban respondents slightly more likely to express uncertainty (0.28%) compared to rural respondents (0.55%). This distribution highlights a strong consensus among the surveyed population regarding the current political leadership in Punjab, suggesting widespread awareness of recent political developments and figures within the region.

Table 3.13: Knowledge about the female Chief Minister of Punjab

Female Chief Minister of Punjab	No. of Urban respondents			No. of Rural respondents			Total and Percentage
Harsimrat Kaur Badal	2 (0.55%)			16 (4.44 %)			18 (5 %)
	Gen 1 (0.5%)	OBC 1 (0.5%)	SC 0 (0%)	Gen 4 (2.2%)	OBC 8 (4.4%)	SC 4 (2.2%)	

Parneet Kaur	2 (0.55%)			13 (3.61 %)			15 (4.17 %)
	Gen 0 (0%)	OBC 1 (0.5%)	SC 1 (0.5%)	Gen 5 (2.8%)	OBC 2 (1.1%)	SC 6 (3.3%)	
Rajinder Kaur Bhattal	135 (37.5 %)			34 (9.44 %)			169 (46.94 %)
	Gen. 51 (28.3%)	OBC 45 (25%)	SC 39 (21.7%)	Gen. 11 (6.1%)	OBC 10 (5.5%)	SC 13 (7.2%)	
Ambika Soni	1 (0.28 %)			4 (1.11 %)			5 (1.38 %)
	Gen 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 1 (0.5%)	Gen 1 (0.5%)	OBC 3 (1.7%)	SC 0 (0%)	
Don't Know	40 (11.11 %)			113 (31.39 %)			153 (42.5 %)
	Gen. 8 (4.4%)	OBC 13 (7.2%)	SC 19 (10.5%)	Gen. 39 (21.7%)	OBC 37 (20.5%)	SC 37 (20.5%)	
TOTAL	180 (50 %)			180 (50 %)			360 (100%)

The data on knowledge about the female Chief Minister of Punjab reveals varying levels of awareness among respondents. Rajinder Kaur Bhattal is identified by the majority, comprising 46.94% of respondents, with notable recognition across both urban 37.5% (135) [including Gen. 51 (28.3%), OBC 45 (25%) and SC 39 (21.7%)] and rural 9.44% (34) [including Gen. 11 (6.1%), OBC 10 (5.5%) and SC 13 (7.2%)] areas. Harsimrat Kaur Badal and Parneet Kaur are each recognized by a smaller percentage, 5% and 4.17%, respectively, with slightly higher recognition among rural respondents for both. Ambika Soni receives minimal recognition, with only 1.38% of respondents identifying her as a former female Chief Minister. A significant portion of respondents, 42.5%, indicate they do not know who the female Chief Minister of Punjab is, with rural respondents more likely to express uncertainty (31.39%) compared to urban respondents (11.11%). The underlying distribution outlines that there are variations in knowledge about female political leadership in Punjab.

Table 3.14: Knowledge about your current MLA of Nawanshahr Constituency

Current M.L.A	No. of Urban respondents			No. of Rural respondents			Total and Percentage
Angad Singh	7 (1.94%)			28 (7.77%)			35 (9.72%)
	Gen 2 (1.1%)	OBC 2 (1.1%)	SC 3 (1.7%)	Gen 3 (1.7%)	OBC 5 (2.8%)	SC 20 (11.1%)	
Nachhatar Pal	166 (46.11 %)			139 (38.61%)			305 (84.72 %)
	Gen. 58 (32.2%)	OBC 60 (33.3%)	SC 48 (26.6%)	Gen. 44 (24.4%)	OBC 50 (27.8%)	SC 45 (25%)	
Lalit Mohan Pathak	3 (0.83%)			3 (0.83 %)			6 (1.66%)
	Gen 1 (0.5%)	OBC 1 (0.5%)	SC 1 (0.5%)	Gen 1 (0.5%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 2 (1.1%)	
Satvir Singh	0 (0%)			6 (1.66 %)			6 (1.66%)
	Gen 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	Gen 3 (1.7%)	OBC 2 (1.1%)	SC 1 (0.5%)	
Poonam Manik	4 (1.11 %)			4 (1.11 %)			8 (2.22 %)
	Gen 1 (0.5%)	OBC 1 (0.5%)	SC 2 (1.1%)	Gen 1 (0.5%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 3 (1.7%)	
TOTAL	180 (50 %)			180 (50 %)			360 (100%)

The data on knowledge about the current Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) for Nawanshahr Constituency reveals that Nachhatar Pal is widely recognized, with 84.72% of respondents correctly identifying him as their MLA. Urban respondents show slightly higher recognition at 46.11% (166) [including Gen. 58 (32.2%), OBC 60 (33.3%), and SC 48 (26.6%)] compared to 38.61% (139) [including Gen. 44 (24.4%), OBC 50 (27.8%) and SC 45(25%)] among rural respondents. Angad Singh is recognized by a small percentage, 9.72%, with slightly higher recognition among rural respondents (7.77%) compared to urban respondents (1.94%). Lalit Mohan Pathak and Satvir Singh receive minimal recognition, each identified by less than 2% of

respondents. Poonam Manik is recognized by a small percentage, 2.22%. This distribution highlights a generally informed electorate in Nawanshahr Constituency, indicating potential engagement and awareness of local political figures and issues.

Table 3.15: Knowledge about the name of the present M.P. from Anandpur Sahib Constituency

Name your present M. P	No. of Urban respondents			No. of Rural respondents			Total and Percentage
Manish Tiwari	125 (34.72 %)			41 (11.39 %)			166 (46.11 %)
	Gen. 46 (25.5%)	OBC 36 (20%)	SC 43 (23.9%)	Gen. 20 (11.1%)	OBC 8 (4.4%)	SC 13 (7.2%)	
Don't Know	55 (15.27 %)			139 (38.61%)			194 (53.88 %)
	Gen. 14 (7.7%)	OBC 24 (13.3%)	SC 17 (9.4%)	Gen. 40 (22.2%)	OBC 52 (28.8%)	SC 47 (26.1%)	
TOTAL	180 (50 %)			180 (50 %)			360 (100%)

The data on knowledge about the name of the present Member of Parliament (MP) from the Anandpur Sahib Constituency shows a varied level of awareness among respondents. A significant portion, 46.11%, of respondents indicate they know the name of their present MP. Urban respondents demonstrate higher awareness at 34.72% (125) [including Gen. 46 (25.5%), OBC 36 (20%), and SC 43 (23.9%)] compared to rural respondents at 11.39% (41) [including Gen. 20 (11.1%), OBC 8 (4.4%), and SC 13 (7.2%)]. Conversely, 53.88% of respondents state they do not know the name of their present MP, with rural respondents more likely to be uncertain (38.61%) compared to urban respondents (15.27%). Only 31 rural respondents have provided the correct name of Manish Tiwari as their MP.

Table 3.16: Authority responsible for conducting Parliament and State Legislature elections

The authority responsible for conducting the Parliament and State Legislature elections	No. of Urban respondents			No. of Rural respondents			Total and Percentage
President	17 (4.72 %)			81 (22.5%)			98 (27.22%)
	Gen 3 (1.7%)	OBC 4 (2.2%)	SC 10 (5.5%)	Gen 11 (6.1%)	OBC 20 (11.1%)	SC 50 (27.8%)	
Governor	1 (0.28 %)			3 (0.83 %)			4 (1.11 %)
	Gen 1 (0.5%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	Gen 1 (0.5%)	OBC 2 (1.1%)	SC 0 (0%)	
Prime Minister	1 (0.28 %)			6 (1.66 %)			7 (1.94 %)
	Gen 0 (0%)	OBC 1 (0.5%)	SC 0 (0%)	Gen 4 (2.2%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 2 (1.1%)	
Election Commission of India	158 (43.88 %)			73 (20.27 %)			231 (64.16 %)
	Gen. 59 (32.8%)	OBC 48 (26.7%)	SC 51 (28.3%)	Gen. 27 (15%)	OBC 21 (11.7%)	SC 25 (13.9%)	

Political Parties	3 (0.83 %)			17 (4.72 %)			20 (5.55 %)
	Gen 0 (0%)	OBC 2 (1.1%)	SC 1 (0.5%)	Gen 1 (0.5%)	OBC 2 (1.1%)	SC 12 (6.7%)	
TOTAL	180 (50 %)			180 (50 %)			360 (100%)

The data on knowledge about the authority responsible for conducting Parliament and State Legislature elections reveals that the Election Commission of India (ECI) is correctly identified by a significant majority of respondents, comprising 64.16% of the total. Urban respondents show higher awareness at 43.88% (158) [including Gen. 59 (32.8%), OBC 48 (26.7%), and SC 51 (28.3%)] compared to rural respondents at 20.27% (73) [including Gen. 27 (15%), OBC 21 (11.7%), and SC 25 (13.9%)]. A small percentage of respondents incorrectly believe that the President, Governor, or Prime Minister is responsible for conducting these elections, each accounting for less than 2% of responses. A notable portion of respondents, 32.22%, indicate they do not know which authority is responsible for conducting these elections, with rural respondents more likely to express uncertainty (26.67%) compared to urban respondents (5.55%). Therefore, in the above context, there is a need for enhanced civic education efforts to improve understanding of the Election Commission's mandate and its critical role in organizing free and fair elections across India.

Table 3.17: Awareness about the term of a member of the Lok Sabha

Terms of a member of Lok Sabha	No. of Urban respondents			No. of Rural respondents			Total and Percentage
2 years	0 (0 %)			0 (0 %)			0 (0 %)
	Gen 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	Gen 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	
4 years	1			2			3

	(0.28 %)			(0.55%)			(0.83 %)
	Gen 0 (0%)	OBC 1 (0.5%)	SC 0 (0%)	Gen 1 (0.5%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 1 (0.5%)	
5 years	176 (48.89 %)			147 (40.83 %)			323 (89.72 %)
	Gen. 64 (35.5%)	OBC 56 (31.1%)	SC 56 (31.1%)	Gen. 59 (32.8%)	OBC 43 (23.9%)	SC 45 (25%)	
6 years	0 (0 %)			9 (2.5%)			9 (2.5%)
	Gen 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	Gen 3 (1.7%)	OBC 3 (1.7%)	SC 3 (1.7%)	
10 Years	3 (0.83 %)			22 (6.11 %)			25 (6.94 %)
	Gen 1 (0.5%)	OBC 2 (1.1%)	SC 0 (0%)	Gen 8 (4.4%)	OBC 7 (3.9%)	SC 7 (3.9%)	
TOTAL	180 (50 %)			180 (50 %)			360 (100%)

The data on awareness about the term of members of the Lok Sabha (House of the People) shows that the majority of respondents, 89.72%, correctly identify that the term of Lok Sabha members is 5 years. This understanding is consistent across both urban and rural respondents, with 48.89% 176 [including Gen. 64 (35.5%), OBC 56 (31.1%), and SC 56 (31.1%)] and 40.83% (147) [including Gen. 59 (32.8%), OBC 43 (23.9%) and SC 45 (25%), respectively, correctly identified the term. A small percentage of respondents incorrectly believe the term is either 4 years (0.83%) or 6 years (2.5%), with slightly higher misconceptions among rural respondents for the latter. A significant portion of respondents, 6.94%, indicate they do not know the correct term for Lok Sabha members, with rural respondents more likely to express uncertainty (6.11%) compared to urban respondents (0.83%).

Table 3.18: Knowledge about the minimum age for contesting elections of the Panchayat/ Municipal Council

Minimum age for contesting elections	No. of Urban respondents			No. of Rural respondents			Total and Percentage
18 years	46 (12.77%)			119 (33.05%)			165 (45.83 %)
	Gen 14 (7.8%)	OBC 14 (7.8%)	SC 18 (10%)	Gen 20 (11.1%)	OBC 29 (16.1%)	SC 70 (38.9%)	
21 years	133 (36.94%)			48 (13.33%)			181 (50.27%)
	Gen. 51 (28.3%)	OBC 44 (24.4%)	SC 38 (21.1%)	Gen. 20 (11.1%)	OBC 8 (4.4%)	SC 20 (11.1%)	
25 years	1 (0.28 %)			0 (0 %)			1 (0.28 %)
	Gen 0 (0%)	OBC 1 (0.5%)	SC 0 (0%)	Gen 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	
35 years	0 (0 %)			0 (0 %)			0 (0 %)
	Gen 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	Gen 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	
Above 35 Years	0 (0 %)			13 (3.61 %)			13 (3.61 %)
	Gen 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	Gen 4 (2.2%)	OBC 6 (3.3%)	SC 3 (1.7%)	
TOTAL	180 (50 %)			180 (50 %)			360 (100%)

The data summarizes respondents' views on the minimum age for contesting elections across urban and rural areas. In urban areas, 18 years was supported by 46 respondents, comprising 12.77% of the total urban respondents. Meanwhile, in rural areas, 119 respondents, accounting for 33.05%, favored the same age requirement. The combined total shows 165 respondents, or 45.83%, supporting 18 years as the minimum age. For the age of 21 years, 133 urban respondents (36.94%) (133) [including Gen. 51 (28.3%), OBC 44 (24.4%) and SC 38 (21.1%)] and 48 (13.33%) rural respondents

[including Gen. 20 (11.1%), OBC 8 (4.4%) and SC 20 (11.1%)] endorsed this requirement, making up 50.27% of the total responses. Only one urban respondent (0.28%) expressed support for a minimum age of 25 years, with no rural support recorded. The data indicates that no respondents favored a minimum age of 35 years or above in either urban or rural areas.

Table 3.19: Knowledge about the number of Assembly Constituencies in Punjab at present

Number of Assembly Constituencies in Punjab	No. of Urban respondents			No. of Rural respondents			Total and Percentage
100	12 (3.33%)			84 (23.33%)			96 (26.66%)
	Gen. 2 (1.1%)	OBC 7 (3.9%)	SC 3 (1.7%)	Gen. 22 (12.2%)	OBC 35 (19.4%)	SC 27 (15%)	
104	6 (1.67 %)			11 (3.05%)			17 (4.72%)
	Gen. 1 (0.5%)	OBC 3 (1.7%)	SC 2 (1.1%)	Gen. 3 (1.7%)	OBC 7 (3.9%)	SC 1 (0.5%)	
115	17 (4.72%)			19 (5.27 %)			36 (10%)
	Gen. 3 (1.7%)	OBC 5 (2.8%)	SC 9 (5%)	Gen. 9 (5%)	OBC 4 (2.2%)	SC 6 (3.3%)	
117	137 (38.05 %)			53 (14.72 %)			190 (52.77%)
	Gen. 52 (28.9%)	OBC 42 (23.3%)	SC 43 (23.9%)	Gen. 23 (12.8%)	OBC 13 (7.2%)	SC 17 (9.4%)	
125	8 (2.22 %)			13 (3.61 %)			21 (5.83%)
	Gen. 2 (1.1%)	OBC 3 (1.7%)	SC 3 (1.7%)	Gen. 3 (1.7%)	OBC 1 (0.5%)	SC 9 (5%)	
TOTAL	180 (50 %)			180 (50 %)			360 (100%)

The data on knowledge about the number of Assembly Constituencies in Punjab shows varying levels of awareness among respondents. The correct number of constituencies in Punjab is 117, which is identified by 52.77% of respondents. For 100 constituencies, 12 urban (3.33%) and 84 rural respondents (23.33%) supported this option, totaling 96 (26.66%). For 104 constituencies, 6 urban (1.67%) and 11 rural respondents (3.05%) supported it, totaling 17 (4.72%). For 115 constituencies, 17 urban (4.72%) and 19 rural respondents (5.27%) were in favor, totaling 36 (10%). The most supported option was 117 constituencies, with 137 (38.05 %) urban respondents [including Gen. 52 (28.9%), OBC 42 (23.3%) and SC 43 (23.9%)] and 53 (14.72 %) and rural respondents [including Gen. 23 (12.8%), OBC 13 (7.2%) and SC 17 (9.4%)], totaling 190 (52.77%). Finally, for 125 constituencies, 8 urban (2.22%) and 13 rural respondents (3.61%) supported it, totaling 21 (5.83%).

Table 3.20: Knowledge about the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments

73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment	No. of Urban respondents			No. of Rural respondents			Total and Percentage
Yes	111 (30.83%)			31 (8.61 %)			142 (39.44%)
	Gen. 45 (25%)	OBC 33 (18.3%)	SC 33 (18.3%)	Gen. 13 (7.2%)	OBC 7 (3.9%)	SC 11 (6.1%)	
No	69 (19.16%)			149 (41.38 %)			218 (60.55%)
	Gen. 15 (8.3%)	OBC 27 (15%)	SC 27 (15%)	Gen. 47 (26.1%)	OBC 53 (29.4%)	SC 49 (27.2%)	
TOTAL	180 (50 %)			180 (50 %)			360 (100%)

The data on knowledge about the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments shows varying levels of awareness among respondents. A minority, 39.44%, indicates they are aware of these amendments. Urban respondents demonstrate higher awareness at 30.83% compared to rural respondents at 8.61%. Conversely, a majority, 60.55%, of respondents state they are not familiar with the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments. Rural respondents show a higher lack of awareness at 41.38 % compared to urban respondents at 19.16%. This distribution highlights disparities in knowledge about constitutional amendments aimed at decentralizing political power and

empowering local governance structures. It underscores the need for increased education and awareness initiatives, particularly in rural areas, to enhance understanding of constitutional reforms and their implications for grassroots democracy in India.

Table 3.21: Knowledge about the provision of reservation of seats for women in local bodies according to the Indian Constitution

Percentage of seats reserved for women in local bodies	No. of Urban respondents			No. of Rural respondents			Total and Percentage
33	143 (39.72%)			48 (13.33%)			191 (53.05 %)
	Gen. 53 (29.4%)	OBC 46 (25.5%)	SC 44 (24.4%)	Gen. 17 (9.4%)	OBC 12 (6.6%)	SC 19 (10.5%)	
45	32 (8.88 %)			97 (26.94%)			129 (35.83%)
	Gen. 5 (2.8%)	OBC 14 (7.8%)	SC 13 (7.2%)	Gen. 35 (19.5%)	OBC 36 (20%)	SC 26 (14.5%)	
50	2 (0.55 %)			29 (8.05%)			31 (8.61%)
	Gen. 2 (1.1%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	Gen. 6 (3.3%)	OBC 9 (5%)	SC 14 (7.8%)	
60	1 (0.28 %)			4 (1.11 %)			5 (1.39 %)
	Gen. 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 1 (0.5%)	Gen. 2 (1.1%)	OBC 2 (1.1%)	SC 0 (0%)	
65	2 (0.55%)			2 (0.55%)			4 (1.11%)
	Gen. 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 2 (1.1%)	Gen. 0 (0%)	OBC 1 (0.5%)	SC 1 (0.5%)	
TOTAL	180 (50 %)			180 (50 %)			360 (100%)

The data outlines respondents' preferences regarding the percentage of seats reserved for women in local bodies, categorized by urban and rural areas. In the survey on the allocation of seats reserved for women in local bodies, 53.05% of respondents favored reserving 33% of seats, with 39.72% (143) [including Gen. 53 (29.4%), OBC 46 (25.5%) and SC 44 (24.4%)] of urban respondents and 13.33% (48) [including Gen. 17 (9.4%), OBC 12 (6.6%) and SC 19 (10.5%)] of rural respondents supporting this option. Reserving 45% of seats received support from 35.83% of respondents, with 8.88% from urban and 26.94% from rural areas. The option of a 50% reservation garnered 8.61% support, with 0.55% from urban and 8.05% from rural respondents. For 60% reservation, 1.39% of respondents expressed support, comprising 0.28% urban and 1.11% rural respondents. Lastly, 1.11% of respondents supported reserving 65% of seats, with equal representation from both urban and rural areas.

Table 3.22: Knowledge about women's welfare schemes launched by the Government

Welfare schemes launched by the Government for Women's welfare	No. of Urban respondents			No. of Rural respondents			Total and Percentage
Yes	140 (38.89%)			96 (26.67%)			236 (65.55%)
	Gen. 51 (28.3%)	OBC 45 (25%)	SC 44 (24.4%)	Gen. 40 (22.2%)	OBC 28 (15.5%)	SC 28 (15.5%)	
No	40 (11.11%)			84 (23.33%)			124 (34.44%)
	Gen. 8 (4.4%)	OBC 13 (7.2%)	SC 19 (10.5%)	Gen. 20 (11.1%)	OBC 27 (15%)	SC 37 (20.5%)	
TOTAL	180 (50 %)			180 (50 %)			360 (100%)

The data on knowledge about women's welfare schemes launched by the government shows that a majority of respondents, 65.55 %, are aware of such schemes.

Urban respondents demonstrate higher awareness at 38.89% compared to rural respondents at 26.67%. However, a notable portion of respondents, 34.44%, indicate they are not aware of any government-launched welfare schemes for women. This distribution highlights disparities in awareness about government initiatives aimed at women's welfare, suggesting a need for increased dissemination of information and outreach efforts, particularly in rural areas, to ensure broader awareness and access to these important programs. Efforts to enhance awareness could contribute significantly to the empowerment and support of women through targeted government interventions.

Out of 140 urban respondents who are informed about government schemes, 14 mentioned the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme, 19 were aware of the Ujjwala Yojana, 40 knew about the free bus service for women, 2 were familiar with the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, 2 knew about free education for girls, 20 were aware of the Saubhagya scheme, 16 knew about the One Stop Centre initiative, 2 were informed about the reservation of seats for women in local bodies, 2 knew about the single girl child scholarship, 13 were aware of the Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana, 1 respondent knew about the widow pension scheme, and 9 were aware of the Women Helpline number.

Table 3.23: Knowledge about the ruling party at the center

Name of the ruling party at the center during the 17 th Lok Sabha	No. of Urban respondents			No. of Rural respondents			Total and Percentage
BJP	173 (48.05 %)			125 (34.72 %)			298 (82.77 %)
	Gen. 110 (61.1%)	OBC 22 (12.2%)	SC 35 (19.4%)	Gen. 44 (24.4%)	OBC 39 (21.7%)	SC 42 (23.3%)	
Congress	1 (0.28 %)			2 (0.55%)			3 (0.83 %)
	Gen. 1 (0.5%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	Gen. 1 (0.5%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 1 (0.5%)	

BSP	2 (0.55 %)			2 (0.55%)			4 (1.11 %)
	Gen. 0 (0%)	OBC 1 (0.5%)	SC 1 (0.5%)	Gen. 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 2 (1.1%)	
AAP	2 (0.55 %)			23 (6.38 %)			25 (6.94 %)
	Gen. 0 (0%)	OBC 1 (0.5%)	SC 1 (0.5%)	Gen. 6 (3.3%)	OBC 8 (4.5%)	SC 9 (5%)	
Don't Know	2 (0.55 %)			28 (7.78 %)			30 (8.33 %)
	Gen. 0 (0%)	OBC 1 (0.5%)	SC 1 (0.5%)	Gen. 9 (5%)	OBC 11 (6.1%)	SC 8 (4.5%)	
TOTAL	180 (50 %)			180 (50 %)			360 (100%)

The data on knowledge about the ruling party at the center during the 17th Lok Sabha reveals that a significant majority of respondents, 82.77%, correctly identify the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) as the ruling party. Urban respondents show higher awareness at 48.05% (173) [including Gen. 110 (61.1%), OBC 22 (12.2%), and SC 35 (19.4%)] compared to 34.72% (125) [including Gen. 44 (24.4%), OBC 39 (21.7%), and SC 42 (23.3%)] among rural respondents. The Indian National Congress is identified by a negligible 0.83% of respondents, while the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) each receive recognition from a small percentage of respondents, 1.11% and 6.94%, respectively. A notable portion of respondents, 8.33%, indicate they do not know the ruling party at the center, with rural respondents more likely to express uncertainty (7.78%) compared to urban respondents (0.55%). Thus, the given distribution highlights disparities in knowledge about national political leadership. In this context, it becomes imperative to improve the understanding of central governance and political parties among the surveyed population.

3.5.1: Analysis of Political Awareness by Social Category (General, OBC, SC)

The study reveals significant variations in political awareness among female voters across different social categories in the Nawanshahr constituency. The analysis of Tables 3.10 through 3.23 demonstrates clear patterns in political knowledge distribution between General, OBC, and SC respondents. Table 3.10 (Knowledge about first female PM) shows that General category respondents demonstrated the highest awareness (33% urban, 21.6% rural), followed by OBC (31% urban, 21% rural) and SC (31.6% urban, 20% rural). The "Don't Know" responses were exclusively from OBC (3 urban) and SC (3 urban, 24 rural) categories, indicating knowledge gaps among marginalized groups. Table 3.11 (Current President knowledge) reveals similar patterns, with General caste respondents showing the highest correct identification (30.5% urban, 7.2% rural) compared to SC (23.3% urban, 6.7% rural). Notably, 44.17% of respondents overall lacked this knowledge, disproportionately comprising SC (8.3% urban, 22.8% rural) and OBC (9.4% urban, 23.9% rural) categories.

Table 3.13 (Female CM of Punjab) demonstrates the General category's superior awareness (28.3% urban, 6.1% rural) compared to SC (21.7% urban, 7.2% rural). Table 3.14 (Current MLA) presents a relatively better scenario, with OBC respondents showing the highest awareness (33.3% urban), followed by General (32.2% urban) and SC (26.6% urban). However, rural SC respondents still lagged at 25% correct identification. The knowledge gap widens in Table 3.15 (Current MP), where General respondents showed 25.5% urban awareness versus SC's 23.9% urban and mere 7.2% rural recognition. Table 3.16 (Election conducting authority) reveals the General caste's superior knowledge (32.8% urban) compared to SC (28.3% urban, 13.9% rural). Table 3.18 (Minimum election age) shows SC respondents were most likely to incorrectly choose 18 years (21.1% urban, 11.1% rural), indicating confusion about different electoral tiers. Table 3.20 (73rd/74th Amendment awareness) shows similar patterns, with General respondents at 25% urban awareness versus SC's 18.3% urban and 6.1% rural. Table 3.21 (Women's reservation) highlights the General category's better understanding (29.4% urban correct responses) compared to SC (24.4% urban, 10.5% rural). Table 3.22 shows the General category's better awareness of women's schemes (28.3% urban) compared to SC (24.4% urban, 15.5% rural). The

"No knowledge" responses were disproportionately high among SC respondents (10.5% urban, 20.5% rural).

The study reveals distinct caste-based patterns in political awareness among female voters in Nawanshahr constituency, with General category respondents demonstrating consistently superior knowledge across all parameters, including institutional awareness (32.2-35.5% correct responses on key indicators) and retention of both national and local political information. OBC women occupied an intermediate position, showing particular strength in identifying local political figures (33.3% MLA awareness) but displaying significant rural knowledge gaps (28.8% unable to identify their MP). Most alarmingly, SC women exhibited the lowest political awareness levels, with the highest incidence of "Don't Know" responses, severe rural knowledge deficits, and particular confusion regarding constitutional provisions and electoral processes, highlighting persistent caste-based disparities in political knowledge despite representation policies.

The data further underscores the need for targeted political education programs focusing on SC and OBC women, particularly in rural areas, to address these persistent caste-based disparities in political awareness. The findings suggest that while reservation policies have ensured representation, knowledge gaps among marginalized groups continue to hinder their full political participation.

3.6 Status of Political Participation of Urban and Rural Women

In the Nawanshahr constituency of Punjab, the status of political participation among urban and rural women reflects diverse perspectives. These perspectives have been presented under a given set of tabulations in a systematic form in the given section. All the findings are primarily based on field-based data collected from 360 respondents (eligible voters) from the Nawanshahr constituency of Punjab using the questionnaire schedule.

Table 3.24: Interest in politics

Interest in politics	No. of Urban respondents			No. of rural respondents			Total and Percentage
Yes	78 (21.66 %)			20 (5.55 %)			98 (27.22 %)
	Gen. 29 (16.1%)	OBC 23 (12.8%)	SC 26 (14.4%)	Gen. 10 (5.5%)	OBC 4 (2.2%)	SC 6 (3.3%)	
No	102 (28.33 %)			160 (44.44 %)			262 (72.77 %)
	Gen. 31 (17.2%)	OBC 37 (20.5%)	SC 34 (18.9%)	Gen. 50 (27.8%),	OBC 56 (31.1%)	SC 54 (30%)	
TOTAL	180 (50 %)			180 (50 %)			360 (100%)

In the given data, the researcher has examined the interest in politics among urban and rural respondents. Of the total 360 respondents surveyed, 180 were from urban areas and an equal number from rural areas. Among urban respondents, 78 (21.66%) [including Gen. 29 (16.1%), OBC 23 (12.8%) and SC 26 (14.4%)] indicated an interest in politics, whereas 102 (28.33 %) [including Gen. 31 (17.2%), OBC 37 (20.5%) and SC 34 (18.9%)] did not. For rural respondents, 20 (5.55 %) [including 10 (5.5%), OBC 4 (2.2%), and SC 6 (3.3%)] expressed interest, while 160 (44.44 %) [including Gen. 50 (27.8%), OBC 56 (31.1%), and SC 54 (30%)] did not. Overall, 98 respondents (27.22% of the total) showed interest in politics, compared to 262 (72.77%) who did not. This breakdown highlights a significantly higher proportion of rural respondents showing less interest in politics compared to their urban counterparts.

Table 3.25: Casting votes regularly in different elections

Casting votes regularly in different elections	No. of Urban respondents			No. of Rural respondents			Total and Percentage
Yes	179 (49.72 %)			178 (49.44 %)			357 (99.16 %)
	Gen	OBC	SC	Gen	OBC	SC	

	60 (33.3%)	60 (33.3%)	59 (32.8%)	60 (33.3%)	58 (32.2%)	60 (33.3%)	
No	1 (0.27 %)			2 (0.55%)			3 (0.83 %)
	Gen 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 1 (0.5%)	Gen 0 (0%)	OBC 2 (1.1%)	SC 0 (0%)	
TOTAL	180 (50 %)			180 (50 %)			360 (100%)

In this analysis of voting behavior across urban and rural respondents, a total of 360 individuals were surveyed, with an equal distribution between urban (180) and rural (180) areas. Among urban respondents, 179 (49.72%) indicated that they regularly cast votes in different elections, while only 1 (0.27%) did not. Similarly, among rural respondents, 178 (49.44%) stated they vote regularly, with 2 (0.55%) indicating they do not. Overall, 357 respondents (99.16% of the total) reported voting regularly, while only 3 (0.83%) did not. This data suggests a high level of participation in elections among both urban and rural populations, with a negligible difference in voting behavior between the two groups.

Table 3.26: Reason for casting votes

Reason for casting votes	No. of Urban respondents	No. of Rural respondents	Total and Percentage
To elect a suitable representative	48 (13.33%)	24 (6.67%)	72 (20%)
To elect a suitable political party	35 (9.72%)	21 (5.83%)	56 (15.55%)
To get benefits from the candidate	6 (1.66%)	8 (2.22%)	14 (3.88%)
To fulfill the wishes of family members	1 (0.27 %)	53 (14.73%)	54 (15%)
Personal relations with the candidate	4 (1.11%)	6 (1.66%)	10 (2.77%)

A vote is important	85 (23.61%)	66 (18.33%)	151 (41.94%)
Not applicable	1 (0.28 %)	2 (0.55%)	3 (0.83%)
TOTAL	180 (50 %)	180 (50 %)	360 (100%)

The data on reasons for casting votes reveals diverse motivations among respondents. A significant majority, 41.94%, cite the importance of voting as their primary reason. This sentiment is notably higher among urban respondents at 23.54% compared to rural respondents at 18.33%. Another substantial portion, 20%, indicates they vote to elect a suitable representative, with urban respondents slightly higher at 13.33% compared to rural respondents at 6.66%. Similarly, 15.55% of respondents overall state their reason for voting is to elect a suitable political party, with a higher percentage among urban respondents (9.72%) than rural respondents (5.83%). A notable finding is that 15% of rural respondents mention voting to fulfill the wishes of family members, while only 0.28% of urban respondents share this sentiment. Additionally, 3.88% of respondents indicate voting to potentially receive benefits from candidates, with a slight difference between urban (1.66%) and rural (2.22%) respondents. A small minority, 2.77%, mentions personal relations with candidates as a reason for voting. Only a negligible portion of respondents, 0.83%, find voting not applicable to them, with minimal responses from both urban (0.28%) and rural (0.55%) areas. This distribution underscores varied motivations for political participation, reflecting personal, familial, and civic considerations among the surveyed population.

Table 3.27: Influence on the decision of casting votes

Influence on the decision of casting votes	No. of Urban respondents	No. of Rural respondents	Total and Percentage
Own	154 (42.77 %)	85 (23.61 %)	239 (66.38%)
Family members	25 (6.94 %)	95 (26.38 %)	120 (33.33%)

Relatives	1 (0.28 %)	0 (0 %)	1 (0.28 %)
Religious Leaders	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)
Party Member	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)
TOTAL	180 (50 %)	180 (50 %)	360 (100%)

The data on the influence on the decision of casting votes indicates that a significant majority of respondents, 66.38%, are primarily influenced by their own decisions when voting. Specifically, 42.77% of urban respondents and 23.61% of rural respondents state that they make voting decisions independently. Family members also play a considerable role, influencing 33.33% of respondents overall. This influence is more pronounced among rural respondents, with 26.38 % citing family influence compared to 6.94 % among urban respondents. Relatives and religious leaders do not appear to have a significant influence according to the data, with negligible percentages indicating their influence. Similarly, party members do not influence the voting decisions of any respondents in the surveyed population. The above distribution outlines the predominant role of personal agency and familial influence in shaping voting decisions among the surveyed urban and rural populations.³

Table 3.28: Frequency of referring to the election manifesto of political parties before casting a vote

Frequency of referring to the election manifestos of political parties	No. of Urban respondents	No. of Rural respondents	Total and Percentage
Never	29 (8.05%)	122 (33.89%)	151 (41.94%)
Rarely	15 (4.16%)	19 (5.28 %)	34 (9.44%)
Sometimes	48 (13.33%)	16 (4.44%)	64 (17.77 %)
Often	38 (10.55%)	8 (2.22 %)	46 (12.77%)

Always	50 (13.88%)	15 (4.17%)	65 (18.05%)
TOTAL	180 (50 %)	180 (50 %)	360 (100%)

The data on the frequency of referring to the election manifestos of political parties before casting votes reveals varying levels of engagement among respondents. A significant portion, 41.94%, indicates that they never refer to election manifestos. This trend is more pronounced among rural respondents, where 33.89% never refer to manifestos, compared to 8.05% of urban respondents. Another 9.44% of respondents rarely refer to manifestos, with a higher percentage among rural respondents (5.28%) compared to urban respondents (4.16%). In contrast, 17.77% of respondents sometimes refer to election manifestos, with a higher percentage among urban respondents (13.33%) compared to rural respondents (4.44%). Similarly, 12.77% of respondents often refer to manifestos, with a higher percentage among urban respondents (10.55%) compared to rural respondents (2.22%). Lastly, 18.05% of respondents always refer to election manifestos before casting their votes, with a higher percentage among urban respondents (13.88%) compared to rural respondents (4.17%). The given distribution highlights the varying degrees of attention paid to election manifestos among urban and rural populations, suggesting opportunities for increased voter education and awareness about the importance of understanding political party platforms in making informed voting decisions.

Table 3.29: Willingness to Contest Elections

Willingness to contest elections	No. of Urban respondents			No. of Rural respondents			Total and Percentage
Yes	56 (15.55 %)			20 (5.55 %)			76 (21.11 %)
	Gen. 16 (8.8%)	OBC 13 (7.2%)	SC 27 (15%)	Gen. 6 (3.3%)	OBC 6 (3.3%)	SC 8 (4.4%)	
No	124 (34.44 %)			160 (44.44%)			284 (78.89 %)

	Gen. 44 (24.4%)	OBC 47 (26.1%)	SC 33 (18.3%)	Gen. 54 (30%)	OBC 54 (30%)	SC 52 (28.9%)	
TOTAL	180 (50 %)			180 (50 %)			360 (100%)

The data on willingness to contest elections shows varying levels of interest among respondents. A minority, 21.11%, express a willingness to contest elections, with 56 (15.55 %) [including Gen. 16 (8.8%), OBC 13 (7.2%) and SC 27 (15%)] of urban respondents and 20 (5.55 %) [including Gen. 6 (3.3%), OBC 6 (3.3%) and SC 8 (4.4%)] of rural respondents indicating interest. Conversely, 78.89% of respondent's overall state they are not willing to contest elections, with rural respondents showing a higher reluctance at 160 (44.44%) [including Gen. 54, (30%), OBC 54 (30%) and SC 52 (28.9%)] compared to urban respondents at 124 (34.44 %) [including Gen. 44 (24.4%), OBC 47 (26.1%) and SC 33 (18.3%)]. This distribution underscores disparities in political aspiration between urban and rural populations, suggesting potential barriers or factors influencing participation in electoral politics that merit further exploration and intervention.

Table 3.30: Reasons for not contesting elections

Reasons for not contesting elections	No. of Urban respondents	No. of Rural respondents	Total and Percentage
Economic constraints	28 (7.78 %)	15 (4.17 %)	43 (11.94 %)
Household responsibilities	16 (4.44 %)	27 (7.5 %)	43 (11.94 %)
Lack of interest in politics	14 (3.89 %)	37 (10.28 %)	51 (14.17 %)
family restrictions	12 (3.33 %)	26 (7.22 %)	38 (10.55 %)
The patriarchal setup of society/Politics is man's Game	1 (0.28 %)	16 (4.44 %)	17 (4.72 %)
Job restrictions	8 (2.22 %)	2 (0.55%)	10 (2.77 %)

Unsatisfactory performance of political parties	34 (9.44 %)	19 (5.27 %)	53 (14.72 %)
Health issues	1 (0.28 %)	0 (0 %)	1 (0.28 %)
Not Applicable	66 (18.33%)	38 (10.55 %)	104 (28.88%)
TOTAL	180 (50 %)	180 (50 %)	360 (100%)

The data on reasons for not contesting elections provides insights into the factors influencing respondents' decisions. A significant portion, 28.88%, says that not contesting elections does not apply to them, with a higher percentage among urban respondents (18.33%) compared to rural respondents (10.55%). Economic constraints are cited by 11.94% of respondents overall, with slightly more urban respondents (7.78%) than rural respondents (4.17%) mentioning this reason. Household responsibilities are mentioned by 11.94% of respondents, showing a higher proportion among rural respondents (7.5%) compared to urban respondents (4.44%). Lack of interest in politics is another prominent reason, with 14.17% overall citing this, including 10.28% of rural respondents and 3.89% of urban respondents.

Family restrictions and the patriarchal setup of society/politics being perceived as a man's game are cited by 10.55% and 4.72% of respondents, respectively, with higher percentages among rural respondents in both cases. Job restrictions and unsatisfactory performance of political parties are mentioned by smaller proportions of respondents, 2.77% and 14.72%, respectively. Health issues are a negligible factor, mentioned by only 0.28% of urban respondents. This data highlights a range of personal, social, and systemic barriers perceived by respondents that affect their decision not to contest elections, underscoring the multifaceted nature of political participation barriers in both urban and rural contexts.

Table 3.31: Membership of any political party

Membership of any political party	No. of Urban respondents	No. of Rural respondents	Total and Percentage
Yes	12 (3.33 %)	4 (1.11 %)	16 (4.44 %)

No	168 (46.66 %)	176 (48.88 %)	344 (95.55 %)
TOTAL	180 (50 %)	180 (50 %)	360 (100%)

The data on membership of any political party indicates a low level of affiliation among respondents, with only 4.44% reporting membership. Urban respondents show a slightly higher membership rate at 3.33% compared to rural respondents at 1.11%. Conversely, a significant majority of respondents, totaling 95.55%, do not belong to any political party, with similar percentages observed across urban (46.66%) and rural (48.88%) areas. This disparity underscores a general trend of non-affiliation with political parties among the surveyed population, indicating potential disengagement from formal political structures or a preference for independent political stances.

Table 3.32: Participation in meetings of the general body

Participation in meetings of the general body	No. of Urban respondents	No. of Rural respondents	Total and Percentage
Never	180 (50%)	120 (33.33 %)	300 (83.33%)
Rarely	0 (0 %)	15 (4.16%)	15 (4.16%)
Sometimes	0 (0 %)	20 (5.55%)	20 (5.55%)
Often	0 (0 %)	10 (2.77%)	10 (2.77%)
Always	0 (0 %)	15 (4.16%)	15 (4.16%)
TOTAL	180 (50 %)	180 (50 %)	360 (100%)

This data focuses on the participation in meetings of the general body among urban and rural respondents. A total of 360 respondents were surveyed, with an equal distribution of 180 respondents each from urban and rural areas. Among urban respondents, 180 (50%) indicated they never participate in general body meetings, while among rural respondents, 120 (33.33%) reported the same. Additionally, 15

(4.16%) rural respondents stated they rarely participate, while 20 (5.55%) participate sometimes, 10 (2.77%) participate often, and another 15 (4.16%) always participate. Overall, this indicates a higher frequency of participation in general body meetings among rural respondents compared to their urban counterparts, who predominantly reported never participating.

Table 3.33: Frequency of Speaking in Meetings

Speaking in Political Party Meetings	No. of Urban respondents	No. of Rural respondents	Total and Percentage
Never	180 (50%)	145 (40.27 %)	325 (90.27%)
Rarely	0 (0%)	5 (1.39%)	5 (1.39%)
Sometimes	0 (0%)	25 (6.94%)	25 (6.94%)
Often	0 (0%)	5 (1.39%)	5 (1.39%)
Always	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
TOTAL	180 (50 %)	180 (50 %)	360 (100%)

In this analysis of speaking in political party meetings among urban and rural respondents, a total of 360 individuals were surveyed, evenly distributed between urban (180) and rural (180) areas. Among urban respondents, 180 (50%) indicated they never speak in political party meetings, while 145 (40.27%) rural respondents reported the same. Additionally, 5 (1.39%) rural respondents stated they speak rarely, 25 (6.94%) speak sometimes, and 5 (1.39%) speak often. None of the respondents from either urban or rural areas reported speaking always in political party meetings. Overall, this data highlights a higher frequency of speaking in political party meetings among rural respondents compared to urban respondents, who predominantly reported never speaking in such gatherings.

Table 3.34: Participation in Political Debates and Discussions

Participation in Political Debates and Discussions	No. of Urban respondents			No. of Rural respondents			Total and Percentage
Never	88 (24.44%)			166 (46.11 %)			254 (70.55 %)
	Gen. 19 (10.5%)	OBC 37 (20.5%)	SC 32 (17.7%)	Gen. 52 (28.9%)	OBC 57 (31.7%)	SC 57 (31.7%)	
Rarely	50 (13.88 %)			7 (1.94 %)			57 (15.83 %)
	Gen 23 (12.8%)	OBC 13 (7.3%)	SC 14 (7.8%)	Gen 4 (2.2%)	OBC 1 (0.5%)	SC 2 (1.1%)	
Sometimes	39 (10.83 %)			2 (0.55%)			41 (11.38 %)
	Gen. 16 (8.9%)	OBC 10 (5.5%)	SC 13 (7.3%)	Gen 1 (0.5%)	OBC 0 (0 %)	SC 1 (0.5%)	
Often	2 (0.55%)			0 (0 %)			2 (0.55%)
	Gen 1 (0.5%)	OBC 0 (0 %)	SC 1 (0.5%)	Gen 0 (0 %)	OBC 0 (0 %)	SC 0 (0 %)	
Always	1 (0.28 %)			5 (1.38 %)			6 (1.66 %)
	Gen 1 (0.5 %)	OBC 0 (0 %)	SC 0 (0 %)	Gen 3 (1.7%)	OBC 2 (1.1%)	SC 0 (0 %)	
TOTAL	180 (50 %)			180 (50 %)			360 (100%)

The data reveal the extent of participation in political debates and discussions among urban and rural respondents. A significant portion of urban respondents, 88 (24.44%) [including Gen. 19 (10.5%), OBC 37 (20.5%) and SC 32(17.7%)] reported never participating in such activities, while 166 (46.11 %) [including Gen. 52 (28.9%), OBC 57 (31.7%) and SC 57 (31.7%)] of rural respondents similarly indicated non-participation, making up 70.55% of the total respondents. Conversely, 13.88% of urban respondents and only 1.94% of rural respondents participate rarely. In contrast, 10.83% of urban respondents and 0.55% of rural respondents engage sometimes. A minimal

percentage of urban respondents (0.55%) claim to often participate, while rural respondents do not report this activity. Additionally, very few urban respondents (0.28%) and 1.38% of rural respondents claim to always participate. Overall, the data illustrate varying levels of engagement in political debates and discussions between urban and rural populations, highlighting differences in participation patterns across these demographics.

Table 3.35: Participation in Political Campaigning

Participation in Political Campaigning	No. of Urban respondents			No. of Rural respondents			Total and Percentage
Never	65 (18.05%)			138 (38.33%)			203 (56.38%)
	Gen. 23 (12.7%)	OBC 22 (12.2%)	SC 20 (11.1%)	Gen. 42 (23.3%)	OBC 49 (27.2%)	SC 47 (26.1%)	
Rarely	24 (6.66 %)			12 (3.33%)			36 (10%)
	Gen. 7 (3.9%)	OBC 8 (4.4%)	SC 9 (5%)	Gen. 6 (3.3%)	OBC 4 (2.2%)	SC 2 (1.1%)	
Sometimes	79 (21.94 %)			21 (5.83%)			100 (27.77 %)
	Gen. 26 (14.5%)	OBC 27 (15%)	SC 26 (14.5%)	Gen. 8 (4.4%)	OBC 4 (2.2%)	SC 9 (5%)	
Often	11 (3.05%)			5 (1.38 %)			16 (4.44 %)
	Gen. 3 (1.7%)	OBC 5 (2.8%)	SC 3 (1.7%)	Gen. 2 (1.1%)	OBC 2 (1.1%)	SC 1 (0.5%)	
Always	1 (0.28 %)			4 (1.11 %)			5 (1.38 %)
	Gen. 1 (0.5%)	OBC 0 (0 %)	SC 0 (0 %)	Gen. 2 (1.1%)	OBC 1 (0.5%)	SC 1 (0.5%)	
TOTAL	180 (50 %)			180 (50 %)			360 (100%)

The data reflect the extent of participation in political campaigning among urban and rural respondents. A significant portion of urban respondents, comprising 65

(18.05%) [including Gen. 23 (12.7%), OBC 22 (12.2%) and SC 20 (11.1%)] reported never engaging in political campaigning, whereas a higher proportion of rural respondents, at 138 (38.33%) [including Gen. 42 (23.3%), OBC 49 (27.2%) and SC 47 (26.1%)] indicated the same, contributing to a total of 56.38% across both groups. Conversely, 6.66% of urban respondents and 3.33% of rural respondents participate rarely. In contrast, 21.94% of urban respondents and 5.83% of rural respondents engage in political campaigning. A smaller percentage of urban respondents (3.05%) and rural respondents (1.38%) reported often participating in such activities. Additionally, a very small number of urban respondents (0.28%) and 1.11% of rural respondents stated they always participate in political campaigning. Overall, the data highlights varying levels of involvement in political campaigning between urban and rural populations, underscoring differences in participation across these demographics.

Table 3.36: Reasons for Participation in Activities Related to Political Campaigning

Participation in Political Campaigning	No. of Urban respondents	No. of Rural respondents	Total and Percentage
Requested others to cast a vote in favour of a candidate of your choice	92	33	125 (34.72%)
Donated to the election fund.	38	10	48 (13.33%)
Attended any election meeting	102	26	128 (35.55%)
Helped in organizing any election meeting.	83	21	104 (28.89%)
Participated in any election procession.	108	32	140 (38.89%)
Distributed slips/posters/leaflets, etc., in favour of any candidate.	110	39	149 (41.38%)
Campaigned from door to door.	109	39	118 (32.77%)

The data on participation in political campaigning reveals varying levels of engagement among urban and rural respondents. In terms of specific activities, 125

respondents, comprising 92 urban and 33 rural respondents, requested others to cast votes in favor of a candidate. Regarding financial contributions, 48 respondents (38 urban and 10 rural) donated to election funds. Attendance at election meetings was reported by 128 respondents, with 102 from urban areas and 26 from rural areas. Additionally, 104 respondents (83 urban and 21 rural) helped organize election meetings, while 140 respondents (108 urban and 32 rural) participated in election processions. Furthermore, 149 respondents (110 urban and 39 rural) distributed campaign materials such as slips, posters, or leaflets, and 118 respondents (109 urban and 39 rural) campaigned door-to-door. These figures underscore the active participation of both urban and rural populations in various facets of political campaigning, reflecting diverse levels of involvement across different campaign activities.

Table 3.37: Reasons for non-participation in Political Campaigning

Reasons for Non-Participation in Political Campaigning	No. of Urban respondents	No. of Rural respondents	Total and Percentage
Physical constraints	1 (0.28 %)	1 (0.28 %)	2 (0.55 %)
Socio-cultural constraints	0 (0 %)	2 (0.55 %)	2 (0.55 %)
No Interest in Politics	14 (3.89 %)	49 (13.61 %)	63 (17.5 %)
Restrictions by family members	14 (3.89 %)	48 (13.33 %)	62 (17.22 %)
Household responsibilities	7 (1.94%)	31 (8.61 %)	38 (10.55 %)
Job restrictions	18 (5 %)	5 (1.38 %)	23 (6.38 %)
Poor performance of the political parties	5 (1.38 %)	5 (1.38 %)	10 (2.77 %)
Not Applicable	121 (33.61 %)	39 (10.83%)	160 (44.44 %)
TOTAL	180 (50 %)	180 (50 %)	360 (100%)

The data on reasons for non-participation in political campaigning highlights various factors influencing both urban and rural respondents. Among urban respondents, physical constraints were cited by 1 individual (0.28%), while the same

number was reported among rural respondents, totaling 2 individuals. Socio-cultural constraints were also a barrier for 2 rural respondents (0.55 %). Notably, 14 urban respondents (3.89 %) and 49 rural respondents (13.61 %) expressed no interest in politics as a reason for non-participation. Restrictions imposed by family members were reported by 14 urban and 48 rural respondents, totaling 62 individuals. Household responsibilities were mentioned by 7 urban and 31 rural respondents, amounting to 38 individuals. Job restrictions affected 18 urban respondents and 5 rural respondents, totaling 23 individuals. Poor performance by political parties was noted as a reason by 5 urban respondents and 5 rural respondents, totaling 10 individuals (2.77 %). The "Not Applicable" category accounted for the majority, with 160 respondents (33.61% urban and 10.83% rural) indicating this reason, suggesting a prevalent disengagement or indifference towards the activity of political campaigning among the surveyed population.

Table 3.38: Meeting Elected Representatives (M.L.A/ M.P/ M.C/ Sarpanch)

Meeting M.L.A/ M.P/ Sarpanch/M.C	No. of Urban respondents			No. of Rural respondents			Total and Percentage
Yes	90 (25%)			59 (16.38%)			149 (41.38%)
	Gen. 32 (17.7%)	OBC 31 (17.2%)	SC 27 (15%)	Gen. 15 (8.3%)	OBC 21 (11.7%)	SC 23 (12.7%)	
No	90 (25%)			121 (33.61%)			211 (58.61%)
	Gen. 28 (15.5%)	OBC 29 (16.1%)	SC 33 (18.3%)	Gen. 45 (25%)	OBC 39 (21.7%)	SC 37 (20.5%)	
TOTAL	180 (50 %)			180 (50 %)			360 (100%)

In this data regarding meetings with political representatives such as M.L.A, M.P, Sarpanch, or M.C, a total of 360 respondents were evenly divided between urban (180) and rural (180) areas. Among urban respondents, 90 (25%) [including Gen. 32 (17.7%), OBC 31 (17.2%) and SC 27 (15%)] indicated they have met with these representatives, while 90 (25%) [including Gen. 28 (15.5%), OBC 29 (16.1%) and SC

33 (18.3%)] have not. In contrast, among rural respondents, 59 (16.38%) [including Gen. 15 (8.3%), OBC 21 (11.7%) and SC 23 (12.7%)] reported meeting them, while 121 (33.61%) [including Gen. 45 (25%), OBC 39 (21.7%) and SC 37 (20.5%)] have not. Overall, 149 respondents (41.38%) across both urban and rural areas have met with political representatives, while 211 (58.61%) have not. This data suggests that a higher proportion of urban respondents have engaged with political representatives compared to rural respondents.

Table 3.39: Participation in any Protest against some Government Policy

Participation in any protest against a government policy	No. of Urban respondents			No. of Rural respondents			Total and Percentage
Yes	39 (10.83%)			102 (28.33%)			141 (39.16 %)
	Gen. 17 (9.4%)	OBC 11 (6.1%)	SC 11 (6.1%)	Gen. 38 (21.1%)	OBC 32 (17.8%)	SC 32 (17.8%)	
No	141 (39.16%)			78 (21.66%)			219 (60.83%)
	Gen. 43 (23.9%)	OBC 49 (27.2%)	SC 49 (27.2%)	Gen. 22 (12.2%)	OBC 28 (15.5%)	SC 28 (15.5%)	
TOTAL	180 (50 %)			180 (50 %)			360 (100%)

In this data concerning participation in protests against government policies among urban and rural respondents, a total of 360 individuals were surveyed. Among urban respondents, 39 (10.83%) [including Gen. 17 (9.4%), OBC 11 (6.1%) and SC 11 (6.1%)] indicated they have participated in such protests, while 141 (39.16%) [including Gen. 43 (23.9%), OBC 49 (27.2%) and SC 49 (27.2%)] have not. In contrast, among rural respondents, 102 (28.33%) [including Gen. 38 (21.1%), OBC 32 (17.8%) and SC 32 (17.8%)] reported participation in protests, with 78 (21.66%) [including Gen. 22 (12.2%), OBC 28 (15.5%) and SC 28 (15.5%) indicating they have not. Overall, 141 respondents (39.16%) across both urban and rural areas have participated in protests against government policies, while 219 (60.83%) have not. This data indicates a higher

level of participation in protests among rural respondents compared to urban respondents, reflecting differing levels of engagement with political activism across these demographics.

Table 3.40: Reasons for non-participation in Political protest

Reasons for Non-Participation in Political Protest	No. of Urban respondents	No. of Rural respondents	Total and Percentage
Physical constraints	1 (0.27%)	3 (0.83%)	4 (1.11%)
Socio-cultural constraints	1 (0.27%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.27%)
No Interest in Politics	35 (9.72%)	24 (6.66%)	59 (16.38%)
Restrictions by family members	65 (18.05%)	44 (12.22%)	109 (30.27%)
Lack of Opportunity	26 (7.22%)	6 (1.66%)	32 (8.88%)
Job restrictions	11 (3.05%)	4 (1.11%)	15 (4.16%)
Not Applicable	41 (11.38%)	99 (27.5%)	140 (38.89%)
TOTAL	180 (50 %)	180 (50 %)	360 (100%)

The data reveals various reasons why respondents chose not to participate in political protests against government policies. Among the urban respondents, physical constraints were cited by 1 person, while 3 rural respondents mentioned the same reason, totaling 4 individuals. Socio-cultural constraints were reported by 1 urban respondent, with none from rural areas mentioning this reason. A significant number of respondents, both urban (35) and rural (24), indicated their lack of interest in politics as a barrier to participating in protests. Family restrictions were noted as a reason by 65 urban respondents and 44 rural respondents, totaling 109 individuals. Additionally, 26 urban respondents and 6 rural respondents cited a lack of opportunity as a constraint. Job restrictions were mentioned by 11 urban respondents and 4 rural respondents. Notably, 41 urban respondents and 99 rural respondents stated that non-participation was not applicable to them. Overall, these reasons highlight a range of factors

influencing individuals' decisions not to participate in political protests, including personal, social, and practical constraints, alongside varying levels of interest and opportunity.

Table 3.41: Participation in any boycott

Participation in any boycott	No. of Urban respondents			No. of Rural respondents			Total and Percentage
Yes	9 (2.5%)			63 (17.5%)			72 (20 %)
	Gen. 4 (2.2%)	OBC 4 (2.2%)	SC 1 (05%)	Gen. 22 (12.2%)	OBC 23 (12.8%)	SC 18 (10%)	
No	171 (47.5%)			117 (32.5 %)			288 (80%)
	Gen. 56 (31.1%)	OBC 56 (31.1%)	SC 59 (32.8%)	Gen. 38 (21.1%)	OBC 37 (20.5%)	SC 42 (23.3%)	
TOTAL	180 (50 %)			180 (50 %)			360 (100%)

In the given data on participation in boycotts among urban and rural respondents, a total of 360 individuals were surveyed. Among urban respondents, 9 (2.5%) indicated they have participated in boycotts, while 171 (47.5%) have not. Conversely, among rural respondents, 63 (17.5%) reported participating in boycotts, while 117 (32.5%) indicated they had not. Overall, 72 respondents (20%) across both urban and rural areas have participated in boycotts, while 288 (80%) have not. This data suggests a notably higher participation rate in boycotts among rural respondents compared to urban respondents, indicating differing levels of involvement in consumer or political boycott actions between these demographic groups.

Table 3.42: Participation in any march or rally

Participation in any march or rally	No. of Urban respondents			No. of Rural respondents			Total and Percentage
Yes	32 (8.88%)			60 (16.66%)			92 (25.55%)
	Gen. 16 (8.9%)	OBC 7 (3.9%)	SC 9 (5%)	Gen. 20 (11.1%)	OBC 21 (11.7%)	SC 19 (10.5%)	
No	148 (41.11 %)			120 (33.33 %)			268 (74.44%)
	Gen. 44 (24.4%)	OBC 53 (29.4%)	SC 51 (28.3%)	Gen. 40 (22.2%)	OBC 39 (21.7%)	SC 41 (22.8%)	
TOTAL	180 (50 %)			180 (50 %)			360 (100%)

According to given data, among urban respondents, 32 (8.88%) [including Gen. 16 (8.9%), OBC 7 (3.9%) and SC 9 (5%)] indicated they have participated in marches or rallies, while 148 (41.11 %) [including Gen. 44 (24.4%), OBC 53 (29.4%) and SC 51 (28.3%)] have not. Among rural respondents, 60 (16.66%) [including Gen. 20 (11.1%), OBC 21 (11.7%) and SC 19 (10.5%)] reported participation in such events, while 120 (33.33 %) [including Gen. 40 (22.2%), OBC 39 (21.7%) and SC 41 (22.8%)] indicated they had not. Overall, 92 respondents (25.55%) across both urban and rural areas have participated in marches or rallies, while 268 (74.44%) have not. This data shows a higher proportion of rural respondents participating in marches or rallies compared to urban respondents, indicating varying levels of engagement in public demonstrations between these demographic groups.

Table 3.43: Filling of any petition

Filing of any petition	No. of Urban respondents	No. of Rural respondents	Total and Percentage
Yes	13 (3.61%)	1 (0.27%)	14 (3.89%)
No	167 (46.38%)	179 (49.72%)	346 (96.11%)
TOTAL	180 (50 %)	180 (50 %)	360 (100%)

In the given data, of the urban respondents, 13 (3.61%) reported having filled out petitions, whereas only 1 (0.27%) rural respondent indicated the same. In contrast, 167 (46.38%) urban respondents and 179 (49.72%) rural respondents had not filed any petitions. Overall, 14 respondents (3.89%) from both urban and rural backgrounds had filled out petitions, while 346 (96.11%) had not. These findings underscore a notably low level of engagement in petition submission across both urban and rural populations, with urban participants marginally more inclined to have done so than their rural counterparts. This gap suggests potential disparities in awareness or accessibility to avenues for civic participation between these demographic segments.

Table 3.44: Use of Social Media for Political Activities

Use of Social Media for Political Activities	No. of Urban respondents			No. of Rural respondents			Total and Percentage
Never	47 (13.05%)			161 (44.72%)			208 (57.78 %)
	Gen. 4 (2.2%)	OBC 23 (12.8%)	SC 20 (11.1%)	Gen. 50 (27.8%)	OBC 55 (30.5%)	SC 56 (31.1%)	
Rarely	38 (10.55%)			7 (1.94 %)			45 (12.5 %)
	Gen. 13 (7.1%)	OBC 12 (6.6%)	SC 13 (7.1%)	Gen. 4 (2.2%)	OBC 2 (1.1%)	SC 2 (1.1%)	

Sometimes	39 (10.83%)			2 (0.56%)			41 (11.39 %)
	Gen. 16 (8.8%)	OBC 10 (5.5%)	SC 13 (7.1%)	Gen. 1 (0.5%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 1 (0.5%)	
Often	43 (11.94%)			5 (1.39 %)			48 (13.33 %)
	Gen. 16 (8.8%)	OBC 14 (7.7%)	SC 13 (7.1%)	Gen. 2 (1.1%)	OBC 2 (1.1%)	SC 1 (0.5%)	
Always	13 (3.61%)			5 (1.39 %)			18 (5%)
	Gen. 8 (8.8%)	OBC 1 (0.5%)	SC 4 (2.2%)	Gen. 3 (1.7%)	OBC 2 (1.1%)	SC 0 (0%)	
Total	180 (50 %)			180 (50 %)			360 (100%)

According to the above data, among urban respondents, 47 (13.05%) [including Gen. 4 (2.2%), OBC 23 (12.8%) and SC 20 (11.1%)] indicated they never use social media for political activities, while 161 (44.72%) [including Gen. 50 (27.8%), OBC 55 (30.5%) and SC 56 (31.1%)] rural respondents reported the same. In contrast, 38 (10.55%) urban respondents and 7 (1.94%) rural respondents stated they rarely use social media for such activities. Additionally, 39 (10.83%) urban respondents and 2 (0.56%) rural respondents reported using social media sometimes, while 43 (11.94%) urban respondents and 5 (1.39%) rural respondents stated they often use it. Lastly, 13 (3.61%) urban respondents and 5 (1.39%) rural respondents indicated they always use social media for political activities. Thus, these responses reflect varying levels of engagement with social media for political purposes across urban and rural areas. Urban respondents generally demonstrate more frequent use of social media for political activities compared to their rural counterparts, with a notable proportion in both groups indicating they rarely or never utilize it for such purposes.

3.6.1: Analysis of Political Participation by Social Category (General, OBC, SC)

The study highlights significant disparities in political participation among women from the General, OBC, and SC categories across urban and rural areas. The data reveals that while urban women show relatively higher engagement, caste remains a critical factor influencing participation levels. As shown in Table 3.24, urban women display greater political interest (21.66%) compared to rural women (5.55%). Among urban respondents, SC women show slightly higher interest (14.4%) than General (16.1%) and OBC (12.8%), while rural SC women (3.3%) lag behind rural General (5.5%). However, Table 3.29 reveals a contrasting trend in electoral ambition: urban SC women exhibit the highest willingness to contest elections (15%), surpassing General (8.8%) and OBC (7.2%) women. This suggests that while political interest varies, SC women in urban areas may see electoral participation as a means of empowerment.

Table 3.34 indicates minimal participation in political debates, with 70.55% of women never engaging in discussions. Urban General women (10.5%) show marginally better participation than SC (17.7%), while rural SC women (31.7%) are the least engaged. Similarly, Table 3.35 highlights that rural SC women (26.1%) are the least likely to participate in political campaigns, whereas urban General women (12.7%) and SC women (11.1%) show comparable engagement. This suggests that while caste disparities exist, rural residence further exacerbates political disengagement among SC women.

Table 3.38 shows that urban General women (17.7%) are more likely to meet elected representatives than SC women (15%), but rural SC women (12.7%) surpass rural General (8.3%) in this regard. Interestingly, Table 3.39 reveals that rural SC women (17.8%) participate in protests at rates similar to rural OBC (17.8%) and General (21.1%) women, indicating that grassroots activism may be more inclusive than formal political engagement. Table 3.41 highlights that rural SC women (10%) are less likely to join boycotts than rural General (12.2%) and OBC (12.8%) women. However, Table 3.42 shows that rural SC women (10.5%) participate in rallies at rates comparable to rural General (11.1%) and OBC (11.7%) women. Digital engagement, as per Table 3.44, remains low across all groups, but urban General women (2.2%)

"Never") far outperform rural SC women (31.1% "Never"), underscoring a digital divide.

At large, the key inferences drawn from the above analysis show that urban SC Women show higher electoral ambition (15%) despite lower political interest, possibly due to reservation policies. Rural SC Women lag in formal political engagement (debates, campaigns) but participate in protests and rallies at rates similar to other groups. General Category Women, especially in urban areas, lead in interactions with representatives and digital political activities. While OBC Women generally occupy a middle ground, with no standout trends except lower protest participation in urban areas. These findings further suggest that while caste influences political participation, rural-urban divides and the nature of engagement (formal vs. grassroots) further shape these dynamics. Policies must address both structural barriers (e.g., digital access) and caste-specific gaps to enhance women's political inclusion.

3.7 Factors Affecting Women's Political Participation

Women's political participation is influenced by several key factors. Socio-cultural norms and gender stereotypes often limit women's access to political roles. Economic barriers, Institutional factors such as electoral systems and political party structures, and a lack of education and training opportunities hinder women from acquiring the necessary skills for political leadership. In this context, the present section analyzed the factors that affect the political participation of women in the Nawanshahr constituency of Punjab.

Table 3.45: Gender Stereotypes impact women's political participation

Gender Stereotypes impact women's political participation	No. of Urban respondents			No. of Rural respondents			Total and Percentage
Strongly Disagree	4 (1.11%)			1 (0.27%)			5 (1.38 %)
	Gen. 3 (1.7%)	OBC 1 (0.5%)	SC 0 (0%)	Gen. 1 (0.5%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	

Disagree	11 (3.05%)			9 (2.5%)			20 (5.55%)
	Gen. 2 (1.1%)	OBC 4 (2.2%)	SC 5 (2.8%)	Gen. 0 (0%)	OBC 5 (2.8%)	SC 4 (2.2%)	
Uncertain	48 (13.33%)			61 (16.94%)			109 (30.27%)
	Gen. 27 (15%)	OBC 9 (5%)	SC 11 (6.1%)	Gen. 26 (14.4%)	OBC 19 (10.5%)	SC 16 (8.9%)	
Agree	96 (26.67%)			90 (25%)			186 (51.67 %)
	Gen. 25 (13.9%)	OBC 37 (20.5%)	SC 34 (18.9%)	Gen. 29 (16.1%)	OBC 30 (16.7%)	SC 31 (17.2%)	
Strongly Agree	21 (5.83%)			19 (5.28%)			40 (11.11 %)
	Gen. 7 (3.9%)	OBC 4 (2.2%)	SC 10 (5.5%)	Gen. 4 (2.2%),	OBC 6 (3.3%)	SC 9 (5%)	
Total	180 (50 %)			180 (50 %)			360 (100%)

Gender stereotypes significantly influence women's political participation, as evidenced by the data from urban and rural respondents. Among urban respondents, 180 individuals participated, with 4 (1.11%) strongly disagreeing, 11 (3.05%) disagreeing, 48 (13.33%) uncertain, 96 (26.67%) agreeing, and 21 (5.83%) strongly agreeing that stereotypes affect political engagement. In rural areas, an equal number of respondents showed slightly varied responses: 1 (0.27%) strongly disagreed, 9 (2.5%) disagreed, 61 (16.94%) were uncertain, 90 (25%) agreed, and 19 (5.28%) strongly agreed. Overall, urban and rural totals of 360 respondents highlighted a collective acknowledgment of stereotypes' impact, with 186 (51.67%) agreeing and 40 (11.11%) strongly agreeing. These findings underscore a nuanced regional variation but a shared recognition of stereotypes' hindrance to women's political involvement across demographics.

Table 3.46: There are Gender gaps in political interest and political awareness.

There are Gender gaps in political interest and political awareness	No. of Urban respondents	No. of Rural respondents	Total and Percentage
Strongly Disagree	32 (8.88%)	6 (1.67%)	38 (10.55 %)
Disagree	47 (13.05%)	14 (3.89%)	61 (16.94 %)
Uncertain	15 (4.16%)	22 (6.11%)	37 (10.27 %)
Agree	50 (13.89%)	94 (26.11%)	144 (40 %)
Strongly Agree	36 (10%)	44 (12.22%)	80 (22.22%)
Total	180 (50 %)	180 (50 %)	360 (100%)

Gender gaps persist in political interest and awareness, revealing significant disparities between urban and rural respondents. In urban areas, 180 participants indicated varying levels of agreement: 32 (8.88%) strongly disagreed, 47 (13.05%) disagreed, 15 (4.16%) were uncertain, 50 (13.89%) agreed, and 36 (10%) strongly agreed with the existence of gender gaps. Conversely, rural respondents exhibited differing perspectives: 6 (1.67%) strongly disagreed, 14 (3.89%) disagreed, 22 (6.11%) were uncertain, 94 (26.11%) agreed, and 44 (12.22%) strongly agreed. Overall, the total responses from 360 participants underscored a prevalent acknowledgment of these disparities, with 144 (40%) agreeing and 80 (22.22%) strongly agreeing across urban and rural contexts. These findings highlight the urgent need for targeted interventions to address and mitigate gender discrepancies in political engagement and awareness across diverse geographic settings.

Table 3.47: Low Educational status has adverse impacts the political awareness and engagement.

Low Educational status has adverse impacts the political awareness and engagement	No. of Urban respondents			No. of Rural respondents			Total and Percentage
Strongly Disagree	0 (0%)			1 (0.27%)			1 (0.27%)
	Gen. 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	Gen. 1 (0.5%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	
Disagree	0 (0%)			7 (1.94%)			7 (1.94 %)
	Gen. 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	Gen. 3 (1.7%)	OBC 2 (1.1%)	SC 2 (1.1%)	
Uncertain	19 (5.27%)			60 (16.67%)			79 (21.94%)
	Gen. 7 (3.9%),	OBC 8 (4.4%)	SC 4 (2.2%)	Gen. 18 (10%),	OBC 22 (12.2%)	SC 20 (11.1%)	
Agree	124 (34.44%)			76 (21.11%)			200 (55.55%)
	Gen. 38 (21.1%)	OBC 38 (21.1%)	SC 48 (26.6%)	Gen. 28 (15.5%)	OBC 23 (12.8%)	SC 25 (13.9%)	
Strongly Agree	37 (10.27%)			36 (10 %)			73 (20.27%)
	Gen. 15 (8.3%)	OBC 14 (7.8%)	SC 8 (4.4%)	Gen. 10 (5.5%)	OBC 13 (7.2%)	SC 13 (7.2%)	
Total	180 (50 %)			180 (50 %)			360 (100%)

Low educational status significantly impacts political awareness and engagement, as evidenced by responses from urban and rural participants. In urban areas, out of 180 respondents, 124 (34.44%) agreed and 37 (10.27%) strongly agreed that low educational status hinders political involvement. Additionally, 19 (5.27%) were uncertain about this impact. Rural respondents, totaling 180, similarly reflected concerns: 76 (21.11%) agreed, 36 (10%) strongly agreed, and 60 (16.67%) were uncertain. Overall, the combined data from 360 participants illustrated a widespread recognition of the adverse effects of low educational status on political awareness and engagement, with 200 (55.55%) agreeing and 73 (20.27%) strongly agreeing across urban and rural demographics. These findings underscore the critical need for educational initiatives to enhance political literacy and participation among socioeconomically disadvantaged populations.

Table 3.48: Economic constraints hinder Women's inclusion in politics.

Economic constraints hinder Women's inclusion in politics.	No. of Urban respondents			No. of Rural respondents			Total and Percentage
Strongly Disagree	1 (0.28%)			3 (0.83%)			4 (1.11%)
	Gen. 0 (0%)	OBC 1 (0.5%)	SC 0 (0%)	Gen. 2 (1.1%)	OBC 1 (0.5%)	SC 0 (0%)	
Disagree	6 (1.67%)			10 (2.77%)			16 (4.44%)
	Gen. 0 (0%)	OBC 4 (2.2%)	SC 2 (1.1%)	Gen. 4 (2.2%)	OBC 3 (1.7%)	SC 3 (1.7%)	
Uncertain	15 (4.17%)			38 (10.55%)			53 (14.72 %)
	Gen. 6 (3.3%),	OBC 7 (3.8%)	SC 2 (1.1%)	Gen. 16 (8.9%)	OBC 12 (6.7%)	SC 10 (5.5%)	
Agree	122 (33.89%)			84 (23.33%)			206

	Gen. 41 (22.8%)	OBC 40 (22.2%)	SC 41 (22.8%)	Gen. 26 (14.4%)	OBC 28 (15.5%)	SC 30 (16.7%)	(57.22%)
Strongly Agree	36 (10%)			45 (12.5 %)			81 (22.5 %)
	Gen. 13 (7.2%)	OBC 8 (4.4%)	SC 15 (8.3%)	Gen. 12 (6.7%),	OBC 16 (8.9%)	SC 17 (9.4%)	
Total	180 (50 %)			180 (50 %)			360 (100%)

According to the given data, economic constraints are perceived to significantly hinder women's inclusion in politics. In urban areas, out of 180 participants, 122 (33.89%) agreed and 36 (10%) strongly agreed with this assertion, while 15 (4.17%) were uncertain. Similarly, rural respondents, also totaling 180, showed 84 (23.33%) agreeing and 45 (12.5%) strongly agreeing, with 38 (10.55%) uncertain. Overall, the combined results from 360 respondents indicate a prevailing belief in the impact of economic constraints on women's political participation, with 206 (57.22%) agreeing and 81 (22.5%) strongly agreeing. These findings highlight the need for targeted policies and initiatives to mitigate economic barriers and enhance gender equity in political representation across diverse socioeconomic contexts. Moreover, it also underscores the need for inclusion as an effective mechanism for bringing political equality in terms of gender.

Table 3.49: The religion of a candidate impacts the Women's voting behaviour.

The religion of a candidate impacts the Women's voting behaviour.	No. of Urban respondents			No. of Rural respondents			Total and Percentage
Strongly Disagree	37 (10.27%)			8 (2.22%)			45 (12.5 %)
	Gen. 15 (8.3%)	OBC 11 (6.1%)	SC 11 (6.1%)	Gen. 4 (2.2%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 4 (2.2%)	
Disagree	37 (10.27%)			33 (9.17%)			70 (19.44%)

	Gen. 10 (5.5%)	OBC 11 (6.1%)	SC 16 (8.9%)	Gen. 7 (3.9%)	OBC 16 (8.9%)	SC 10 (5.5%)	
Uncertain	26 (7.22%)			37 (10.27%)			63 (17.5 %):
	Gen. 12 (6.7%)	OBC 8 (4.4%)	SC 6 (3.3%)	Gen. 11 (6.1%),	OBC 13 (7.2%)	SC 13 (7.2%)	
Agree	55 (15.28%)			74 (20.55%)			129 (35.83%):
	Gen. 11 (6.1%)	OBC 26 (14.4%)	SC 18 (10 %)	Gen. 25 (13.9%)	OBC 26 (14.4%)	SC 23 (12.8%)	
Strongly Agree	25 (6.94%)			28 (7.78%)			53 (14.72%)
	Gen. 12 (6.7%)	OBC 4 (2.2%)	SC 9 (5%)	Gen. 13 (7.2%)	OBC 5 (2.7%)	SC 10 (5.5%)	
Total	180 (50 %)			180 (50 %)			360 (100%)

The impact of a candidate's religion on women's voting behavior is a subject of varying perceptions among urban and rural respondents. In urban areas, out of 180 participants, 55 (15.28%) agreed and 25 (6.94%) strongly agreed that religion influences voting behavior, while 37 (10.27%) strongly disagreed and 37 (10.27%) disagreed. Additionally, 26 (7.22%) were uncertain about this influence. Rural respondents, totaling 180, exhibited similar perspectives, with 74 (20.55%) agreeing and 28 (7.78%) strongly agreeing, while 33 (9.17%) disagreed and 8 (2.22%) strongly disagreed. Furthermore, 37 (10.27%) were uncertain about the impact of the candidate's religion on voting behavior. Overall, these findings suggest a nuanced understanding of how religious affiliations may shape women's electoral decisions, underscoring the complexity and diversity of factors influencing voting behaviors in different societal contexts.

Table 3.50: Caste impacts the participation of women in various political activities.

Caste impacts the participation of women in various political activities.	No. of Urban respondents			No. of Rural respondents			Total and Percentage
Strongly Disagree	24 (6.67%)			3 (0.83%)			27 (7.5 %)
	Gen. 10 (5.5%)	OBC 6 (3.33%)	SC 8 (4.4%)	Gen. 1 (0.5%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 2 (1.1%)	
Disagree	27 (7.5%)			20 (5.55%)			47 (13.05 %)
	Gen. 10 (5.5%)	OBC 9 (5%)	SC 8 (4.4%)	Gen. 5 (2.7%)	OBC 10 (5.5%)	SC 5 (2.7%)	
Uncertain	17 (4.72%)			26 (7.22%)			43 (11.94 %)
	Gen. 8 (4.4%)	OBC 5 (2.7%)	SC 4 (2.2%)	Gen. 5 (2.7%)	OBC 10 (5.5%)	SC 11 (6.1%)	
Agree	68 (18.89%)			83 (23.05%)			151 (41.94%)
	Gen. 12 (6.7%)	OBC 31 (17.2%)	SC 25 (13.9%)	Gen. 31 (17.2%)	OBC 28 (15.5%)	SC 24 (13.3%)	
Strongly Agree	44 (12.22 %)			48 (13.33%)			92 (25.55 %)
	Gen. 20 (11.1%)	OBC 9 (5%)	SC 15 (8.3%)	Gen. 18 (10%)	OBC 12 (6.7%)	SC 18 (10%)	
Total	180 (50 %)			180 (50 %)			360 (100%)

The impact of caste on women's participation in political activities varies across urban and rural respondents, reflecting diverse perspectives. In urban areas, out of 180 participants, 68 (18.89%) agreed and 44 (12.22%) strongly agreed that caste influences political participation among women. Conversely, 24 (6.67%) strongly disagreed and

27 (7.5%) disagreed with this assertion. Additionally, 17 (4.72%) were uncertain about the impact of caste on political activities. Rural respondents, totaling 180, similarly showed varied opinions: 83 (23.05%) agreed and 48 (13.33%) strongly agreed, while 20 (5.55%) disagreed and 3 (0.83%) strongly disagreed. Moreover, 26 (7.22%) were uncertain about the caste's influence. Overall, these findings highlight the complex interplay of caste dynamics in shaping women's engagement in political spheres, emphasizing the need for nuanced approaches to address barriers and promote inclusive participation across different social contexts.

Table 3.51: Women with Political backgrounds have more chances to succeed in elections.

Women with Political backgrounds have more chances to succeed in elections.	No. of Urban respondents			No. of Rural respondents			Total and Percentage
Strongly Disagree	0 (0 %)			0 (0 %)			0 (0 %)
	Gen. 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	Gen. 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	
Disagree	0 (0 %)			4 (1.11%)			4 (1.11%)
	Gen. 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	Gen. 0 (0%)	OBC 2 (1.1%)	SC 2 (1.1%)	
Uncertain	2 (0.55%)			52 (14.44%)			54 (15%)
	Gen. 2 (1.1%),	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	Gen. 20 (11.1%)	OBC 15 (8.3%)	SC 17 (9.4%)	
Agree	101 (28.05%)			82 (22.78 %)			183 (50.83 %)
	Gen. 32 (17.7%)	OBC 33 (18.3%)	SC 36 (20%)	Gen. 26 (14.4%)	OBC 28 (15.5%)	SC 28 (15.5%)	

Strongly Agree	77 (21.38%)			42 (11.67 %)			119 (33.05 %)
	Gen. 26 (14.4%)	OBC 27 (15%)	SC 24 (13.3%)	Gen. 14 (7.8%)	OBC 15 (8.3%)	SC 13 (7.2%)	
Total	180 (50 %)			180 (50 %)			360 (100%)

The perception that women with political backgrounds have greater chances to succeed in elections varies among urban and rural respondents, showcasing notable differences in opinion. In urban areas, 28.05% agreed and 21.38% strongly agreed with this notion, totaling 50.83% affirmatively. Conversely, rural respondents demonstrated slightly lower agreement levels, with 22.78% agreeing and 11.67% strongly agreeing, totaling 33.05% in favor. Meanwhile, 15% of rural respondents were uncertain about the impact of a political background on electoral success compared to 0.55% of urban respondents. These findings underscore differing views on the influence of political experience on women's electoral prospects, emphasizing the need for further exploration into the factors affecting political candidacy and success for women in diverse geographic and social settings.

Table 3.52: Social media platforms (Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, YouTube, Blog, etc.) can positively influence women's political participation

Social media platforms (Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, YouTube, Blog, etc.) can positively influence women's political participation	No. of Urban respondents	No. of Rural respondents	Total and Percentage
Strongly Disagree	0 (0 %)	1 (0.27%)	1 (0.27%)
Disagree	2 (0.55%)	5 (1.39%)	7 (1.94%)
Uncertain	26 (7.22%)	104 (28.89%)	130 (36.11%)
Agree	86 (23.88%)	55 (15.27%)	141 (39.16%)
Strongly Agree	66 (18.34%)	15 (4.17%)	81 (22.5%)
Total	180 (50 %)	180 (50 %)	360 (100%)

Social media platforms, including Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, YouTube, and blogs, are perceived to potentially positively influence women's political participation, although opinions vary between urban and rural respondents. In urban areas, out of 180 participants, 86 (23.88%) agreed and 66 (18.34%) strongly agreed with this view, totaling 39.16% who see social media as a positive influence. Conversely, rural respondents showed slightly lower levels of agreement, with 55 (15.27%) agreeing and 15 (4.17%) strongly agreeing, totaling 22.5% in favor. A significant portion of rural respondents, 28.89%, were uncertain about the impact of social media on women's political participation, compared to 7.22% of urban respondents. These findings underscore the potential of social media in enhancing women's engagement in politics while highlighting the need for tailored strategies to harness its benefits across diverse geographical contexts.

Table 3.53: Family Restriction due to a conservative mindset prevents women's Participation in non-electoral activities

Family Restriction due to a conservative mindset prevents women's Participation in non-electoral activities	No. of Urban respondents			No. of Rural respondents			Total and Percentage
Strongly Disagree	11 (3.05%)			5 (1.39%)			16 (4.44 %)
	Gen. 4 (2.22%)	OBC 2 (1.1%)	SC 6 (3.33%)	Gen. 2 (1.1%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 3 (1.7%)	
Disagree	12 (3.33%)			27 (7.5%)			39 (10.83 %)
	Gen. 7 (3.9%)	OBC 2 (1.1%)	SC 3 (1.7%)	Gen. 7 (3.9%)	OBC 9 (5%)	SC 11 (6.7%)	

Uncertain	30 (8.33%)			64 (17.78%)			94 (26.11 %)
	Gen. 9 (5%),	OBC 12 (6.7%)	SC 9 (5%)	Gen. 20 (11.1%)	OBC 24 (13.3%)	SC 20 (11.1 %)	
Agree	88 (24.44%)			60 (16.67%)			148 (41.11%)
	Gen. 20 (11.1%),	OBC 32 (17.7%)	SC 36 (20%)	Gen. 25 (13.9%)	OBC 14 (7.8%)	SC 21 (11.7 %)	
Strongly Agree	39 (10.83%)			24 (6.67%)			63 (17.5%)
	Gen. 19 (10.5%)	OBC 12 (6.7%)	SC 8 (4.4%)	Gen. 6 (3.3%)	OBC 13 (7.2%)	SC 5 (2.8 %)	
Total	180 (50 %)			180 (50 %)			360 (100%)

According to the given responses, family restrictions influenced by a conservative mindset are perceived to significantly hinder women's participation in non-electoral activities. In urban areas, out of 180 respondents, 88 (24.44%) agreed and 39 (10.83%) strongly agreed with this statement, totaling 41.11% who acknowledge this barrier. Conversely, rural respondents showed slightly lower levels of agreement, with 60 (16.67%) agreeing and 24 (6.67%) strongly agreeing, totaling 17.5% in favor. A substantial proportion of rural respondents, 17.78%, were uncertain about the impact of conservative family restrictions on women's participation, compared to 8.33% of urban respondents. These findings underscore the cultural and familial barriers that restrict women from engaging in various non-electoral activities, highlighting the need for societal shifts and supportive measures to promote gender equality and empowerment across different community settings.

Table 3.54: Patriarchal culture and social norms restrict the political participation of women.

Patriarchal culture and social norms restrict the political participation of women.	No. of Urban respondents			No. of Rural respondents			Total and Percentage
Strongly Disagree	1 (0.27%)			0 (0%)			1 (0.27%)
	Gen. 1 (0.5%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	Gen. 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	
Disagree	1 (0.27%)			1 (0.27%)			2 (0.55 %)
	Gen. 0 (0%)	OBC 1 (0.5%)	SC 0 (0%)	Gen. 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0.5%)	
Uncertain	6 (1.67%)			60 (16.66%)			66 (18.33 %)
	Gen. 2 (1.1%)	OBC 3 (1.7%)	SC 1 (.5%)	Gen. 23 (12.8%)	OBC 22 (12.2%)	SC 15 (8.3%)	
Agree	101 (28.05%)			63 (17.5%)			164 (45.55 %)
	Gen. 25 (13.9%)	OBC 42 (23.3%)	SC 34 (18.9%)	Gen. 20 (11.1%)	OBC 21 (11.7%)	SC 22 (12.2%)	
Strongly Agree	71 (19.72%)			56 (15.55%)			127 (35.27 %)
	Gen. 31 (17.2%)	OBC 15 (8.3%)	SC 25 (13.9%)	Gen. 17 (9.4%),	OBC 17 (9.4%)	SC 22 (12.2%)	
Total	180 (50 %)			180 (50 %)			360 (100%)

Patriarchal culture and social norms are widely perceived to restrict the political participation of women, as indicated by responses from urban and rural participants. In urban areas, out of 180 respondents, 101 (28.05%) agreed and 71 (19.72%) strongly

agreed with this statement, totaling 45.55% who recognize these barriers. Similarly, rural respondents agreed, with 63 (17.5%) agreeing and 56 (15.55%) strongly agreeing, totaling 35.27% in favor. A notable number of rural respondents, 16.66%, were uncertain about the impact of patriarchal culture and social norms on women's political participation, compared to 1.67% of urban respondents. These findings underscore the pervasive influence of patriarchal norms in limiting women's political engagement, highlighting the need for transformative social change and policies that promote gender equality and empowerment across all societal levels.

3.7.1: Analysis of Factors Affecting Women's Political Participation by Social Category

The analysis of factors influencing women's political participation reveals significant caste-based variations across urban and rural areas. Gender stereotypes emerge as a major barrier, with 51.67% of women overall agreeing they impact participation (Table 3.45). Urban OBC women show the highest agreement (20.5%), while rural SC women demonstrate stronger conviction (17.2% agree, 5% strongly agree). Educational limitations disproportionately affect SC women, with 26.6% of urban SC respondents agreeing about education's adverse impact compared to 21.1% of General women (Table 3.47). Economic constraints show similar patterns, with urban SC women (22.8%) and rural SC women (16.7%) most likely to agree that this hinders political participation (Table 3.48).

Religious considerations in voting behavior show caste-specific patterns, with urban OBC women most likely to agree (14.4%) about religion's impact (Table 3.49). Caste itself significantly influences participation, as 41.94% agree and 25.55% strongly agree (Table 3.50). Urban General women show the strongest recognition of caste's role (11.1% strongly agree), while rural SC women demonstrate substantial agreement (13.3% agree, 10% strongly agree). Political family backgrounds are seen as advantageous by most respondents (50.83% agree, 33.05% strongly agree), with urban SC women particularly likely to recognize this (20% agree) (Table 3.51).

Family restrictions and patriarchal norms show complex caste dynamics. Urban SC women report the highest agreement (20%) about family restrictions (Table 3.53), while rural SC women show strong recognition of patriarchal barriers (12.2% strongly agree) (Table 3.54). Across all factors, OBC women typically occupy a middle position between General and SC categories, though urban OBC women show particular sensitivity to gender stereotypes (20.5% agree) and caste impacts (17.2% agree). The data consistently reveals that SC women, particularly in urban areas, perceive structural barriers more acutely, while General category women often underestimate these constraints. These findings underscore how caste intersects with other socioeconomic factors to shape women's political participation in distinct ways across different social groups.

3.8 Conclusion

The data underscores significant perceptions regarding the barriers women face in political participation due to patriarchal culture and social norms, with distinct patterns between urban and rural contexts. Urban respondents predominantly acknowledge these constraints, with 45.55% agreeing or strongly agreeing that patriarchal culture and social norms restrict women's political involvement. This recognition likely stems from increased exposure to discussions on gender equity and evolving societal norms in urban settings. Conversely, rural respondents, while also recognizing these barriers (35.27% agreeing or strongly agreeing), show higher uncertainty (18.33%) compared to their urban counterparts (1.67%), indicating a more nuanced understanding and possibly varied experiences within rural communities.

The disparities in perceptions between urban and rural respondents highlight the complex interplay of cultural, social, and geographical factors shaping attitudes toward women's political participation. In urban areas, where access to education and diverse social networks may be more prevalent, there appears to be greater awareness and acknowledgment of patriarchal barriers. In contrast, rural areas, often characterized by more traditional norms and limited access to resources, exhibit both acknowledgment and uncertainty regarding these barriers. This suggests a potential opportunity for targeted interventions such as community engagement programs, educational initiatives, and policy reforms tailored to address specific regional challenges. Largely,

addressing patriarchal culture and social norms as barriers to women's political participation requires multifaceted strategies that encompass awareness-building, empowerment programs, and policy changes. Bridging the urban-rural divide in perceptions and understanding can foster a more inclusive political environment where women are encouraged and supported to actively engage in shaping their communities and societies.



CHAPTER 4

CHALLENGES CONFRONTING ELECTED FEMALE REPRESENTATIVES IN NAWANSHAHR CONSTITUENCY, PUNJAB

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4.1 Introduction

The realm of political representation in Nawanshahr, Punjab, presents a complex and often challenging terrain for women elected to public office. Despite the implementation of constitutional provisions and reservation policies designed to advance gender equality, the realities on the ground remain marked by structural barriers and entrenched patriarchal norms. This chapter examines these dynamics through a two-part empirical framework. Section A focuses on thirty elected women representatives drawn from Nawanshahr constituencies—comprising 15 urban and 15 rural elected members—whose experiences shed light on the everyday realities of governance in contrasting socio-political contexts. Section B brings into focus 10 key respondents, including 8 administrators, 1 social worker, and 1 academic, whose insights provide institutional and community-level perspectives on women’s participation in politics. Together, these two sections create a multi-dimensional understanding of the factors shaping women’s entry into, and performance within, local governance structures in Nawanshahr.

Situated in the Doaba region of Punjab, Nawanshahr reflects broader national patterns where women’s increased numerical representation does not always translate into substantive participation. Women in political office frequently encounter unequal access to resources, limited opportunities for decision-making within parties, and bureaucratic constraints that restrict their effectiveness. The situation is further complicated by rural–urban disparities. Urban elected representatives often benefit from relatively better access to education, media visibility, and institutional resources,

while rural women remain embedded in environments where caste hierarchies, limited infrastructure, and entrenched patriarchal values constrain their political agency. Beyond formal structures, cultural expectations continue to reinforce gendered divisions of labor, burdening women leaders with dual responsibilities of household management and public service. The inclusion of administrators, academics, and social workers in Section B allows this study to capture not only personal experiences but also institutional bottlenecks and systemic limitations that frame women's roles in local governance.

This chapter, therefore, sets out to unpack the multiple and overlapping challenges faced by women leaders in Nawanshahr. By weaving together the voices of elected representatives with those of key institutional actors, it highlights how gender, geography, and governance intersect in shaping women's political trajectories. The analysis not only documents the constraints—ranging from non-cooperation by male colleagues to proxy politics and lack of resources—but also examines the strategies women adopt to assert agency and influence decision-making processes. At the same time, it reflects on the differentiated experiences of rural and urban representatives, illustrating how context alters both the intensity and nature of challenges. In doing so, this chapter provides a grounded, evidence-based assessment of women's participation in Nawanshahr's political life, while pointing toward broader implications for strengthening gender-inclusive governance across Punjab and India.

4.2 Socio-Demographic Profile of Elected Women Representatives

The socio-economic profile analysis of elected female representatives in Nawanshahr, Punjab, explores how factors like age, education, caste, marital status, religion, residential area, and income collectively impact their political inclusion and the challenges they encounter in their roles. Younger representatives may struggle to establish their leadership maturity, while older leaders face adapting to evolving political landscapes. Education plays a critical role in empowering women with higher educational backgrounds to navigate legislative intricacies effectively. Caste dynamics influence outreach and constituency dynamics, affecting their ability to mobilize support and resources. Marital status and residential location are also significant;

married representatives balance familial responsibilities with political duties, while those from rural areas contend with infrastructure limitations. Additionally, factors like religion and income influence resource access and acceptance among diverse voter bases, highlighting the nuanced challenges faced by elected women leaders in Nawanshahr.

Table 4.1: Marital Status of Respondents

Marital Status of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Unmarried	0	0 %
Married	28	93.33%
Divorced	0	0 %
Widow	2	6.67%
Separated	0	0 %
Total	30	100%

The data analysis of marital status among respondents indicates that the majority, comprising 93.33%, are married. This suggests a significant representation of married women among elected female representatives in Nawanshahr, Punjab. Furthermore, 6.67% of respondents are widows, highlighting a smaller yet notable presence within this demographic group. The absence of unmarried, divorced, and separated respondents underscores the predominant marital status among elected women leaders in the constituency. This distribution underscores the potential influence of marital roles and responsibilities on their political engagement and leadership dynamics within the community.

4.2: Respondent's Place of Residence

Respondents' Place of Residence	Frequency	Percentage
Urban Elected Female Representatives	15	50%
Rural Elected Female Representatives	15	50%

Total	30	100%
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The data on respondents' place of residence reveals an equal distribution between urban and rural elected female representatives in Nawanshahr, Punjab, with each category comprising 50% of the total respondents. This balanced representation underscores the diverse geographic backgrounds from which these leaders emerge, reflecting both urban centers and rural communities within the constituency.

4.3 Respondents' Age-Wise Distribution

Respondents' Age Group (Years)	Frequency	Percentage
18-32	2	6.67 %
32-46	16	53.33 %
46-60	6	20%
60-74	6	20%
Above 74	0	0%
Total	30	100%

Table 4.3 presents the age-wise distribution of elected women representatives. Among the total of 30 representatives surveyed, the majority fall within the age groups of 32-46 years and 46-60 years, constituting 53.33% (16 representatives) and 20% (6 representatives), respectively. Another 20% (6 representatives) are aged between 60-74 years. There are no elected women representatives reported above the age of 74 years. Only 6.67% (2 representatives) fall within the age group of 18-32 years. This distribution indicates a predominant representation of middle-aged women in elected positions, with a notable absence of younger and older age groups among the sampled representatives.

4.4: Respondents' Social Category

Respondents Social Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gen	13	43.33%
BC	5	16.67%
SC/ST	12	40%
Total	30	100%

Table 4.4 provides the distribution of respondents according to social categories. The data reveals that out of the total 30 respondents surveyed, 43.33% (13 respondents) belong to the General category, while 16.67% (5 respondents) are from the Backward Classes (BC). The Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes (SC/ST) category constitutes 40% (12 respondents) of the total sample. This distribution indicates a varied representation across different social categories, with a significant presence of SC/ST respondents, followed by General category respondents, and a smaller proportion from the BC category.

4.5: Respondents' Religion-Wise Distribution

Respondents Religion	Frequency	Percentage
Hindu	14	46.67%
Sikh	16	53.33%
TOTAL	30	100%

Table 4.5 presents the religion-wise distribution of respondents. Among the total 30 respondents surveyed, 46.67% (14 respondents) identify as Hindu, while the remaining 53.33% (16 respondents) identify as Sikh. This data indicates a nearly equal

distribution of respondents between these two religions in the surveyed sample. The table provides insight into the religious composition of the respondents within the context of the study or survey conducted.

4.6: Respondents' Educational Status

Educational Status of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterate	1	3.33 %
Primary	1	3.33 %
Matric	12	40 %
Sr. Sec	9	30 %
Graduate	3	10 %
Post graduate	4	13.33 %
TOTAL	30	100 %

Table 4.6 provides a snapshot of the educational status distribution among respondents, totaling 30 individuals. The data reveals that the largest proportion of respondents, 40% (12 individuals), have completed education up to the Matric level, followed by 30% (9 individuals) who have finished Senior Secondary education. There are 10% (3 individuals) who are graduates, and another 13.33% (4 individuals) who have attained post-graduate qualifications. Additionally, 3.33% (1 individual) each represents the categories of illiterate and primary education completers. This distribution illustrates a varied educational background among the respondents, with a notable presence of individuals having completed education up to Matric and Senior Secondary levels, alongside smaller but significant cohorts of graduates and post-graduates.

4.7: Distribution of respondents according to Monthly Income

Respondents Monthly Income	Frequency	Percentage
Below 20000	10	33.33 %
20001-40000	14	46.67%
40001-60000	3	10%
60001-80000	2	6.67%
Above 80000	1	3.33 %
TOTAL	30	100%

Table 4.7 outlines the distribution of respondents based on their monthly income levels. Among the total of 30 respondents surveyed, the largest group comprises those earning between 20001-40000 INR per month, accounting for 46.67% (14 respondents). Additionally, 33.33% (10 respondents) have a monthly income below 20000 INR. Smaller proportions are observed in higher income brackets: 10% (3 respondents) earn between 40001-60000 INR, 6.67% (2 respondents) earn between 60001-80000 INR, and only 3.33% (1 respondent) reports earning above 80000 INR monthly. This distribution highlights a majority of respondents earning moderate incomes, with a significant number falling within the lower to middle income ranges, and a minority in higher income brackets.

4.3 Political Awareness Among Elected Women Representatives of Nawanshahr Constituency

This section explores the intricate landscape of political awareness among elected women representatives of Nawanshahr Constituency. It delves into the levels of political consciousness, engagement, and the factors influencing their understanding of governance processes and policy-making dynamics. By examining these aspects, the section aims to shed light on how these leaders navigate and contribute to the political discourse and decision-making within their constituency.

4.8: Knowledge regarding the Minimum age to contest Elections of the Panchayat/ Municipal Council

Minimum Age to Contest Election in Local Governance	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)		
	Urban N=15 (MC)	Rural N=15 (Sarpanches/Punches)	Total N=30
18 Years	1 (3.33%)	1 (3.33%)	2 (6.66%)
21 Years	13 (43.33%)	9 (30%)	22 (73.33%)
25 years	0 (0%)	1 (3.33%)	1 (3.33%)
35 years	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Don't Know	1 (3.33%)	4 (13.33%)	5 (16.67%)
TOTAL			30 (100%)

In analyzing the data regarding the knowledge of minimum age requirements to contest elections at the local level among elected women representatives in Nawanshahr Constituency, several key findings emerge. Among urban representatives (Municipal Council), 3.33% were aware that the minimum age is 18 years, while a significant majority, comprising 43.33%, correctly identified 21 years as the minimum age requirement. None of the urban representatives were aware of the requirement being 25 or 35 years old. Conversely, among rural representatives (Sarpanches/Panches), 3.33% knew that 18 years is the minimum age, and 30% correctly identified 21 years. Additionally, 13.33% of rural representatives were unsure about the minimum age requirement. Overall, the majority (73.33%) of all elected women representatives knew that the minimum age to contest local elections is 21 years, while a notable percentage (16.67%) indicated uncertainty about this criterion. These findings underscore varying levels of awareness among elected women leaders regarding crucial eligibility criteria for participating in local governance, suggesting potential areas for targeted educational interventions to enhance their understanding of electoral requirements.

4.9: Knowledge Regarding Lok Sabha Elections held till Date

Lok Sabha Elections till date	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)		
	Urban N=15 (MC)	Rural N=15 (Sarpanches/Punches)	Total
15	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
16	1 (3.33%)	0 (0%)	1 (3.33%)
17	6 (20%)	2 (6.67%)	8 (26.67%)
18	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Don't Know	8 (3.33%)	13 (43.33%)	21 (70%)
TOTAL			30 (100%)

The data reveals varying levels of knowledge among elected women representatives in Nawanshahr Constituency regarding the history of Lok Sabha elections. In urban areas (Municipal Council), 3.33% were aware of 16 elections having been held, while 20% knew about 17 elections. None were aware of 15 or 18 elections, and a significant portion (70%) expressed uncertainty about the total number of elections conducted to date. Conversely, in rural areas (Sarpanches/Panches), 6.67% were aware of 17 elections, and 43.33% were unsure, representing a higher level of uncertainty compared to urban counterparts. Overall, 26.67% of all elected women representatives were knowledgeable about 17 Lok Sabha elections, with 70% indicating uncertainty. These findings highlight a need for enhanced civic education initiatives to improve elected women leaders' understanding of historical electoral processes and their implications for governance and policymaking at both urban and rural levels in Nawanshahr.

4.10: Knowledge regarding the term of a member of the Lok Sabha

Tenure of a member of the Lok Sabha	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)		
	Urban N=15 (MC)	Rural N=15 (Sarpanches/ Punches)	Total
2 years	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
4 years	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
5 years	15 (50%)	14 (46.67%)	29 (96.67%)
6 years	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Don't Know	0 (0%)	1 (3.33%)	1 (3.33%)
TOTAL			30 (100%)

The data illustrates the understanding among elected women representatives in the Nawanshahr Constituency regarding the tenure of members of the Lok Sabha. In urban areas (Municipal Council), 50% correctly identified the term as 5 years, while 46.67% of rural representatives (Sarpanches/Panches) also demonstrated awareness of the same tenure. None of the respondents in either urban or rural areas indicated knowledge of a 2-year or 4-year term, reflecting a unanimous consensus on the 5-year term among those aware. Moreover, only one respondent in the rural category expressed uncertainty regarding the tenure, constituting 3.33% of the total respondents. Overall, 96.67% of elected women representatives across both urban and rural areas correctly identified the 5-year term, underscoring a strong grasp of this fundamental aspect of parliamentary governance.

4.11: Authority responsible for conducting the Parliament and state legislative assembly Elections

The authority responsible for conducting the Parliament and state legislative assembly Elections	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)		
	Urban N=15 (MC)	Rural N=15 (Sarpanches/ Punches)	Total
Political Party	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Prime minister	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
President	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Election Commission of India	15 (50%)	3 (10%)	18 (60 %)
Don't Know	0 (0%)	12 (40 %)	12 (40 %)
TOTAL			30 (100%)

The data reveals the understanding among elected women representatives in Nawanshahr Constituency regarding the authority responsible for conducting elections for Parliament and state legislative assemblies. In urban areas (Municipal Council), 50% correctly identified the Election Commission of India as the authority responsible. In contrast, only 10% of rural representatives (Sarpanches/Panches) demonstrated awareness of the Election Commission's role, with a significant 40% indicating uncertainty. None of the respondents attributed this responsibility to political parties, the Prime Minister, or the President. Overall, 60% of all elected women representatives correctly recognized the Election Commission of India's role, highlighting a substantial gap in awareness between urban and rural areas. These findings underscore the need for targeted education and awareness campaigns to enhance knowledge about electoral processes and institutional responsibilities among elected leaders, particularly in rural settings.

4.12: Knowledge regarding the year of the reorganization of Punjab

Year of the reorganization of Punjab	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)		
	Urban N=15 (MC)	Rural N=15 (Sarpanches/ Punches)	Total
1950	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
1952	1 (3.33%)	0 (0%)	1 (3.33%)
1966	7 (23.33%)	0 (0%)	7 (23.33%)
1967	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Don't Know	7 (23.33%)	15 (50%)	22 (73.33%)
TOTAL			30 (100%)

The data on elected women representatives' knowledge regarding the year of Punjab's reorganization reveals varying levels of awareness among urban and rural leaders in Nawanshahr Constituency. In urban areas (Municipal Council), 23.33% correctly identified 1966 as the year of Punjab's reorganization, while 3.33% mentioned 1952. Conversely, none of the rural representatives (Sarpanches/Panches) were aware of the specific year, with 50% indicating uncertainty. Overall, 23.33% of all elected women representatives across both urban and rural areas correctly identified 1966, whereas 73.33% expressed uncertainty about the historical event. These findings underscore a significant gap in historical knowledge among elected leaders, particularly in rural areas, suggesting a potential need for educational initiatives to enhance awareness of Punjab's political history and its implications for contemporary governance.

4.13: Knowledge regarding the number of Assembly Constituencies in Punjab

Number of Constituencies in Punjab at present	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)		
	Urban N=15 (MC)	Rural N=15 (Sarpanches/ Punches)	Total
100	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
115	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
117	14 (46.66%)	8 (26.67%)	22 (73.33%)
125	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Don't Know	1 (3.33%)	7 (23.33%)	8 (26.67%)
TOTAL			30 (100%)

The data analysis reveals the level of knowledge among elected women representatives in Nawanshahr Constituency regarding the number of assembly constituencies in Punjab. In urban areas (Municipal Council), 46.66% correctly identified that Punjab currently has 117 assembly constituencies. Meanwhile, 26.67% of rural representatives (Sarpanches/Panches) demonstrated awareness of the same number. A minority of respondents, 3.33% in urban and 23.33% in rural areas, indicated uncertainty about the number of constituencies. None of the respondents mentioned incorrect numbers such as 100 or 115. Overall, 73.33% of all elected women representatives correctly identified Punjab's assembly constituencies as 117, highlighting a reasonably strong understanding of this crucial electoral structure. These findings suggest a generally adequate awareness of electoral boundaries among elected leaders in Nawanshahr, albeit with some variability between urban and rural areas.

4.14: Knowledge about the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments

73rd and 74 th Constitutional Amendment	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)		
	Urban N=15 (MC)	Rural N=15 (Sarpanches/Panches)	Total
Yes	13 (43.33%)	6 (20%)	19 (63.33%)
No	2 (6.67%)	9 (30%)	11 (36.67%)
TOTAL			30 (100%)

The data analysis reveals the level of awareness among elected women representatives in Nawanshahr Constituency regarding the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments.

- In urban areas (Municipal Council), 43.33% correctly acknowledged the existence of these amendments, whereas 20% of rural representatives (Sarpanches/Panches) demonstrated awareness.
- Conversely, 6.67% of urban and 30% of rural representatives answered 'No' to their knowledge about these amendments.
- Overall, 63.33% of all elected women representatives correctly recognized the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments, highlighting a moderate level of awareness about these transformative legislative changes aimed at decentralizing power to local governments.

These findings underscore the need for continued education and awareness-building efforts to ensure elected leaders are well-informed about constitutional reforms that impact governance at the grassroots level in Nawanshahr.

4.15: Reading of Panchayat Raj Act/ Municipality Act

Reading of the Panchayat Raj Act/ Municipality Act	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)		
	Urban N=15 (MC)	Rural N=15 (Sarpanches/Panches)	Total
Yes	7 (23.33%)	2 (6.67%)	9 (30%)
No	8 (26.67%)	13 (43.33%)	21 (70%)
TOTAL			30 (100%)

In examining the data on the reading of the Panchayat Raj Act or Municipality Act among elected women representatives in Nawanshahr Constituency, distinct patterns emerge between urban and rural areas.

- Among urban representatives (Municipal Council), 23.33% have read these legislative acts, while a smaller proportion of 6.67% of rural representatives (Sarpanches/Panches) have done so.
- Conversely, 26.67% of urban representatives and 43.33% of rural representatives have not read these Acts, indicating a notable gap in familiarity with foundational governance frameworks.
- Overall, 30% of all elected women representatives have engaged with these Acts, underscoring a mixed level of preparedness among leaders in understanding the legal foundations that govern local governance structures.

These findings suggest a need for targeted initiatives to enhance the knowledge and comprehension of legislative frameworks among elected women representatives, particularly in rural areas, to empower them in their roles as effective local leaders in Nawanshahr.

4.16: A percentage of seats is reserved for women in the local bodies of Punjab at present

A percentage of seats is reserved for women in the local bodies of Punjab at present.	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)		
	Urban N=15 (MC)	Rural N=15 (Sarpanches/Panches)	Total
33%	1 (3.33%)	0 (0%)	1 (3.33%)
45%	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
50%	14 (46.66%)	12 (40 %)	26 (86.67%)
60%	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Don't Know	0 (0%)	3 (10%)	3 (10%)
TOTAL			30 (100%)

The data illustrate the distribution of knowledge among elected women representatives in Nawanshahr Constituency regarding the percentage of seats reserved for women in local bodies in Punjab. In urban areas (Municipal Council), 3.33% of representatives correctly identified that 33% of seats are reserved for women, while a substantial majority of 46.66% recognized that 50% of seats are reserved. Similarly, in rural areas (Sarpanches/Panches), 40% of representatives correctly identified the reservation percentage as 50%. A minority of 10% in rural areas indicated uncertainty about the reservation percentage. Overall, 86.67% of all elected women representatives correctly recognized that 50% of seats are reserved for women in local bodies of Punjab, highlighting a strong understanding of this crucial aspect of gender representation in local governance. These findings underscore a positive trend towards gender inclusivity in local leadership roles, supported by legislative measures aimed at enhancing women's participation and influence in Nawanshahr's community governance.

Table 4.17: Knowledge about Sources of Income of Panchayat/ Municipal Council

Sources of income of the Panchayat/ Municipal Council	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)		
	Urban N=15 (MC)	Rural N=15 (Sarpanches/Punches)	Total
Yes	13 (43.33%)	8 (26.67%)	21 (70%)
No	2 (6.67%)	7 (23.33%)	9 (30%)
TOTAL			30 (100%)

Table 4.17 provides a breakdown of the knowledge about the sources of income of Panchayat/Municipal Council among elected women representatives. The table categorizes respondents into two groups: Urban (Municipal Council) and Rural (Sarpanches/Punches), with a total of 30 participants evenly split between these groups. For Urban elected women representatives, 8 out of 15 (53.33%) demonstrated knowledge about the sources of income, while 7 (46.67%) did not. In contrast, the Rural group showed a lower level of awareness, with only 13 out of 15 (86.67%) indicating knowledge about income sources, leaving 2 (13.33%) without such knowledge. Aggregating the results, the total number of representatives who knew about the sources of income was 21 out of 30, equating to 70%. Conversely, 9 representatives (30%) did not possess this knowledge. This distribution highlights a notable difference in awareness levels between Urban and Rural representatives, with the Rural group showing a higher proportion of knowledgeable individuals. This disparity could reflect differences in the availability of information or the nature of their roles and responsibilities. The overall figure indicates a substantial majority of women representatives are informed about income sources, though the variation between the Urban and Rural groups suggests targeted educational or informational efforts might be necessary to equalize knowledge across these areas.

Table 4.18: Knowledge about the Quorum of the meeting of the Panchayat and Municipal Council

Quorum of the meeting of the Panchayat and Municipal Council	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)		
	Urban N=15 (MC)	Rural N=15 (Sarpanches/Punches)	Total
Yes	10 (33.33%)	5 (16.67%)	15 (50%)
No	5 (16.67%)	10 (33.33%)	15 (50%)
TOTAL			30 (100%)

Table 4.18 provides insights into the knowledge of elected women representatives regarding the quorum required for meetings of the Panchayat and Municipal Council. Among the Urban elected women representatives, 10 out of 15 (66.67%) knew about the quorum requirements, whereas 5 (33.33%) did not. On the other hand, in the Rural category, only 5 out of 15 (33.33%) were aware of the quorum regulations, with the remaining 10 (66.67%) lacking this knowledge. Overall, across both groups, 15 representatives (50%) were knowledgeable about the quorum requirements for meetings, while the remaining 15 (50%) were not. This indicates an even split in overall knowledge about this aspect of the Panchayat and Municipal Council operations. The data underscores a significant difference in quorum knowledge between Urban and Rural representatives, with Urban representatives demonstrating higher awareness. This discrepancy suggests that Urban representatives may have better access to training or information resources compared to their Rural counterparts. To ensure equitable knowledge across all areas, it might be beneficial to provide targeted training sessions or informational resources focusing on quorum requirements, particularly for Rural representatives.

4.4 Political Participation among Elected Women Representatives of Nawanshahr Constituency

Political participation among elected women representatives in Nawanshahr Constituency reveals varied levels of engagement and knowledge. The data indicates that while a majority of the representatives are informed about key aspects such as sources of income for Panchayats and Municipal Councils, there is a noticeable gap in understanding quorum requirements. Urban representatives generally exhibit higher awareness compared to their Rural counterparts, reflecting potential disparities in access to information and training. This variation underscores the need for targeted educational initiatives to enhance political efficacy and ensure equitable participation across different areas. Overall, while progress is evident, addressing these knowledge gaps is crucial for fostering more inclusive and effective governance.

Table 4.19: Information regarding the year of contesting the first election

Year of Contesting First Election	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)		
	Urban N=15 (MC)	Rural N=15 (Sarpanches/Punches)	Frequency / Total
1998	1	0	1 (3.33%)
2003	1	0	1 (3.33%)
2008	1	0	1 (3.33%)
2013	1	2 (Sarpanch=1 Punch=1)	3 (10%)
2015	2	0	2 (6.67%)
2018	0	13 (Sarpanch =8 Punch =5)	13 (43.33%)
2021	9	0	9 (30%)
TOTAL			30 (100%)

Table 4.19 illustrates the distribution of years in which elected women representatives in the Nawanshahr Constituency first contested elections. It shows a notable disparity between Urban and Rural representatives in their electoral debut. A significant majority of Rural representatives, 13 out of 15 (43.33%), began their political careers in 2018, reflecting a recent surge in rural political engagement. In contrast, Urban representatives predominantly contested their first election in 2021, with 9 out of 15 (30%) participating this year. Other years show limited participation, with only a few representatives emerging in 1998, 2003, 2008, 2013, and 2015. This distribution highlights a recent influx of new entrants, especially in Rural areas, suggesting a potential shift in political dynamics and increased opportunities for women in these regions.

Table 4.20: How many times and for which seat did you contest the election

Frequency of terms as an elected representative	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)		
	Urban N=15 (MC)	Rural N=15 (Sarpanches/Punches)	Frequency / Total
1 st	10	13 (Sarpanch=8 Punch=5)	23 (76.67%)
2 nd	2	2 (Sarpanch=1 Punch=1)	4 (13.33%)
3 rd	1	0	1 (3.33%)
4 th	1 Municipal councilor & Vice president	0	1 (3.33%)
5 th	1	0	1 (3.33%)
TOTAL			30 (100%)

In Table 4.20, which examines the electoral experiences of 30 elected women representatives, an analysis reveals insights into their political trajectories and distribution across urban and rural settings. Among the total representatives, 15 were elected from urban areas as Municipal Councilors (MC), with 10 of them securing their

first term. One MC also served as Vice President in her fourth term. In rural settings, encompassing Sarpanches and Panches, a total of 15 women were elected, with 13 achieving their first term; among them, 8 served as Sarpanches and 5 as Panches. The data indicates a predominance of first-term winners, comprising 76.67% of the total, while subsequent terms decline proportionally, with 13.33% in their second term, and smaller fractions in third, fourth, and fifth terms. This distribution highlights the diverse roles and electoral successes of women across urban and rural contexts, illustrating varying paths to political leadership within local governance structures.

Table 4.21: Factors that helped you to enter politics

Factors that helped to enter politics	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)		
	Urban N=15 (MC)	Rural N=15 (Sarpanches/Panches)	Total
Reservation policy	7 (23.33%)	13 (43.33%)	20 (66.66%)
Family Heritage	5 (16.67%)	1 (3.33%)	6 (20%)
Ideological beliefs	2 (6.67%)	0 (0%)	2 (6.67%)
Interest in Politics	1 (3.33%)	1 (3.33%)	2 (6.67%)
Personality of the Leader	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
TOTAL			30 (100%)

In Table 4.21, which explores the factors contributing to the entry of 30 elected women representatives into politics, key insights emerge regarding the influences that facilitated their political careers. The data reveals that 66.66% of the representatives cited the Reservation Policy as a significant factor, with 43.33% from rural areas and 23.33% from urban areas benefiting from this policy. Family heritage also played a

role, particularly among urban representatives, where 16.67% acknowledged it compared to only 3.33% in rural areas, contributing to an overall 20% impact. Ideological beliefs were mentioned by 6.67% of urban representatives. Interest in politics was noted equally among one representative each from both urban and rural settings, reflecting a minor yet notable driver. Interestingly, none cited the personality of a leader as a motivating factor. This data underscores the pivotal role of institutional policies like reservations in promoting women's participation in politics, while also highlighting the diverse personal and ideological motivations that influence their entry into political spheres.

Table 4.22: Reason behind contesting in the election

Reasons behind contesting in the election	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)		
	Urban N=15 (MC)	Rural N=15 (Sarpanches/ Punches)	Total
To promote the wishes of family members	8 (26.67%)	10 (33.33%)	18 (60%)
Social service	7 (23.33%)	3 (10%)	10 (33.33%)
Interest in Politics	0 (0%)	2 (6.67%)	2 (6.67%)
Urge for power	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
To build a political career	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
TOTAL			30 (100%)

In Table 4.22, which examines the motivations behind 30 elected women representatives contesting elections, notable patterns emerge regarding their reasons for entering politics. The data shows that a significant majority, comprising 60%, cited

promoting the wishes of their family members as a primary motivation. This trend was slightly more pronounced among rural representatives (33.33%) compared to urban ones (26.67%). Social service was another prominent reason, with 33.33% of all representatives, particularly significant in urban areas, where 23.33% mentioned it compared to 10% in rural settings. Interest in politics was cited by a minority, with 6.67% overall, primarily among rural representatives. Notably, none of the respondents mentioned urges for power or aspirations to build a political career as motivations. This data highlights the strong familial influence and community-oriented goals among elected women representatives, underscoring their roles as conduits for community aspirations rather than personal political ambitions.

Table 4.23: Involvement of family members in politics

Involvement of family members in politics	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)		
	Urban N=15 (MC)	Rural N=15 (Sarpanches/Punches)	Total
Yes	11 (36.67%)	6 (20%)	17 (56.67%)
No	4 (13.33%)	9 (30%)	13 (43.33%)
TOTAL			30 (100%)

The given data explores the involvement of family members in the political careers of 30 elected women representatives, revealing significant insights into familial support dynamics across urban and rural contexts. Overall, 56.67% of representatives acknowledged family involvement in their political journeys. Specifically, 36.67% of urban representatives, primarily Municipal Councilors (MC), noted family support, whereas 20% of rural representatives, serving as Sarpanches or Punches, similarly reported familial involvement. Conversely, 43.33% of respondents indicated no family involvement, with higher proportions observed in rural areas (30%) compared to urban

areas (13.33%). This data underscores the varying degrees of familial support experienced by women entering politics, suggesting that while family backing is prevalent among a majority, a significant minority pursue their political aspirations independently.

Table 4.24: Attitude of family members towards women’s involvement in politics

Attitude of family members	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)		
	Urban N=15 (MC)	Rural N=15 (Sarpanches/Punches)	Total
Positive	15 (50%)	14 (46.67%)	29 (96.67%)
Negative	0 (0%)	1 (3.33%)	1 (3.33%)
Indifferent	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
TOTAL			30 (100%)

In the given dataset that explores the attitudes of family members towards the involvement of 30 elected women representatives in politics, a clear trend of positive support emerges. A significant majority, totaling 96.67%, reported that their families held positive attitudes toward their political engagements. Specifically, 50% of urban representatives, predominantly Municipal Councilors (MC), and 46.67% of rural representatives, serving as Sarpanches or Punches, indicated strong familial support. Conversely, only 3.33% of rural representatives reported encountering negative attitudes from their families towards their political involvement. Interestingly, none of the respondents noted indifference from their families. This data underscores a supportive familial environment for women in politics, indicating that family members overwhelmingly encourage and endorse their roles in political leadership, thereby facilitating their active participation in public service.

Table 4.25: Membership of any Political Party

Membership of any Political Party	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)		
	Urban N=15 (MC)	Rural N=15 (Sarpanches/Punches)	Total
Yes	15 (50 %)	12 (40 %)	27 (90 %)
No	0 (0 %)	3 (10 %)	3 (10 %)
TOTAL			30 (100 %)

According to the above data, which examines the political party memberships of 30 elected women representatives, a clear pattern emerges regarding their affiliations across urban and rural settings. A significant majority, totaling 90% of all representatives, are members of political parties. Specifically, 50% of urban representatives, predominantly Municipal Councilors (MC), and 40% of rural representatives, serving as Sarpanches or Punches, are affiliated with various parties. Notably, all 15 urban MCs are members of political parties, with 9 belonging to the Congress (Cong), 5 to the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), and 1 to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Among rural Sarpanches, 10 out of 12 are affiliated, with 5 each in the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and Congress, and 2 in SAD. Conversely, 10% of representatives, all from rural areas, are not affiliated with any political party. This data underscores the high prevalence of party memberships among elected women representatives, highlighting their engagement with established political structures to advance their roles in governance and representation.

Table 4.26: Participate in party meetings and express your opinion in party meetings

Participation in party meetings and expression	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)		
	Urban N=15 (MC)	Rural N=15 (Sarpanches/Punches)	Total
Never	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Rarely	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Sometimes	0 (0%)	2 (6.67%)	2 (6.67%)
Often	0 (0%)	2 (6.67%)	2 (6.67%)
Always	15 (50%)	11 (36.67%)	26 (86.66%)
TOTAL			30 (100 %)

In the above table, which examines the participation and expression of opinions by 30 elected women representatives in party meetings, a strong trend towards active engagement is evident. A significant majority, totaling 86.67% of all representatives, reported participating and consistently expressing their opinions in party meetings. Specifically, 50% of urban representatives, predominantly Municipal Councilors (MC), and 36.67% of rural representatives, serving as Sarpanches or Punches, indicated regular participation. None of the respondents reported never or rarely participating in these meetings. A small minority, comprising 6.67%, noted occasional participation, primarily observed among rural representatives. This data underscores the proactive involvement of elected women representatives in party affairs, highlighting their active role in shaping party agendas and policies, thereby contributing significantly to political discourse and decision-making processes within their respective parties.

Table 4.27: Participation in meetings of Panchayat/Municipal Council

Participation in meetings of the Panchayat/Municipal Council	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)		
	Urban N=15 (MC)	Rural N=15 (Sarpanches/Punches)	Total
Never	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)
Rarely	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)
Sometimes	0 (0 %)	2 (6.67 %)	2 (6.67 %)
Often	0 (0 %)	2 (6.67 %)	2 (6.67 %)
Always	15 (50 %)	11 (36.67%)	26 (86.66 %)
TOTAL			30 (100 %)

In the above table, which examines the participation of 30 elected women representatives in meetings of Panchayats or Municipal Councils, a clear pattern of active involvement emerges.

- An overwhelming majority, comprising 86.67% of all representatives, reported attending these meetings always. Specifically, 50% of urban representatives, predominantly Municipal Councilors (MC), and 36.67% of rural representatives serving as Sarpanches or Punches, consistently participate in these local governance gatherings.
- None of the respondents reported never or rarely attending such meetings, while a small minority, totaling 6.67%, noted occasional attendance, primarily among rural representatives.

This data underscores the proactive engagement of elected women representatives in local governance processes, highlighting their commitment to participating in key decision-making forums that shape community policies and development initiatives.

Table 4.28: Boycott of the meetings, Panchayat/ Municipal Council

Boycott of the meetings Panchayat/ Municipal Council	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)		
	Urban N=15 (MC)	Rural N=15 (Sarpanches/Punches)	Total
Yes	2 (6.67%)	0 (0 %)	2 (6.67%)
No	12 (40 %)	14 (46.67%)	26 (86.66 %)
Sometimes	1 (3.33%)	1 (3.33%)	2 (6.67 %)
TOTAL			30 (100 %)

According to Table 4.28, which explores the instances of elected women representatives boycotting meetings of Panchayats or Municipal Councils, the data reveals a generally low incidence of boycotts among the 30 representatives surveyed.

- Specifically, 6.67% of all representatives reported instances of boycotting meetings. This was observed in 6.67% of urban representatives, primarily Municipal Councilors (MC), citing issues related to sanitation and fund allocation for the ward development. None of the rural representatives serving as Sarpanches or Punches reported boycotting meetings.
- The majority, totaling 86.66%, indicated no instances of boycott, with sporadic occurrences noted by 6.67% of respondents, equally distributed between urban and rural settings.

This data underscores a generally cooperative stance among elected women representatives towards participating in governance meetings, with sporadic boycotts driven by specific local issues related to ward development and resource allocation.

Table 4.29: Methods adopted by female representatives to maintain contact with people of the Ward/ Panchayat?

Methods adopted to maintain contact with people of the Ward/ Panchayat	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)		
	Urban N=15 (MC)	Rural N=15 (Sarpanches/Punches)	Total
Direct contact	7 (23.33%)	5 (16.67%)	12 (40%)
Through family members and the political party	2 (6.67%)	8 (26.66%)	10 (33.33%)
Telephonically	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)
Social media	6 (20%)	2 (6.67%)	8 (26.67%)
Through members of the Panchayat/ Municipality	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)
TOTAL			30 (100 %)

In dataset 4.29, which examines the methods adopted by 30 elected women representatives to maintain contact with people of their Ward or Panchayat, several strategies are evident, reflecting diverse approaches across urban and rural contexts. Direct contact emerges as the most utilized method, with 40% of all representatives, including 23.33% of urban Municipal Councilors (MC) and 16.67% of rural Sarpanches or Punches, engaging directly with constituents. Additionally, 33.33% of representatives, comprising 6.67% of urban and 26.66% of rural representatives, leverage family members and political party connections to maintain contact. Social media also plays a significant role, with 26.67% of representatives utilizing platforms

like Facebook and Twitter, particularly popular among urban MCs (20%) compared to rural representatives (6.67%). Telephonic communication and relying on other Panchayat or Municipal members were not reported as methods of contact. This data illustrates the varied strategies employed by elected women representatives to stay connected with their communities, leveraging personal outreach, familial ties, and digital platforms to foster engagement and address local issues effectively.

Table 4.30: Main Grievances of People in your Panchayat/Municipal Council

People's Grievances of the public in the Panchayat/Municipal Council	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)		
	Urban N=15 (MC)	Rural N=15 (Sarpanches/Punches)	Total
Education	0 (0 %)	1 (3.33 %)	1 (3.33 %)
Health	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)
Development Problems	8 (26.67%)	3 (10%)	11 (36.67 %)
Environment-related problems	3 (10%)	0 (0 %)	3 (10%)
Caste related disputes	0 (0 %)	5 (16.67 %)	5 (16.67 %)
Related to women and children	0 (0 %)	1 (3.33%)	1 (3.33%)
Sanitation	4 (13.33 %)	5 (16.67 %)	9 (30 %)
Any Other	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)
TOTAL			30 (100 %)

In dataset 4.30, grievances to elected women representatives in Panchayats or Municipal Councils show notable trends across urban and rural areas. Development problems are prominent, with 36.67% of all representatives concerned, split between 26.67% of urban Municipal Councilors (MC) and 10% of rural Sarpanches/Punches. Sanitation is a significant issue for 30% of all representatives, evenly distributed between urban MCs and rural representatives. Caste-related disputes are reported by 16.67%, primarily in rural areas. Environmental issues and grievances related to women

and children are reported by 10% and 3.33% of representatives, respectively, mostly from urban areas. Education and health are not significant concerns. This data highlights community challenges and underscores the role of elected women representatives in addressing developmental, social, and environmental issues, while also reflecting regional variations in grievances.

Table 4.31: Resolving Grievances of People in your Panchayat/Municipal Council

Methods for the Removal of Public Grievances	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)		
	Urban N=15 (MC)	Rural N=15 (Sarpanches/Punches)	Total
Contacting concerned Government officers	7 (23.33%)	5 (16.66%)	12 (40%)
Contacting Ministers	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)
Raising the matter in the Panchayat/ Municipal Council	8 (26.66%)	10 (33.33 %)	18 (60 %)
Contacting Party Members	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)
Social media/ Mass media to Mobilize Public Opinion	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)
Any Other	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)
TOTAL			30 (100 %)

Table 4.31 provides a clear picture of how elected women representatives address public grievances in Panchayat and Municipal Council settings.

- The primary method utilized, with 60% of representatives employing it, is raising issues directly in the Panchayat or Municipal Council. This approach is slightly more common among rural representatives (33.33%) compared to urban ones (26.66%).

- The next most frequent method, used by 40% of the representatives, is contacting concerned government officers, with urban representatives (23.33%) slightly outpacing their rural counterparts (16.66%).

Notably, there is no use of contacting ministers, party members, or leveraging social media and mass media, indicating a uniformity in grievance resolution strategies and a possible underutilization of broader advocacy channels.

Table 4.32: Participation in Training Programs

Participation in Training Programs	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)		
	Urban N=15 (MC)	Rural N=15 (Sarpanches/Punches)	Total
Yes	14 (46.67%)	5 (16.66%)	19 (63.3%)
No	1 (3.33%)	10 (33.33%)	11 (36.37%)
TOTAL			30 (100 %)

Table 4.32 illustrates the participation of elected women representatives in training programs. Overall, 63.3% of the representatives have participated in such programs, with a notable distinction between urban and rural areas. In urban settings, 46.67% of representatives have engaged in training, compared to only 16.66% in rural areas. Conversely, 33.33% of rural representatives have not participated in training, significantly higher than the 3.33% in urban areas. This data suggests a disparity in training opportunities or uptake between urban and rural representatives, with urban representatives showing a higher rate of participation.

Table 4.33: Participation in protest against government policy

Participation in a protest against government policy	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)		
	Urban N=15 (MC)	Rural N=15 (Sarpanches/Punches)	Total
Yes	6 (20 %)	10 (33.33%)	16 (53.33%)
No	9 (30 %)	5 (16.66%)	14 (46.67%)
TOTAL			30 (100 %)

Table 4.33 outlines the participation of elected women representatives in protests against government policy. A total of 53.33% of the representatives have participated in such protests, with a notable difference between urban and rural areas. Specifically, 33.33% of rural representatives (Sarpanches/Punches) and 20% of urban representatives (Municipal Council members) have engaged in protests. Among those who participated, urban representatives primarily protested in response to farmer agitation, while rural representatives focused on protests related to repealing the agriculture bills. This indicates that while both urban and rural representatives engage in protests, their specific motivations and targets differ, with rural representatives showing a higher level of engagement in policy-driven protests.

Table 4.34: Raising issues related to women's development in meetings of the Panchayat/ Municipal

Raising issues related to women's development	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)		
	Urban N=15 (MC)	Rural N=15 (Sarpanches/Punches)	Total
Yes	8 (26.66%)	5 (16.66%)	13 (43.33%)
No	4 (13.33 %)	8 (26.66%)	12 (40%)
Sometimes	3 (10%)	2 (6.67%)	5 (16.67%)
TOTAL			30 (100%)

Table 4.34 details the involvement of elected women representatives in raising issues related to women's development during Panchayat or Municipal Council meetings. Overall, 43.33% of the representatives actively address women's development issues, with urban representatives at 26.66% and rural representatives at 16.66%. In contrast, 40% of the representatives, including 13.33% from urban areas and 26.66% from rural areas, do not raise such issues, indicating a significant number who do not focus on women's development topics. Additionally, 16.67% of representatives occasionally bring up women's development issues, with 10% from urban areas and 6.67% from rural areas. This data reflects a relatively higher engagement in addressing women's development issues in meetings from urban representatives compared to their rural counterparts, though a substantial portion of both groups either do not address these issues or only do so sporadically.

Table 4.35: Participation in debates and discussions in panchayat / Municipal Council

Participation in debates and discussions in the panchayat / Municipal Council	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)		
	Urban N=15 (MC)	Rural N=15 (Sarpanches/Punches)	Total
Yes	8 (26.66%)	5 (16.66%)	13 (43.33%)
No	4 (13.33 %)	8 (26.66%)	12 (40%)
Sometimes	3 (10%)	2 (6.67%)	5 (16.67%)
TOTAL			30 (100%)

Table 4.35 provides an overview of the participation of elected women representatives in debates and discussions within the Panchayat or Municipal Council.

- Overall, 43.33% of representatives actively participate in these debates, with urban representatives at 26.66% and rural representatives at 16.66%.
- In contrast, 40% of the representatives, including 13.33% from urban areas and 26.66% from rural areas, do not engage in such discussions.
- Additionally, 16.67% of representatives participate occasionally, with 10% from urban areas and 6.67% from rural areas.

This data highlights that while a notable portion of urban representatives are actively involved in discussions, a significant number of both urban and rural representatives either do not participate or engage only sporadically.

Table 4.36: Who makes decisions in the meetings of the body you represent?

Who makes decisions in the meetings of the body you represent?	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)		
	Urban N=15 (MC)	Rural N=15 (Sarpanches/Punches)	Total
By Chairperson	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
By Female Representatives	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
By male representatives	6 (20 %)	10 (33.33%)	16 (53.33%)
Mutual consent of all representatives	9 (30 %)	5 (16.66%)	14 (46.66%)
on the directions of male family members	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
TOTAL			30 (100%)

Table 4.36 reveals that in the meetings of the bodies represented by elected women, decision-making is predominantly influenced by male representatives, who are responsible for 53.33% of the decisions, with a notable disparity between urban (20%) and rural areas (33.33%).

- Decisions made through mutual consent among all representatives account for 46.66% of cases, showing a greater prevalence in urban settings (30%) compared to rural ones (16.66%).
- Interestingly, there is no indication of decisions being made solely by the chairperson, female representatives, or under the influence of male family members, highlighting a uniform approach in the absence of these specific influences.

This suggests that while mutual consent plays a significant role, male representatives hold a substantial influence over decision-making processes in both urban and rural settings.

4.5 Perspective Regarding Reservation Policy

The field-based data on perspectives regarding reservation policy highlights varying opinions and experiences among elected women representatives across urban and rural areas. The data reveals a nuanced understanding of how reservation policies impact the roles of women and their effectiveness. In this context, the present section offers insights into the perception of elected women on reservation policy at the local level of governance.

Table 4.37: Reservation of Seats for Women in Local Bodies

The reservation of seats for women in local bodies has enhanced their participation in politics.	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)						
	Urban N=15 (MC)			Rural N=15 (Sarpanches/ Punches)			Total
Strongly Disagree	0 (0 %)			0 (0 %)			0 (0 %)
	Gen. 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	Gen. 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	
Disagree	0 (0 %)			0 (0 %)			0 (0 %)
	Gen. 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	Gen. 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	
Uncertain	0 (0 %)			2 (6.66%)			2 (6.66%)
	Gen. 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	Gen. 1 (6.7%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 1 (6.7%)	
Agree	2 (6.66 %)			6 (20%)			8 (26.67 %)
	Gen. 1 (6.7%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 1 (6.7%)	Gen. 3 (20%)	OBC 1 (6.7%)	SC 2 (13.3 %)	
Strongly Agree	13 (43.33 %)			7 (23.33 %)			20 (66.66 %)
	Gen. 6 (40%)	OBC 3 (20%)	SC 4 (26.7%)	Gen. 2 (13.3%)	OBC 1 (6.7%)	SC 4 (26.7 %)	
TOTAL							30 (100 %)

Table 4.37 illustrates the impact of reserved seats for women in local governance, showing a significant increase in their participation. Among the 30 elected women representatives surveyed, comprising 15 from urban municipal councils (MC) and 15 from rural sarpanches/punches, the majority strongly agreed (66.66%) that the reservation policy positively influenced their involvement in politics. In urban areas, 43.33% strongly agreed and 6.66% were uncertain, while in rural settings, 23.33% strongly agreed and 20% agreed. This indicates that reserved seats have effectively empowered women to engage more actively in local governance, fostering greater gender inclusivity in political decision-making processes.

Table 4.38: Reservation and Upliftment of Women

How has the reservation policy helped the upliftment of women?	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)		
	Urban N=15 (MC)	Rural N=15 (Sarpanches/ Punches)	Total
Contributed towards their social empowerment.	1 (3.33 %)	1 (3.33 %)	2 (6.67 %)
Women have been more economically independent	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)
Helpful in the formation of women-oriented policies	8 (26.66 %)	5 (16.66 %)	13 (43.33 %)
More inclusion of women in political decision-making	6 (20 %)	5 (16.66 %)	11 (36.66 %)
It gives them the confidence to participate in Politics	0 (0 %)	4 (13.33%)	4 (13.33%)
TOTAL			30 (100%)

Table 4.38 examines the impact of reservation policies on the upliftment of women, based on responses from 30 elected women representatives in urban and rural

settings. The data reveals several positive outcomes: 6.67% of respondents across both groups agreed that reservations contributed to their social empowerment. Additionally, 43.33% reported that these policies facilitated the formulation of women-oriented policies, indicating a direct impact on governance priorities. Furthermore, 36.66% noted increased inclusion of women in political decision-making processes, highlighting broader systemic changes. However, while 13.33% of rural representatives felt more confident to participate in politics due to reservations, there was no reported impact on economic independence. Overall, the reservation policy appears pivotal in fostering social empowerment, influencing policy agendas, and enhancing political participation among women in local governance.

Table 4.39: Reservation and Proxy Politics

The reservation of seats for women encourages proxy politics	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)						
	Urban N=15 (MC)			Rural N=15 (Sarpanches/Punches)			Total
Strongly Disagree	1 (3.33 %)			0 (0 %)			1 (3.33 %)
	Gen. 0 (0%)	OBC 1 (6.7%)	SC 0 (0%)	Gen.0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	
Disagree	1 (3.33 %)			2 (6.66 %)			3 (10 %)
	Gen. 1 (6.7%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	Gen. 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 2 (13.3%)	
Uncertain	3 (10 %)			5 (16.66 %)			8 (26.66 %)
	Gen. 1 (6.7%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 2 (13.3%)	Gen. 1 (6.7%)	OBC 1 (6.7%)	SC 3 (20%)	
Agree	2 (6.66 %)			7 (23.33 %)			9 (30%)
	Gen. 1 (6.7%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 1 (6.7%)	Gen. 4 (26.7%)	OBC 1 (6.7%)	SC 2 (13.3%)	
Strongly Agree	8 (26.66 %)			1 (3.33 %)			9 (30%)
	Gen. 4 (26.7%)	OBC 2 (13.3%)	SC 2 (13.3%)	Gen. 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 1 (6.7%)	
TOTAL							30 (100%)

The data from Table 4.39 on the impact of reserved seats for women on proxy politics among elected women representatives reveals nuanced perspectives. Among the total of 30 respondents, consisting of 15 each from urban municipal councils (MC) and rural sarpanches/punches, 3.33% strongly disagree and 10% disagree that such reservations encourage proxy politics. Conversely, 26.66% are uncertain about this assertion, reflecting ambiguity in their perceptions. On the other hand, 30% agree and another 30% strongly agree that reserved seats do promote proxy politics. This indicates a split in opinions among elected women representatives, suggesting that while some perceive reservations as empowering genuine representation, others believe it fosters proxy involvement, potentially undermining the authenticity of women's political roles. The variability in responses underscores the complex nature of gender-based reservations and their perceived effects on political dynamics within local governance structures.

4.6 Challenges Faced by Elected Women Representatives

Elected women representatives face challenges that range from gender discrimination, stereotypes undermining their authority, and limited mobility and resources due to cultural norms. In this context, the present section offers an analysis of the challenges faced by elected women representatives in the Nawanshahr constituency.

Table 4.40: Female representatives belonging to the lower caste encounter caste-based discrimination

Female representatives belonging to the lower caste encounter caste-based discrimination.	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)						
	Urban N=15 (MC)			Rural N=15 (Sarpanches/Punches)			Total
Strongly Disagree	0 (0%)			0 (0%)			0 (0%)
	Gen. 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	Gen. 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	

Disagree	12 (40%)			6 (20%)			18 (60%)
	Gen. 7 (46.7 %)	OBC 3 (20%)	SC 2 (13.3 %)	Gen. 4 (26.7 %)	OBC 1 (6.7 %)	SC 1 (6.7 %)	
Uncertain	0 (0%)			2 (6.67%)			2 (6.67%)
	Gen. 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	Gen. 2 (13.3 %)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	
Agree	3 (10%)			5 (16.67%)			8 (26.67%)
	Gen. 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 3 (20%)	Gen. 0 (0%)	OBC 1 (6.7 %)	SC 4 (26.7 %)	
Strongly Agree	0 (0%)			2 (6.67%)			2 (6.67%)
	Gen. 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 0 (0%)	Gen. 0 (0%)	OBC 0 (0%)	SC 2 (13.3 %)	
TOTAL							30 (100%)

Table 4.40 presents data on caste-based discrimination faced by female representatives belonging to lower castes, encompassing 30 elected women representatives from urban municipal councils (MC) and rural sarpanches/punches. The majority, comprising 60% of respondents, disagreed that they encounter caste-based discrimination, with 40% in urban areas and 20% in rural areas holding this perspective. A minority, 6.67%, expressed uncertainty about the issue. Conversely, 26.67% agreed and another 6.67% strongly agreed that caste-based discrimination affects them. Notably, none strongly disagreed with this assertion. These findings suggest mixed perceptions among elected women representatives regarding the prevalence of caste-based discrimination, highlighting variability in experiences across different political and geographic contexts.

Table 4.41: The use of muscle and money power is a significant barrier for female candidates

The use of muscle and money power is a significant barrier for female candidates.	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)		
	Urban N=15 (MC)	Rural N=15 (Sarpanches/ Punches)	Total
Strongly Disagree	1 (3.33%)	0 (0%)	1 (3.33%)
Disagree	0 (0%)	1 (3.33%)	1 (3.33%)
Uncertain	1 (3.33%)	6 (20%)	7 (23.33%)
Agree	5 (16.67%)	8 (26.67%)	13 (43.33%)
Strongly Agree	8 (26.67%)	0 (0%)	8 (26.66%)
TOTAL			30 (100%)

The data from Table 4.41 indicates that the use of muscle and money power presents a significant barrier for female candidates, based on responses from 30 elected women representatives across urban municipal councils (MC) and rural sarpanches/punches. Among these representatives, 3.33% strongly disagree, and an additional 3.33% disagree that muscle and money power hinder female candidates. Conversely, 23.33% are uncertain about this assertion. Meanwhile, 43.33% agree, and another 26.66% strongly agree that muscle and money power pose significant barriers for female candidates. Notably, no rural representatives strongly disagreed with this statement. These findings underscore the pervasive challenge of electoral dynamics influenced by financial resources and physical intimidation, particularly affecting female candidates in both urban and rural political arenas.

Table 4.42: Due to male domination at all levels of politics, women representatives are not consulted before major decisions are made

Women representatives are not consulted in political decision-making due to male dominance.	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)		
	Urban N=15 (MC)	Rural N=15 (Sarpanches/ Punches)	Total
Strongly Disagree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Disagree	3 (10%)	3 (10%)	6 (20%)
Uncertain	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Agree	8 (26.66%)	5 (16.67%)	13 (43.33%)
Strongly Agree	4 (13.33%)	7 (23.33%)	11 (36.67%)
TOTAL			30 (100%)

Table 4.42 highlights the issue of women representatives being sidelined in political decision-making processes due to male dominance, based on responses from 30 elected representatives, including 15 from urban municipal councils (MC) and 15 from rural sarpanches/punches. The data shows that no respondents strongly disagreed with this assertion, indicating unanimity on the absence of outright disagreement. However, 20% expressed disagreement, suggesting some level of consultation. Conversely, 43.33% agreed and 36.67% strongly agreed that they are not adequately consulted in political decisions due to male dominance. This disparity between urban and rural settings—where urban representatives exhibit higher rates of agreement and rural representatives show higher rates of strong agreement—underscores the pervasive nature of gender inequity in decision-making roles within local governance structures. These findings emphasize the urgent need for measures to promote gender inclusivity and ensure equitable participation of women representatives in political decision-making processes.

Table 4.43: Women representatives face non-cooperation from male colleagues and officials

Non-cooperation from male colleagues and officials	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)		
	Urban N=15 (MC)	Rural N=15 (Sarpanches/Punches)	Total
Strongly Disagree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Disagree	1 (3.33 %)	0 (0%)	1 (3.33%)
Uncertain	5 (16.67%)	1 (3.33%)	6 (20%)
Agree	3 (10%)	11 (36.66%)	14 (46.67%)
Strongly Agree	6 (20%)	3 (10%)	9 (30 %)
TOTAL			30 (100%)

Table 4.43 provides insight into the challenges faced by elected women representatives due to non-cooperation from male colleagues and officials. The data, gathered from 30 representatives evenly split between urban municipal councils (MC) and rural sarpanches/punches, reveals a significant issue affecting their effectiveness in governance. Notably, none of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement, indicating a consensus that non-cooperation exists to some degree. A small minority, 3.33%, disagreed, while 20% were uncertain about the extent of non-cooperation. Meanwhile, 46.67% agreed, and another 30% strongly agreed that they experienced non-cooperation from male colleagues and officials. This disparity between urban and rural settings—where rural representatives experience higher rates of agreement and urban representatives more strongly agree—underscores the pervasive nature of gender-based challenges in collaborative political environments. Addressing these issues requires fostering inclusive practices and policies that promote cooperation and respect for women's leadership within local governance structures.

Table 4.44: Due to the burden of household and childcare responsibilities, women representatives cannot devote equal time to political activities as compared to men.

The burden of household and childcare responsibilities, women representatives cannot devote equal time to political activities as compared to men.	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)		
	Urban N=15 (MC)	Rural N=15 (Sarpanches/ Punches)	Total
Strongly Disagree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Disagree	5 (16.67%)	4 (13.33%)	9 (30%)
Uncertain	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Agree	7 (23.33%)	5 (16.67%)	12 (40%)
Strongly Agree	3 (10%)	6 (20%)	9 (30%)
TOTAL			30 (100%)

Table 4.44 illustrates the impact of household and childcare responsibilities on the ability of elected women representatives to devote equal time to political activities compared to their male counterparts. The data, collected from 30 representatives, reveals significant challenges faced by women in balancing their familial duties with political responsibilities. None of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement, indicating a consensus that household and childcare responsibilities indeed affect their political engagement. A combined 30% disagreed, with 16.67% in urban and 13.33% in rural areas expressing this view. Meanwhile, 40% agreed and another 30% strongly agreed that these responsibilities limit their ability to dedicate equal time to political activities, highlighting a barrier to gender parity in political participation. These findings underscore the need for supportive policies and infrastructure that enable women to effectively manage their dual roles and contribute meaningfully to political decision-making processes.

Table 4.45: A large number of women are forced to contest elections only to act as custodians of the seats vacated by their husbands and other male family members due to the forced reservation policy.

A large number of women are forced to contest elections only to act as custodians of the seats vacated by their husbands and other male family members due to the forced reservation policy.	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)		
	Urban N=15 (MC)	Rural N=15 (Sarpanches/ Punches)	Total
Strongly Disagree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Disagree	1 (3.33 %)	0 (0%)	1 (3.33%)
Uncertain	1 (3.33%)	1 (3.33 %)	2 (6.66%)
Agree	2 (6.66 %)	8 (26.67%)	10 (33.33%)
Strongly Agree	11 (36.66%)	6 (20%)	17 (56.66%)
TOTAL			30 (100%)

Table 4.45 reflects the sentiment regarding the perception that many women are compelled to contest elections solely to hold seats vacated by their husbands or male family members, due to forced reservation policies. The data is based on responses from 30 elected women representatives, evenly split between urban municipal councils (MC) and rural sarpanches/punches. None strongly disagreed with this assertion, indicating a consensus that this phenomenon exists to some extent. A small minority, 3.33%, disagreed, while 6.66% were uncertain about the situation. In contrast, 33.33% agreed, and another 56.66% strongly agreed that women often contest elections under these circumstances. This highlights a critical issue where gender-based reservation policies may not always lead to genuine empowerment, but rather to symbolic representation, emphasizing the complexity and challenges in achieving substantive gender equality in political representation.

Table 4.46: Women representatives face interference from family members in their work

Interference from family members in their work	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)		
	Urban N=15 (MC)	Rural N=15 (Sarpanches/ Punches)	Total
Strongly Disagree	3 (10%)	0 (0%)	3 (10 %)
Disagree	8 (26.67%)	0 (0%)	8 (26.67%)
Uncertain	2 (6.66%)	6 (20%)	8 (26.66%)
Agree	0 (0%)	9 (30%)	9 (30%)
Strongly Agree	2 (6.66%)	0 (0%)	2 (6.66%)
TOTAL			30 (100%)

Table 4.46 presents data on interference faced by women representatives from family members in their work, based on responses from 30 elected representatives. The data shows that 10% strongly disagree and another 26.67% disagree that they experience interference from family members in their work, totaling 36.67% expressing no interference. However, 26.66% are uncertain about this issue. Conversely, 30% agree and another 6.66% strongly agree that they do face interference, totaling 36.66% experiencing familial interference in their professional roles. This highlights a significant challenge for women representatives across both urban and rural settings, indicating a need for support mechanisms that enable them to carry out their duties without undue familial constraints.

Table 4.47: Voters prefer to elect a male candidate as compared to a female.

Voters prefer to elect a male candidate as compared to a female.	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)		
	Urban N=15 (MC)	Rural N=15 (Sarpanches/ Punches)	Total
Strongly Disagree	1 (3.33%)	0 (0 %)	1 (3.33%)
Disagree	10 (33.33 %)	5 (16.66%)	15 (50 %)
Uncertain	1 (3.33 %)	6 (20%)	7 (23.33%)
Agree	2 (6.66%)	0 (0%)	2 (6.66%)
Strongly Agree	1 (3.33 %)	4 (13.33%)	5 (16.66 %)
TOTAL			30 (100%)

Table 4.47 examines voter preferences regarding the election of male versus female candidates, based on responses from 30 elected women representatives across urban municipal councils (MC) and rural sarpanches/punches. The data reveals that 3.33% strongly disagree and 50% disagree that voters prefer male candidates over female candidates. Additionally, 23.33% are uncertain about this preference. Conversely, 6.66% agree, and another 16.66% strongly agree that voters do prefer male candidates. Notably, rural representatives exhibit higher rates of agreement and strong agreement compared to their urban counterparts. These findings underscore persistent gender biases in electoral preferences, highlighting challenges for women seeking equal representation and indicating the need for continued efforts to promote gender equality in political participation.

Table 4.48: There is a lack of awareness among elected female representatives about their duties and privileges due to low educational status

There is a lack of awareness among elected female representatives about their duties and privileges due to low educational status.	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)		
	Urban N=15 (MC)	Rural N=15 (Sarpanches/ Punches)	Total
Strongly Disagree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Disagree	4 (13.33%)	0 (0%)	4 (13.33%)
Uncertain	2 (6.66%)	4 (13.33%)	6 (20%)
Agree	6 (20%)	7 (23.33%)	13 (43.33%)
Strongly Agree	3 (10%)	4 (13.33%)	7 (23.33%)
TOTAL			30 (100%)

Table 4.48 explores the awareness among elected female representatives about their duties and privileges, influenced by their educational status. The data includes responses from 30 representatives evenly distributed between urban municipal councils (MC) and rural sarpanches/punches. None strongly disagrees with the assertion that there is a lack of awareness due to low educational status. However, 13.33% disagree and 20% are uncertain about this issue. On the other hand, 43.33% agree and another 23.33% strongly agree that low educational status contributes to a lack of awareness about their roles and privileges. These findings suggest a notable perception gap among elected women representatives regarding the influence of educational attainment on their understanding of responsibilities and rights in governance. Addressing this gap requires tailored educational initiatives and support mechanisms to empower women in their political roles effectively.

Table 4.49: Fear of violence and Verbal Abuse discourages the engagement of women representatives in political activities.

Fear of violence and Verbal Abuse discourages the engagement of women representatives in political activities.	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)		
	Urban N=15 (MC)	Rural N=15 (Sarpanches/ Punches)	Total
Strongly Disagree	1 (3.33%)	0 (0%)	1 (3.33%)
Disagree	0 (0%)	1 (3.33%)	1 (3.33%)
Uncertain	1 (3.33%)	7 (23.33%)	8 (26.66%)
Agree	5 (16.66 %)	7 (23.33%)	12 (40%)
Strongly Agree	8 (26.66%)	0 (0%)	8 (26.66%)
TOTAL			30 (100%)

Table 4.49 explores the impact of fear of violence and verbal abuse on the engagement of women representatives in political activities, based on responses from 30 elected representatives. The data reveals that 3.33% strongly disagree and an additional 3.33% disagree that fear of violence and verbal abuse discourages their engagement. However, 26.66% are uncertain about this issue. Conversely, 40% agree, and another 26.66% strongly agree, that these factors indeed deter their active participation in political activities. Notably, urban representatives show higher rates of agreement compared to their rural counterparts. These findings underscore significant barriers faced by women representatives, necessitating strategies to enhance safety measures and support systems to mitigate the impact of threats and intimidation in political settings.

Table 4.50: Gender bias in political parties is the major hurdle to women's political participation.

Gender bias in political parties is the major hurdle to women's political participation.	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)		
	Urban (MC)	Rural (Sarpanches/Punches)	Total
Strongly Disagree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Disagree	1 (3.33 %)	0 (0%)	1 (3.33%)
Uncertain	3 (10 %)	3 (10%)	6 (20%)
Agree	5 (16.66%)	10 (33.33%)	15 (50%)
Strongly Agree	6 (20%)	2 (6.66%)	8 (26.66%)
TOTAL			30 (100%)

Table 4.50 examines the perception that gender bias within political parties represents a significant hurdle to women's political participation, based on responses from 30 elected women representatives divided between urban municipal councils (MC) and rural sarpanches/punches. None of the respondents strongly disagrees with this assertion, indicating that unanimity on the issue is not being completely dismissed. A small percentage, 3.33%, disagree, while 20% are uncertain about the impact of gender bias in political parties on women's participation. Conversely, 50% agree and another 26.66% strongly agree that gender bias within political parties constitutes a major obstacle for women in political engagement. These findings underscore the pervasive nature of gender disparities within political structures, highlighting the need for reforms within parties to promote equitable opportunities for women in leadership roles and decision-making processes.

Table 4.51: Female representatives encounter economic limitations as a result of the unequal allocation of grants/ Funds.

Female representatives encounter economic limitations as a result of the unequal allocation of grants/ Funds.	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)		
	Urban (MC)	Rural (Sarpanches/ Punches)	Total
Strongly Disagree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Disagree	1 (3.33%)	0 (0%)	1 (3.33%)
Uncertain	3 (10%)	6 (20%)	9 (30%)
Agree	4 (13.33%)	7 (23.33%)	11 (36.67%)
Strongly Agree	7 (23.33%)	2 (6.66%)	9 (30%)
TOTAL			30 (100%)

Table 4.51 examines the perception that female representatives encounter economic limitations due to unequal allocation of grants/funds, based on responses from 30 elected representatives. The data reveals that none strongly disagree with this assertion, indicating a consensus that economic limitations exist to some extent. A small percentage, 3.33%, disagree, while 30% are uncertain about this issue. On the other hand, 36.67% agree and another 30% strongly agree that unequal allocation of grants/funds poses economic limitations for female representatives. This highlights a critical concern where disparities in resource allocation hinder women's ability to effectively carry out their duties and contribute to governance. Addressing these disparities is crucial for promoting gender equity and enabling women to participate fully in political decision-making processes.

Table 4.52: Lack of training and political experience is a major challenge.

Lack of training and political experience is a major challenge.	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)		
	Urban (MC)	Rural (Sarpanches/ Punches)	Total
Strongly Disagree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Disagree	3 (10%)	0 (0%)	3 (10%)
Uncertain	0 (0%)	1 (3.33%)	1 (3.33%)
Agree	6 (20%)	11 (36.67%)	17 (56.67%)
Strongly Agree	6 (20%)	3 (10%)	9 (30%)
TOTAL			30 (100%)

Table 4.52 explores the perception that a lack of training and political experience is a major challenge for elected women representatives, based on responses from 30 representatives. The data reveals that none strongly disagree with this assertion, indicating a consensus that this challenge exists to some degree. A small percentage, 10%, disagree, while 3.33% are uncertain about this issue. On the other hand, 56.67% agree and another 30% strongly agree that a lack of training and political experience poses a significant obstacle for women representatives. This underscores the critical need for targeted training programs and mentorship opportunities to enhance the capabilities and confidence of elected women representatives in fulfilling their roles effectively within political environments.

Table 4.53: Societal and cultural norms restrict the political inclusion of female representatives.

Societal and cultural norms restrict the political inclusion of female representatives.	Elected Women Representatives (N=30)		
	Urban (MC)	Rural (Sarpanches/Punches)	Total
Strongly Disagree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Disagree	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Uncertain	1 (3.33 %)	1 (3.33 %)	2 (6.67 %)
Agree	5 (16.66%)	7 (23.33%)	12 (40 %)
Strongly Agree	9 (30%)	7 (23.33%)	16 (53.33 %)
TOTAL			30 (100%)

Table 4.53 presents data on the perception that societal and cultural norms restrict the political inclusion of female representatives, based on responses from 30 elected representatives. The data shows that none strongly disagree or disagree with this assertion, indicating a widespread acknowledgment of societal and cultural barriers. However, 6.67% are uncertain about this issue. In contrast, 40% agree, and another 53.33% strongly agree, that these norms pose significant obstacles to the political inclusion of women representatives. This highlights the pervasive impact of cultural and societal norms on women's participation in politics, emphasizing the need for cultural shifts and policy interventions to promote gender equity and enhance women's representation in decision-making roles.

4.7 Social Category Data Analysis: A Critical Appraisal

The present section examines the demographic distribution and perceptions of elected female representatives in local governance, focusing on their place of residence, social categories, and views on reservation policies. The findings highlight key trends based on urban-rural divides and caste-based differences, offering insights into how reservation policies impact women's political participation. According to the data as shown in Table 4.2, the respondents were evenly distributed between urban and rural areas, with 15 representatives (50%) from each setting. This balanced representation enables meaningful comparisons between urban municipal corporations and rural panchayats. Table 4.4 reveals that the General category women constituted the largest group (43.33%), followed by SC/ST women (40%) and OBC women (16.67%). The substantial representation of SC/ST women indicates that reservation policies have been effective in ensuring participation from marginalized communities in local governance.

Table 4.37 presents compelling data on perceptions regarding the reservation's role in enhancing women's political participation. A striking 66.66% of respondents strongly agreed with this proposition, including 43.33% of urban representatives compared to 23.33% of rural representatives. The caste-wise breakdown shows that General category women were most supportive, with 40% of urban General representatives strongly agreeing. OBC women showed moderate agreement (20% urban, 6.7% rural), while SC/ST women demonstrated strong approval (26.7% in both settings). Only 6.66% expressed uncertainty, primarily rural SC/ST and General category representatives, indicating widespread consensus on the reservation's positive impact.

Table 4.39 explores the controversial issue of proxy politics, where male relatives may wield undue influence over elected women representatives. The data reveals a polarized view: while 30% agreed that reservation encourages proxy politics, another 30% strongly agreed. Urban General and OBC representatives showed the strongest agreement (26.66% strongly agree), whereas rural SC/ST respondents exhibited higher uncertainty (20%). This suggests that perceptions of proxy politics vary significantly across caste and geographic lines.

Table 4.40 provides crucial insights into caste-based discrimination faced by women in local governance. While 60% of respondents overall denied its existence (including 40% of urban representatives), a significant 26.67% of SC/ST women reported experiencing discrimination, particularly in rural areas (where 16.67% agreed and 6.67% strongly agreed). Rural female representatives, especially Dalit women, experience caste-based verbal harassment. Caste-based discrimination affects Dalit women leaders' credibility and capability to govern. The urban-rural divide is notable, with urban SC/ST women reporting discrimination at 10% compared to 23.34% of their rural counterparts. This disparity highlights how caste and geography intersect to shape women's political experiences.

Therefore, the analysis of Tables 4.2, 4.4, 4.37, 4.39, and 4.40 collectively demonstrates that reservation policies have successfully increased women's political participation across all social groups. However, the data also reveals persistent challenges: concerns about proxy politics are prevalent among General and OBC representatives, while SC/ST women continue to face caste-based barriers, especially in rural areas. These findings underscore the need for complementary measures alongside reservation policies, including sensitization programs and stricter enforcement against discrimination, to ensure truly inclusive and effective political representation for all women. The intersectional analysis of caste, residence, and gender provides valuable directions for future policy interventions in local governance.

4.8 Political Perception of Key Respondents

From the Nawanshahr constituency, a diverse group of ten key respondents have been selected that offer invaluable perspectives on the political participation of women. Representing various roles essential to the region's governance and development, these respondents include officials such as the SDM and Assistant Commissioner, and others, highlighting their pivotal positions in local administration. Together, their diverse backgrounds and expertise promise a comprehensive view on enhancing women's political engagement in Nawanshahr. In this context, the present section offers insights drawn from perceptions of key respondents collected by the in-depth interview method. All the findings have been presented under appropriate themes as mentioned below:

Table 4.54: Gender Wise Distribution of Key Respondents

Gender	Frequency of Key Informants	Percentage
Male	4	40 %
Female	6	60 %
Total	10	100%

In the analysis of 10 key respondents, the gender distribution reveals that 40% of the respondents are male, accounting for 4 individuals, while 60% are female, totaling 6 individuals. This indicates a slight majority of female respondents among the key informants. Such gender diversity within the respondent pool is crucial for capturing a comprehensive range of perspectives and insights across the study or survey conducted with these individuals.

Table 4.55: Age-Wise Distribution of Key Respondents

Age Group (years)	Frequency of Key Informants	Percentage
18-32	3	30 %
32-46	4	40 %
46-60	3	30%
Total	10	100%

The age-wise distribution of the 10 key respondents shows a balanced representation across different age groups. Among the respondents, 30% fall within the 18-32 years category, comprising 3 individuals. The largest group, representing 40% of the respondents, is aged between 32-46 years, totaling 4 individuals. Similarly, another 30% of the respondents are in the 46-60 years age group, accounting for 3 individuals. This distribution suggests a diverse range of perspectives and life experiences among the key informants, which is valuable for obtaining comprehensive insights and understanding in the context of the study or survey conducted with them.

Table 4.56: Profession of Key Respondents

Profession	Frequency of Key Informants	Percentage
Administration	8	80 %
Social Work	1	10 %
Academics	1	10%
Party worker	0	0%
Other	0	0%
Total	10	100%

The profession distribution among the 10 key respondents highlights a dominant presence of administrators, constituting 80% of the group, with 8 individuals. Social workers and academics each represent 10% of the respondents, with 1 individual from each profession category. There are no respondents from the categories of party workers or others. This distribution emphasizes a significant concentration within administrative roles, suggesting a focus on perspectives and insights likely related to organizational management and governance. The presence of social workers and academics also introduces perspectives from fields focused on societal impact and research, contributing to a diverse range of viewpoints within the respondent group.

Table 4.57: Designation of Key Respondents

S. No.	Designation of Key Respondents
1	SDM Nawanshahr
2	Assistant Commissioner
3	District Child Protection Officer
4	District Development Fellow
5	Career Councilor
6	Election Kanungo

7	Election Tehsildar
8	District Development & Panchayat Officer
9	Child Welfare Committee/Social Worker
10	District Science Supervisor

The 10 key respondents hold diverse designations reflecting various roles within administrative, developmental, and social service sectors. These include SDM (Sub-Divisional Magistrate) from Nawanshahr, an Assistant Commissioner, and a District Child Protection Officer, indicating a focus on governance, child welfare, and administrative oversight. Additionally, roles such as District Development Fellow and Career Counselor highlight contributions to development initiatives and educational guidance. Positions such as Election Kanungo and Election Tehsildar underscore involvement in electoral processes, while the District Development & Panchayat Officer signifies engagement in rural development and local governance. Furthermore, the presence of a Child Welfare Committee/Social Worker and a District Science Supervisor emphasizes roles dedicated to social welfare and educational advancement, respectively. This diverse mix of designations among the key respondents suggests a broad range of expertise and perspectives crucial for comprehensive insights and decision-making in relevant fields.

QUESTION 1: *How do you assess the political participation of urban women as compared to rural women in Nawanshahr constituency in various political activities?*

ANALYSIS

- **Access to Resources:** Urban women tend to have greater access to educational and professional resources, which leads to higher political awareness and engagement as compared to rural women
- **Engagement in Formal Politics:** Urban women are generally more involved in formal political activities. They often participate in political parties, attend rallies, and engage in campaign activities. Due to socio-cultural restrictions and

limited access to resources, rural women might have less formal political engagement.

- **Support Networks:** Urban women tend to be more active in women's groups and NGOs that support political engagement and activism, whereas rural women receive support from local networks and community leaders, which can help in advocating for local issues.
- **Education Levels:** Urban women often have higher education levels, which can enhance their understanding of political issues and boost their engagement in political discussions and activities, as compared to rural women
- **Economic Independence:** urban women have higher financial independence, which enables women to engage in political activities more actively, whereas Economic dependence and limited job opportunities can restrict their capacity to participate in political activities.
- **Socialization:** The majority of urban people are politically active; they are aware, but rural women consider merely voting as political participation. Most of them are not aware of other forms of political participation.
- **Awareness:** A High awareness level among urban women about their political rights as compared to rural women
- **Non-conventional activities:** Urban women are politically more aware, and they participate more in online activities, whereas rural women participate more in agitations.

The above-mentioned disparities highlight the diverse challenges and opportunities that shape political engagement for women in the Nawanshahr constituency.

QUESTION 2: *What are the factors that hinder the effective participation of women in various political and non-political activities?*

ANALYSIS

- **Level of Political Awareness and Interest:** Women's lower levels of political awareness and interest, particularly in rural areas, limit their engagement in

political activities beyond voting. This is often compounded by limited access to information and education.

- **Male Dominance in Decision Making:** Persistent male dominance in decision-making roles, both within households and in political spheres, restricts women's autonomy and agency.
- **Political Background:** Women frequently encounter barriers in building a political background and network, which are crucial for entering and advancing in political arenas. This lack of background further marginalizes their representation in decision-making processes.
- **Socialization:** Traditional gender norms often confine women to domestic roles, limiting their exposure to and involvement in public spheres.
- **Reservation Policy:** While reservation policies aim to promote women's representation in politics, familial pressure and societal expectations sometimes force women into electoral contests without their genuine interest or preparedness, undermining their effectiveness as political representatives.
- **Lack of Financial Resources:** Financial constraints pose a significant barrier to women's participation, particularly in campaign activities and political leadership roles. Limited access to financial resources limits their ability to compete effectively in electoral processes or engage in advocacy efforts.
- **Low Educational Status:** Educational disparities further hinder women's effective participation by limiting their understanding of political processes, policy issues, and their ability to articulate their interests and concerns effectively.
- **Household Responsibilities:** Women often bear disproportionate household responsibilities, including caregiving and domestic chores, which leave them with limited time and energy to engage in political or community activities.
- **Family Restrictions:** Cultural and familial expectations often restrict women's mobility, participation in public gatherings, and decision-making autonomy. Family pressures to prioritize domestic roles over public engagement further marginalize women from political and non-political activities.

QUESTION 3: *According to you, what are the major challenges faced by elected women in a political context?*

ANALYSIS

- **Male Dominance in the Decision-Making Process:** Persistent male dominance in political decision-making continues to marginalize women's voices and influence in policy formulation and implementation.
- **Gender Bias:** Prevalent gender biases and stereotypes undermine women's credibility and competence as political leaders, affecting their ability to garner support and effectively represent their constituents.
- **Violence and Harassment:** Women in politics often face threats to their safety, including physical violence, harassment, and intimidation. This creates a hostile environment that deters women from actively participating in public and community engagements.
- **Institutional Barriers:** Political parties and institutions may lack adequate support structures for women, such as mentorship programs, training opportunities, and financial resources. This limits women's access to leadership positions and their ability to navigate political landscapes effectively.
- **Interference of Family:** Family expectations and responsibilities often impose constraints on women's political careers, including pressure to prioritize domestic roles over public service and challenges in balancing familial obligations with political commitments.
- **The Burden of Household Responsibilities:** Women frequently bear the primary responsibility for caregiving and household management, which can limit their availability and capacity to engage fully in political activities and decision-making processes.

QUESTION 4: *What is your opinion regarding the reservation of seats for women in local bodies leading to Proxy representation?*

ANALYSIS

- **Patriarchal Setup and Social Norms:** Politics is traditionally viewed as a masculine domain, perpetuating social norms that confine women to domestic roles. This societal conditioning limits women's aspirations and opportunities for political leadership, reinforcing gender stereotypes that undermine their credibility in public office.
- **Lack of Political Education and Economic Dependence:** Many women lack access to political education and training, which is crucial for navigating the complexities of governance and policy-making. Economic dependence on male family members further restricts women's autonomy and decision-making power, reinforcing their marginalization in political arenas.
- **Perception as Rubber Stamps:** Despite holding elected positions, women often face challenges in asserting their authority and influence. They may be perceived merely as figureheads or rubber stamps, with actual decision-making power resting with male counterparts or party leaders who marginalize their contributions.
- **Awareness of Political Rights and Responsibilities:** Women elected representatives may not fully understand their political rights and responsibilities, limiting their effectiveness in advocating for their constituents and shaping policy agendas.
- **Reservation Policy Pressures:** Reservation policies intended to promote gender equality sometimes lead to tokenistic representations, where women are pressured or coerced by their families to contest elections solely to maintain political status, without genuine support or empowerment.
- **Lack of Consultation:** Male colleagues frequently exclude women from decision-making processes within elected bodies, sidelining their input and expertise. This exclusion perpetuates a cycle where women's perspectives are undervalued and their potential contributions go unrealized.
- **Limited Political Experience and Training:** The absence of adequate political experience and training hinders women's ability to navigate political dynamics

effectively. This gap in preparation undermines their confidence and capability to lead and advocate on behalf of their constituents.

- **Political Party Manipulation:** Political parties may nominally support women's inclusion through reserved seats or quotas. However, in practice, male party leaders often retain real political power, using women as symbols of inclusivity while maintaining control over policy-making and decision-making processes.

QUESTION 5: *What are the reasons for the marginal representation of women of the Nawanshahr Constituency in the legislative assembly and parliament, despite the increase in the percentage of female voters and representation of women in local bodies?*

ANALYSIS

- **Gender Biases in Party Nominations:** Political parties often exhibit biases against female candidates during nomination processes, preferring male candidates due to perceived electability and entrenched gender stereotypes.
- **Lack of Political Awareness:** Many women, particularly in rural areas, have limited awareness of political processes, opportunities, and their rights as voters and candidates. This lack of awareness hinders their ability to actively engage in electoral politics.
- **Family Interference:** Cultural and familial expectations frequently discourage women from pursuing political careers or restrict their involvement in public life, prioritizing traditional domestic roles over leadership positions.
- **Lack of Political Interest:** A significant number of women may lack interest or confidence in pursuing political careers due to perceived barriers, limited role models, or disillusionment with the political system's responsiveness to their concerns.
- **Male Dominance in Legislatures:** The overwhelming presence of men in national and state legislatures perpetuates a male-dominated political

environment, making it challenging for women to secure party nominations and electoral victories.

- **Cultural and Social Norms:** Deep-rooted norms that prioritize men in public and political spheres marginalize women's participation and leadership opportunities, reinforcing gender disparities in political representation.
- **Women's Economic Dependency:** Economic dependence on male family members limits women's financial autonomy and their ability to invest time and resources into political activities, including campaign efforts.
- **Safety Concerns:** Women often face heightened risks of harassment, intimidation, and violence in political contexts, deterring them from seeking or maintaining political office and contributing to their underrepresentation in legislative bodies.

QUESTION 6: *What are the major initiatives that have been taken by the government as well as district authorities to the enhancement of women's participation in political activities?*

ANALYSIS

- **Inclusion in Electoral Processes:** Through initiatives like SVEEP activities, young women are actively included in voter education and electoral participation efforts, enhancing their understanding of democratic processes and encouraging voter turnout.
- **Nomination and Representation:** District authorities nominate female icons and include women in district SVEEP teams to ensure comprehensive representation and active participation of women in political activities.
- **Social Media Engagement:** Utilizing social media platforms to raise awareness among women about their political rights, importance, and opportunities for engagement, facilitating broader outreach and education.
- **Involvement of Anganwadi Workers:** Engaging Anganwadi workers in awareness activities helps reach grassroots levels, ensuring that women from rural and marginalized communities are informed about their rights and roles in governance.

- **Reservation in Local Bodies:** Implementing a 50% reservation for women in local bodies ensures their representation at grassroots levels, empowering them to participate actively in decision-making processes.
- **Restrictions on Male Interference:** Recent directives in Punjab prevent husbands or male relatives from attending meetings of Panchayati Raj institutions on behalf of elected women, reducing male proxy interference in official duties.
- **Training Programs:** Conducting programs and workshops to train women leaders and potential candidates equips them with the necessary skills for effective political participation and governance roles.
- **Community Outreach Campaigns:** Organize district-level campaigns to raise awareness about women's rights, challenge gender norms, and highlight their vital role in local governance and community development.
- **Access to Resources:** Ensuring women have access to campaign materials, office space, and administrative support helps level the playing field, enabling them to run effective and competitive political campaigns.
- **Focus on Marginalized Communities:** Emphasizing initiatives to increase participation among women from marginalized backgrounds, including lower socio-economic groups, ethnic minorities, and rural areas, ensures broader representation and inclusivity in political processes.

QUESTION 7: *What measures do you suggest to raise the participation of women in politics?*

ANALYSIS

- **Minimum Education Qualification:** Establishing a minimum education qualification for political candidates can ensure that elected representatives have the knowledge and skills necessary for effective governance.
- **Compulsory Training:** Implementing mandatory training programs for elected female representatives can equip them with essential leadership, governance, and legislative skills.

- **Awareness Through Social Media:** Utilizing social media platforms to raise awareness among women about the electoral process, their rights, and the importance of political participation can reach a broad audience and empower more women to engage in politics.
- **Implementation of Reservation Policy:** Ensuring 50% reservation for women in political bodies, similar to local governance structures, can provide guaranteed opportunities for women to participate and lead.
- **Political Party Gender Quotas:** Encouraging political parties to adopt gender quotas for candidate selection ensures equitable representation and increases the likelihood of women being nominated and elected.
- **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Organizing public awareness campaigns that emphasize the significance of women's involvement in politics and challenge traditional gender norms can foster a supportive environment for women leaders.
- **Safety Measures:** Providing robust safety measures, including legal protections, support services, and awareness initiatives, is crucial to protecting women from political violence and harassment.
- **Support for Local Women Leaders:** Offering training, funding, and networking opportunities specifically designed for women leaders at the local level can help them build strong political careers and overcome barriers to participation.

By implementing these measures, governments, political parties, and civil society can create an inclusive and supportive environment where women are empowered to actively participate in politics, contribute to decision-making processes, and advocate for issues that matter to them and their communities.

4.9 Unique Migration Patterns among Youth in the Doaba Region

Migration in the Doaba region of Punjab has historically reflected a distinct trajectory, but in recent decades it has acquired unique features, particularly among youth. The survey conducted in Nawanshahr and Garhshankar highlights that over 50% of aspirants were in the age group of 19–22 years, revealing that migration is

increasingly pursued immediately after school or during undergraduate studies (*Deepika & Aggarwal, 2021*). Interestingly, the sample of 71 respondents showed that 74.65% were male and only 25.35% female, indicating a persistent gendered dimension of migration aspirations (*Deepika & Aggarwal, 2021*). However, this trend resonates with the findings of *Gurinder Kaur (2019)*, who observed that male migration from Punjab consistently outweighed female migration due to socio-cultural conservatism. This reflects a generational continuity in migration, where Doaba youth view international mobility not merely as an option but as a necessary transition to achieve economic security, higher education, and social prestige.

Another unique pattern observed is the strong preference for migration despite high financial burdens and risks. According to the survey, over 91% of the aspirants were unmarried, underscoring the trend that international education and settlement are prioritized before marriage (*Deepika & Aggarwal, 2021*). This mirrors *Rajan and Wadhawan's (2013)* findings, where most prospective students applied for overseas study despite the steep costs, motivated by improved employment opportunities and the global value of foreign qualifications. Similarly, *Deepika & Aggarwal (2021)* found that economic benefits, especially remittances, serve as strong motivating factors for youth migration across Punjab. The Doaba case exemplifies how young aspirants are willing to invest heavily in overseas education even when scholarship opportunities are scarce, pointing to a cultural psychology where migration itself symbolizes success, regardless of the immediate economic returns. This “migration mindset” distinguishes Doaba from other Punjabi regions by embedding international mobility into social expectations and household strategies.

Religious and cultural affiliations also reveal a distinct dimension of youth migration in Doaba. The data shows that 57.75% of migration aspirants identified as Hindu and 36.62% as Sikh (*Deepika & Aggarwal, 2021*), highlighting that migration is not confined to one community but cuts across religious lines. Historically, migration theories such as *Stouffer's (1940)* “intervening opportunities” and *Lee's (1966)* “push-pull” framework explain this persistent outflow, where factors like lack of local employment and the lure of higher remuneration abroad influence decisions. Yet, the Doaba region's uniqueness lies in its deep-rooted legacy of migration dating back to

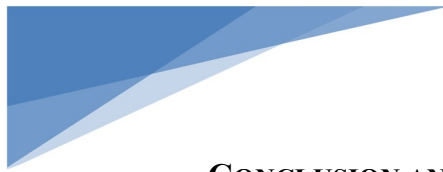
the colonial period, which continues to shape modern aspirations (*Michiel, 2010*). This historical continuity, combined with contemporary socio-economic pressures, has created a culture where overseas settlement is often viewed as the primary route to upward mobility. Thus, the youth migration pattern in Doaba is distinctive not only for its scale but also for how it blends generational traditions, economic imperatives, and cultural motivations into a single powerful narrative of mobility.

4.10 Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings underscore the multifaceted challenges and opportunities influencing women's political participation in the Nawanshahr constituency. The perceptions of elected representatives and key respondents reflect a broad spectrum of expertise crucial for informed decision-making across various sectors. This diversity highlights the importance of inclusive representation in governance and policy-making processes to address complex socio-economic and developmental issues effectively. Analyzing the political landscape, urban women exhibit higher levels of political engagement compared to their rural counterparts, primarily due to better access to educational and professional resources, participation in formal political activities, and support from advocacy groups and NGOs. Conversely, rural women face challenges stemming from socio-cultural norms, limited resources, and traditional gender roles, which hinder their broader political engagement beyond basic voting rights.

Moreover, barriers such as low political awareness, male dominance in decision-making spheres, economic dependency, and familial expectations persistently undermine the effective participation of women in both political and non-political activities. Despite initiatives aimed at enhancing women's political involvement, including reservation policies and awareness campaigns, systemic changes are needed to dismantle entrenched gender biases and empower women to contribute fully to political processes. Moving forward, implementing measures like mandatory education qualifications for candidates, comprehensive training programs, and equitable gender quotas in political parties can facilitate greater female representation and leadership. Strengthening support structures, ensuring safety measures, and enhancing awareness

through inclusive community outreach are essential steps towards fostering a more inclusive and representative political landscape. By addressing these challenges and building on existing initiatives, Nawanshahr and similar constituencies can pave the way for a more equitable and participatory democracy where women's voices are heard and valued.



CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, RESULTS, AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1 Introduction

The present chapter, titled "Conclusion and Suggestions," serves as the culmination of the research on "Political Participation of Urban and Rural Women: A Case Study of Nawanshahr Constituency of Punjab." This chapter synthesizes the findings and implications derived from the preceding analysis, offering insights into the dynamics of political engagement among women in both urban and rural contexts within Nawanshahr. Previous chapter findings have unearthed significant disparities in political participation between urban and rural women in the Nawanshahr constituency of Punjab. Urban women demonstrated higher levels of engagement in political activities compared to their rural counterparts. Factors such as education, socioeconomic status, and access to resources emerged as critical determinants influencing this disparity. Urban women, often equipped with better educational opportunities and economic empowerment, exhibited greater awareness of political processes and stronger advocacy for their rights within the political sphere.

In contrast, rural women faced numerous challenges, including limited access to education and resources, which constrained their active participation in political activities. These findings underscore the need for targeted interventions to enhance the political agency of rural women, thereby fostering more inclusive and equitable political participation across both urban and rural settings in Nawanshahr. Moving forward, several suggestions have been outlined based on the findings derived from primary and secondary data sources. Firstly, initiatives aimed at improving educational opportunities for rural women should be prioritized to enhance their political literacy and awareness. Additionally, targeted programs focusing on economic empowerment can empower rural women to overcome socioeconomic barriers that hinder their political engagement.

Furthermore, there is a pressing need for advocacy campaigns and community outreach efforts to raise awareness about the importance of gender equality in political

representation. Strengthening grassroots organizations and providing platforms for networking and skill-building among women in Nawanshahr can also facilitate their meaningful participation in local governance and decision-making processes. By implementing these suggestions, policymakers and stakeholders can contribute to creating a more inclusive and participatory political environment that empowers women from both urban and rural areas in Nawanshahr, ultimately advancing gender equality and social justice in the region.

5.2 Objective-wise Analysis

Research findings refer to the results obtained from a systematic investigation or study on a specific topic or question. They represent the empirical evidence and conclusions drawn from data analysis, observations, or experiments conducted during the research process. The significance of research findings lies in their ability to contribute new knowledge, validate existing theories, or challenge established beliefs within a particular field or discipline. Findings provide insights into patterns, trends, relationships, or phenomena that were previously unknown or not well understood. They serve as a basis for making informed decisions, shaping policies, and guiding future research directions. In this context, the present section outlines the key findings inferred from both primary (field-based data and government publications) and secondary (research papers, newspapers, and other published material) sources. All the research findings have been presented under appropriate themes in synchronization with the research objectives.

Research Objective 1: To analyse the status of political awareness among women of Nawanshahr Constituency of Punjab.

The detailed data analysis regarding political awareness among 360 eligible female voters (180 rural and 180 urban) in the Nawanshahr constituency of Punjab reveals significant insights into their knowledge of key political figures and institutions. Overall, 79.72% of respondents correctly identified Indira Gandhi as India's first female Prime Minister, indicating a high level of awareness across both rural and urban populations. However, awareness about other

political figures varied considerably. For instance, knowledge of the current President of India, Droupadi Murmu, was identified by 46.67% of respondents, with stark differences between urban (38.05%) and rural (8.61%) recognition levels. Similarly, awareness about the female Chief Minister of Punjab, Rajinder Kaur Bhattal, was noted among 46.94% of respondents, with higher recognition among urban (37.5%) compared to rural (9.44%) respondents. Interestingly, 42.5% of respondents were uncertain about the current female Chief Minister, with rural areas showing more uncertainty (31.39%) than urban areas (11.11%).

Moreover, awareness about local political representatives varied widely. Nachhatar Pal, the current MLA for Nawanshahr Constituency, was correctly identified by 84.72% of respondents, with slightly higher recognition among urban voters. Meanwhile, awareness about the current MP from Anandpur Sahib Constituency, Manish Tiwari, was lower overall, with only 31 rural respondents correctly naming him. Furthermore, the majority (89.72%) correctly identified the term length of Lok Sabha members as 5 years, showcasing a strong understanding of electoral processes. However, awareness about the exact number of Assembly Constituencies in Punjab was less precise, with only 52.77% correctly identifying the correct number as 117.

Thus, the data highlights the varied levels of political awareness among female voters in the Nawanshahr constituency of Punjab, highlighting areas where educational campaigns and civic engagement initiatives could enhance knowledge and participation in electoral processes.

Research Objective 2: To compare the political participation of urban and rural women of the Nawanshahr Constituency of Punjab.

In a comparative analysis of political participation between urban and rural female voters in the Nawanshahr constituency of Punjab, the data present a nuanced picture of engagement and interest. The survey included 360 eligible female voters, evenly split between urban and rural areas. The findings reveal that political interest varies between urban and rural female voters. Among the 180 urban respondents, 78 (21.66%) expressed an interest in politics, while 102

(28.33%) did not. Conversely, 102 out of 180 rural respondents (28.33%) showed interest, indicating a slightly higher engagement compared to their urban counterparts. This suggests a marginally higher political curiosity among rural women. Voting behavior among both groups shows high participation rates. In urban areas, 179 (49.72%) respondents reported regular voting, with only 1 (0.27%) indicating otherwise. Similarly, 178 (49.44%) rural respondents voted regularly, with 2 (0.55%) abstaining. This high level of regular voting underscores a strong civic engagement in both areas, though rural areas exhibit slightly more consistent participation.

The influence of voting decisions reveals that a significant majority, 66.38%, are primarily guided by their own choices. Specifically, 42.77% of urban and 23.61% of rural respondents make their voting decisions independently. Family influence plays a notable role, affecting 33.33% of respondents overall. This highlights a trend where urban women are more likely to make independent voting choices compared to rural women, who are more influenced by family. When it comes to contesting elections, interest is relatively low, with only 21.11% of respondents expressing a willingness to run. This interest is skewed towards urban respondents, with 15.55% showing readiness compared to 5.55% from rural areas. This disparity might reflect differing levels of political ambition and opportunity between the two settings. Political party membership is minimal across the board, with only 4.44% of respondents reporting affiliation. Urban areas show a slightly higher membership rate (3.33%) compared to rural areas (1.11%). The overwhelming majority, 95.55%, do not belong to any political party, with almost equal distribution between urban (46.66%) and rural (48.88%) areas.

Engagement in political meetings and discussions is also varied. In urban areas, 50% of respondents reported never speaking at political meetings, while 40.27% of rural respondents did the same. Participation in political debates shows a significant portion of urban (24.44%) and rural (46.11%) respondents who reported never engaging in such activities, making a combined total of 70.55%. Political campaigning activities reveal further differences. Urban

respondents were more active in encouraging others to vote, with 92 out of 180 participating in such efforts compared to 33 rural respondents. Financial contributions to election funds were made by 48 respondents, with a higher proportion from urban areas (38) than from rural areas (10). Attendance at election meetings was also higher among urban respondents (102) compared to rural respondents (26). Meetings with political representatives such as MLAs, MPs, and local leaders show a clear divide. Urban respondents are more likely to have met these representatives, with 25% reporting such interactions, whereas only 16.38% of rural respondents have had similar encounters.

In addition, social media use for political activities shows a pronounced difference. A significant portion of rural respondents, 44.72%, reported never using social media for political purposes, compared to 13.05% of urban respondents. Conversely, urban respondents are more likely to use social media, albeit infrequently, with 10.55% indicating rare use compared to just 1.94% of rural respondents. Therefore, it can be inferred from the above discussion, while both urban and rural female voters exhibit strong voting behaviors and low political party affiliation, urban respondents generally show higher levels of individual decision-making, political activity, and social media engagement compared to their rural counterparts. This differential pattern highlights varying dimensions of political participation influenced by urban-rural divides.

Research Objective 3: To investigate the factors affecting women's political participation in Nawanshahr Constituency of Punjab.

The comparative analysis of factors affecting political participation among female voters in the Nawanshahr constituency of Punjab reveals diverse influences rooted in socio-cultural, educational, and technological dimensions. The data encompasses 360 respondents, equally divided between urban and rural areas, shedding light on how these factors impact women's political engagement.

Socio-cultural Norms and Gender Stereotypes: The impact of socio-cultural norms and gender stereotypes on political engagement is evident from the survey. Among urban respondents, 48 (13.33%) were uncertain about the influence of

stereotypes, while a significant portion, 96 (26.67%), agreed, and 21 (5.83%) strongly agreed that these stereotypes affect political participation. In contrast, rural respondents showed a slightly different pattern: 61 (16.94%) were uncertain, with 90 (25%) agreeing and 19 (5.28%) strongly agreeing. This indicates that while both urban and rural respondents recognize the impact of gender stereotypes, rural women may feel less strongly about their influence compared to their urban counterparts.

Gender Gaps: Perceptions of gender gaps in political participation also varied. Urban respondents showed a broader range of opinions, with 50 (13.89%) agreeing and 36 (10%) strongly agreeing that gender gaps exist. On the other hand, rural respondents were more uniformly aligned, with 94 (26.11%) agreeing and 44 (12.22%) strongly agreeing. This suggests that rural respondents may perceive gender gaps more acutely, reflecting a more entrenched view of gender disparities in political spheres.

Educational Status: Educational attainment plays a crucial role in political awareness and involvement. In urban areas, 124 (34.44%) agreed and 37 (10.27%) strongly agreed that low educational status impedes political engagement, with 19 (5.27%) uncertain. Rural respondents similarly recognized this issue, with 76 (21.11%) agreeing and 36 (10%) strongly agreeing. This finding highlights a shared understanding across both settings that education is a key factor influencing political participation, though urban respondents demonstrate a slightly greater awareness of this link.

Candidate's Religion and Caste: The influence of a candidate's religion on voting behavior shows a mixed perception. In urban areas, 55 (15.28%) agreed and 25 (6.94%) strongly agreed that religion affects voting behavior, with an equal number of respondents (37 or 10.27%) strongly disagreeing and disagreeing. Rural respondents showed a similar pattern, with 74 (20.55%) agreeing and 28 (7.78%) strongly agreeing, while fewer (33 or 9.17%) disagreed and 8 (2.22%) strongly disagreed. This indicates that while both urban and rural respondents acknowledge the impact of religion, there is a notable uncertainty and variability in how strongly it is felt.

Caste as a factor influencing political participation reveals a higher level of agreement among rural respondents. Urban respondents showed that 68 (18.89%) agreed and 44 (12.22%) strongly agreed, compared to 83 (23.05%) agreeing and 48 (13.33%) strongly agreeing among rural respondents. This disparity suggests that caste may play a more significant role in rural areas, affecting political dynamics more intensely than in urban settings.

Political Background: The influence of a candidate's political background on electoral success also exhibits a differential perception. Urban respondents demonstrated higher agreement levels, with 28.05% agreeing and 21.38% strongly agreeing, making up a total of 50.83% who acknowledge this factor. Conversely, rural respondents showed lower agreement rates, with 22.78% agreeing and 11.67% strongly agreeing, totaling 33.05%. A notable 15% of rural respondents were uncertain about the impact of a political background on success, compared to just 0.55% of urban respondents. This indicates that rural respondents may be less certain about the role of political background, reflecting possible regional variations in political networks and influence.

Social Media Influence: Social media's role in enhancing political participation also varies. Urban respondents displayed a more favorable view, with 86 (23.88%) agreeing and 66 (18.34%) strongly agreeing that social media positively influences political participation. In contrast, rural respondents showed slightly lower agreement, with 55 (15.27%) agreeing and 15 (4.17%) strongly agreeing, making a total of 22.5% in favor. Additionally, a significant portion of rural respondents, 28.89%, were uncertain about social media's impact, compared to 7.22% of urban respondents. This discrepancy suggests that while urban areas may benefit more from social media in terms of political engagement, rural areas still grapple with the uncertainty of its effectiveness.

Therefore, the given data underscores how socio-cultural norms, educational levels, and technological access differently shape political participation among female voters in urban and rural areas. Understanding these factors can help in devising targeted strategies to enhance political engagement and address barriers specific to each setting.

Research Objective 4: *To explore the challenges faced by elected female representatives in the Nawanshahr Constituency of Punjab.*

The data on the challenges faced by female elected representatives in the Nawanshahr constituency of Punjab provides a comprehensive overview of the multifaceted issues impacting their effectiveness and engagement. The sample of 30 elected women, evenly divided between urban and rural areas, reveals significant insights into age, educational background, caste, and socio-cultural challenges. The age profile of the representatives indicates that the majority are between 32 and 60 years old, with 16 out of 30 (53.33%) in the 32–46-year range and 6 (20%) in the 46–60-year range. However, there are only a few representatives aged between 18–32 years (6.67%) and none above 74 years, highlighting a potential gap in younger and older age group representation. Educational attainment among the representatives shows that 40% have completed their education up to the Matric level, while 30% have completed Senior Secondary education. A smaller proportion holds undergraduate (10%) or postgraduate degrees (13.33%), with a minor number at the illiterate or primary education levels. In the given context, the set of challenges associated with elected women in the Nawanshahr constituency of Punjab are outlined below:

Caste-Based Discrimination: Caste-based discrimination presents a varied picture. While 60% of respondents do not perceive caste-based discrimination in their roles, with urban respondents showing a higher level of disagreement (40%) compared to rural respondents (20%), 26.67% of the respondents agree, and 6.67% strongly agree that caste-based discrimination does affect them.

Consultation and Non-Cooperation: The issue of consultation and non-cooperation from male colleagues is a significant challenge. A substantial majority, 43.33%, agree and 36.67% strongly agree that they are not adequately consulted in political decisions due to male dominance. This lack of consultation reflects a broader issue of gender imbalance in political decision-making processes. Additionally, 46.67% agree and 30% strongly agree that they face non-cooperation from male colleagues and officials, underscoring the persistent gender-based hurdles in their roles.

Balancing Familial and Political Duties: Balancing familial responsibilities with political duties is another major challenge. The data shows that 40% agree and 30% strongly agree that household and childcare responsibilities limit their ability to fully engage in political activities. This constraint is acknowledged by all respondents to some degree, indicating that domestic duties are a significant barrier to their political effectiveness.

Interference from Family Members: Interference from family members in their professional roles is also noted. While 36.67% of respondents experience familial interference, with 30% agreeing and 6.66% strongly agreeing, a significant proportion (36.67%) reports no interference. This reflects a varied impact of familial dynamics on their political work, with some representatives facing more direct challenges than others.

Voter Preferences: Regarding voter preferences, 23.33% are uncertain, and 50% disagree that voters prefer male candidates over female candidates. However, 6.66% agree and 16.66% strongly agree that such a preference exists. This suggests that while a majority do not perceive a strong bias against female candidates, there is still a notable concern about gender preferences among voters.

Educational Status and Awareness: Low educational status and its impact on political awareness is a concern, with 43.33% agreeing and 23.33% strongly agreeing that it contributes to a lack of awareness about their roles and privileges. This is corroborated by the fact that none strongly disagree with this assertion, indicating a general recognition of the link between educational attainment and political engagement.

Fear of Violence and Verbal Abuse: The fear of violence and verbal abuse is also a notable challenge, with 40% agreeing and 26.66% strongly agreeing that these factors deter their participation in political activities. This highlights a significant barrier to women's full engagement in politics, with a quarter of respondents being uncertain about the impact of these threats.

Gender Bias and Training: Gender bias within political parties is seen as a major obstacle by 50% of respondents who agree and 26.66% who strongly agree.

Similarly, 56.67% agree and 30% strongly agree that a lack of training and political experience poses a significant challenge. These responses indicate that systemic biases and insufficient training opportunities significantly hinder the effectiveness of female representatives.

Societal and Cultural Barriers: Lastly, societal and cultural barriers are acknowledged as significant obstacles, with 40% agreeing and 53.33% strongly agreeing that these norms impede political inclusion. This near-universal agreement highlights the deep-rooted nature of these barriers and their impact on the political landscape for women.

Therefore, the data paints a comprehensive picture of the challenges faced by female elected representatives in Nawanshahr. Age, educational background, caste-based discrimination, gender bias, and societal norms all play a role in shaping their political engagement and effectiveness. Addressing these challenges requires targeted interventions to support female representatives in overcoming these barriers and enhancing their political participation.

5.3 Research Questions Answerability

Research questions are central inquiries that guide a study's exploration and investigation into a specific subject matter. They define the scope of the research, focusing on what the study aims to uncover, explain, or understand. The significance of research questions lies in their ability to direct the research process towards meaningful outcomes. They help researchers clarify objectives, identify relevant variables, and determine the appropriate methods for data collection and analysis. Research questions play a pivotal role in shaping the trajectory of research endeavors, influencing decision-making processes, and contributing to the accumulation of knowledge that informs policy, practice, and future research initiatives. In this milieu, the present section outlines the answerability/validity of research questions derived from primary cum secondary data sources. These questions maintain the symmetry with research objectives in a systematic mode.

Research Question 1: What are the various factors which are affecting the political participation of women in Nawanshahr Constituency of Punjab?

The political participation of women in Nawanshahr Constituency, Punjab, is influenced by a multitude of factors spanning educational, socioeconomic, cultural, and institutional dimensions. Urban women generally exhibit higher levels of engagement in political activities compared to their rural counterparts, largely due to better educational opportunities and economic empowerment. This affords urban women greater awareness of political processes and enhanced advocacy within the political sphere. Conversely, rural women encounter significant barriers such as limited access to education and resources, which hamper their active involvement in political affairs. Knowledge about local political representatives and specific governance structures varies widely, indicating gaps in political literacy and civic engagement. The study also reveals that while both urban and rural women demonstrate strong voting behaviors, urban women tend to exhibit higher levels of individual decision-making in voting choices, political activity, and social media engagement. In contrast, rural women are more influenced by familial decisions and face challenges such as caste dynamics and gender stereotypes, which inhibit their political participation.

Research Question 2: What is the impact of socio-economic status on the political participation of women in Nawanshahr Constituency?

Based on the primary and secondary data sources, the findings reveal stark disparities in political engagement between urban and rural women, largely influenced by socio-economic factors. Urban women, characterized by better access to education and economic resources, demonstrate higher levels of political awareness and participation compared to their rural counterparts. This advantage translates into greater involvement in political activities such as voting, attending political meetings, and engaging in social media for political purposes. Moreover, urban women exhibit more independence in their voting decisions and are more likely to express interest in contesting elections, reflecting a higher

degree of political ambition facilitated by their socio-economic status. Conversely, rural women face significant barriers rooted in socio-economic disadvantages. Limited access to education and economic opportunities constrains their political literacy and active participation in political processes. The data highlights lower levels of political awareness and engagement among rural women, compounded by challenges like family influence on voting decisions and reduced access to political networks and resources.

Research Question 3: What is the status of political awareness among urban and rural women of Nawanshahr Constituency?

The political awareness among urban and rural women in the Nawanshahr Constituency of Punjab reflects significant disparities influenced by various socio-economic factors. Urban women generally exhibit higher levels of political engagement compared to their rural counterparts, owing to better access to education, socioeconomic status, and resources. This advantage translates into greater awareness of political figures and institutions among urban women, as evidenced by their ability to correctly identify figures like Indira Gandhi and local political representatives more frequently than rural women. Conversely, rural women face substantial challenges that hinder their political awareness and participation. Limited educational opportunities and economic resources constrain their ability to engage meaningfully in political activities. The data reveals that rural women often struggle with identifying prominent political figures and understanding electoral processes compared to their urban counterparts. This disparity underscores the need for targeted interventions aimed at enhancing political literacy and awareness among rural women in Nawanshahr.

Research Question 4: What has been the performance of women of Nawanshahr Constituency in Municipal Council, Panchayat elections, and State Legislative Assembly elections since 2003?

Since 2003, the performance of women in Nawanshahr Constituency across various elections—Municipal Council, Panchayat, and State Legislative

Assembly—reflects a dynamic landscape of political engagement shaped by urban-rural disparities and socio-economic factors. In Municipal Council elections, urban women have shown relatively higher levels of participation compared to their rural counterparts. This trend is attributed to better educational opportunities and economic empowerment among urban women, enabling them to navigate political processes more effectively. Rural women often contend with traditional gender roles and socio-cultural norms that discourage their entry into public office. In a similar context, State Legislative Assembly elections reflect broader trends observed across the Nawanshahr Constituency. Urban women voters consistently demonstrate robust turnout rates and active engagement in electoral campaigns, influenced by their socio-economic status and access to information channels. At large, the trajectory of women's political participation in Nawanshahr Constituency reveals a complex interplay of socio-economic disparities and cultural dynamics.

Research Question 5: What is the level of participation of urban and rural women in conventional and unconventional political activities such as election campaigning, protesting, and contacting officials, etc.?

The political participation of urban and rural women in the Nawanshahr constituency of Punjab reveals distinct patterns shaped by various socio-economic factors and regional disparities. In Nawanshahr, urban women benefit from better educational opportunities and economic empowerment compared to rural women, which enhances their awareness of political processes and advocacy for their rights within the political sphere. They are more likely to participate actively in election campaigns, protests, and engage with political representatives. This higher engagement is reflected in their frequent attendance at election meetings, involvement in political debates, and utilization of social media for political purposes. At large, while both urban and rural women in Nawanshahr demonstrate a strong commitment to voting, urban women exhibit higher levels of participation in unconventional political activities and have greater access to platforms for political expression.

Research Question 6: How does reservation policy has impacted the political participation of women?

The impact of reservation policies on the political participation of women in the Nawanshahr constituency of Punjab reveals nuanced insights into their engagement across urban and rural settings. Historically, reservations have aimed to address gender disparities by mandating a certain percentage of seats for women in local governance. In Nawanshahr, this policy has significantly increased the representation of women in elected positions. Data indicates that 30% of elected representatives are women, highlighting progress towards gender parity in political leadership. Despite this advancement, challenges persist, particularly in rural areas where socio-economic barriers and traditional gender roles hinder women's active political involvement. Limited educational opportunities and patriarchal norms continue to restrict rural women's political literacy and leadership aspirations. Conversely, urban women, benefiting from better educational access and economic empowerment, demonstrate higher levels of political participation and leadership roles.

Research Question 7: What are the challenges faced by elected female representatives of this region?

The challenges faced by elected female representatives in the Nawanshahr Constituency of Punjab are multifaceted and deeply entrenched, as revealed by the data collected. One of the primary challenges highlighted is caste-based discrimination. While 60% of representatives do not perceive direct discrimination, a significant portion (33.34%) acknowledges its impact, especially from rural areas. Women from Dalit groups in rural India, who are already subject to frequent verbal abuse based on caste inequality, confront an even more severe obstacle. Negative comments and insults that bring down these women's self-esteem and authority are common. A substantial majority (80%) agree that they are inadequately consulted in political decisions due to male dominance, with a significant portion (76.67%) also experiencing non-cooperation. Balancing familial responsibilities with political duties emerges as

a critical challenge, affecting 70% of elected women. Household and childcare responsibilities often limit their capacity to engage fully in political activities, highlighting the ongoing struggle to reconcile traditional gender roles with professional aspirations. Interference from family members further complicates their roles, as reported by 36.67% of representatives. Concerns about voter preferences and biases against female candidates persist, despite a majority (73.33%) disagreeing with overt biases. A significant minority (23.32%) perceives such biases, indicating a nuanced landscape where perceptions and realities of gender preferences in electoral outcomes remain a concern for elected women. Educational attainment and awareness also pose challenges, with 66.67% of representatives agreeing that low educational status limits political awareness and efficacy. Fear of violence and verbal abuse further inhibits political participation, affecting 66.66% of elected women. This fear highlights the pervasive threat to their safety and well-being, discouraging full engagement in political activities and public discourse.

5.4 Pearson Co-Relation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis aims to quantify the strength and direction of linear relationships between variables. It helps researchers understand dependencies, predict outcomes, and identify patterns in data. Its significance lies in uncovering associations that inform decision-making in fields like psychology, economics, and social sciences.

Correlation 1: Respondents' Marital Status and Respondents' Interest in Politics

Correlations			
		Marital Status	Interest in Politics?
Marital Status	Pearson Correlation	1	-.045
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.398
	N	360	360

Interest in Politics?	Pearson Correlation	-.045	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.398	
	N	360	360

From the given data, it has been observed that the correlation between “respondents’ marital status” and “interest in politics” is -0.045 and vice versa. The correlation score of -0.045 suggests that there is a weak negative linear relationship between the variables. This means that there is a slight tendency that as one variable changes, the other might change in the opposite direction, but the relationship is not strong. In addition, the p-values (Significance Value) of 0.0398 indicate that these correlations are not statistically significant at the conventional significance level (typically 0.05). Therefore, it can be inferred from the given data that there is no significant relationship between the two variables “marital status of respondents” and “interest in politics”.

Correlation 2: Respondents' Habitation and Use of Social Media for Political Activities

Correlations			
		Respondents Habitation	Use of Social Media
Respondents Habitation	Pearson Correlation	1	-.539**
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.000
	N	360	360
Use of Social Media	Pearson Correlation	-.539**	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	
	N	360	360
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).			

Based on the given correlation table, it can be outlined that there is a strong negative correlation (-0.539) between "Respondents' Habitation" and "Use of Social Media Platforms for Political Activities”. The p-value (Sig.) of 0.000 indicates that this

correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed). From the given data, it can be inferred that a correlation coefficient of -0.539 suggests a strong negative linear relationship between the variables. This means that as respondents' habitation type (likely urban or rural) changes, there is a corresponding change in how often they use social media for political activities, specifically, posting/sharing content related to politics, following political party pages/channels, or engaging in online political discussions. The significant p-value suggests that this correlation is unlikely to be due to random chance and reflects a genuine relationship in the population. This data further outlines that urban and rural residents differ significantly in their use of social media for political engagement.

Correlation 3: Respondents' Age and Knowledge About Electoral Authority

Correlations			
		Respondents Age	Authority Conducts Parliament and State Assembly Elections
Respondents Age	Pearson Correlation	1	.139**
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.004
	N	360	360
Authority Conducts Parliament and State Assembly Elections	Pearson Correlation	.139**	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.004	
	N	360	360
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).			

Based on the given correlation data, it can be outlined that there is a positive correlation (0.139) between “Respondents' Age” and “Knowledge About Authority Conducts Parliament and State Assembly Elections”. Furthermore, the p-value of 0.004

indicates that this correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed). The significant p-value indicates that this relationship is unlikely to be due to random chance and reflects a genuine association in the population. However, the correlation coefficient of 0.139 signifies a weak positive linear relationship between the two variables. This implies that older respondents tend to have slightly more knowledge about the authority responsible for conducting the parliamentary and state assembly elections. Thus, an increase in age tends to increase the knowledge of the voters at large.

Correlation 4: Respondents' Educational Status and Knowledge About the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts

Correlations			
		Respondents Educational Status	Knowledge About the 73rd and 74th CAA's
Respondents Educational Status	Pearson Correlation	1	-.034
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.258
	N	360	360
Knowledge About the 73rd and 74th CAA's	Pearson Correlation	-.034	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.258	
	N	360	360

According to the given data, the Pearson correlation coefficient between "Respondents' Educational Status" and " Knowledge About 73rd and 74th CAA's " is - 0.034. The p-value (Sig.) of 0.258 indicates that this correlation is not statistically significant. A correlation coefficient of -0.034 suggests a very weak negative relationship between respondents' educational status and their knowledge of the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments. Essentially, there is little to no association between these two variables. This suggests that educational background may not play a substantial role in knowledge of these amendments.

Correlation 5: Respondents' Monthly Income and Interest in Contesting Elections

Correlations			
		Respondents Monthly Income	Interest in contesting elections?
Respondents Monthly Income	Pearson Correlation	1	-.117*
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.013
	N	360	360
Interest in contesting elections?	Pearson Correlation	-.117*	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.013	
	N	360	360
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).			

According to the given data, there is a weak negative correlation (-0.117) between "Respondents' Monthly Income" and "If you will get an opportunity, do you want to contest elections?" The p-value (Sig.) of 0.013 indicates that this correlation is statistically significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed). A correlation coefficient of -0.117 suggests a slight negative relationship. This means that as respondents' monthly income increases, the likelihood of wanting to contest elections decreases slightly. The significant p-value indicates that this relationship is unlikely to be due to random chance, suggesting a meaningful association. Therefore, the given data implies that higher income may correlate with less interest in pursuing electoral candidacy, potentially due to differing priorities or perceived risks.

5.5 Political Participation of Women: Critical Analysis Based on Social Category

The study reveals stark disparities in political awareness among General, OBC, and SC women in Nawanshahr. General category women consistently demonstrate superior knowledge, with 33% urban and 21.6% rural respondents correctly identifying India's first female PM (Table 3.10), compared to SC women's 31.6% urban and 20% rural accuracy. Knowledge gaps persist in constitutional matters, where only 18.3% of urban and 6.1% of rural SC women recognize the 73rd/74th Amendments (Table 3.20), versus 25% of urban General women. The digital divide exacerbates these disparities,

with 31.1% of rural SC women never using social media for political engagement (Table 3.44), contrasting sharply with 2.2% of urban General women. These findings underscore how caste intersects with urban-rural divides to create layered barriers to political awareness.

Analysis of participation reveals complex caste dynamics. Urban SC women show remarkable electoral ambition (15% willing to contest elections - Table 3.29), surpassing General (8.8%) and OBC (7.2%) counterparts, likely due to reservation policies' empowerment effect. However, rural SC women face compounded disadvantages, with 31.7% never participating in political debates (Table 3.34) and 26.1% abstaining from campaigns (Table 3.35). Interestingly, protest participation shows relative parity, with rural SC (17.8%), OBC (17.8%), and General (21.1%) women engaging similarly (Table 3.39), suggesting grassroots activism may transcend some caste barriers that constrain formal political engagement.

Multiple intersecting factors constrain women's political involvement along caste lines. SC women report the strongest perception of economic (22.8% urban, 16.7% rural - Table 3.48) and educational (26.6% urban - Table 3.47) barriers. Gender stereotypes disproportionately affect urban OBC women (20.5% agreement - Table 3.45), while patriarchal norms are most acutely felt by rural SC women (12.2% strong agreement - Table 3.54). The data reveals a paradox: urban SC women recognize political family advantages (20% agreement - Table 3.51) yet face the strongest family restrictions (20% agreement - Table 3.53), highlighting how caste mediates women's navigation of political spaces.

Representation data shows reservations' success in securing SC/ST women's presence (40% of representatives - Table 4.4), with 66.66% strongly agreeing it enhances participation (Table 4.37). However, persistent challenges emerge: 30% perceive proxy politics (Table 4.39), particularly among General/OBC representatives, while 26.67% of SC/ST women report caste discrimination (Table 4.40), worsening in rural areas (23.34% versus 10% urban). These findings demonstrate the reservation's role in formal inclusion while revealing the need for complementary measures addressing informal exclusion mechanisms that continue to marginalize SC/ST women, especially in rural contexts.

5.6 Rural–Urban Divide in Women’s Political Participation: Evidence from Nawanshahr Constituency of Punjab

Women’s political participation in Punjab reflects both progress and persisting inequality. Nawanshahr, situated in the Doaba region, offers a valuable microcosm to study how rural and urban contexts shape women’s involvement in politics. While the overall voter turnout among women is remarkably high across both settings, closer examination reveals striking contrasts in awareness, autonomy, and leadership aspirations. Urban women are more knowledgeable, more independent in their decision-making, and more willing to take active roles in political life. Rural women, though committed voters, remain more constrained by traditional family structures, caste hierarchies, and a lack of resources. By using precise comparisons and incorporating caste, class, and cultural dimensions, this analysis demonstrates how the rural–urban divide is central to understanding women’s participation and representation in Nawanshahr and the wider Doaba region.

The first clear disparity lies in political awareness. Data shows that 38.05% of urban women could correctly identify national figures such as President Droupadi Murmu, compared to only 8.61% of rural women. Similarly, 27.77% of urban women knew the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments, while a mere 6.1% of rural Scheduled Caste women were aware of these provisions. Such statistics highlight how urban women’s access to education, media, and political networks equips them with stronger political knowledge, whereas rural women often remain excluded from these information streams. This gap in cognitive awareness becomes the foundation for unequal participation: when women do not have access to basic political knowledge, their engagement remains limited to voting without the confidence to shape broader political discourse.

The behavioral dimension of participation further reinforces this divide. While both rural and urban women show high voter turnout—refuting the stereotype of rural apathy—other political activities reveal stark differences. In campaigning, 92 urban women reported active involvement compared to only 33 rural women. Financial contributions followed a similar pattern, with 38 urban women contributing compared to just 10 rural women. Attendance at political meetings also showed a sharp contrast:

102 urban women versus 26 rural women. These figures illustrate how urban women's engagement goes beyond casting a ballot, extending into high-involvement forms of participation that indicate deeper integration into political life. Rural women, meanwhile, often confine their role to voting, with limited opportunities or encouragement to engage in visible, public forms of political activity.

Autonomy in decision-making is perhaps the most revealing indicator of the rural-urban divide. Among urban women, 42.77% reported voting independently, compared to only 23.61% of rural women. Instead, 33.33% of rural women admitted to voting according to family influence, reinforcing the role of patriarchal authority in shaping their political behavior. Ambition to contest elections also shows a sharp divide: 15.55% of urban women expressed willingness to stand for office, whereas only 5.55% of rural women showed similar intent. These figures reveal not just a quantitative difference, but a qualitative one. Urban environments cultivate political self-efficacy, enabling women to see themselves as agents of change, while rural women, constrained by family and community expectations, struggle to view politics as a space where they can act autonomously.

The intersection of caste with geography deepens these divides. For instance, urban Scheduled Caste women displayed a higher willingness (15%) to contest elections than their urban General (8.8%) and OBC (7.2%) counterparts. This counterintuitive finding suggests that urban contexts, combined with reservation policies, provide SC women with greater political ambition than even some privileged groups. By contrast, rural SC women remain at the lowest end of participation: they are least informed about constitutional provisions, with only 6.1% aware of the 73rd/74th Amendments, and 31.1% reporting that they never use social media for political purposes. This "compounded disadvantage" of caste and rural residence shows how structural marginalization works in layers, severely curtailing opportunities for Dalit women in villages compared to their urban peers.

The category of "rural women" itself is far from homogeneous. A rural Jat woman, while bound by patriarchy, may benefit from caste privilege that enhances her family's influence in local politics, whereas a rural Dalit woman faces both caste exclusion and gender subordination. For example, elected Dalit women often reported

being denied resources and support, and some faced outright discrimination from male colleagues. Such experiences highlight how rural contexts, dominated by caste hierarchies, often silence Dalit women's voices even within spaces of representation. Urban settings, while not free from caste bias, dilute its intensity and create openings for marginalized women to assert political presence. This shows that geography interacts with caste in complex ways, amplifying or mitigating disadvantage.

Moreover, differences also emerge in the challenges faced by women representatives. Survey findings show that 80% of women reported non-cooperation from male colleagues, 70% struggled with balancing familial duties, and 66.66% expressed fear of political violence. Yet these challenges take on sharper forms in rural contexts. Rural elected women are more likely to experience caste-based discrimination and proxy politics, where husbands or male relatives control their official position. They are also less likely to have access to training and support networks, leaving them isolated in their roles. Urban representatives, though not without challenges, benefit from better media visibility, access to resources, and opportunities to connect with peers. This uneven playing field explains why descriptive representation (filling seats with women) does not automatically lead to substantive representation (empowering women to lead effectively).

The persistence of proxy politics in rural areas reveals the limitations of reservation policies when not accompanied by structural support. In many rural panchayats, women elected under reserved seats become symbolic figures while male relatives wield actual authority. This undermines the intent of gender quotas, reinforcing patriarchal control under the guise of women's empowerment. By contrast, urban municipal councils provide women with better institutional backing, reducing the scope for proxy politics. This difference highlights why reservation alone cannot be a sufficient strategy; it must be supplemented with training, resource allocation, and monitoring mechanisms that ensure women exercise independent authority, particularly in rural contexts.

The broader implications for the Doaba region are significant. Theoretically, the data challenges the notion of "Punjabi women" as a unified category in politics. Instead, geography emerges as a primary determinant of opportunity, with urban areas enabling

greater autonomy and rural areas reinforcing traditional controls. Practically, the findings suggest that interventions must be tailored geographically. Urban women benefit from leadership training, networks, and encouragement to contest beyond reserved seats. Rural women require more foundational support—adult education, digital literacy, and mentorship networks to reduce isolation. Caste-sensitive strategies are also essential, especially for empowering Dalit women in villages who remain doubly marginalized by both place and social identity.

Policy recommendations must therefore be two-pronged. In rural areas, interventions should begin with political literacy campaigns, digital inclusion projects, and platforms for elected women to collectively voice their challenges. Capacity-building workshops can provide them with the knowledge and confidence to assert themselves against entrenched patriarchal controls. Simultaneously, institutional safeguards are needed to reduce proxy politics and ensure resources reach women leaders. In urban areas, policy should focus on advancing women into higher levels of leadership, equipping them with platforms for policy advocacy, and dismantling barriers within political parties that limit women's independent candidacy. Across both contexts, systemic reforms like gender-sensitive media reporting and provision of childcare facilities would further strengthen women's ability to balance domestic and political roles.

Therefore, at large, the rural–urban divide is not a side observation but the core of understanding women's political participation in Nawanshahr. While rural women demonstrate high civic commitment through voting, their engagement is shaped and often constrained by family influence, caste hierarchies, and resource scarcity. Urban women, by contrast, exhibit greater political awareness, autonomy, and ambition, though structural ceilings still limit their full empowerment. The path forward requires a dual strategy: building upon the strengths of urban women while dismantling the entrenched disadvantages faced by rural women, particularly those from marginalized castes. Only by addressing these layered inequalities can Punjab move toward a more inclusive political culture, where women are not only voters but also informed decision-makers and transformative leaders.

5.7 Limitations of the Study

The study on "Political Participation of Urban and Rural Women: A Case Study of Nawanshahr Constituency of Punjab" faces several limitations that warrant consideration:

- 🚩 **No MLA/MP as key respondents:** The absence of elected MLAs (Members of Legislative Assembly) or MPs (Members of Parliament) as key respondents limits insights into political processes from the perspective of current political leaders. Their perspectives could provide crucial insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by women in political roles and decision-making.
- 🚩 **No comparative analysis with other constituencies in Punjab:** Restricting the study to the Nawanshahr constituency alone limits the generalizability of findings. Comparative analysis with other constituencies in Punjab could provide broader insights into regional variations in political participation and the specific challenges faced by women in different contexts.
- 🚩 **No detailed gender-based comparative analysis:** While the study examines differences between urban and rural women, it lacks a more nuanced gender-based comparative analysis. This could include comparisons based on socio-economic status, educational background, or other relevant factors that influence political participation among women in Nawanshahr.
- 🚩 **Limited exploration of the field in context to Nawanshahr constituency of Punjab:** The study's focus on Nawanshahr constituency may limit the depth of understanding of broader political dynamics within Punjab. A more comprehensive exploration of local political landscapes, including historical, cultural, and economic factors, could provide a richer context for the findings.
- 🚩 **Females are exclusive respondents in the study:** While focusing exclusively on female respondents is integral to understanding women's political participation, a complementary study involving male perspectives could offer comparative insights into gender disparities in political engagement and perceptions of female representation.
- 🚩 **Others:** Additional limitations could include methodological constraints such as sample size or selection bias, potential language barriers in data collection,

and the timeframe of the study, which may impact the current relevance of findings.

Addressing these limitations could enhance the study's robustness and applicability, offering deeper insights into the complex dynamics of political participation among women in Nawanshahr constituency and beyond. Future research endeavors should consider broader stakeholder perspectives, comparative analyses, and a more inclusive approach to gender dynamics in political research.

5.8 Suggestions

Based on the findings from the study, several measures can be suggested to enhance the political empowerment of women eligible voters and elected representatives in the Nawanshahr constituency of Punjab. These measures aim to address the identified gaps and challenges across political awareness, participation, socio-cultural influences, and the specific difficulties faced by elected female representatives.

- Conduct targeted educational campaigns focused on increasing awareness about key political figures, institutions, and electoral processes. Special attention should be given to increasing knowledge about current political figures, like the President and Chief Minister, among rural women. Local media, community workshops, and school programs could be utilized to disseminate information and foster understanding of political roles and processes.
- Organize regular community meetings in both urban and rural areas to discuss political issues and current events. Encourage local leaders and educators to lead these discussions. In this context, the government can leverage local influencers and grassroots organizations to reach women in rural areas and ensure that information is accessible and relatable.
- Offer training programs to women in both urban and rural areas on political engagement, including how to run for office, campaign strategies, and public speaking skills. In addition, there is a need to develop mentorship programs

connecting experienced female politicians with aspiring candidates to provide guidance and support.

- Promote political engagement through civic education in schools and community centers. Highlight the importance of voting and participating in political discussions. There is also a need to create platforms for women to engage in political debates and discussions, both online and offline, to increase their comfort and familiarity with political processes.
- Develop initiatives to encourage independent decision-making in voting among rural women, possibly through workshops or community discussions focused on critical thinking and evaluating candidates. In addition, there is a need to implement awareness campaigns to challenge and change societal attitudes that perpetuate gender stereotypes and hinder women's political participation.
- Engage men and boys in conversations about gender equality and the importance of women's participation in politics to build supportive networks.
- Increase access to educational opportunities for women in rural areas, including scholarships and adult education programs, to enhance political awareness and involvement. Collaborate with educational institutions to include political education as part of the curriculum, focusing on women's roles in politics and governance.
- Enhance digital literacy programs for rural women to increase their comfort with social media and online political engagement.
- Promote policies and initiatives aimed at reducing caste-based and gender-based discrimination within political spaces. In addition, develop support networks for female politicians to share experiences and strategies for overcoming discrimination.
- Provide ongoing training and professional development opportunities for elected female representatives, focusing on leadership skills, policy-making, and navigating political structures.
- Offer resources and support to help balance familial and political responsibilities, such as childcare support and flexible work arrangements.
- Advocate for increased representation of women in decision-making positions and committees to ensure their voices are heard and valued.

- Strengthen support structures within political parties and governmental bodies to assist female representatives in their roles, including providing administrative support and facilitating networking opportunities.
- Implement safety measures and support systems for female representatives who face threats or violence, including legal protections and psychological support.
- Raise awareness and create protocols to address and prevent violence and abuse in political contexts.
- Political parties should also initiate a reservation mechanism for women in the local/state/Lok Sabha elections. It will encourage women to remain active politically and address the issues.

By implementing these measures, Nawanshahr constituency in particular and the state of Punjab in general can enhance the political empowerment of women, improve their participation in electoral processes, and support female representatives in overcoming the challenges they face.

5.9 Conclusion

The research on the political participation of women in the Nawanshahr Constituency of Punjab reveals significant insights into the disparities and challenges faced by female representatives in urban and rural settings. The study highlights that urban women exhibit higher levels of political engagement compared to their rural counterparts, primarily due to differences in education, socioeconomic status, and access to resources. Urban women benefit from better educational opportunities and economic empowerment, which contribute to greater political awareness and advocacy. Conversely, rural women face substantial barriers, including limited educational access and socioeconomic constraints, which restrict their political involvement. This disparity underscores the urgent need for targeted interventions to boost political agency among rural women, promoting more inclusive and equitable participation across both settings.

The data also indicates that the age profile of elected women representatives is predominantly between 32 and 60 years, with very few younger or older representatives. This suggests a potential gap in the representation of younger and older

age groups. Educational attainment among these representatives is varied, with a majority holding only matriculation or senior secondary qualifications. This highlights a need for enhanced educational and training programs to better equip women for effective political engagement. Additionally, several key challenges were identified for elected female representatives. Caste-based discrimination is perceived differently between urban and rural areas, with a higher level of disagreement among urban representatives. However, the issue remains significant, affecting nearly one-third of respondents. The power and efficacy of rural women politicians, especially those from Dalit groups, are diminished by long-standing caste-based prejudice from the upper caste people. Scheduled Castes (SC) women representatives still face structural barriers caused by persistent societal inequalities, regardless of the constitutional provisions that reserve seats for them. The resources, training, and support that are essential for good governance are not made available to many Dalit women in leadership roles. Non-cooperation and inadequate consultation from male colleagues are prominent concerns, with many women feeling marginalized in political decision-making processes.

Additionally, balancing familial duties with political responsibilities is a substantial barrier, affecting the ability of women to fully engage in their roles. Familial interference and societal expectations further complicate their political involvement, indicating the need for systemic changes to support women in managing these dual responsibilities. The study also reveals a varied perception of voter preferences, with some acknowledging a bias towards male candidates, though this is not universally agreed upon. Educational status is consistently recognized as a crucial factor influencing political awareness and effectiveness. Women with lower educational attainment report a lack of awareness about their roles and privileges, emphasizing the need for educational initiatives to enhance political literacy. Moreover, fear of violence and verbal abuse, gender bias within political parties, and inadequate training are significant obstacles identified by the study. These factors collectively hinder women's full participation in politics, reflecting broader societal and institutional biases. Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach, including educational reforms, targeted economic empowerment programs, advocacy for gender equality, and supportive policies to mitigate violence and bias.

Considering the challenges associated with eligible female voters and elected female representatives, the study underscores the need for comprehensive strategies to address the disparities and challenges faced by female political representatives in Nawanshahr. By enhancing educational opportunities, promoting economic empowerment, advocating for gender equality, and providing targeted support to overcome societal and institutional barriers, policymakers and stakeholders can foster a more inclusive and equitable political environment. This approach will not only empower women from both urban and rural areas but also advance gender equality and social justice in the region.



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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I
COVER LETTER

Dear Respondents,

I am Hardeep Kaur, a Ph.D. Research Scholar of the Department of Political Science, Lovely Professional University, Punjab. I am pursuing research on the topic “**Political Participation of Urban and Rural Women: A Case Study of Nawanshahr Constituency of Punjab**” under the supervision of Dr. Manvendra Singh, Associate Professor, Department of Government and Public Administration, Lovely Professional University, Punjab. The aim of this study is analyze the status of Political participation and political awareness among urban and rural women.

This study is independent and is not linked to any political party or government agency. It will be a great help if you can please spare some time from your daily schedule to share your opinions. So, I humbly request you to fill out this questionnaire. Please respond to all items. I value your opinions and respect your privacy. Your answers will be kept confidential and will be used for academic purposes only.

I hope that you will take part in this survey and help me in completing my research successfully. Your cooperation will be highly appreciated.

Thanks, and Best regards

Hardeep Kaur

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APPENDIX II

**SCHEDULED QUESTIONNAIRE FOR URBAN AND RURAL FEMALE
VOTERS**

Section A: Socio-Economic Profile of Rural and Urban Voters

Variable	Response				
Name					
Permanent Address					
Contact Number					
Marital Status	Unmarried	Married	Divorced	Widow	Can't Say
Habitation	Rural		Urban		
Age in Years	18-32	33-40	41-60	61-74	Above 74
Social Category	General	OBC	SC	ST	
Religion	Hinduism	Sikhism	Islam	Christian	Other
Education	Illiterate	Primary	10 th	12 th	Graduation
	PG	Doctorate	Diploma	Other	
Monthly Income	<20,000	20,001 – 40,000	40,001 - 60,000	60,001 – 80,000	Above 80,000

Section B: Political Awareness Among Rural and Urban Voters

Question	Responses				
Who was the first female	Indira Gandhi	Sonia Gandhi	Sushma Swaraj	Ambika Soni	Don't Know

Prime Minister of India					
Who is the current President of India	Pranab Mukherjee	Pratibha Devi Patil	Droupadi Murmu	Ram Nath Kovind	Don't Know
Who is the current Chief Minister of Punjab?	Captain Amarinder Singh	Charanjit Singh Channi	Parkash Singh Badal	Bhagwant Singh Mann	Don't Know
Who was the first female Chief Minister of Punjab	Harsimrat Kaur Badal	Parneet Kaur	Rajinder Kaur Bhattal	Ambika Soni	Don't Know
What is the name of your current M.L.A.? Please tick the correct option.	Angad Singh	Nachhatar Pal	Lalit Mohan Pathak	Satbir Singh	Poonam Manik
Who is the present M.P. from Anandpur Sahib Constituency?	Manish Tiwari	Prem Singh Chandu Majra	Angad Singh	Lalit Mohan Pathak	Don't Know
Who conducts elections in India for the Parliament and	President	Governor	Prime Minister	Election Commission of India	Political Parties

State Legislatures?					
What is the minimum age for contesting elections of the Panchayat/ Municipal Council?	18 Years	21 Years	25 Years	35 Years	Above 35 Years
The members of Lok Sabha hold office for a term of	2 Years	4 Years	5 Years	6 Years	10 Years
Please tick the number of assembly constituencies in Punjab	100	104	115	117	125
Do you know about the 73rd and 74 th Constitutional Amendments?	Yes		No		
How many percentage of seats are reserved for women in local bodies according to	33 %	45%	50%	60%	65 %

the Constitution of India?					
Do you know about women's welfare schemes? If yes, then please name those schemes.	Yes		No		
Which among the following is the ruling part at the centre level?	BJP	Congress	BSP	AAP	Don't Know

Section C: Political Participation Among Rural and Urban Voters in Electoral and Non-Electoral Activities

Question	Responses				
Are you interested in Politics?	Yes		No		
Do you cast votes regularly in different elections?	Yes		No		
	To elect a suitable	To elect a suitable	To get benefits	To fulfill the	Personal relations

If yes, then why do you vote?	representative.	political party.	from the candidate	wishes of family members	with the candidate
	A vote is important	Any Other	Not Applicable		
Whose opinion influences your decision to cast a vote?	Own	Family Member	Relative	Religious Leader	Party Members
Have you ever gone through the election manifesto of any political party before casting a vote?	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
If you get an opportunity, do you want to contest elections?	Yes		No		
If NO, then what is the reason for not contesting?	Economic constraints	Household responsibilities	No interest in politics	Family restrictions	Patriarchal setup of society

	Job restrictions	Unsatisfactory performance of political parties	Health Issues	Other	Not Applicable
Are you a member of any political party?	Yes		No		
Do you attend/participate in the meetings of the General Body /a political party you are associated with?	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Whether you speak in the meetings?	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Have you ever participated in political debates and discussions?	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Have you ever	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always

participated in a political campaign?					
If always, then what is your role in the political context?	Requested others to cast a vote in favour of a candidate of your choice	Donated to the election fund	Attended any election meeting	Helped in organizing any election meeting	Participated in any election procession.
	Distributed slips/posters/leaflets, etc., in favour of any candidate	Campaigned from door to door			
If never, then what are the reasons for non-participation in political campaigning ? Specify if any others.	Physical constraints	Socio-cultural constraints	No Interest in Politics	Restrictions by family members	Household responsibilities
	Job restrictions	Other	Not Applicable		
Have you ever met your MLA/ M. P/M.C/Sarpanches and administrative officials	Yes		No		

regarding your Problems?					
Have you ever participated in any protest against some government action/policy ?	Yes	No	Sometimes		
If no, then mention the reasons for non- participation in political protest.	Physical constraints	Socio- cultural constraints	No Interest in Politics	Restricti ons by family members	Lack of Opportu nity
	Job restrictions	Not Applicable			
Have you ever joined any boycotts? If yes, please explain.	Yes		No		
Have you ever participated in a march or rally?	Yes		No		

Have you ever filed a petition?	Yes		No		
How often did you use social media Platforms (Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, YouTube, Blog, etc.) for political activities such as posting/sharing content related to politics, following pages/channels of political parties/online political discussions?	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always

Section D: Factors Affecting Women's Political Participation

Kindly provide your opinion about the factors affecting political inclusion. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements by placing the tick (✓) mark in the appropriate place? **SA**- Strongly agree, **A**- Agree, **U**-Uncertain, **DA**- Disagree, **SDA**-Strongly Disagree.

Factors	SDA	DA	U	A	SA
Gender Stereotypes impact women's political participation.					
There are Gender gaps in political interest and political awareness. Males have more Political awareness.					
Low Educational status has adverse impacts the political awareness and engagement.					
Economic constraints hinder Women's inclusion in politics.					
The religion of a candidate impacts the Women's voting behaviour.					
Caste impacts the participation of women in various political activities.					
Women with Political backgrounds have more chances to succeed in elections.					

Social media platforms (Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, YouTube, Blog, etc.) can positively influence women's political participation.					
Family Restriction due to a conservative mindset prevents women's Participation in non-electoral activities.					
Patriarchal culture and social norms restrict the political participation of women.					

Your kind cooperation is highly appreciated.

If there are any points you wish to elaborate on about the subject at hand, your suggestion/s and opinions are welcome. Please make use of the space provided.

APPENDIX III

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ELECTED WOMEN REPRESENTATIVES

Section A: Personal Information of the Elected Female Representatives

Variable	Response				
Name					
Permanent Address					
Contact Number					
Designation					
Marital Status	Unmarried	Married	Divorced	Widow	Separated
Habitation	Rural		Urban		
Age in Years	18-32	33-40	41-60	61-74	Above 74
Social Category	General	OBC	SC	ST	
Religion	Hinduism	Sikhism	Islam	Christian	Other
Education	Illiterate	Primary	10 th	12 th	Graduation
	PG	Doctrate	Diploma	Other	
Monthly Income	<20,000	20,001 – 40,000	40,001 - 60,000	60,001 – 80,000	Above 80,000

Section B: Political Awareness Among Elected Female Representatives

Question	Responses				
Minimum age to contest the Elections of the Panchayat/ Municipal Council	18 Years	21 Years	25 years	35 years	Don't Know
Knowledge regarding the Lok Sabha elections held to date	15	16	17	18	Don't Know
Knowledge regarding the term of a member of the Lok Sabha	2 Years	4 Years	5 Years	6 Years	Don't Know
Knowledge regarding the authority that allocates symbols to Political Parties for the Parliament and State Legislature elections.	Political Party	Prime minister	President	Election Commission of India	Don't Know
Knowledge regarding the year of the reorganization of Punjab?	1950	1952	1966	1967	Don't Know

Knowledge regarding the number of Assembly Constituencies in Punjab	100	115	117	125	Don't Know
Knowledge about the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments?	Yes		No		
Reading of the Panchayat Raj Act/ Municipality Act	Yes		No		
What percent of seats are reserved for women in the local bodies of Punjab at present?	33	45	50	60	Don't Know
Knowledge about the sources of income of the Panchayat/ Municipal Council	Yes		No		
Knowledge about the Quorum of the meeting of the Panchayat and Municipal Council	Yes		No		

Section C: Political Participation of Elected Female Representatives

Question	Responses				
When did you first contest the election?					
How many times have you been elected as a representative and for which post?	Ist	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th
What Factors influenced you to enter politics?	Reservation Policy	Family Heritage	Interest in politics	Ideological Beliefs	Personality of the Leader
The reason behind contesting in the election	To promote the wishes of family members	Social service	Interest in Politics	Urge for power	To build a political career
Is any member of your family involved in politics?	Yes		No		
What was the attitude of your family towards your involvement in politics? Please	Positive	Negative	Indifferent		

explain the reason.					
Are you a member of any political party? If yes, can you please mention the name of the party?	Yes		No		
Do you participate in party meetings and express your opinion in party meetings?	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Do you attend all the meetings of the Panchayat/ Municipal Council?	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
If not, what are the reasons for your absence?					
Have you ever boycotted the meetings Panchayat/ Municipal Council?	Yes	No	Sometimes		

If yes, specify the issue.					
How do you contact people in your ward/ Panchayat?	Directly	Through male family members	Telephonically	Social media	Through members of the Panchayat/ Municipality
	Any other				
What are the main grievances of the people of your Panchayat/ Municipal Council?	Education	Health	Development Problems	Environment Problems	Caste related Problems
	Related to women and children	Sanitation	Any Other		
How do you remove the grievances of the people of your Panchayat/ Municipal Council?	Contacting concerned Government officers	Contacting Ministers	Raising the matter in the Panchayat/ Municipal Council	Contacting Party Members	Social media/ Mass media to Mobilize Public Opinion
	Other/s				
Did you participate in training programs for members?	Yes		No		

Have you ever participated in any protest against some government action/policy? If yes, then explain the reasons for the participation.	Yes	No				
Raising Issues related to women's development in meetings of the Panchayat/Municipality	Yes	No	Sometimes			
Participation in debates and discussions in the panchayat / Municipal Council	Yes	No	Sometimes			
Who makes decisions in the meetings of the body you represent?	By Chairperson	By Female Representatives	By male representatives	Mutual consent of all representatives	on the directions of male family members	

Section D: Perspective Regarding Reservation Policy

Question	Responses				
The reservation of seats for women in local bodies has enhanced their participation in politics.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree
How has the reservation policy helped the upliftment of women?	Contributed towards their social empowerment.	Women have been more economically independent.	Helpful in the formation of women-oriented policies	More inclusion of women in political decision-making	It gives them the confidence to participate in Politics
The reservation of seats for women encourages proxy politics, as the majority of functions related to local bodies are performed by male family members on behalf of elected	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree

female representatives.					
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Section E: Challenges faced by Elected Women Representatives

Kindly provide your opinion about the challenges faced by elected women representatives.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements by placing the tick (✓) mark in the appropriate place? **SA-** Strongly agree, **A-** Agree, **U-**Uncertain, **DA-**Disagree, **SDA-**Strongly Disagree

S. No	Statements	SDA	DA	U	A	SA
1	Female representatives belonging to the lower caste encounter caste-based discrimination.					
2	The use of muscle and money power is a significant barrier for female candidates.					
3	Due to male domination at all levels of politics, women representatives are not consulted before major decisions are made.					
4	Women representatives face non-cooperation from male colleagues and officials.					

5	Due to the burden of household and childcare responsibilities, women representatives cannot devote equal time to political activities as compared to men.					
6	A large number of women are forced to contest elections only to act as custodians of the seats vacated by their husbands and other male family members due to the forced reservation policy.					
7	Women representatives face interference from family members in their work.					
8	Voters prefer to elect a male candidate as compared to a female.					
9	There is a lack of awareness among elected female representatives about their duties and privileges due to low educational status.					
10	Fear of violence and Verbal Abuse discourages the engagement of women					

	representatives in political activities.					
11	Gender bias in political parties is the major hurdle to women's political participation.					
12	Female representatives encounter economic limitations as a result of the unequal allocation of grants/Funds.					
13	Lack of training and political experience is a major challenge.					
14	Societal and cultural norms restrict the political inclusion of female representatives.					

Your kind cooperation is highly appreciated.

If there are any points you wish to elaborate on about the subject at hand, your suggestion/s and opinions are welcome. Please make use of the space provided.

APPENDIX IV

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW FOR KEY RESPONDENTS

Section A: Personal Information

Variable	Response
Name	
Permanent Address	
Contact Number	
Profession	Administration Social Work Academics Party worker Other
Designation	

Part B: Interview Questions

1. How do you assess the political participation of urban women as compared to rural women in Nawnshahar constituency in various political activities?

.....

2. What are the factors that hinder the effective participation of women in various political and non-political activities?

.....

3. According to you, what are the major challenges faced by elected women in the political context?

.....
.....
.....

4. What is your opinion regarding the reservation of seats for women in local bodies leading to Proxy representation?

.....
.....
.....

5. What are the reasons for the marginal representation of women of the Nawanshahr Constituency in the legislative assembly and parliament, despite the increase in the percentage of female voters and representation of women in local bodies?

.....
.....
.....

6. What are the major initiatives that have been taken by the government, as well as district authorities, to the enhancement of women's participation in political activities?

.....
.....
.....

7. What measures do you suggest to raise the participation of women in politics?

.....
.....
.....
.....

Thanks for your cooperation

APPENDIX V**LIST OF PLACES VISITED**

Sr. No	Places visited
1	Deputy Commissioner's Office, S.B.S. Nagar
2	District Election Office, S.B.S Nagar
3	Census office, S.B.S Nagar
4	Municipal Council Office, Nawanshahr
5	Municipal Council Office Rahon
6	Urban area: Nawanshahr City: Vikas Nagar, Baba Deep Singh Nagar, Umtan Mohalla, Waheguru Nagar, Nami Abadi, Balmiki Mohalla, Gobindgarh Mohalla, Kulam Road, Bhuchran Mohalla, New teacher Colony, Angad Nagar, Bhatti colony, Jain colony, Rishi Mohalla, Fateh Nagar, Pandora Mohalla, Kothi Road, College colony, Sirsa Colony, Satgurur Nagar, Friends colony, Ibrahim Basti, Ambedkar Nagar, Quilla Mohalla, Shiv colony, Guru Teg Bahadur Nagar, Deshmesh Nagar, Ravidas Nagar Rahon City: Sarafa Mohalla, Jain Mohalla, Anchali Mohalla, Khosla Mohalla, Tajpura Mohalla, Rotan Mohalla, Rajputan Mohalla, Pahar Singh Mohalla, Makbara Mohalla, Jagotian Mohalla, Ravidas Mohalla, Duggalan Mohalla, Jainian Mohalla
7	Rural Area : Villages: Kahma, Barnala Kalan, Mahalon, Mubarakpur, Begampur, Punnu Majara, Jettu Majara, Kulam, Alachour, Hayala

APPENDIX VI**LIST OF PEOPLE CONTACTED FOR VALIDATING CONTENT OF
QUESTIONNAIRE**

Sr. No	Name	Designation
1	Dr. Manvendra Singh	Associate Professor, Lovely Professional University
2	Dr. Kusum Verma	Assistant Professor, Political Science, D.A.V. College, Hoshiarpur, Punjab University
3	Dr. Surinder Agnihotri	District Election Master Trainer
4	Mr. Satnam Singh	Assistant Nodal Officer SVEEP, Saheed Bhagat Singh Nagar
5	Mr. Daljeet Singh	Election Kanogo, District Saheed Bhagat Singh Nagar
6	Dr. Kavita Khanna	Associate Professor, DAN College of Education
7	Dr. Nirdosh Kaur	Associate Professor of Political Science. Amardeep Singh Shergill Memorial College, Mukandpur
8	Mr. Amandeep Singh	Election Tehsildar, District Saheed Bhagat Singh Nagar

APPENDIX VII

LIST OF PAPER PUBLICATIONS

Sr. No.	Title of paper	Journal	ISSN / ISBN Vol. No.	Scopus Indexed Journal
1	Domestic Violence against Women during COVID-19 Pandemic in India	COVID-19 Crisis: Psychosocial Perspective”	ISBN 97893-91178-37-6	Book
2	Barriers to Political Participation of Women: A Case Study of Punjab, India	‘Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry, Volume 12, Issue 8, July 2021: 2808-2816.	ISSN: 1309-6591	Scopus Index journal
3	Social Media Inclusion and Political Participation of Women in Nawanshahr Block of S.B.S Nagar District, Punjab	Journal of Positive School Psychology, Volume 6, Issue 4, 2022: 4942-4951	ISSN: 2717-7564	Scopus Index journal
4	An Assessment of Environmental Pollution and Policy Initiatives in Punjab, India: A Review	“Environment and Ecology Research” Vol 10, Issue 4, 2022:427-436	ISSN:2331-6268 DOI: 10.13189/eer.2022.100401	Scopus Index journal

5	Stubble as a Renewable Source of Energy: A Study of Stubble Burning and Crisis of Environmental Degradation in Punjab, India	Renewable Energy Optimization, Planning, and Control. Studies in Infrastructure and Control. Springer, Singapore	https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-981-19-8963-6 Doi:https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-8963-6_28	Conference Proceedings
6	Tribal Development in India: Policies and Challenges	Accepted for publication as a book chapter by Indian Institute of Public Administration in collaboration with the National Tribal Research Institute.		Book
7	Gender Gap in Political Participation and Representation in Nawanshahr Constituency: An Analysis of Punjab Assembly Elections	Under Review		
8	Changing Dynamics in Electoral Politics and Role of Women in Punjab: An Analytical Study	Policy, People, and Pandemics: Innovations in Governance for the Future	ISBN:9789390342792	Book

APPENDIX VIII

CONFERENCE PAPER PRESENTED

Sr. No .	Title of the Paper Presented	Authors	Title of Conference/ Seminar/ Symposium	Organisation	Date of the Conference
1	Environmental Pollution and Policy Initiatives: A Case of Punjab, India	Hardeep Kaur Dr. Manvendra Singh	National conference on “Sustainable Environment: Challenges and Opportunities	B. R. Ambedkar National Institute of Technology, Jalandhar	September 8-9, 2021.
2	Social Media Inclusion and Political Participation of Women in Nawanshahr Block of S.B.S Nagar District, Punjab	Hardeep Kaur Dr. Manvendra Singh	International Conference on Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity: Issues and Concerns	School of Education & School of Humanities, Lovely Professional University, Punjab	25th September , 2021
3	Tribal Development in India:	Hardeep Kaur	National Conference on "Experiences on	Indian Institute of Public Administratio	29th -30th November 2021

	Policies and Challenges	Dr. Manvendra Singh	Decentralization, Tribal Local Self-Governance and its Implications"	n (IIPA) & National Tribal Research Institute (NTRI), New Delhi	
4	Gender Inequalities in Women's Political Participation and Representation in Nawanshahr Constituency: An Analysis of Punjab Assembly Elections	Hardeep Kaur Dr. Manvendra Singh	International Symposium on "World Order Under Strain: Emerging Political and Economic Challenges"	Department of Political Science, Lovely Professional University, Punjab.	10th June 2022
5	Stubble as a Renewable Source of Energy: A Study of Stubble Burning and Crisis of Environmental	Hardeep Kaur Dr. Manvendra Singh	Second International Conference on Renewable Technologies in Engineering (ICRTE-22)	Manav Rachna International Institute of Research and Studies, Faridabad	7th and 8th October 2022.

	Degradation in Punjab, India				
6	Changing Dynamics in Electoral Politics and Role of Women in Punjab: An Analytical Study	Hardeep Kaur Dr. Manvendra Singh	International Conference theme "Public policy, governance & administration in the post-pandemic era"	LPU	13 th Nov 2024
7	Exploring the Intersection of Ethics and Indian Politics	Hardeep Kaur	International Conference theme "Ethical Behaviour and Importance of Moral Values in Everyday Life"	D.A.V College, Hoshiarpur	22 nd March 2025

APPENDIX IX

CONFERENCES /SEMINARS/WEBINARS ATTENDED

- Participated in a National E-Conference on the topic “Education and Development: Post COVID-19,” organised by the School of Education, Lovely Professional University, on 26th September 2020.
- Participated in an International Webinar on the topic “India and Her Neighbours in the Post COVID-19 Era,” conducted by the Department of Political Science, School of Humanities, Lovely Professional University on 25th June 2020.
- Participated in an online interaction on the topic “Cyber Crime in India and Its Socio-Economic Consequences,” conducted by the School of Humanities, Lovely Professional University, on 13th March 2021.
- Participated in an online interaction on the topic “Changing Regional Dynamics in South East Asia,” conducted by the Department of Political Science, School of Humanities, Lovely Professional University on 20th March 2021.
- Participated in a National Webinar on the topic “Development of MOOC Modules Using OSS,” conducted by the Department of Library, B.L.M Girls College, Nawanshahr, on 22nd May 2021.
- Participated in a National Webinar on the topic “Intellectual Property Rights: Concept and Need,” conducted by the Department of Commerce, B.L.M. Girls College, Nawanshahr, on 19th June 2021.
- Participated in an online seminar delivered by Ambassador Anil Trigunayat (IFS Retd) on the topic “Emerging Dynamics in the Middle East and India’s Options,” hosted by the Department of Political Science, School of Humanities, Lovely Professional University on 3rd July 2021.
- Participated in an online seminar delivered by Dr. Raghab P. Dash, Private Secretary to the Union Minister of Micro Small and Medium Enterprises, on the topic “Legislative Processes in India,” hosted by the Department of Government and Public Administration, School of Humanities, Lovely Professional University, on October 30, 2021.

- Participated in an online seminar delivered by Major General Prabdeep Singh Behl on the topic “Leadership in the VUCA World,” hosted by the Department of Government and Public Administration, School of Humanities, in collaboration with the Division of Industry Interface, Lovely Professional University, on February 23, 2022
- Participated in an online seminar delivered by Dr. Vibhuti Singh Shekhawat on the topic “Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions in India,” hosted by the Department of Government and Public Administration, School of Humanities, Lovely Professional University on March 11, 2022.

APPENDIX X**WORKSHOPS/FDP/SHORT-TERM COURSES ATTENDED**

Sr. No.	Theme of STC/ Workshop	Name of the organisation	Duration (Date & Year)
1	National workshop on “ICT Tools for Collaboration”	SNDT Women’s University	19-25 Nov 2019
2	National workshop on “Cooperative Learning”	SNDT Women’s University	16-22 March 2020
3	National FDP on Advances in Research Methodology and Data Analysis	Ch. Bansi Lal University, Haryana	14-20 May 2020
4	FDP on Academic Writing	Teaching learning center, Ramanujan college (University of Delhi)	12-18 March 2021.
5	National Workshop On Research Methodology and Data Analysis using SPSS	Lovely Professional University	April 26, 2021 - May 1, 2021
6	Refresher Course on Laws, Democracy, and Institutions	Teaching Learning Center, Ramanujan College, Delhi University	26 April- 11 May 2021.
7	FDP on Data Analysis and Visualization	Teaching Learning Center, Ramanujan College, Delhi University	08 - 14 July, 2021.

8	Workshop on Advanced Data Analysis Using SPSS for Social Sciences	Lovely Professional University	22-30 August 2022
9	Short Term Course on Article Publication in High Impact Journals and Reference Management	Lovely Professional University in collaboration with Clarivate	22 -28 Sept 2022
10.	STC on High Impact Publication	Lovely Professional University	1 June 2023-7 June 2023

Appendix XI

Other Achievements

- Appreciation certificate for contribution in Election services from Deputy Commissioner, S.B.B Nagar, Sh. Vishesh Sarangal on the occasion of the 12th District level celebration of National Voters Day on 25th January 2022.
- Appreciation certificate for contribution in Election services as ELC Nodal Officer SVEEP from Deputy Commissioner S.B.B Nagar, Sh. Navjot Pal Singh Randhawa on the occasion of the 13th District level celebration of National Voters Day on 25th January 2023.
- Appreciation certificate for contribution in Election services as Best Nodal Officer SVEEP from Deputy Commissioner S.B.B Nagar, Sh. Navjot Pal Singh Randhawa on the occasion of the 14th District level celebration of National Voters Day on 25th January 2024.
- Appreciation certificate for contribution in Election services as SVEEP Team member from Deputy Commissioner, S.B.B Nagar, Sh. Navjot Pal Singh Randhawa on the occasion of the 14th District level celebration of National Voters Day on 16th April 2024.
- Appreciation certificate for contribution in Election services as Best Nodal Officer SVEEP from Deputy Commissioner S.B.B Nagar, Sh. Navjot Pal Singh Randhawa on the occasion of the 14th District level celebration of National Voters Day on 30th April 2024.
- Appreciation certificate for contribution in Election services as Best Nodal Officer SVEEP from Deputy Commissioner S.B.B Nagar, Sh. Ankurjeet Singh on the occasion of the 15th District level celebration of National Voters Day on 25th January 2025.



Dr. B. R. Ambedkar National Institute of Technology Jalandhar

{An institute of National Importance under Ministry of Education, Govt of India}

Certificate of Participation

This is to certify that Ms. Hardeep Kaur from Lovely Professional University Punjab has presented a Research paper entitled, "Environmental Pollution and Policy Initiatives: A Case of Punjab, India" in the National conference on "**Sustainable Environment: Challenges and Opportunities**" organized by Centre for Continuing Education, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar National Institute of Technology Jalandhar from September 8-9, 2021.

Dr. Preeti Puri
Organizing Secretary

Dr. Rakesh Kumar
Organizing Secretary

Dr. Sadhika Khullar
Organizing Secretary

LOVELY FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND ARTS

[Under the Aegis of Lovely Professional University, Jalandhar-Delhi G.T. Road, Phagwara (Punjab)]

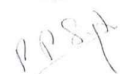
Certificate No.234257

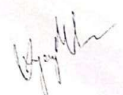
Certificate of Presentation

This is to certify that Dr./Mr./Ms. Hardeep Kaur of Lovely Professional University, Phagwara, Punjab presented a paper entitled **Social Media Inclusion and Political Participation of Women in Nawanshahr Block of S.B.S Nagar District, Punjab** in International Conference on Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity: Issues and Concerns organized on 25th September, 2021 by School of Education & School of Humanities, Lovely Professional University, Punjab.

Date of Issue : 09-10-2021
Place : Phagwara (Punjab), India


Prepared by
(Administrative Officer-Records)


Organizing Secretary


Conference Director

LOVELY FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND ARTS

[Under the Aegis of Lovely Professional University, Jalandhar-Delhi G.T. Road, Phagwara (Punjab)]

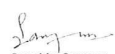
Certificate No.247387

Certificate of Presentation

This is to certify that Prof./Dr./Mr./Ms. Hardeep Kaur of Lovely Professional University has presented paper on **Gender Inequalities in Women's Political Participation and Representation in Nawanshahr Constituency: An Analysis of Punjab Assembly Elections** in the International Symposium on "World Order Under Strain: Emerging Political and Economic Challenges" held on 10th June, 2022 organized by Department of Political Science, Lovely Professional University, Punjab.

Date of Issue : 23-06-2022
Place : Phagwara (Punjab), India


Prepared by
(Administrative Officer-Records)


Organizing Secretary


Head of School
School of Social Science and Languages

MANAV RACHNA INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF RESEARCH AND
STUDIES

FACULTY OF ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY
THE 2nd INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON RENEWABLE
TECHNOLOGIES IN ENGINEERING

(ICRTE-22)

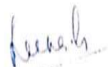
7th - 8th October-2022

CERTIFICATE OF PRESENTATION

This is to certify that Dr./Mr./Ms. Hardeep Kaur from Lovely Professional University, Phagwara has presented a paper titled Stubble as a Renewable Source of Energy: A Study of Stubble Burning and Crisis of Environmental Degradation in Punjab, India in the Second International Conference on Renewable Technologies in Engineering (ICRTE-22) organized by Manav Rachna International Institute of Research and Studies, Faridabad on 7th and 8th October 2022.



Dr. Anita Khosla
Conference Chair



Dr. Leena G.
HOD, EEE



Dr. Pardeep Kumar
General Chair



**Indian Institute of Public Administration
&
National Tribal Research Institute
New Delhi**

This is to Certify that

Hardeep Kaur & Manwendra Singh

have successfully presented a paper on Tribal Development in India: Policies and Challenges in TWO DAYS NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EXPERIENCES ON DECENTRALIZATION, TRIBAL LOCAL SELF-GOVERNANCE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS: PERSPECTIVES FROM ACADEMICS AND POLICY MAKERS organised by Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi in collaboration with National Tribal Research Institute, New Delhi

(Dr. Nupur Tiwary)
Special Director, NTRI

(Surendra Nath Tripathi)
Director General, IIPA

November 29-30, 2021





Domestic Violence Against Women during Covid-19 Pandemic In India

Hardeep Kaur¹
Dr. Manvendra Singh²

Abstract

The outbreak of a global pandemic COVID-19 has affected every aspect of human life and society. Due to the absence of the effective treatment, governments around the world have imposed a lockdown to control the transmission of this virus. This pandemic and the associated lockdown have affected men and women all over the world. It adversely affected females around the globe. Domestic violence is highly prevalent in Indian society. This chapter attempts to examine the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic and associated lockdown on domestic violence against women in India. It is based on the data collected from newspapers, e-journal articles, authentic internet sources, websites, government reports and others. The findings reveal a shocking upsurge in domestic violence during the lockdown period in India.

This study indicates unemployment, alcohol consumption, psychological issues, lack of legal services are some of the causes that are responsible for domestic violence during the pandemic. It recommends a crucial need for the formulation of policies to reduce the unintended effects of quarantine. This study concludes with the measures to control domestic violence during the ongoing pandemic.

Keywords: COVID-19, Domestic Violence, Gender-based violence, Lockdown, India

Introduction

Domestic violence is deeply rooted and highly prevalent in Indian society. Domestic violence has been rising to a shocking rate during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. "Domestic violence can include psychological, physical, sexual, or economic as well as controlling and coercive behavior in the family or a couple's relationship that presupposes cohabitation" (Sacco et al., 2020). World Health Organization defines domestic violence as "Violence within the home can be carried out in several forms: physical (beatings, torture, murder); sexual (unwanted intercourse, harassment, sexual jokes); psychological (manipulation, threats, humiliations, intimidation); economic (obsessive control of finances; money subtraction); stalking (persecution, obsessive control of phone calls or messages)."

"World Health Organization has declared COVID-19 a global pandemic" (Liu et al., 2020). To curb the transmission of Coronavirus, different strategies like social distancing and lockdown have been implemented by most countries globally (Adhikari et al. 2020). The pandemic has left the public confined to their houses, which led to a surge in domestic violence and made it more frequent. According to WHO, "Violence against women remains a major threat to global public health and women's health during emergencies." However, the lockdown has adversely impacted domestic violence female victims. The incidents of domestic violence increased around the world due to the enforcement of COVID-19 lockdown. Due to an increase in violence against women, UN Women

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Chapter 28

Stubble as a Renewable Source of Energy: A Study of Stubble Burning and Crisis of Environmental Degradation in Punjab, India



Hardeep Kaur and Manvendra Singh

Abstract Stubble burning is a major contributor to environmental pollution in north India. It releases massive amounts of toxic pollutants, including particulate matter and gaseous pollutants, which cause serious health risks for humans and substantially impact the environment. Punjab is a prosperous state in India, and agriculture is the foundation of its economy. This study is primarily concerned with the issue of stubble burning, which is a significant cause of environmental degradation in Punjab. It explores the effects of stubble burning, incidents of stubble burning in Punjab, and various governmental policy incentives for crop residue management. The data for this research was collected from newspaper articles, governmental reports, reliable Internet sources, and field visits to the Punjab Remote Sensing Centre, Ludhiana, and the district agriculture department regarding the record of crop fire incidents. The findings revealed a shocking upsurge in stubble burning events in 2022 during the Rabi session despite various environmental legislation and crop residue management techniques. Maximum incidents of stubble burning were reported in the Sangrur district of Punjab since 2016 during the Kharif session (15th September–30th November). Most of the farmers in Punjab are unaware of various crop residue management techniques. Hence, they consider the burning of residue as the best option. Therefore, extensive awareness campaigns are required to educate farmers about the range of financially viable alternatives and the effects of stubble burning. The primary purpose of this study is to provide eco-friendly substitutes for crop residue management. It recommends the effective implementation of regulations as an important prerequisite to preventing environmental degradation in Punjab caused by crop residue burning.

Keywords Environment degradation · Stubble burning · Crop residue management strategies · Air quality index · Punjab

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311

An Assessment of Environmental Pollution and Policy Initiatives in Punjab, India: A Review

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Abstract Environmental pollution is a global health concern. Air, water, and soil pollution cause 16% of premature deaths worldwide. Rapid urbanization and industrialization result in the environmental pollution in developing countries, including India. Environmental degradation is a grave issue in developing countries due to a lack of awareness, inadequate legislation and faulty enforcement. This research is mainly concerned with the issue of environmental pollution and various policy initiatives undertaken by the Punjab state of India. Punjab is a predominantly agrarian state. Anthropogenic activities such as burning fossil fuels, stubble burning, excessive chemical fertilizer and industrial waste are significant contributors to environmental pollution in Punjab. This study explores the causes and effects of environmental pollution in Punjab. It is exploratory, and secondary data used in this research were collected from newspapers, e-journal articles, reliable internet sources, government reports, "Punjab Pollution Control Board", and "Central Pollution Control Board" websites. Despite environmental legislation, findings revealed an alarming upsurge in Punjab's pollution levels, leading to air, water, and soil quality degradation. It causes serious health issues. Malwa region is identified as the "Cancer capital of Punjab" due to the shocking surge in cancer cases. It concludes with measures to control environmental pollution. It recommends a crucial need for a comprehensive awareness program and the proper implementation of policies to curb the harmful effects of pollution in Punjab, India.

Keywords Environment Pollution, Stubble Burning,

Measures, Air Quality Index, Punjab

1. Introduction

Environmental pollution is the most crucial global issue. Environmental pollution can be described as "the contamination of physical, chemical and biological quality of the environment that cause harmful impacts on human and other living organisms". Urbanization, rapid industrialization, and associated human activities are prime reasons for environmental pollution in India. It is the leading cause of premature deaths and diseases across the globe. The majority of premature deaths occur in developing industrialized countries. According to HEI's report, "more than 1.1 million premature deaths in India were caused by air pollution in the year 2017" (HEI 2019) [1]. As per World Air Quality Report 2019, India ranks fifth in the world's most polluted countries, and out of the 30 most polluted cities globally, 21 are from India [2]. According to Poovanna, S. [3], the report entitled "Greenpeace: Cost to Economy Due to Air Pollution Analysis 2021" indicates that air pollution resulted in 160,000 deaths globally in 2020. Greenpeace Southeast Asia Analysis of IQAir data has indicated that air pollution led to over 120,000 deaths in India in 2020.

Punjab was the centre of the green revolution, and the emergence of new irrigation techniques, use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides and high-yielding varieties made Punjab self-sufficient. It is known as the "breadbasket of

Barriers to Political Participation of Women: A Case Study of Punjab, India

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Abstract

Political engagement of women is an issue of global concern. Women are underrepresented in national and state legislature around the world. Despite the constitutional provisions, women in India are still marginalized in the political arena. The involvement of women in the decision-making process is negligible compare to men. This study is focused on the Punjab state of India. Punjab is an economically developed state, in spite of that women are less involved in political activities due to the patriarchal setup of society. This research attempts to examine the political participation of women and the major barriers faced by women with special reference to Punjab. The data used in this research has been collected from newspapers, e-journal articles, authentic internet sources, websites, government reports, census of India and such others. The findings reveal that there is a significant increase in women voter turnout for the last few years in this state but the participation of women in other political activities is very low. Elected women candidates act as proxies of male members of their families. It has indicated the major barriers to women's political participation in this state such as psychological, socio-cultural and political to name a few. This paper concludes with suggestions for the enhancement in effective participation of women in the political arena in this region of India.

Keywords: women's political participation, barriers, Punjab, proxy candidates, patriarchal society.

1. Introduction

The success of the democratic system depends upon the extent of involvement of citizens in the political process. Political participation is a process of voluntary involvement in political activities. It is regarded as "those legal activities by citizens which are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel or the actions they take" (Verba & Nie, 1978). It is defined as "those voluntary activities by which members of a society share in the selection of rulers and directly or indirectly in the formation of public policy" (McClosky, H., 1968). Women constitute almost half of the population of India and therefore, the political engagement of women is very essential for their overall empowerment. It is not merely related to casting vote but also includes participation in political campaigning, discussions, communicating with representatives, contesting elections, donating money to the party, protesting, petitioning and other activities related to politics.

The constitution of India guarantees equal social, economic and political rights for women. Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles of state policy provide special provisions to secure

Social Media Inclusion and Political Participation of Women in Nawanshahr Block of S.B.S Nagar District, Punjab

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Abstract

In a democratic government, every citizen directly or indirectly participates in decision-making. Social media is an effective instrument of political communication and moulding public opinion. Social media have brought changes to traditional campaign strategies of political parties. It provides a platform for politicians and candidates to convey their political policies and programs effectively to a large number of voters in less time. Women's political engagement is an essential criterion for the success of a democratic system. Social media facilitate the inclusion of women in political activities. This study investigates the effect of social media inclusion on women's political participation in the Nawanshahr block of S.B.S Nagar district of Punjab. It is mainly based upon the Primary data collected from 65 respondents consisting of urban and rural females through Google form. This study has revealed that 95.4% of women respondents use various social media platforms, but most of them neither visited the website of any political party nor shared or liked any political information. The majority of female students between the age group of 15-29 years utilize social media and engage in online political activities. 35.5% of female respondents do not have any interest in politics. It was found that social media is an effective tool to measure the performance of political parties.

Keywords: Social Media, Women's Political Participation, Political Campaigning, Voting Behaviour, Punjab

1. INTRODUCTION

The electoral system is the soul of the democratic system of India. The utilization of social media in political campaigning resulted in an important change in the country's electoral system. Social media has become a powerful instrument for political communication and engagement. It has a significant role in forming a public opinion by attracting voters of a different age groups during election campaigning. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and WhatsApp have been widely used by all political parties to mobilize voters during India's 16th Parliamentary general election (Narasimhamurthy, N., 2014).

Social Media can be defined as "a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of web 2.0 and allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content" (Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M., 2010). According to "Oxford Dictionary,"

Social media can be described as "websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or participate in social networking."

Electoral politics is dynamic. Observing the political interest of voters is an essential strategy adopted by political parties during elections. Political parties use social media to influence voting behaviour (Singh, M., & Kaur, M. H., 2020).

Social media can mobilize women's empowerment through technology by increasing their representation in the public sphere. It contributes to reducing gender stereotypes by direct or indirect inclusion of women in political activities. The extensive use of social media by women provides significant opportunities to highlight the issues of gender equality and women's right.

The novelty of the research- To the best of my knowledge, this is the first paper to analyze the influence of social media on women's political

Chapter 4: Changing Dynamics in Electoral Politics and Role of Women in Punjab: An Analytical Study

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Abstract

Gender equality in the political field is crucial for the participatory democratic system. Political inclusion and representation of women in various decision-making bodies are significant tools for the attainment of women's empowerment. Women's involvement in politics helps in the formation of gender-sensitive policies. Despite the attainment of universal suffrage and advancement in women's education and financial status, women tend to remain marginalized in the legislature. The exclusion of women from decision-making bodies limits the opportunities for entrenching democratic values and hinders economic development. An attempt has been made to explore the extent of women's political participation and women's empowerment in Punjab. It also aimed to analyze the various determinants affecting the political inclusion of women. The study demonstrates an extremely low percentage of women being elected to the Punjab legislative assembly and serving as policymakers. The findings of the study revealed various social and political and economic factors play a crucial role in determining the extent of women's participation in political activities. These findings emphasize the need to shift towards a conception of women as appealing in various political activities.

Keywords: *Women, Political participation, Women's empowerment, Legislative Assembly, Punjab*

1. Introduction

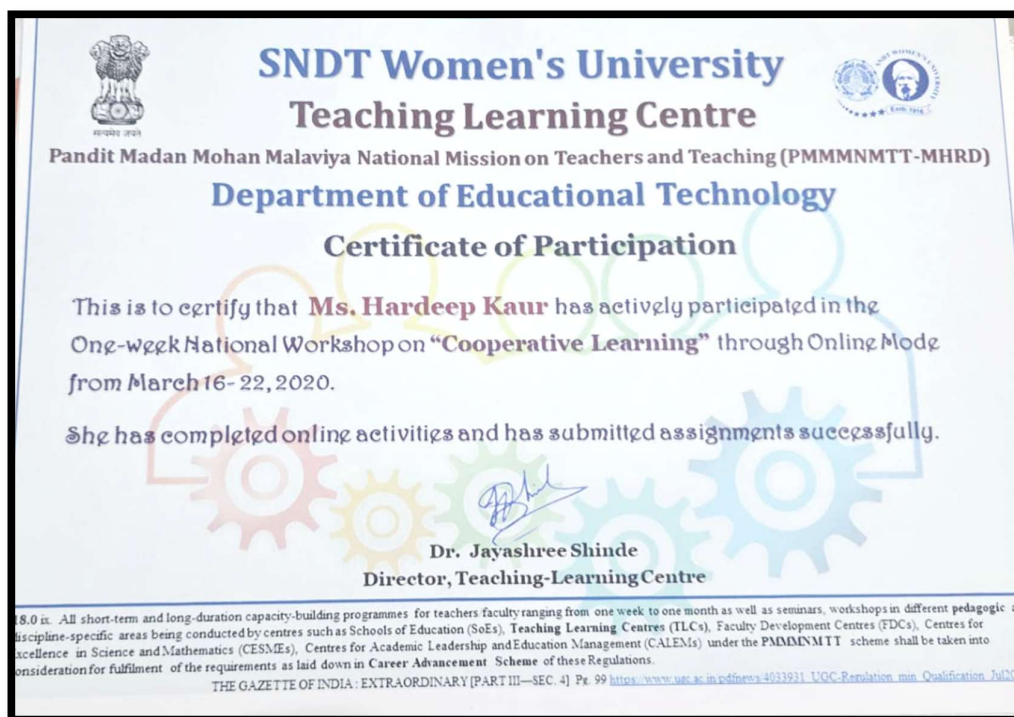
The gender gap in the political process has drawn significant consideration from researchers and policymakers all over the globe. Women's empowerment has been a significant factor in accelerating societal advancement (Esquivel & Enriquez, 2020; Khawaja, 2017). Women's empowerment is the process of providing access to economic and political resources to women that enables them to gain the knowledge, and skills required to participate in the political decision-making process. Political representation of women enables them to utilize their rights to frame public policy to address national issues (Greenstein, 2014). Men dominate political and leadership positions and women are still marginalized despite their significant contribution to the electoral process. Women encounter considerable difficulties in gaining access to political power, positions of authority in the public sphere, and decision-making mechanisms. In Punjab, women are underrepresented especially when it pertains to running for office and serving in the State Legislature. Women seem to be primarily excluded from political life. The essence of Punjab politics is elite, and the majority of the women who enter politics have significant financial and political support. In addition, the lack of legislative quotas is a factor leading to the underrepresentation of women in Punjab politics. Despite the numerous studies on women's political engagement and empowerment. However, this study has attempted to examine the extent of women's institutional participation in Punjab.

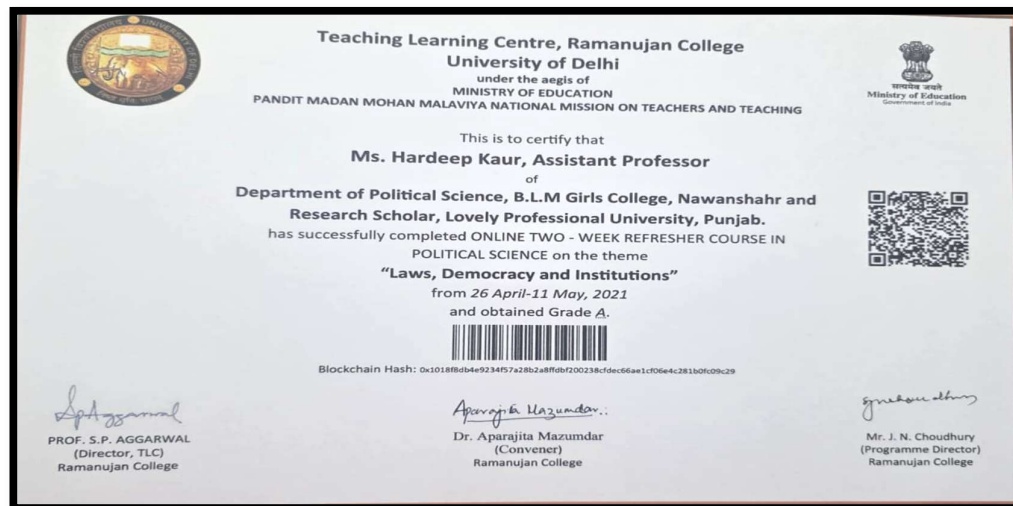
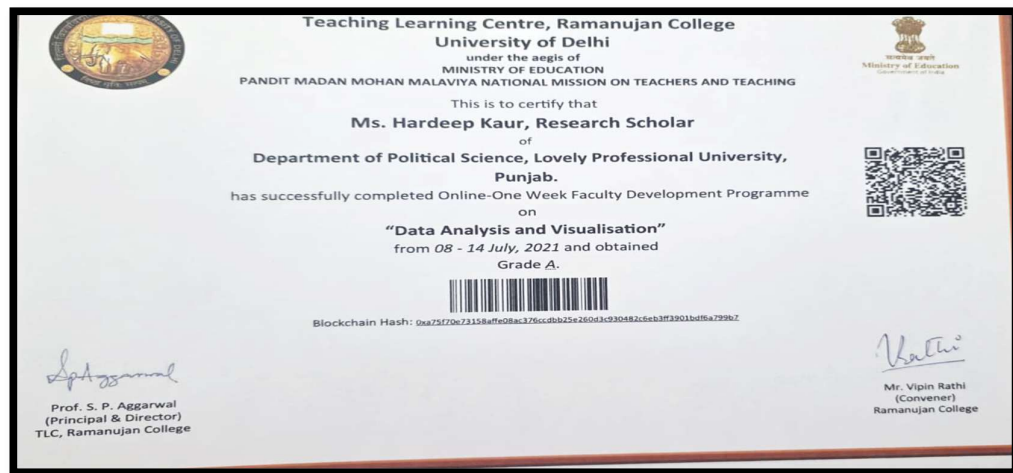
2. Literature Review

Devi, D. S., & Lakshmi, G. (2005) highlights the status of political inclusion of women in the decision-making process. The numerical strength of women in the lower house is very less compared to men and women are underrepresented in ministerial positions. Their role in the electoral process is just confined to voting.

Kaur, S. (2010) outlines social, economic, and political obstacles to women's political empowerment in Punjab. The patriarchal outlook of society is the major challenge that treats women as inferior to males and limits their ability to participate in the decision-making process. The lack of opportunity for women to run for office and hold influential positions in political parties is another form of bias they have to deal with. Lack of family and societal support, which deters women from joining politics, is another issue. Additionally, it might be difficult for women









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