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# SPWI JOURNAL FOR SOCIAL WELFARE

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**Volume 2 Issue: 3 July- September 2019**

*Editor*

**Dr. D. Suresh**



**SOCIETY FOR PUBLIC WELFARE AND INITIATIVES**

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**WOMEN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN  
UNDIVIDED ANDHRA PRADESH****Poleboina Undyasri**

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The State of Andhra Pradesh was formed in 1956. The language of most of the people in the State is denoted by the terms Telugu or Andhra, although they bear no phonetic or etymological affinity. There were two important stages in the formation of the State. At the time of Independence, the Telugu-speaking people were concentrated in the old multilingual Madras State and the princely State of Hyderabad. The Telugu-speaking areas of the Madras State were separated on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1953 to create the 'Andhra State', with Kurnool as capital. This Andhra region itself was composed of two sub-regions, namely the Andhra region (popularly called the Andhra), and the southern interior region, known as Rayalaseema. Later, the Telugu -speaking districts (referred to as Telangana region) of the old Hyderabad State were merged with the Andhra State on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1956 under the State Reorganization Act, to form the greater Andhra (Visalandhra), called Andhra Pradesh. Hyderabad, the former capital of the Nizam State, became the capital of the enlarged State. Andhra Pradesh state was the first State in Independent India to be formed on linguistic principle, creating one unified State for people speaking one language.

Prior to the Andhra Pradesh Reorganization Act, 2014 the erstwhile unfired Andhra Pradesh consisting of three distinct regions: the 'Circars' (literally, the government districts) or the coastal Andhra region consisting of nine districts i.e., Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, East Godavari, West Godavari, Krishna, Guntur, Prakasam and Nellore comprising 41.7% of the State population; the 'Rayalaseema' (the land of kings) consisting of four districts; Chittoor, Cuddapah, Anantapur and

Kurnool with 18% of the population; and the 'Telangana' (the land of Telugus) consisting of 10 districts (Mahbubnagar, Ranga Reddy, Hyderabad, Medak, Nizamabad, Adilabad, Karimnagar, Warangal, Khammam and Nalgonda with 40.5% of the population (CoI, AP 2001). The coastal and Rayalaseema districts are often jointly referred to as the 'Andhra' in contradistinction to the 'Telangana'.

At the time of the elections to local bodies in July–August 2001, there were 22 Zilla Parishads (District councils) (excluding Hyderabad, which is entirely urban), 1094 Mandals and 21,943 Gram Panchayats in the State. At the end of the year 2000, the electorate of the State stood at 50.58 million. The State has 42 Lok Sabha constituencies and Rajya Sabha represented by 18 Members and the strength of the State Legislative Assembly is 294.

For the purpose of the study, I had collected the data relating to women representation in various legislative bodies in Andhra Pradesh i.e., the State Legislature, the Local self-government bodies such as the Panchayat Raj and Nagarapilikas including Municipalities and Municipal Corporations in Andhra Pradesh. The data has been collected and analyzed until 2013. However, with the enactment of the Andhra Pradesh Reorganization Act, 2014, (No. 6 of 2014) which provides for providing for the reorganization of the existing State of Andhra Pradesh and for matters connected therewith. According to the above Reorganization Act and in accordance with Section 3 of the said Act, on and from the appointed day, there shall be formed a new State to be known as the State of Telangana comprising the following territories of the existing State of Andhra Pradesh, namely; Adilabad, Karimnagar, Medak, Nizamabad, Warangal, Rangareddi, Nalgonda, Mahbubnagar, Khammam (G.O. M.S. No. 111, 2005) and Hyderabad districts, and thereupon the said territories shall cease to form part of the existing State of Andhra Pradesh. According to Section 4 of the said Act, on and from the appointed day, the State of Andhra Pradesh shall comprise the territories of the existing State of Andhra Pradesh other than those specified in section 3. Further, according to Section 5, Hyderabad to be a common capital for the States of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. Consequent to the reorganization and formation of new Telangana State by way of bifurcation of the existing Andhra Pradesh State, the representation of members in the Parliament and the members in respective State Legislature have been reorganized as follows:

Table 1  
Member of Parliaments from the Telugu States

No. of Parliament seats (Lok Sabha)	Telangana	17
No. of Parliament seats (Rajya Sabha)	Telangana	07
No. of Assembly Segments (Vidhana Sabha)	Telangana	119
No. of Assembly Segments (Vidhaya Parishad)	Telangana	40

No. of Parliament seats (Lok Sabha)	Andhra Pradesh	25
No. of Parliament seats (Rajya Sabha)	Andhra Pradesh	11
No. of Assembly Segments (Vidhana Sabha)	Andhra Pradesh	175
No. of Assembly Segments (Vidhaya Parishad)	Andhra Pradesh	58

Source: *Compiled from the Documents of AP & Telangana State Legislative Assembly, Hyderabad*

Right from the inception of the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly (APLA), women as legislators have played a significant role. In the year 1956, when the APLA was constituted by unifying Andhra and Hyderabad Legislative Assemblies, there were eleven elected women members in the House. The following are the highlights of APLA.

- As the years progressed, the number of elected women members in the Andhra Pradesh Legislature kept steadily increasing. There are 5 women MLCs and 36 women MLAs, representing various constituencies of the state of Andhra Pradesh.
- To give special thrust to the welfare of women and to focus on alleviation of their problems, the APLA constituted the Committee on Welfare of Women and Children in the year 1993.
- The year 1999, the Eleventh APLA unanimously elected Mrs. K. Prathibha Bharathi as the Speaker of the House. She was the first Woman Speaker of APLA.
- The APLA has taken up several new initiatives like providing Zero Hour opportunity to all the women legislators on the occasion of International women's day.
- The 13<sup>th</sup> APLA has given a new dimension to the theme of the Common Wealth Parliamentary Association by felicitating eight women from different walks of life as 'Agents of Change' in recognition of their exemplary service to the society with commitment and passion.

Presently Consequent on Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014, the Telangana State with Hyderabad as its Capital has been carved out on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2014 and thus became the 29<sup>th</sup> State in the Union of India. The State consists of 10 Districts with an area of 114,840 sq. Kms and a population of 3,52,86,757 (2011 census). It is the 12<sup>th</sup> largest state in India. The First Telangana Legislative Assembly was constituted on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2014 with 119 Elected Members after the General Election held in the month of April 2014. The Legislature is bicameral. The Legislative Assembly consists of 119 elected members and one member nominated by the Governor from among Anglo-Indian Community, under Article 333 of the Constitution of India. The duration of the

Assembly is five years from the date appointed for its first meeting, unless sooner dissolved. The first meeting of the Assembly was held on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2014.

Presently Consequent on Andhra Pradesh Reorganization Act, 2014, the Andhra Pradesh State has become existing Andhra Pradesh with common capital Hyderabad as its Capital has been carved out on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2014 and thus became the residuary State in the Union of India. The following are women MLCs and MLAs in Andhra Pradesh as on the State Reorganization. In 2014, the state was bifurcated into Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. The Strength of the APLA was 175 and the present Strength of the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council is 50.

In India society normatively, women have been given positions relatively inferior to men. So far as Hindu society is concerned, during the Rig Vedic period, women in India enjoyed high status in society. Their condition was good. The women were provided the opportunity to attain high intellectual and spiritual standards. There were many women Rishis during this period. Though monogamy was most common, the richer section of the society indulged in polygamy. Although the position of women declined in modern times especially during the long period of foreign rule, which disrupted every aspect of society, most scholars agree that women in ancient India held a most elevated position.

Today social customs vary from age to age and from place to place. Customs in Indian society regarding women were severely impacted by the centuries of invasions and foreign occupation when the careful protection of Hindu women became essential. All aspects of Indian society believed to have suffered the British-imposed Christian educational system, the tearing apart of families by proselytizing faiths determined to gain converts by any possible means, and the further disruptions caused by a relatively swift change from a historically stable, largely agrarian society to one intensely focused on manufacturing and technology. Under the influence of the male-centric Western religions, the role that comes most naturally to most women wife and mother, the children's first guru, the Shakti of the home, the preserver and enhancer of the spiritual force field of the home and family has been effectively disparaged and has become so despised in the mass mind that any reference to it is now perceived as an attempt at subjugation. Thus, during ancient times they were treated at par with men even in political and philosophical spheres. However, down the centuries, the position of women in society deteriorated and politically they were pushed to the background.

In the Indian socio-political context, the status of women in India has been subject to many great changes over the past few millennia. With a decline in their status from the ancient to medieval times, to the promotion of equal rights by many reformers, the history of women in India has been eventful. Modern India demonstrates where women have held high offices including that of the President, Prime Minister, Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Leader of the Opposition, Union Ministers, Chief Ministers and Governors

on the political front and in many chief executive positions in the corporate world. Today in Indian women's rights are secured under the Constitution of India including equality, dignity, and freedom from discrimination; further, India has various statutes governing the rights of women (*Lalita Dhara Parihar, 2011*). The Constitution of India guarantees to all Indian women equality under Article 14, no discrimination by the State as guaranteed under Article 15(1), equality of opportunity under Article 16, and equal pay for equal work as provided under Article 39(d). In addition, it allows special provisions to be made by the State in favour of women and children (Article 15(3)), renounces practices derogatory to the dignity of women (Article 51(A) (e)), and also allows for provisions to be made by the State for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief under Article 42 etc. of Indian Constitution.

In an international political scenario, the last quarter of the twentieth century will be remembered for rapid progress in improving the status of women worldwide and the corresponding international spread of feminism (*Mary, K. Meyer, 1999*). In Indian societies, the Indian patriarchal society that dominates the social, political and economic life of people in the country has never encouraged its women in any field, except the kitchen for quite many centuries. Indian women are relatively disempowered and they enjoy lower status than that of men from times immemorial, thus gender gap exists regarding access to education and employment.

On political empowerment, in spite of many hurdles on political empowerment of Indian women, the country has witnessed the world's largest experiment in grassroots local democracy, triggered by the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Amendments to the Indian Constitution, which created a third tier of governance Panchayat Raj Institutions and urban local bodies. These are elected bodies and cannot be dissolved by administrative order. Since 1995, four rounds of elections have been held; and as one-third of seats are reserved for women, more than 1.5 million women have been elected to office in each round. It is evident therefore that first-generation issues of framing the 'rules of the game' and creating an understanding about them have been addressed. However, in Telangana State and Andhra Pradesh, the reservations in respect of women have been increased to 50% and the same is being the order.

On women political participation, way back in 1974 itself, The Committee on the Status of Women in India Report (1974) defined the political status of women as the degree of equality and freedom enjoyed by them in shaping and sharing of power and in the value given by the society to this role. The three indicators mentioned by the Committee are (*Sarala Gopalan, 2002*):

1. Participation in the Political Process
2. Political Attitudes
3. Impact of women in the Political Process



The recommendations of the Committee on the Status of Women in India (CSWI), 1972 remained in cold storage till the early 1990s, when the Indian Parliament passed the Seventy-Third Amendment to the Indian Constitution with near unanimity in December 1992 and the Amendment came into effect from 24<sup>th</sup> April 1993. The purpose of this amendment was to revitalize local self-governing village councils (which had been in existence in some states of the country even prior to this amendment). The 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment has been considered historic and one of the most significant attempts at transforming the Indian polity in the direction of greater democratization and decentralization of powers. It has also been regarded as an important instrument for drawing in the vast sections of marginalized people in the task of self-government.

### **Women Representation in Legislative Bodies – An Over View**

It is the historic beginning for the effective participation of women in the decision-making process at the grassroots level. In the elections to these local bodies, more than one million women were having been elected every five years. It is but natural that a larger number of women have participated in these elections and this signifies a very encouraging trend for women's empowerment.

In the Indian context, political participation and grassroots democracy have been strengthened considerably by the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendments that have created new democratic institutions for local governance. The average of women representation in Panchayats across the country is 36.94%. However, a few states have gone beyond the mandated 33% and provided more reservation for women. However, as of now, there is no specific women reservation/representation in the constitutional legislative bodies i.e., the Union Parliament and the State Legislatures as a constitutional right. Women's Reservation Bill or The Constitution (108<sup>th</sup> Amendment) Bill, is a pending bill in India which proposes to amend the Constitution of India to reserve 33% of all seats in the Lower house of Parliament of India, the Lok Sabha, and in all state legislative assemblies for women. The seats to be reserved in the rotation will be determined by draw of lots in such a way that a seat shall be reserved only once in three consecutive general elections. Thus, the proposed legislation to reserve 33.3% of seats in Parliament and state legislatures for women. The Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 12<sup>th</sup> September 1996. Though it has been introduced in Parliament several times since then, the Bill could not be passed because of a lack of political consensus and presently, the Bill is pending before the Lok Sabha.

By clockwork precision, talk about the Women's Reservation Bill has duly floated in ahead of 8<sup>th</sup> March, International Women's Day. President Pranab Mukherjee and Vice-President Hamid Ansari have called for reviving the Constitution (108<sup>th</sup>) Amendment Bill to reserve for women one-third of seats in Parliament and the State legislatures. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been less forthcoming in revealing whether his government has any plans to pilot the Bill through the Lok Sabha. This is

particularly disappointing. The Bill was passed in the Rajya Sabha in March 2010 amid obstructive theatrics from parties such as the Rashtriya Janata Dal and the Samajwadi Party, but also with an unusual level of cooperation among the national parties, especially the Congress, which was leading the United Progressive Alliance government, and the Bharatiya Janata Party. Thereafter they could not or would not overcome similar odds in the Lok Sabha to deliver on their stated support for the Bill. Six years on, Mr. Modi's BJP commands a clear majority in the Lok Sabha. It is therefore in a position not only to get the Bill passed by mopping up the support of just a few more MPs but also to force the Congress and the Left into reaching out across the aisle in a polarized Parliament to affirm fidelity to a long-voiced promise. Every session of Parliament must serve as a reminder that the real stumbling block to the Bill has not been political from parties opposed to it, but essentially patriarchal within the very same parties that have affirmed support to it (*The Hindu*). The following is the chronological order of the long struggle for the passing of women's reservation bill from 1996 to date.

**Table 2**  
**Status Women Reservation Bill from 1996 till date**

<b>Year</b>	<b>The initiative took for the passing of women reservation bill</b>
Sept 1996	Women's Reservation Bill introduced and referred to Joint Select Committee of Parliament
Nov 1996	Women's organizations submit a joint memo to the Joint Select Committee
May 1997	Women's organizations submit a joint memo to national political parties
July 1998	Join women's protest at Parliament to press for passage of Bill
July 1998	National Commission of Women condemns manhandling of women protestors and demands that there be no dilution of Bill
Aug 1998	A joint delegation of women's organizations meet PM Vajpayee
Aug 1998	Joint march and dharna to Parliament and demand to list the Bill for discussion and passage
Nov 1998	Women's Charter for 12th Lok Sabha Elections demand passage of Bill by political parties
Dec 1998	Joint Convention at Delhi – "Voices of all communities for 33% Reservation for Women"
March 1999	International Women's Day jointly observed with the main demand for the passage of the Women's Reservation Bill
April 2000	Joint Memo to the Chief Election Commissioner to withdraw the proposal for reservation for women in party lists as an alternative to the Bill

Dec 2000	Joint delegation to Lok Sabha Speaker Manohar Joshi to protest against his calling a meeting of political parties to discuss the diversionary proposal to amend the People's Representation Act to ensure one-third representation of women in lists of candidates of political parties
March 2003	Joint memorandum to Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Sushma Swaraj to demand that the Bill is put to vote rather than discuss alternative proposals in the all-party meeting
April 2003	Joint appeal to leaders of political parties to support passage of Bill on the 10th anniversary of the 73rd and 74th Amendments giving 33% reservation to women in local self-government bodies.
April 2004	Joint election statement issued to vote NDA government out of Parliament. One of the reasons cited was a betrayal of women on the Reservation Bill
May 2004	Joint appeal to Congress President Sonia Gandhi to demand inclusion of the assurance to pass the Women's Reservation Bill in the Common Minimum Programme
May 2005	Joint delegation to PM Manmohan Singh to ask for placing Bill for discussion
May 2006	Joint delegation meets PM Manmohan Singh once again to demand the introduction of Bill for discussion
May 2006	Joint delegation to meet Railway Minister Laloo Prasad Yadav requesting him to intervene positively in favor of the Bill
May 2008	The Constitution 108th Amendment) Bill, 2008 seeks to reserve one-third of all seats for women in the Lok Sabha and the state legislative assemblies with the following highlights: 1. The allocation of reserved seats shall be determined by such authority as prescribed by Parliament 2. One-third of the total number of seats reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes shall be reserved for women of those groups in the Lok Sabha and the Legislative Assemblies. 3. Reserved seats may be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in the state or Union Territory. 4. Reservation of seats for women shall cease to exist 15 years after the commencement of this Amendment Act.
March 2010	The Upper House Rajya Sabha passed the bill on 9 Mar 2010. As of, the Lower House Lok Sabha has not yet voted on the bill.

Source: *Compiled from the Documents of AP & Telangana State Legislative Assembly, Hyderabad:*

Prior to the introduction of Constitutional provisions relating to reservation, the percentage of women in local bodies, there was merely 4.5%, which after a reservation has gone up to 40% and even more. As per the Fifteenth Anniversary Charter on

Panchayati Raj, “Today more than 26 lakh representatives stand elected to the three levels of Panchayats. Of these, over 10 lakh are women. The last 15 years of PR, have thus succeeded in empowering marginalized groups who have gained political representation and valuable experience. Many of them have successfully taken on the challenge of governance and brought about enduring social change through their close links with the community” (5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Chater on Panchayati Raj, 2008).

Commonly known as the Women’s Reservation Bill, it seeks to reserve one-third of all seats for women in the Lok Sabha and the state legislative assemblies. Introduced by the UPA-I government in May 2008, it also provides that one-third of the total number of seats reserved for SCs and STs shall be reserved for women of those groups. Similar bills have been introduced thrice before in the late ‘90s but lapsed with the dissolution of their respective Lok Sabhas. On providing reservation for women in Lok Sabha/Assemblies the earlier efforts to have seats reserved for women in the Lok Sabha and the State Legislative Assemblies have had a chequered legislative history. After years of painstaking struggle by the Women’s groups, the Bills for Women’s Reservation were introduced in Parliament in 1996, 1998 and 1999, respectively, without being passed. The Constitution (81<sup>st</sup> Amendment) Bill, 1996, was introduced on 12<sup>th</sup> September 1996. Some of the significant features of the Bill were as under:

1. One-third of the total number of seats filled by direct elections in the House of the People and in Legislative Assemblies of the States shall be reserved for women.
2. One-third of seats shall be reserved for women belonging to the SCs and the STs from amongst the seats reserved for the SCs and the STs under clause (1) of Article 330 and clause (1) of Article 332 of the Constitution.
3. No reservation of seats in Lok Sabha for women from a State having less than three seats in Lok Sabha.
4. If the number of seats reserved for the SCs or the STs was less than three in any State, no reservation for women belonging to the SCs and the STs was provided for in the State.
5. The seats were to be reserved for women by rotation in the manner laid down by the law of Parliament.
6. No time limit up to which reservation for women was to continue.
7. It did not provide for reservation of seats for women belonging to the Other Backward Classes.
8. It did not provide reservation of seats for women in the Rajya Sabha and the Legislative Councils of the States.

After intense debates and dissenting opinions, the Bill was referred to a Joint Committee of Parliament consisting of 31 members from both Houses of Parliament

(*Geetha Mukharjee, 1996*). The Constitution (81<sup>st</sup> Amendment) Bill, 1996, as reported by the Joint Committee of Parliament, lapsed with the dissolution of the Eleventh Lok Sabha. Thereafter, a similar Bill, namely, the Constitution (84<sup>th</sup> Amendment) Bill, 1998 was introduced on 14<sup>th</sup> December 1998. The said Bill also lapsed on the dissolution of Twelfth Lok Sabha. Yet another attempt was made by introducing the Constitution (84<sup>th</sup> Amendment) Bill, 1999 in Lok Sabha on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1999. But this Bill also could not be pursued due to a lack of consensus amongst the political parties.

On the issue relating to reservation for Women in Lok Sabha/Assemblies The Constitution (108 Amendment) Bill, 2008, popularly known as Women's Reservation Bill, was introduced in the Rajya Sabha on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2008. The Bill aims at eliminating gender inequality and discrimination against women, by political empowerment of women, so as to fulfill people's mandate of Women Empowerment as envisaged in the National Common Minimum Programme of the Government and seeks:

1. Reservation for women, as nearly as may be, one-third seats of the present strength of the House of the People and the Legislative Assembly of every State;
2. To provide, as nearly as may be, one-third reservation for women including one-third the number of seats reserved for the SCs and the STs in the House of the People and in the Legislative Assembly of every State to be reserved for women of that category;
3. To provide for reservation for women in respect of nominations of members of the Anglo-Indian community in the House of the People and in the Legislative Assemblies of the States;
4. To provide reservation for women in the Legislative Assembly of the National Capital Territory of Delhi; and
5. To provide that reservation of seats for women should cease to have an effect on the expiration of a period of fifteen years from the enactment of the Bill.

The Women's Reservation Bill introduced in the Rajya Sabha has been referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Personnel, Law, and Justice, headed by E.M. Sudarsana Natchiappan for examination. The 31 Member Committee has been seized of the matter and would submit its report, to both Houses of Parliament after making wider consultation on various issues involved in the Bill. The Bill has evoked mixed reactions across the political spectrum, both inside the house as well outside. While some political parties are unanimous that the Bill, which seeks to provide 33% reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and the State legislatures, be passed in its present form at the first available opportunity, others are demanding quota to be fixed for the women belonging to backward sections of the society within this 33%. Otherwise, they contend, the benefit of this reservation is likely to be cornered by the women belonging to upper and well-off sections of our society.

As of now, the Rajya Sabha passed the bill on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2010 (*The Times of India*). As of February 2014, the Lower House Lok Sabha has not yet voted on the bill. If the Lok Sabha were to approve the bill, it would then have to be passed by half of India's state legislatures and signed by the President. For various reasons and political interests of various national political parties, the women's reservation bill is awaiting passing by the Lok Sabha.

Today social customs vary from age to age and from place to place. Customs in Indian society regarding women were severely impacted by the centuries of invasions and foreign occupation when the careful protection of Hindu women became essential. All aspects of Indian society believed to have suffered the British-imposed Christian educational system, the tearing apart of families by proselytizing faiths determined to gain converts by any possible means, and the further disruptions caused by a relatively swift change from a historically stable, largely agrarian society to one intensely focused on manufacturing and technology. Under the influence of the male-centric Western religions, the role that comes most naturally to most women wife and mother, the children's first guru, the Shakti of the home, the preserver and enhancer of the spiritual force field of the home and family has been effectively disparaged and has become so despised in the mass mind that any reference to it is now perceived as an attempt at subjugation. Thus, during ancient times they were treated at par with men even in political and philosophical spheres. However, down the centuries, the position of women in society deteriorated and politically they were pushed to the background.

The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles. The Constitution not only grants equality to women but also empowers the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favor of women.

In the Indian socio-political context, the status of women in India has been subject to many great changes over the past few millennia. With a decline in their status from the ancient to medieval times, to the promotion of equal rights by many reformers, the history of women in India has been eventful. Modern India demonstrates where women have held high offices including that of the President, Prime Minister, Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Leader of the Opposition, Union Ministers, Chief Ministers and Governors on the political front and in many chief executive positions in the corporate world. Today in Indian women's rights are secured under the Constitution of India including equality, dignity, and freedom from discrimination; further, India has various statutes governing the rights of women (*Lalitha Dhar Parihar, 2011*). The Constitution of India guarantees to all Indian women equality under Article 14, no discrimination by the State as guaranteed under Article 15(1), equality of opportunity under Article 16, and equal pay for equal work as provided under Article 39(d). In addition, it allows special provisions to be made by the State in favor of women and children, renounces practices

derogatory to the dignity of women, and also allows for provisions to be made by the State for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief under Article 42 etc.

In the international political scenario, the last quarter of the twentieth century will be remembered for rapid progress in improving the status of women worldwide and the corresponding international spread of feminism (*Mary, K. Meyer, 1999*). In Indian societies, the Indian patriarchal society that dominates the social, political and economic life of people in the country has never encouraged its women in any field, except the kitchen for quite many centuries. Indian women are relatively disempowered and they enjoy lower status than that of men from times immemorial, thus gender gap exists regarding access to education and employment.

Political representation was initially based on the premise that it deals primarily with individuals. It was believed that though very few women were actually joining politics at a given time; the overall improvement in terms of education and employment opportunities would necessarily percolate into the political sphere too and their representation would commensurately increase. During the first general elections, 66 women contested the elections to Parliament and 19 were elected to the House of the People.

On political empowerment, in spite of many hurdles on political empowerment of Indian women, the country has witnessed the world's largest experiment in grassroots local democracy, triggered by the 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Indian Constitution, which created a third tier of governance – PRIs and urban local bodies. These are elected bodies and cannot be dissolved by administrative order. Since 1995, four rounds of elections have been held; and as one-third of seats (proposed to be increased to 50%) are reserved for women, more than 1.5 million women have been elected to office in each round. It is evident therefore that first-generation issues of framing the 'rules of the game' and creating an understanding about them have been addressed.

**Table 3**

**Women MPs both in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha and MLAs in AP**

Sl. No	Elected from House	Total Members in the House	No. of Men MPs/MLAs	% of Men MPs/MLAs	Total Women MPs/MLAs	% of Women MPs/MLAs
1	Lok Sabha	543	484	89%	59	11 %
2	Rajya Sabha	233	210	90%	23	10 %
3	Andhra Pradesh Assembly	294	260	88%	34	12 %

Source: *Compiled from the Documents of AP & Telangana State Legislative Assembly, Hyderabad*

Table 3 shows the poor percentage of women representation in the Union Parliament and in Andhra Pradesh State Legislative Assembly. However, when compared with Union Parliament percentage, representation of women in Andhra Pradesh is slightly more i.e. 1% more than the national average. The statement above shows the poor percentage of women representation in the Union Parliament and in Andhra Pradesh State Legislative Assembly. However, when compared with Union Parliament percentage, representation of women in Andhra Pradesh is slightly more i.e. 1% more than the national average. Figures in the above table are for 15<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha and in Andhra Pradesh as on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2013.

Women Representation among Elected Representatives As per the data from ECI, out of the total 4896 MPs/MLAs across the country, only 418 or 9% are women. Among MPs, Lok Sabha has 59 (11% of 543 MPs) and Rajya Sabha has 10% or 23 (10% of 233 MPs) women MPs. Among State assemblies, West Bengal 34 (out of 294 MLAs), Bihar 34 (out of 243 MLAs) and Andhra Pradesh 34 (out of 294 MLAs) have the maximum no of women MLAs followed by Uttar Pradesh with 32 women out of 403 MLAs and Rajasthan with 28 women out of 200 MLAs In terms of percentage, among state assemblies, the highest percentage of Women MLAs is from Bihar with 14% (34 out of 243 MLAs) followed by Rajasthan with 14% (28 out of 200 MLAs) women votes and West Bengal with 12% (34 out of 294 MLAs). The statement below shows women representation in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.

**Table 4**  
**Women's representation in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha**

Year	Seats in	Women Lok Sabha	%	Seat in Rajya Sabha	Women	%
1952	449	22	4.8	209	16	7.3
1957	500	27	5.4	237	18	7.5
1962	503	34	6.8	238	18	7.6
1967	523	31	5.9	240	20	8.3
1971	521	22	4.2	243	17	7.0
1977	544	19	3.4	244	25	10.2
1980	544	28	5.1	244	24	9.8
1984	544	44	8.1	244	28	11.4
1989	571	27	5.2	245	24	9.7
1991	544	39	7.1	245	38	15.5
1996	543	40	7.3	223	20	9.0



1998	543	43	7.9	245	15	6.1
1999	543	48	8.8	245	19	7.8
2004	543	46	8.4	245	28	11.4
2009	543	59	10.9	245	24	9.9
2014	543	66	12.25	245	24	9.9

Source: *Compiled from the Documents of AP & Telangana State Legislative Assembly, Hyderabad*

Table 4 depicts the women representation in the Union Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha from 1952 onwards. Women representation was not changed right from the first General elections in the country until the recent one. However, in the recent 2014 elections, the representation of women rose to 66 Lok Sabha parliamentarians representing 12.25% and 24 Rajya Sabha women candidates representing 9.9% of the house.

As of 14<sup>th</sup> May 2015, the Indian Rajya Sabha there are 31 female members, out of whom three are nominated. Since there are a total of 244 members, women constitute just 12.7% of the upper house. The 16th Lok Sabha has 66 female MPs out of 543 (the two nominated seats remain vacant) constituting a mere 12.15% of the strength. 62 of these ladies were elected in the General elections while the other 4 came in through subsequent by-polls. The current speaker of the house Smt. Sumitra Mahajan is female. In the present union government council of ministers, 6 out of 26 (23%) cabinet ministers are women as are 2 out of 38 (5.3%) ministers of state. This is the highest number of women MPs elected to the Lok Sabha in the history of the country, although by a small margin. The number was lowest at 19 in the 1977 elections. The present Lok Sabha consists of women representation including Sonia Gandhi, Hema Malini, and Maneka Gandhi, other prominent women elected to the 16th Lok Sabha include Kirron Kher, Poonam Mahajan, Sushma Swaraj, Uma Bharti, Dimple Yadav, Moon Moon Sen, and Meenakshi Lekhi and many more prominent women.

The APLA election of 2014 took place in April, May 2014, concurrently with the Indian general election, 2014. The elections were held in the state in the seventh phase i.e., 30<sup>th</sup> April 2014 and eighth phase i.e., 7<sup>th</sup> May 2014. The results were declared on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2014. President of India has issued a Gazette notification to carve Telangana state out of Andhra Pradesh on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2014. The Telangana Rashtra Samithi led by K. Chandrasekhar Rao won in the new State of Telangana and he has been chosen as the Chief Minister of the State and the Telugu Desam Party led by N. Chandrababu Naidu won with a massive mandate in the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh and was chosen as the Chief Minister of the State of Andhra Pradesh.

The following is the profile of voters polled in successive General Elections in Andhra Pradesh from 1952 General Elections till the 2009 General Elections.

### Number of persons contested and elected by sex in various General Elections to State Legislative Assembly in Andhra Pradesh from 1955 to 2014

Data relating to the Number of Persons Contested and Elected by Sex in various General Elections to State Legislative Assembly in Andhra Pradesh from 1955 to 2014 has been collected and compiled. Accordingly, the women representation in Andhra Pradesh since the 1955 General elections till the current elections has been collected from the database of the Election Commission of India and other sources and compiled hereunder:

**Table 5**

#### Number of Persons Contested and Elected by Sex in various General Elections to State Legislative Assembly in Andhra Pradesh from 1955 to 2014

General Elections	Year	Total No. of seats	No. of Contestants		No. of Elected		% of Winning to total seats	
			Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
1st	1955	167	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
2nd	1957	85	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
3rd	1962	300	24	964	10	290	3.33	96.67
4th	1967	287	21	1,046	11	276	3.38	96.62
5 <sup>th</sup>	1972	287	49	955	0	287	0	100
6th	1978	294	54	1,484	10	284	3.40	96.60
7th	1983	294	73	1,647	11	283	3.74	96.26
8th	1985	294	77	1,895	10	284	3.50	96.50
9th	1989	294	70	1,634	17	277	5.78	94.22
10th	1994	294	127	3,092	8	286	2.72	97.28
11th	1999	294	157	1,947	28	266	9.52	91.48
12th	2004	294	161	1,735	26	268	8.84	91.16
13th	2009	294	300	3,355	34	260	11.56	89.46
14 <sup>th</sup>	2014	294	317	3591	27	267	9.18	91.82

Source: Compiled from the Documents of AP & Telangana State Legislative Assembly, Hyderabad

Table 5 reveals the position of general elections conducted in Andhra Pradesh from 1955 onwards. The data relating to the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> General Elections to the State are not available. From 3<sup>rd</sup> General Elections to 8<sup>th</sup> General Elections to the State Legislative Assembly, the percentage of representation of women in the house was around 3 to 4% only. But however, since the 9<sup>th</sup> Elections, there was a change in the women representation in the State Legislature. The highest representation of women was in the 13<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly where there was a representation of as many as 34 women representatives in the House constituting 11.56% of the total house. However, in the current 14<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly, there is a slight down of representation limiting to 27% only.

### Women representation in Andhra Pradesh State Council of Ministers

Representation of Women in the State Council of Ministers in the State Legislative Assembly of Andhra Pradesh since 1st General Elections has been collected and compiled hereunder:

**Table 6**  
**Women representation in Andhra Pradesh State Council of Ministers**

General Election	Year	Total No. of Ministers	No. of Women Ministers Total	No. of Women representative in the State Legislative Assembly
1 <sup>st</sup>	1955	26	-	NA
2 <sup>nd</sup>	1957			
3 <sup>rd</sup>	1962	16	1	10
4 <sup>th</sup>	1967	46	-	11
5 <sup>th</sup>	1972	37	-	0
6 <sup>th</sup>	1978	36	1	10
7 <sup>th</sup>	1983	16	1	11
8 <sup>th</sup>	1985	71	2	10
9 <sup>th</sup>	1989	29	3	17
10 <sup>th</sup>	1994	32	1	8
11 <sup>th</sup>	1999	53	6	28
12 <sup>th</sup>	2004	48	4	26
13 <sup>th</sup>	2009	36	4	34

Source: *Compiled from the Documents of AP & Telangana State Legislative Assembly, Hyderabad*

Table 6 depicts no representation of women in ministry to meager percentage in the Andhra Pradesh ministry all these years.

The male and female candidates contested in the Andhra Pradesh Assembly elections from 1955 to the current 2014 elections have also been collected and compiled.

Table 7 shows various General elections held in Andhra Pradesh and corresponding women participation in relation to men's participation and winning from 1955 General Elections until the present 2014 General Elections. Representation of women legislators was meager 7 during 1957 elections and a maximum of 34 women legislators was elected during the General Elections, 2009. However, the women representation in the APLA was declined to 27 during the ongoing 2014 Legislative Assembly. The reasons for such a declining trend may be attributed to the active participation of regional parties such as the Telangana Rastra Samithi in Telangana region, Telugu Desam Party and the Y.S.R. Congress Party in Andhra region.

**Table 7**  
**General elections held in Andhra Pradesh and corresponding women participation in Elections**

Year of Elections	Total No. of Assembly Constituencies	No. of male candidates contested	No. Women contested	No. of male won	No. of women won
1955	167	581	NA	NA	NA
1957	85	319	17	78	07
1962	300	964	24	290	10
1967	287	1046	21	276	11
1972	287	966	40	277	10
1978	294	1486	62	284	10
1983	294	1647	73	283	11
1985	294	NA	NA	284	10
1989	294	1634	70	277	17
1994	294	NA	NA	286	08
1999	294	1947	157	266	28
2004	294	1735	161	268	26
2009	294	3355	300	260	34
2014	294	3591	317	267	27

Source: *Compiled from the Documents of AP & Telangana State Legislative Assembly, Hyderabad*

**Table 8**  
**Percentage of voters polled in General Elections - 1952-2014**

General Election	Year	Percentage of male votes	Percentage of female votes	Total
1st	1952	53.00	37.10	60.50
2nd	1957	56.00	39.60	63.70
3rd	1962	63.31	46.63	55.42
4th	1967	66.73	55.48	61.33
5th	1971	60.90	49.11	55.29
6th	1977	65.63	54.91	60.49
7th	1980	62.16	51.22	56.92
8th	1984	68.18	54.60	63.56

9th	1989	66.13	57.32	61.95
10th	1991	61.58	51.35	56.93
11th	1996	62.06	53.41	57.94
12th	1998	66.78	57.88	61.97
13th	1999	63.97	55.64	59.99
14th	2004	60.03	53.64	58.07
15th	2009	60.24	55.82	58.03
16th	2014	74.22	74.18	74.20

Source: *Compiled from the Documents of AP & Telangana State Legislative Assembly, Hyderabad*

Table 8 shows the percentage of voters polled in General Elections 1952-2014. Female percentage of voting ranged from 37.1% during the 1952 General Elections to the highest voting percentage of 74.18% in 2014 General Elections.

**Table 9**

**Number of persons contested and Elected by sex in various General Elections to State Legislative Assembly in Andhra Pradesh from 1955 to 2014**

Genial Elections	Year	Total No. of seats	No. of Contestants		No. of Elected		% of Winning to total seats	
			Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
1st	1955	167	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
2nd	1957	85	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
3rd	1962	300	24	964	10	290	3.33	96.67
4th	1967	287	21	1,046	11	276	3.38	96.62
5 <sup>th</sup>	1972	287	49	955	0	287	0	100
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9th	1989	294	70	1,634	17	277	5.78	94.22
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11th	1999	294	157	1,947	28	266	9.52	91.48
12th	2004	294	161	1,735	26	268	8.84	91.16
13th	2009	294	300	3,355	34	260	11.56	89.46
14 <sup>th</sup>	2014	294	317	3591	27	267	9.18	91.82

Source: *Compiled from the Documents of AP & Telangana State Legislative Assembly, Hyderabad*

Table 9 reveals the position of general elections conducted in Andhra Pradesh from 1955 onwards. The data relating to the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> General Elections to the State

are not available. From 3<sup>rd</sup> General Elections to 8<sup>th</sup> General Elections to the State Legislative Assembly, the percentage of representation of women in the house was around 3 to 4% only. But however, since the 9<sup>th</sup> Elections, there was a change in the women representation in the State Legislature. The highest representation of women was in the 13<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly where there was a representation of as many as 34 women representatives in the House constituting 11.56% of the total house. However, in the current 14<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly, there is a slight down of representation limiting to 27 % only.

### **Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly through General Elections since Formation of the State**

Data and other information relating to the women representation in the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly has been collected and analyzed hereunder to understand the level of women representation in the state legislature. The data has been collected from the first general elections held in Andhra Pradesh till the 2014 General elections. After the General elections during 2014, in accordance with the State Reorganization Act, 2014, the State of Andhra Pradesh was bifurcated into two states i.e., the Telangana State and the residuary Andhra Pradesh State.

### **Women Representation in Andhra Pradesh**

General elections were held in Andhra Pradesh in 1957, 1962, 1967, 1971, 1977, 1980, 1984, 1989, 1991, 1996, 1998, 1999, 2004, 2009 and 2014. Women representation in the Andhra Pradesh government from the formation of the state of Andhra Pradesh to date has been collected and compiled hereunder from the General elections held in 1957 to 2014. After the formation of Andhra Pradesh, General Elections to the Legislative Assembly in the entire State were held for the first time in 1962. Earlier, before the formation of the Andhra Pradesh, which was formed on the basis of State Reorganisation Act, 1956, elections in Andhra region in the united Madras State in 1952, Elections in Telangana region in the Hyderabad State were held in 1952 and Elections in Andhra State was held in 1955. Elections in the Telangana region of Andhra Pradesh were held in 1957.

**General Election, 1957:** During the General elections held in 1957 among house consisting of 86 members in the Andhra Pradesh State Legislature, 7 women members were elected and returned to the Legislative Assembly.

**The general election, 1962:** During the General elections held in 1962 among house consisting of 300 Assembly Constituencies members in the Andhra Pradesh State Legislature, 10 women members were elected and returned to the Legislative Assembly.

**The general election, 1967:** During the General elections held in 1967 among house consisting of 287 Assembly Constituencies members in the Andhra Pradesh State Legislature, 11 women members were elected and returned to the Legislative Assembly.

**General Election, 1972:** During the General elections held in 1972 among house consisting of 287 Assembly Constituencies members in the Andhra Pradesh State Legislature, 16 women members were elected and returned to the Legislative Assembly.

**Election, 1978:** During the General elections held in 1978 among house consisting of 294 Assembly Constituencies members in the Andhra Pradesh State Legislature, 10 women members were elected and returned to the Legislative Assembly.

**The general election, 1983:** During the General elections held in 1983 among house consisting of 294 Assembly Constituencies members in the Andhra Pradesh State Legislature, 11 women members were elected and returned to the Legislative Assembly.

**The general election, 1985:** During the General elections held in 1985 among house consisting of 294 Assembly Constituencies members in the Andhra Pradesh State Legislature, 10 women members were elected and returned to the Legislative Assembly.

**The general election, 1989:** Statement and graph above reveal that during the General elections held in 1985 among house consisting of 294 Assembly Constituencies members in the Andhra Pradesh State Legislature, 17 women members were elected and returned to the Legislative Assembly.

**General election, 1994:** Statement and graph above reveals that during the General elections held in 1994 among house consisting of 294 General elections held house consisting of 294 Assembly Constituencies members in the Andhra Pradesh State Legislature, 99 women were contested and out of the 8 women candidates were returned to the Legislative Assembly constituting only 3% of the total legislative Assembly.

**General election, 1999:** Statement and graph above reveals that during the General elections held in 1999 among house consisting of 294 General elections held house consisting of 294 Assembly Constituencies members in the Andhra Pradesh State Legislature, 158 women were contested and out of whom as many as 28 women candidates were returned to the Legislative Assembly.

**General election, 2004:** Statement and graph above reveals that during the General elections held in 2004 among house consisting of 294 General elections held house consisting of 294 Assembly Constituencies members in the Andhra Pradesh State Legislature, 161 women were contested and out of whom as many as 26 women candidates were returned to the Legislative Assembly.

**General election, 2009:** Statement and graph above reveals that during the General elections held in 2009 among house consisting of 294 General elections held house consisting of 294 Assembly Constituencies members in the Andhra Pradesh State Legislature, 300 women were contested and out of whom as many as 34 women candidates were returned to the Legislative Assembly.

**The general election, 2014:** Elections were conducted in combined Andhra Pradesh in 2014 for 294 Assembly Segments and out of which 27 candidates from women representatives were elected from various parties.

## Findings

Basing on the above information the following finds has drawn as below:

1. Gender Discrimination has a far-reaching effect on the socio-economic and political spheres of women's life. In particular, there is a high degree of gender discrimination in the Indian Political system due to which the percentage of representation of women in Legislative bodies is quite low.
2. The most effective way of achieving a better gender balance is a quota system. Although quotas have resulted in increased participation by women, their effectiveness and the limits of quotas as an institutional mechanism to achieve equality needs to be tested.
3. As of now, there is no law providing reservations in legislative bodies in respect of women i.e., the State legislative bodies and the Union Parliament. There are every need and necessity to provide such reservations in order to achieve women's empowerment.
4. The Constitutional amendment providing women reservation in local self-government bodies is effectively giving results on women empowerment.

The data revealed that there exists gender discrimination in the country which has far-reaching consequences in Indian society and not adequate women representation is observed in politics. Historical background and contemporary scenario have indicated the existence of such gender discrimination in any society and more particularly in Indian society.

There is an imbalance basing on gender and quota system in political offices in the country. An increased quota on women's participation and subsequent empowerment may be fact, but since the same is lacking in reality. The statistical data collected and analyzed systematically reveals that there is quite a clear imbalance among both sexes in the Indian political sphere.

There are no provisions by way of constitutional amendment or enacted law to provide a representation of women in legislative bodies. The absence of law has proved to be a hurdle in the effective participation of women in politics.

The constitutional amendment providing women reservation in local self-government bodies is effectively giving results on women empowerment. The result of the Constitution 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Amendment clearly indicate that women's participation in local self-government bodies i.e. both in Rural self-government bodies and Urban bodies has proved to be fruitful on women empowerment.



## Suggestions

Basing on the research work carried out by the researcher, the following suggestions are made for effective women participation in political offices and the consequent empowerment of women.

1. The much-awaited women reservation bill is required to be passed immediately as proposed in the Bill. Experience of such women reservation in local self-government bodies have proved to be successful in women empowerment. It is strongly believed and further based on the studies in local self-government experience, in a given statutory reservation; women representation shall be essential and highly justified.
2. In the absence of a constitutional amendment for providing women reservations in legislative bodies that are pending, a woman needs to better prepare for the next election in 2019. Most of the candidates elected during the current elections, 2014, will become part of their political parties with a similarly narrow understanding of elections. Meanwhile, those who gain victory this year should strive to practice a refreshing style of politics, involving persuasion and cooperation, much deeper empathy with the grassroots.
3. At the time of future general elections, both in State legislature and the Union Parliament, the reservation system in respect of women touches the very foundation of the democratic process, since the very constitutional mandate to provide seats in legislative bodies will really empower women in the policy and decision making bodies of the State and the Union governments respectively.
4. The 'fast-tracking' of women into legislatures through gender quotas will have to be accompanied by sufficient sensitization among parties and voters which will be essential for women in political life. Sensitizing the voters in choosing right women representatives to best protect their interests in the legislative bodies since as of now the political parties, which are traditionally male-biased, need to be further encouraged to revise their statutes, admit more women into the internal party structures more and more and include them as candidates in elections.
5. While quotas seek to ensure their proportionate presence in Parliament, there is every opportunity for women to prove their power effectively.
6. There arise questions as to whether quotas should be instituted on a temporary or permanent basis. The proposed bill provides that quotas should be considered as a temporary measure for a certain period or a number of elections. This may operate not only for strategic reasons when seeking to have them introduced but also because the quota in itself should change perceptions about gender equality, thereby leveling the playing field for men and women to contest elections on an equal basis.

7. The aim of quota systems is to increase considerably political representation of women which may lead to various advantages such as:
8. The active recruitment of women by political parties in order to have a sufficient number of qualified candidates to fulfill the quota;
9. A larger number of women, rather than a token few, who will be able to influence political norms and culture; and
10. Women having the possibility to influence the decision-making process as individuals or with specific points of view and concerns.
11. On getting women elected to the State Legislature or the Union Parliament, a conducive environment is created so as to clearly understand the functions of the legislature and they must learn the rules of the game— both the written and unwritten codes, and the procedures and mechanisms for getting things done.
12. Training programs should address the gaps in women's formal or political education while seeking to maximize or "translate" their existing skill sets in the political realm.

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