

The Socio-Cultural Factors Impacting the Political Participation of Muslim Women in India

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Abstract: The injunction set down during this verse compels women and men to perform for the progress of society. Thus an individual in a private capability is inspired to require active role in society instead of simply a passive one. But after we endeavor to say ourselves as Muslim women we have a tendency to are labeled of being influenced by the West and attempting to make division and golf shot Muslims and Islam to disgrace. Women in the political perspective of Asian nation aren't an exceptional case. Though history reveals the foremost role via by the women within the politics of Asian nation, and have provided leadership every now and then, their level of participation continued to be inadequate. Women representatives are seen in sequent assemblies, but the few that have coped to urge there are from a awfully narrow privileged section of the society. Nearly majority of them accomplish their body hereditary from family. Regardless of women political leaders' role since 1947, the women illustration within the assemblies has ne'er reached a double figure. The question here is that why women goes on to be marginalized within the political development, despite the adoption of adult authorization. They have been 'granted' seventeen percent seats at the federal and provincial levels and thirty three per cent at the authorities, but that doesn't imply they're on a similar footing as their male counterparts. They're repeatedly reminded that their freedoms are granted and endowments given to them by the present government.

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Introduction: Socio-cultural factors profoundly impact Muslim women's political participation in India, shaping their access to opportunities and their ability to engage effectively in the political sphere. Patriarchal norms, religious interpretations, and socio-economic conditions intertwine to create a complex landscape that often limits their political agency. Patriarchy remains a significant barrier, perpetuating gender roles that confine women to domestic spaces and discourage public and political engagement. In many Muslim communities, traditional expectations emphasize women's roles as homemakers, which restricts their mobility and limits their opportunities to participate in public life. These norms are reinforced by conservative interpretations of religious texts that advocate for gender segregation and subordinate the role of women in society. Socio-economic status also plays a crucial role in shaping political participation. Many Muslim women in India belong to economically disadvantaged groups, which restricts their access to education, healthcare, and employment. The Sachar Committee Report (2006) highlighted the socio-economic challenges faced by Muslims, including lower literacy rates and poorer economic conditions, which are more pronounced for Muslim women. Limited educational attainment reduces their awareness of political rights and processes, while economic constraints make it

difficult for them to engage in political activities that require financial resources, such as running for office or campaigning. Cultural factors, including societal attitudes towards women in leadership, further hinder political participation. In many regions, there is a prevailing belief that politics is a male domain, and women who seek political roles often face resistance from their families and communities. This cultural bias is evident in the limited representation of Muslim women in political bodies and decision-making positions. Despite these challenges, there are notable examples of Muslim women overcoming socio-cultural barriers to engage in politics. For instance, the Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan (BMMA) has played a crucial role in advocating for Muslim women's rights and encouraging their political participation.[2]The organization's efforts to address issues such as triple talaq and to promote gender equality within the Muslim community have empowered many women to assert their political rights. Individual examples of Muslim women who have made significant strides in politics also highlight the potential for change. Syeda Anwara Taimur, the first Muslim woman to serve as Chief Minister of Assam, overcame substantial socio-cultural barriers to achieve political success. Similarly, Najma Heptulla's long career in Indian politics, including roles as Union

Minister and Governor of Manipur, demonstrates how Muslim women can navigate and challenge socio-cultural constraints to attain leadership positions.

MUSLIM WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS

Muslim women in general and now female Muslim political leaders can gain power and prestige political participation in Muslim countries depends on many different variables including tangible objects such as quotes and intangible processes such as culture and history.(Ramírez) Muslim women are often thought of as marginalized, excluded discriminated against, and/or abused. Formal politics represent a theater that does not seem to allow any rights to Muslim women. Bangladesh has had a female political leader. Since 1991 alternating between Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina. They face many difficulties during the participation in politics. Muslim women apart from their natural roles of being the companions of their husband.The 8th biennial national conference and general meeting of the criterion themed —challenges of globalization on Musliml. It is three day event had _participation in politics-dilemma of a Muslim women and ICT: virtues and viruses. women constitute half of the citizens in this country opportunities for women to be represented in political bodies and to influence political matters are an important parameter of democracy and thus an integral aspect of political development and the democratization process one area in which women have gained very little access is the absence of women in key points.(Schlyter; United Nations Development Programme et al.) The effect of patriarchy religious laws and social obligations in the hinders a women’s realization of her rights. The stereotypical portraying of women in social customs and morals irrespective of their caste, class and religious background makes women submissive in the male dominated society. Muslims have the lowest share of working people. About 33% among all religious communities in India. The key reason behind low work participation rates in some communities seems to be the low work participation of women. Women’s participation is just 15% for Muslims while 41% of Muslims and Christian work in agriculture. (Gledhill)

Challenges Faced by Muslim Women in Politics in India:

Muslim women in politics face a myriad of challenges that stem from intersecting factors such as gender discrimination, religious and cultural biases, socio-economic disparities, and systemic barriers within political institutions. These challenges impede their ability to fully participate

in the political process and to assume leadership roles, thus limiting their representation and influence in decision-making. One of the primary challenges faced by Muslim women in politics is gender-based discrimination and stereotypes. Deep-rooted patriarchal attitudes within society often undermine their credibility and legitimacy as political actors. Stereotypes portraying Muslim women as passive, oppressed, or lacking in agency perpetuate misconceptions about their capabilities and suitability for political leadership roles. These stereotypes create hurdles for Muslim women seeking to enter politics, as they must constantly navigate prejudice and prove their competence in male-dominated political spaces. Moreover, religious and cultural barriers present significant obstacles to Muslim women’s political participation. Traditional interpretations of Islam, coupled with cultural norms, may dictate restrictive gender roles and limit women’s freedom of movement and expression. Conservative religious leaders or community elders may discourage women from engaging in politics, citing religious or cultural norms that prioritize domestic duties over public engagement. This can create internalized barriers for Muslim women, who may struggle to reconcile their political aspirations with societal expectations and religious beliefs.[5] Socio-economic disparities also pose challenges for Muslim women in politics, particularly those from marginalized communities. Limited access to education, economic resources, and opportunities for political mobilization can hinder their ability to enter and navigate the political arena effectively. Economic dependence on male relatives or familial obligations may further constrain their autonomy and ability to pursue political careers independently. Systemic barriers within political institutions and electoral processes further exacerbate the challenges faced by Muslim women in politics. Male-dominated political parties and power structures often marginalize women, relegating them to tokenistic roles or denying them opportunities for leadership and decision-making. Discriminatory practices such as gender bias in candidate selection, unequal access to campaign resources, and harassment or intimidation on the campaign trail can deter Muslim women from running for office or actively participating in political activities. Despite these challenges, Muslim women in politics demonstrate resilience and determination in advocating for their rights and representing the interests of their communities. Grassroots movements and women-led organizations provide platforms for mobilizing support, building solidarity, and challenging discriminatory practices. Moreover, the emergence

of role models and trailblazers within the political arena inspires future generations of Muslim women to pursue political careers and effect positive change.

Opportunities for Political Empowerment:

Political empowerment for Muslim women in India presents a promising trajectory amidst evolving societal dynamics, legal reforms, and grassroots initiatives aimed at fostering gender equality and inclusion. Despite persistent challenges, several opportunities have emerged to enhance the political participation and representation of Muslim women, thereby empowering them to effectively engage in shaping the political landscape of the nation. One significant opportunity lies in the emergence of grassroots movements and women-led organizations that advocate for the rights and interests of Muslim women. Organizations such as the Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan (BMMA) and the All India Muslim Women's Personal Law Board (AIMWPLB) provide platforms for mobilizing community support, raising awareness about gender-based injustices, and promoting the political participation of Muslim women at the local, regional, and national levels. These grassroots initiatives empower Muslim women to assert their rights, challenge discriminatory practices, and demand accountability from political leaders and institutions. Reservation policies and affirmative action initiatives have also played a pivotal role in creating opportunities for political empowerment among marginalized communities, including Muslim women. The implementation of reservation quotas for women in local governance bodies, such as Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), has enabled many Muslim women to enter the political arena and assume leadership roles at the grassroots level. By providing reserved seats and ensuring representation, these policies promote inclusivity, diversity, and gender-responsive governance, thereby empowering Muslim women to influence decision-making processes and address community-specific concerns.[6] Moreover, increasing educational attainment and awareness among Muslim women present another avenue for political empowerment. Access to quality education equips women with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to actively participate in civic life, advocate for their rights, and engage in meaningful political discourse. Educational initiatives and capacity-building programs targeted at Muslim women, including leadership training, civic education, and legal literacy workshops, enable them to navigate political processes, articulate their demands, and effectively engage with policymakers and stakeholders. Digital

technology and social media platforms offer unprecedented opportunities for political mobilization, advocacy, and networking among Muslim women. The widespread use of smartphones and social networking sites facilitates communication, information-sharing, and grassroots organizing, enabling women to amplify their voices, mobilize support, and advocate for policy change. Digital campaigns, online petitions, and social media movements have become powerful tools for raising awareness about gender-based injustices, promoting women's rights, and holding authorities accountable for addressing issues affecting Muslim women.

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