



# WORKING WOMEN'S POLITICAL RIGHTS APROPOS MUZAFFARNAGAR DISTRICT: A PRAGMATIC OUTLOOK

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## Abstract

Higher Education can be termed as one of the significant prerequisites for access to one's rights, hence, Working women in higher education can be illustrated as an epitome of multifaceted talent and most qualified and super-educated class contributing to the economy of the country. They constitute the real estate assets for the growth of the nation. Working women hence, contribute to the Gross Domestic Product (G.D.P.) of the nation. Hence, they possess the pivotal necessity in demanding access to their rights, as they fulfil the most pivotal duty of educating the youth of the nation, Hence, the milieu of this study is to demonstrate the level of awareness and level of access to their political rights This study also compels to elucidate and depict the major obstacles in exercising their political rights, and enmark whether they oppose any case of human rights violations confronted by them and if not, analyse the possible reasons for the same, also elaborate possible suggestions pertaining to enable them to access their political rights effectively in society.

**Keywords:** Working Women, Higher Education, Political Rights, Awareness, Access.

## Introduction

Human species are deficient if they do not possess rights. Or it can be aptly illustrated that "Rights are pivotal to the human species as water is to plants or light is to the sun." Hence, these must be extended to the entire human species regardless of any prejudice and so do working women. Working women possess the fortitude of the Indian economy. As she not only performs household responsibility but also enhances the G.D.P. of the country as of 2022, women's labor force

involvement rests at 51.44 percent. By virtue of being the intelligentsia clan, it is pivotal that they act as the driving force to instill enlightenment among the youth who are to be apprenticed to help the nation to accomplish tremendous triumph for which being well educated is regarded as a predicament. To enlighten fellow youth, it is pivotal to enlighten oneself. Hence, hitherto, is an endeavor to analyse the intensity of working women's cognizance and vulnerability to their own rights as well

as the conceivable impediments and suggestions in realizing them.

**Political Rights:** Political rights refer to the right to participate in the decision-making process of the nation through access to various kinds of political rights, viz. Right to Universal Adult Franchise, right to contest elections, right to Political Campaigning, right to join political party, right to freedom of association, right to speech and expression, right to information etc. These form the cornerstones of a healthy and committed democracy, hence every individual must have access to these rights irrespective of any prejudice pertaining to caste, creed, colour, sex or place of birth etc as these confirm the identity of a particular individual as the citizen of a country as these can be exercised only by the citizens of a country.

**Political Rights of Women:** Women folk constitutes more than 75% of the population of our motherland. Therefore, it is their essential right to partake in the decision making for a huge and versatile multicultural country, such as India. In spite of this, women cover only 26.3% of the political institutions globally. Despite, a number of international and national commitments to safeguard women, only 78(14.2%) women mark their presence in the Indian Parliament. Similar is the trend, in the upper house only 31% of the Rajya Sabha are grabbed by women candidates, And also, the women reservation bill has not even been addressed seriously in Parliament as women have started to be taken for granted losing their identity in the political arena, even at the local paradigm, they did not gain much in spite of reservation due to the prevalent culture of "Sarpanchpati".. Hence, it is evident most of the women have scarce or no access to their political rights.

Dr. Rana Nirmala (2020), in her paper, tries to depict the significant problem of women's dismal involvement in politics

and decision-making. Its pivotal aim is to eliminate the qualitative lacunas from the ground level which pose a tremendous obstacle in the equal participation of women with men as no adequate system has been devised to measure the qualitative involvement, however, the quantitative numbers depict an overall increase at all levels of government i.e. national, state and local levels and simultaneously it attempts to identify the possible constraints leading to less participation of women in politics such as illiteracy, poverty, custom, tradition, patriarchal limitations, weak will power of political parties, under-representation of poor sections of society. It addresses the problem that although women's voter turnout has significantly increased her real candidature due to proxy challenges at various levels is still in flux which requires ample redressals by the society as well as the government machinery

Dr. Mahawar Sunil, (2011), in his work 'State and Women Human Rights' tries to analyse all three i.e. social, political, and economic dimensions of working women in higher Education in Jaipur city of Rajasthan. The author of this study tries to explore empirically whether working women in Higher Education are aware and are able to exercise their rights, what kind of perspective they have regarding existing social, political, and economic rights provided to them and to give suggestions to better inculcate social political and economic rights in their lives.

Sachindanand P. Ramesh (1984), in his work, "Women rights Myth or Reality aims to explore the awareness and attitude of women and their families regarding property rights, marriage and violence against women. It aims to eliminate the major obstacles in the enforcement of legal rights and to suggest the efforts that need to be taken for effective enforcement of these legislations.

Tiny Vargese in his empirical article, 'Women's Political Participation and leadership in India: Examining the Challenges', focuses on the significance of women's participation in Indian Democracy and challenges faced by them in acquiring political leadership. To analyse this the researcher conducted an empirical study on to depict the challenges faced by women despite acquiring leadership through Panchayati Raj institutions and being involved in the most significant decision-making processes. Data was collected from 25 elected women presidents who had been on this post since 2015 till present from idukki District of Kerala. The findings of the study were that the respondents face various types of challenges like personal and professional life balance ( household responsibilities, time management, working under stress, family support, decision making in house) economic barriers, ( less salary, lack of funding for campaigning, travelling in non working hours, lack of economic stability in election, inability to have different jobs, spending from own, gender stereotyping, patriarchy, less opportunity for higher positions, society expects higher standards, less voice in upper level party meetings, male representatives support, women are weaker, less decision making capacity administrative training (leadership, convincing ability, lack of equal distribution of services, technical skills, project implementation, party influence solidarity between representatives (collective action, judgemental, trust, compassionate, liberty in decision making) political party affiliation (seat in election, engagement in political activities, acceptance in society, funding for election, support for election propaganda, human rights advocacy, lobbying) and gender based violence ( threat to personal dignity, Verbal Threatening, cyber bullying, sexism, harassment, objectification, threat to

personal dignity) which discourage them from choosing politics as their career owing to fulfilling household responsibilities, lack of adequate financial help, numerous forms of violence experienced by women, questions on their dignity and chastity often refrain them from participating in politics, hence adequate policy dimensions need to be undertaken at all levels of government to ensure their effective participation in political arena.

Although, these empirical studies have been conducted analysing the behavioural aspect of the political rights of working women, this study is entirely unique from the above wider prospects as it tries to evaluate the change within a small specific district of Uttar Pradesh, i.e. Muzaffarnagar which is not so densely populated and consist of a handful of population of permanent working women in higher education as it is believed that any drastic change initiates from smaller to a larger population.

#### **Objectives:**

- To elucidate the concept of political rights of women.
- To evaluate the awareness level and accessibility of political rights among working women in higher Education in the concerned region
- To analyse the constraints in accessibility of political rights among working women in higher education.
- To illustrate possible suggestions to bring improvement in the status of women in accessing their political rights.

#### **Hypothesis:**

- Working women are less aware for their socio-political rights.
- Working women are not only less aware but they cannot exercise their socio-political rights inspite of being highly educated.

- Patriarchal nature of society is the main constraint in exercising their socio-political rights.
- Working women do not oppose any case of their socio-political rights violation due to fear of defamation in society.

**Methodology:** This study is a descriptive and empirical in nature based on experiential evidences as data is collected through primary sources through questionnaire and schedule interview method, using simple random sampling technique in which the target population was 200 permanent female lecturers out of which 133 permanent female lecturers from 30 colleges situated within the 9 blocks of the district have been selected for survey. Simple random technique has been used to avoid any biasness and so that every subject gets an equal chance of being selected from amongst the population. The following formula has been used to derive sample size given by taro Yamane,

$$N = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

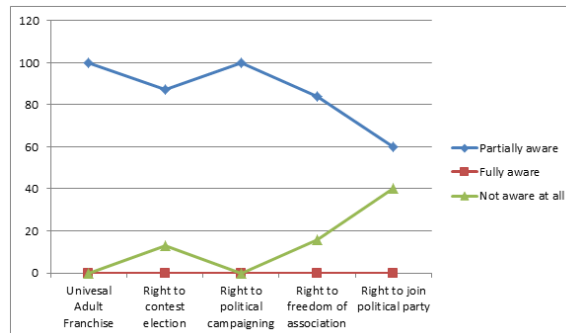
$$200 / 1 + 200 * 0.5^2 = 133$$

Thus, it is evident that the sample size for the study has been derived by using above illustrated formula from the aggregate sum of permanent female lecturers in the district, i.e.200. Moreover, as it is a descriptive research, based on empirical evidences, in which data has been collected through questionnaire and schedule interview research tools of data collection, various secondary sources like government reports, various journals, books have also been consulted where they have been found necessary during the research.

**Results and Discussion:**

The following results were obtained by the researcher regarding awareness of political rights. There were three paradigms-

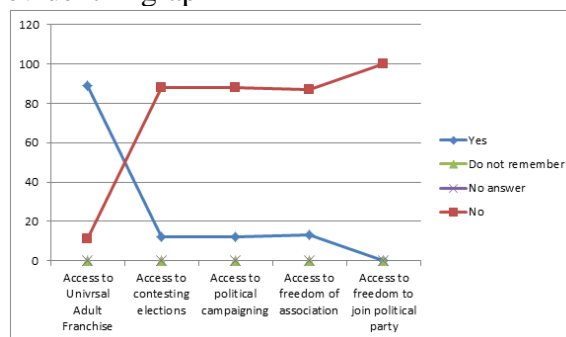
partially aware, fully aware not aware at all etc.



**Figure 1: Level of awareness of political rights.**

Hence, as depicted in the above table and pie-chart, entire 133(100%) working women were partially aware about universal Adult Franchise, No working women was fully aware about it 116(87%) were partially aware about right to contest election, 17(13%) were not aware at all about this right. No woman was fully aware about it. Also, entire 133(100%) working women were partially aware about right to political campaigning, Concurrently, 112(84%) working women were partially aware about right to freedom of association, 21(16%) were not aware at all about this right, 80(60%) working women were partially aware regarding right to form political party.53(40%) working women were not aware at all about this right.

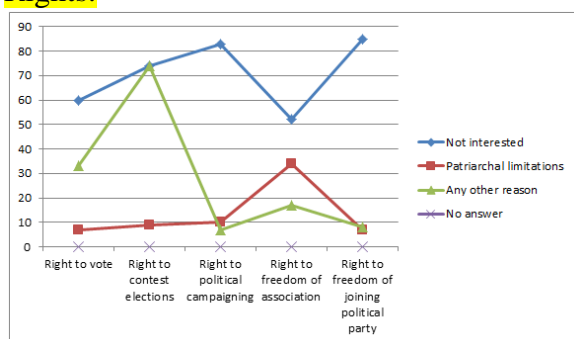
Then the researcher enquired about their access to political rights and following responses were recorded by the researcher as evident in graph 2



**Figure 2: Access to Political Rights**

As evident from the above figure 2, 118(89%) working women had access to Universal Adult Franchise. 15(11%) did not had access to this right. 17(12%) working women had access to right to contest election. 116(88%) did not had access to right to contest election, 17(13%) had access to right to freedom of association, 116(87%) did not had access to this right, No working women had access to right to join political party.

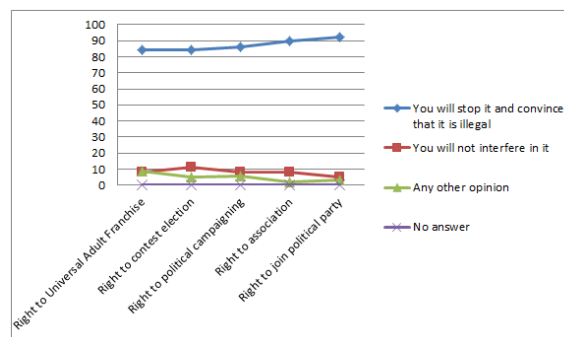
**Table 3: Reason for no Access to Political Rights:**



**Figure 3: Reason for no access to political rights.**

As depicted in the above figure 3, 9(60%) 5(33%) could not access Universal Adult Franchise due to disinterestedness 1(7%) could not access it due to patriarchal limitations, 5(33%) out of 15 working women could not access to due to other reasons viz lack of knowledge, lack of time, no thought about it etc., Concurrently, 86(74%) working women out of 116 could not access right to contest election due to disinterestedness 10(9%) could not access it due to patriarchal limitations, 20(17%) working women could not access it due to other reasons, viz, , lack of detailed knowledge and time, had not thought about it etc, Simultaneously, 96(83%) out of 116 working women could not access right to political campaigning due to disinterestedness, 12(10%) could not access it due to patriarchal limitations, 8(7%) could not access it due to other reasons viz lack of detailed knowledge, lack of time, had not

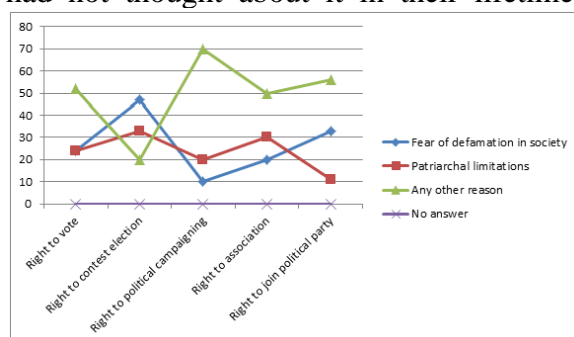
thought about it etc. Concurrently 60(52%)working women could not access right to freedom of association due to disinterestedness 40(34%) could not access it due to patriarchal limitations, 16(14%) could not access it due to other reasons viz, lack of detailed knowledge, , lack of time had not thought about it etc. Concurrently, 113(85%)10 (8%) working women out of 133(100%) could not access right to join political party due to disinterestedness 10(7%) could not access it due to patriarchal limitations, 10(8%) could not access it due to any other reasons such as lack of knowledge, lack of time, had not thought about it etc.



As depicted in the above figure 4, 112(84%) oppose if they or somebody else is refrained from voting and convince that it is illegal, 10(8%) will not interfere in it, 10(9%) had any other opinion viz, they had not thought any such thing in their lifetime, they would interfere only if they knew the person etc. Concurrently, 112 (84%) working women answered that they would oppose it and convince that it was if they were refrained from contesting elections, 15(11%) were of the opinion that they would not interfere.6(5%) working women were of the opinion that they did not think about it in their lifetime. Simultaneously, 115(86%) women would oppose and convince that it was illegal if they were refrained from political campaigning, 10(8%) would not interfere in it, 8(6%) had not thought anything about it in their



lifetime. Concurrently, 120(90%) working women would oppose and convince that it was illegal if they were refrained from freedom of association, 10(8%) would not interfere in it, 3(2%) hold any other opinion as they had not thought any such thing in their lifetime. Concurrently, 124(92%) working women were of the opinion that they would stop it and convince that it was illegal. 6(5%) will not interfere in it, 3(3%) had not thought about it in their lifetime.



As depicted in the above table and figure 5, 5(24%) working women did not oppose if they were refrained from voting due to fear of defamation in society, 5(24%) could not oppose it due to patriarchal limitations, 11(52%) could not oppose it due to any other reasons viz, lack of acquaintance, lack of time, lack of detailed knowledge, long judicial process etc. Concurrently, 5 (33%) did not oppose if they were refrained from contesting election, 3(20%) would not interfere in it, 7(47%) did not oppose it due to lack of acquaintance, lack of time, lack of appropriate knowledge, long judicial procedure etc. Simultaneously, 1(10%) would not oppose if they were refrained from political campaigning, 2(20%) would not oppose it due to patriarchal limitations, 7(70%) would not oppose it due to any other reasons, viz, lack of appropriate knowledge, judicial delays, lack of time etc. Concurrently, 3(30%) would not oppose it if they were refrained from freedom of association, 2(20%) would not oppose it due to patriarchal limitations, 5(50%) would not oppose it due to other

reasons viz, lack of acquaintance, judicial delay, lack of time etc. Concurrently, 3(33%) would oppose it if they were refrained to join political party, 1 (11%) did not oppose it due to patriarchal limitations, 5(56%) working women gave other reasons viz. lack of knowledge, lack of time, lack of acquaintance, long judicial process.

Thus, it is visible from the above table and pie-chart, that most of the working women were partially aware about their rights, they did not possess any knowledge that these are provided in the Indian Constitution, they had only heard of them but did not possess any detailed insight into its practical procedures and detailed outlook provided in the Indian Constitution.

Hence, it is evident from the above depiction that most working women had access to Universal Adult Franchise, , but very few of them had access to contest election, political campaigning, right to freedom of association, right to join political party etc. Also, it is evident from the above table and figure that most of the working women gave other reasons for not able to exercise their rights viz, disinterestedness, lack of detailed knowledge, financial reasons, scarcity of time, had not thought about it etc. to exercise their rights, very few of them could not exercise it due to patriarchal limitations and fear of defamation in society.

As evident in the above table and figure 4, most of the working women tend to oppose any case of human rights violation and try to convince that it is illegal, however there were certain women who did not interfere in it due to various reasons such as lack of knowledge, lack of acquaintance, judicial delay, lack of time, indifference to the crime etc.. Certain women hold other opinion that they had not thought any such thing in their lifetime

Also, most of the working women did not oppose any case of human rights

violation due to lack of knowledge, lack of time, lack of acquaintance, lack of any such thought in their mind and other personal reasons such as lack of adequate financial resources, long judicial procedure etc. However, there were also a handful of women who do not oppose it due to fear of defamation and patriarchal limitations imposed by the society.

### **Hypothesis Testing:**

Analysing the above evidences retrieved from empirical data, hypothesis of the study were analysed and the following conclusions were recorded pertaining to above illustrated hypothesis:

The first hypothesis was proved to be true as it is evident from the retrieved results, that working women in higher education possess only partial awareness about their political rights as illustrated in table 1 and line graph They did not possess detailed knowledge of the various clauses of the Act.

The second hypothesis was proved to be partially true as all of them do not exercise their political rights to a great extent as most of them never had access to rights to contest election, right to political campaigning, right to freedom of association, right to become member of political party, etc as evident from table and line graph 2, However, most of them had exercised universal adult franchise.

The third hypothesis was also proved to be partially true as patriarchy was not the main constraint but one of the obstacle in exercising their political rights. It is evident from the above retrieved data, illustrated in table and line -graph 3, that there were also other obstacles in access to their political rights, along with patriarchy, viz, lack of time, and interest, hectic academic schedule, lack of adequate financial and moral support from political institutions and family, indifference towards politics owing to one party dominance, biased media, lack of

adequate support from political parties, prevalent violence in politics, women issues underestimation in Parliament etc.

The fourth hypothesis was also proved to be partially true as depicted in table and line graph 4, most working women told the researcher that they would oppose any case of human rights violation as they considered it illegal to refrain any individual from exercising their rights, however, there were also certain women who responded that they would not interfere in any such case owing to lack of acquaintance, inadequate support from judiciary, Moreover, they had not thought any such situation in their life, they gave personal reasons such as lack of adequate knowledge and awareness, lack of time etc.

### **Scope for Further Research:**

There has been scope for further research in this dimension, a comparative study of married and unmarried working women in higher education in the concerned district or any other district can be done with reference to access to political rights.

There is a scope for a comparative study of women belonging to two different professions can be done in the same district or any other district.

There is a scope for comparative study of women working in higher education on permanent basis belonging to two different faculties of various colleges pertaining to access to political rights.

There is scope for comparative study of women in two faculties of higher education in a particular university with reference to access to their political rights.

There is a scope for comparative study of working women in higher education belonging to different age groups with reference to political rights of working women.

### **Major Impediments in Working Women's Access to Political Rights:**

1. Disinterestedness: Women's disinterestedness due to rampant corruption and violence and lack of adequate recognition to issues concerning women is the most significant cause for the disinterestedness of women in politics.
2. Lack of enough financial support: Inadequacy of financial support to women is another prominent drudgery for women that put restraint in her access to politics.
3. Lack of time: Working women do not possess adequate time to participate in politics and they always tend to be busy in their although tentative but quite hectic academic schedule
4. Parochial outlook to politics: Working women possess parochial outlook towards politics due to inadequacy of appropriate opposition, muscle power prevalent in politics leading to patriarchal outlook towards politics.
5. Habitual of monotonous life: Working women become habitual of monotonous lifestyle, therefore they do not tend to think of anything except their academic advancement only. They do not tend anything new or creative.
6. Lack of initiative: Women often lack confidence to take self initiative for their own rights, even women themselves do not tend to encourage one another to engage in fruitful activities.
7. Prevalent violence in politics: Rampant excessive violence in politics, always tends to uphold mistrust and hatred towards politics and prevent women from fulfilling their wish to enter into politics.
8. Tendency of defection in political parties: Tendency of frequent defections in political parties, unhealthy political discussions, inadequate opposition, often tend to disappoint women to join the political arena.
9. Lack of support to independent women candidates: Political culture often refrain from extending support to independent women candidates as they are less likely to win the candidature being females therefore political parties refrain from taking women candidates.
10. Biased Media: Women often tend to develop disinterestedness due to repetitive news, biased tendency of media towards a particular political party often creates disinterestedness of women in politics.
11. Patriarchal outlook: Patriarchal outlook towards politics is still a big obstacle in women's entry into politics,
12. Domination of one party in politics: Domination of one party creates obstacle in the access of rights to the working women.
13. Inadequate access to political institutions: Women candidates are often not distributed the tickets owing to very less chances of their winning as an independent candidate. Therefore women tend to develop disinterestedness in politics.
14. Less attention on women related issues: Even in the modern scenario, issues related to women are often put to secrecy even in the 21st century, they are seldom discussed in detail in Parliament. Even the women reservation bill has not yet been enacted by the Parliament.

#### **Suggestions for Streamlining Access to Women's Political Rights.**

1. Fine should be imposed on Indian people who do not exercise right to vote unanimously.



2. Strong mechanism at ground level should be implemented to reduce the impact of money and muscle power in politics.
3. Ban should be imposed on party defection during pre and post election times so that role of money and muscle power can be adequately reduced.
4. Criminalisation of politics must be banned so that indifference and hatred towards this arena can be reduced.
5. Financial aid should be provided to independent women candidates who wish to contest elections and take active part in politics.
6. It should be made mandatory for all political parties to reserve certain number of seats in all constituencies especially for women so that women's talent is not undermined at any cost.
7. Behavioural change in political arena is needed at ground level to make politics moral and free from power lust.
8. Political socialisation process should be strongly rectified from infancy only so that perception of general public towards politics can be altered.
9. Efforts should be made at ground level to make media more neutral and bias free as much as possible by eliminating rampant corrupt practices in it.
10. Adequate mechanisms should be devised to detect proxy candidature of women representatives at all level.
11. Women reservation bill pertaining to women's representation in legislature should be seriously discussed and enacted with a strong central monitoring mechanism to monitor its strict implementation.

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