

# Gender Balancing: A Study of Increasing Participation of Women in Governance

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## Abstract

Equal participation of men and women in all aspects of the workforce is referred to as gender balancing. However, in many areas women participate less and therefore they are underrepresented than what is desired vis-a-vis the division of women in the population. Equal access to opportunities and resources, including involvement in economic matters and decision-making, must be the goal of a progressive society. In practically every area, whether it is social, professional, or political, women have historically had limited prospects. They do not have the same rights or power as males. This prevailing historical trend still exists. Despite being increasingly elected and chosen for positions of decision-making, women are still underrepresented in decision-making positions globally. Women's participation in politics will develop not only women but also society as a whole. The main objective of this research paper is to explore and showcase the benefits of the increased participation of competent women in management and leadership roles to foster both personal and professional development.

**KEYWORDS:** Gender balance, Leadership, Mentoring, Equality, Gender responsive budgeting

## Introduction:

In India, we have always striven to create a society which is gender egalitarian, at least in theory. If we actually wish to create a gender balanced society, we must aim at a society where gender equality is about our thoughts, equal behavior for both men and women in all the spheres of life, whether on the national level or at global level. Many factors like institutional, cultural, economic and societal limit women's opportunities and abilities to participate in decision making.

India is a growing country, both economically and in population. It is projected that by 2050, India will be the most populous country in the world and is expected to exceed 160 crore in number. However, gender population gap persists in India. For every 100 boys born nationally, 90 girls are born. Women constitute 48.5% of the Indian population. The good thing is that women are bridging the higher education gap in our country and the same percentage of men and women i.e., 27% are enrolled in tertiary education.

However, despite educational gains, women are still not at par with men in India as far as employment and empowerment is concerned. In accordance with the World Bank collection of development indicators, employment to population ratio, of 15+ female was reported at 26.08 % in the year 2017. (<https://tradingeconomics.com/india/employment-to-population-ratio-15-plus--female-percent-wb-data.html>) The labour force participation rate for women remains one of the lowest in the World. In

2017 it was 28.5% as against 82% for men. But the silver lining is that of the 11.7 million urban working women in 2011-2012, almost 43% were having regular wages and salaried positions (up from 28.5% in 1993-1994). Young women are shifting to non-traditional professional jobs, for example in communications, mass media, space scientists etc. to name a few.

The wage gap between Indian men and women is amongst the worst in the world. According to a survey reported in Business Today only yesterday, Gender pay gap is still quite towering in India, and inequalities of wages in favour of men are present in all the relevant sectors. In keeping with the latest Monster Salary Index (MSI), the current gender pay gap in India stood at 19 per cent where men earned Rs 46.19 more in comparison to that of women. (<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/gender-pay-gap-still-high-women-in-india-earn-19-less-than-men-report/articleshow/68301331.cms>) The median gross hourly salary for men in India in 2018 stood at Rs 242.49, while for women it stood at around Rs 196. (<https://www.businesstoday.in/current/economy-politics/gender-pay-gap-still-high-women-in-india-earn-19-per-cent-less-than-men-report/story/325378.html>)

In addition to the salary gap and the employment ratio, women are underrepresented in leadership positions too. Women's participation in national or international politics has received relatively little attention from politics and gender scholars, despite their focus on studying gender parity in political representation and the effects of women's growing electoral participation. Men prevail in decision-making roles, including those on corporate boards, as company executives, financial regulators in governments, trade negotiators, and central bankers globally. Women's career paths begin narrow and get narrower over time. When it comes to women in senior positions in Indian corporations, a glass ceiling still exists. One survey found that in 2017, women held only 12.4% of board seats and 3.2% of board chair positions. In India, corporate controller (25%) and human resources director (25%) are the most often held positions by women (18 percent).

Vinita Bali who was on the Board of Directors of Bunge Limited (NYSE: BG), a leading global agribusiness and food company with about 32,000 employees who operates in over 40 countries, and Indira Nooyi (Board of Director of Amazon, former CEO PepsiCo) are very inspiring success stories. When it comes to Indian women breaking the glass ceiling, Indian women in leading positions are still performing more the exception than the rule. According to a global poll by Grant Thornton titled *Women in Business: New Views on Risk and Reward*, India remains amongst those countries that are known for the lowest percentage of company leadership roles held by women.

The political environment in India is likewise rife with gender inequality. Nine out of ten legislators in India are male. While Indian politicians are prepared to discuss women's empowerment and the contributions of India's female politicians, such as Indira Gandhi, Sushma Swaraj, Brinda Karat, etc., these eminent women still mainly stand out from the norm in the country's political landscape. According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, as of 2014, women fabricated only 11.8% of the Indian Lok Sabha and 11.4% of the Indian Rajya Sabha. Despite reaching a peak of 14.39 percent as of June 2019, India's representation of women in parliament is still worse than that of 140 other nations. The proportion of women in parliaments around the world was 24.6 percent on average.

What comes across as the most shocking revelation as far as women in governance position is concerned is in our own education sector. Women barely make about one-fourth of professorial seats at the absolute top. According to AISHE data for 2016-17, there are only 1 woman for every 5 men in Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, and Director posts throughout institutions in India. Additionally, no

state has a higher than 40% representation of female academics. (<https://www.newslaundry.com/2018/02/03/women-academia-india-teaching-harassment-ugc-data>)

Interestingly, findings from a study indicate that when women are at the helm of affairs as administrators, educators or even politicians, educational attainment has been observed to rise. Women in politics promote education and discourage dropouts. They have a favourable effect on the communities with schools. (Clots-Figueras, I., 2012, 'Are Female Leaders Good for Education? Evidence from India', American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 212-44). There is no doubt that more women need to run for positions of governance. Gender diversity in senior leadership roles improves performance and the achievement of results, according to recent research conducted by the World Bank, IMF, and other agencies. In India, this means that there is a tremendous opportunity for women to make a significant contribution to the development of the nation. If women are in positions of governance or leadership or decision-making, they will be empowered economically too, which will result in their overall development. It is essential for realizing women's rights and gender equality. Both companies and institutions have been found to greatly gain from increasing employment and leadership opportunities for women, which in turn increases organizational effectiveness and expansion. Apart from the considerable financial reward the inclusion of females in leadership builds organizations with greater gender awareness have been known to demonstrate faster innovation, better relations with stake holders and also attracts top talent. It is estimated that companies with three or more women in senior management functions score higher in all the dimensions of an organizational performance. A case in point is Sodexo, the French Food Services and Facilities Management Company, which has found that, "gender diversity can create value for external clients, serve as a lever for leadership development, improve executive decision-making, and enable personal and professional growth." In the last five years from 16 to 17 percent of their top 300 leaders, the representation of women has now increased to 23 percent. More than Forty percent of their managers at all levels are now females, and the company is generating a consolidated revenue of 20.4 billion Euro and is serving 100 million consumers every day. Empowering women in the economy and closing gender gaps in the world of work are keys in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and reducing inequalities. Placing women in these senior roles, results in better intake in the quality and quantity of talent.

Another effective strategy could be creating an institutional group of high achiever women for mentoring other women in the organization. This group of women can identify prospective decision makers with positive leadership skills who could be practitioners of good governance, and train and mentor them for future key positions in the organization. As women these mentors would be better equipped to train women. These organizations must fabricate a company culture that doesn't categorize women and men, but one that promotes gender equality. They must make every effort to build not only a work environment with gender equitable policies but also family-friendly practices including flexible schedules and child care.

Comprehensive action is necessary for actual gender parity to be achieved. The hiring and mentoring positions need to include more women. Better talent intake, both in terms of quality and quantity, is the result. Finding this balance can improve workplace interactions, which will foster a more positive work environment. Another tactic that could be used to lessen gap and inequality in society is gender responsive budgeting. Gender Responsive Budgeting is another important strategy which could be

engaged to reduce the discrepancy and inequality in society. Moreover, it is one of the Best Practices for creating a gender sensitive society. Most people see “gender” as a women’s issue, and unfortunately, in many companies the topic is run by women for women and about women. Real gender balance in business requires companies adapting to a more gender-balanced century. And that takes leadership—like any other strategic change initiative.

But advocating exclusively women-centric initiatives is not how to achieve gender balance. Creating policies and practises that assist both men and women is necessary. In order to achieve true gender balance, rules and procedures that assist both men and women need to be created. Women's issues are not necessarily best solved by themselves. The members of the family should come forward to support women to create balance in home and in office wherein the responsibilities keep on increasing. For instance, it is inversely connected with women's success when women are encouraged to take maternity leave. After delivery, Most of the women suffer from various health issues and post-partum depression which no one likes to talk about. That harmful effect is eliminated when fathers are involved and parental leave is supported. It is imperative to underline the importance of feminine and womanly attributes by mentioning Retired Justice A. K. Sikri who from Supreme Court . In his address he asserted that for the deliverance of true justice, all judges must have some womanly attributes of heart. Need anything more be said of a woman’s capability as a decision maker.

### **Conclusion:**

Women's participation in politics governance will develop not only women but also society as a whole. The main objective is to enhance the figure of competent women in management and leadership roles to foster their personal as well as professional development. Comprehensive actions need to be taken for actual gender parity to be achieved. More and more women must be included in important hiring and mentoring positions. Better talent intake, both in terms of quality and quantity, is the result. Women should avoid power demonstration and should learn to enjoy their rights properly. Women should cooperate and support other women colleagues to establish a harmonious work place that may be home or office. The need of the hour is that the successful women should extend helping hands to all the hard working and deserving candidates in general and girls in particular so as to help them in establishing their careers. Women and men are expected to participate in activities proportionate to their population shares in a scenario where gender equality exists.