

# Analytical Study on Political Status of Women in Jammu and Kashmir

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## Abstract

As in other Indian states, women's status in the state of Jammu and Kashmir was subservient across the region. Women's issues have been exacerbated by the state's long-standing political turmoil. There has been an armed struggle in Jammu and Kashmir for 24 years now. Throughout the last two decades, the violence has had a profound impact on people's lives and livelihoods, as well as their health, dietary habits, workplaces, and educational opportunities. Nevertheless, it is Kashmir's female population that has been most affected. As a result, women are among the most vulnerable during war for a variety of reasons that go beyond violence. In political institutions, women had no special privileges. Women received 33 percent of the reservation only after the 73rd amendment Act. Through the Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj (Second Amendment) Act, 2003, the state of Jammu and Kashmir has implemented a 33 percent reservation in its halqa panchayats. Due to a lack of political awareness and the ongoing conflict between India and Pakistan, women's presence in state politics is far from adequate. It is in this environment that this study examines the role of women in politics and their developing political awareness, with a particular emphasis on identifying the reasons of their underrepresentation in state politics.

**Keywords:** *Women Empowerment, Violence, Challenges, Socio Political, Economic.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Women are underrepresented in parliaments all around the globe and far distant from decision-making levels at every sociopolitical level. Fewer than 16% of the world's legislative seats are held by women, according to a study. Women, who make up half of the population in our nation, have long been a vital element of our social structure because of their role in the economy. Despite this, women in India have historically faced discrimination as a result of the country's patriarchal norms. Socioeconomic and political equality have been denied by the patriarchy for far too long. In the face of such patriarchal prejudice, it is impossible to regard women in India as a homogenous group. In terms of class, caste, position, location (rural vs. urban), etc., there exist variations among women. Women in rural areas of India are less economically and politically empowered than their urban counterparts, according to a number of studies. There is still a perception that rural Indian women are "objects" of development rather than "subjects." In India, like in many other nations, women make up a disproportionately small percentage of those in positions of political power and authority. According to the 2011 census, women make up 48.4 percent of the country's overall population, accounting for 586.46 million people. In India, women's engagement in the political process is a hot-button topic with a broad spectrum of ideas and beliefs. According to some thinkers, India's election process is riddled with male patriarchy and supremacy that impedes women's involvement in government.

Exclusions based on gender are to blame for women's underrepresentation in politics and in parliament (Agarwal 2006). On the other hand, there are theorists who contradict this claim and believe that the rise in the number of women voters and the distribution of political power at the local level throughout the 1990s shows that Indian electoral politics is no longer gender-exclusive but rather highly inclusive. The establishment of the Panchayati Raj system was a watershed moment in Indian democracy's evolution from the top down. The Government of India introduced the constitutional 73rd Amendment Act, 1992, which became the Panchayati Raj statute on April 24, 1993, in order to empower women. Similarly, there is a proposal to reserve seats for them in both the House of Representatives and the State Legislatures. Through the universal adult franchise, India's constitution guarantees equal political rights for women. In 1950, India's constitution guaranteed women the ability to participate in politics on an equal footing with males. Although the Panchayat level reservation of 33 percent for women may have improved the number of women in the Panchayat, their participation was still

minor. Thus, panchayats gained constitutional standing. Most states and union territories, with the exception of Arunachal Pradesh, have passed laws allowing for the establishment of strong, functional, and accountable Panchayats at various levels within their states after the passage of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act of 2011.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

**Mohammad Iqbal Ganie et. al, (2019):** Panchayati Raj is a crucial part of Indian democracy at the local level. It took four years for the 73rd Amendment Act to India's Panchayati Raj Act to take effect in Jammu & Kashmir. When the first Panchayat election was conducted after a 12-year hiatus under this Act, it was not successful because of armed strife. Since the previous Panchayat Elections in J&K were conducted in 2011, the 2011 Panchayat Elections have been successful. In the current research, many issues facing Panchayati Raj in Jammu and Kashmir are highlighted. Rural governance institutions have been dominated by males. The Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in rural India were controlled by males. Most of the issues women face stem from their inability to make choices on their own owing to societal norms that favor male members. Institutions of rural government in Jammu and Kashmir were also dominated by males until the state established a 33 percent quota for women in 2002. Women had the possibility to get a greater share of the vote in the 2011 Panchayati elections. Indicators of women's involvement included their involvement in village affairs prior to elections, their attendance at training programmes and the way they raised concerns on their own. The elected members' political awareness has been researched via the following components, such as their knowledge of the term of Halaqa panchayats, the women's quota, and more.

**Shafiq Mohi ud din et. al, (2018):** Social scientists, particularly feminists, often utilize the phrase "empowerment" in their work. Inextricably connected to women's empowerment is the pursuit of gender equality. Women's ability to participate in decision-making processes, like their male counterparts in all sectors of life, is a critical aspect of empowerment. Increasing attention has been paid to rural women's empowerment. The Indian economy relies heavily on women in rural regions, where they make up the majority of the population. Transformational economic, environmental, and social transformations needed by sustainable development would not be possible without them. This study focuses on the empowerment of rural women in Kashmir Valley. " It is rural women in Kashmir Valley who are in the greatest danger. They are subjected to extended despair as well as acute humiliation and abuse. Political intellectuals, social scientists, and reformers see rural women empowerment in Kashmir valley as a sine qua non of growth in that state, hence the problem is of crucial significance. Self-help organisations, MANREGA, education, numerous initiatives, government regulations and rules, NGO's and also self-realization have paved the road for rural empowerment of women in Kashmir valley. As a result, they are becoming more self-sufficient and creating jobs for others.

**Ghulam Sarwer (2017):** Domestic abuse, societal norms, armed conflict, and militancy in the state all contribute to women becoming victims. Aside from the humiliation and harassment they've had, they've also had terrible encounters with sadness that have left them psychologically unstable. The fighting in Jammu and Kashmir has robbed women of their rights and exacerbated their plight. There was no way of knowing how many women had to take care of their children while simultaneously being a widow. There are still numerous obstacles faced by women in Jammu and Kashmir, such as dowry harassment and eve teasing, child labour and female feticide and infanticide. The national government, the state administration, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) should collaborate to help women in Jammu and Kashmir reach their full potential. The current study focuses on the efforts of the authorities to empower women in the area and examines existing policies.

**Mohd Muzaffar Banday, Dr. P. Ganesan (2016):** J&K, the state of Due to militancy and armed conflict, women are the most vulnerable. As a result of the long-term depression of war in which many women have been left widows, they face a wide range of difficulties in their health, economics, education, and politics. Using primary and secondary data, the researcher was able to identify women's freedom of movement inside and outside their households, as well as their educational freedom before and after marriage. Women enjoyed a great degree of freedom to pursue their education before to marriage, as well as a high degree of freedom to travel both inside and beyond their communities.

**Showkeen Bilal Ahmad Gul (2015):** To bring attention to the problem of violence against women in Jammu and Kashmir, this report sets out to do just that. As a result of militancy and armed conflict, women in Jammu and Kashmir are the most vulnerable and at risk in society. They are not only subjected to severe humiliation and harassment, but they are also subjected to long-term depression as a result of their trauma. Women in Kashmir have been hurt the hardest by the troubling scenario that exists in Jammu and Kashmir. Thousands of

women who have lost their husbands are now alone responsible for raising their children and maintaining the family's finances. As a result of the study, women in Jammu and Kashmir are still confronted with a slew of problems connected to health, economics, education, and politics, as well as domestic abuse, a rapidly dropping sex ratio, infanticide by females, and other forms of violence perpetrated by the state. Efforts to empower women in Jammu and Kashmir should be coordinated by the federal, state, and municipal governments, as well as non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

### 3. WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR POLITICS

Traditionally, in Kashmiri culture, women were limited to or around their families. In 1934, for the first time, the citizens of Jammu and Kashmir were enfranchised. Women's voting rights were extended to those who can read and write. "The addition of women voters would raise the administrative problems of an election," said Franchise Commission as an explanation for this exercise's small size. S.M. Abdullah's leadership, however, gave women a chance to thrive in 1944. J&K's constitution had a section x that dealt with the state's elections. All institutions should have equal rights for both sexes and women should be chosen and elected in all sorts of institutions (no discrimination on the basis of sex). The governor may nominate no more than two women members of the assembly if he determines that women are underrepresented (section 47). No women from Jammu and Kashmir attended the meeting. After the American Revolution, Economic advancements were made for women in Kashmir but political involvement by the female population remained scarce. Before 1972, women's engagement in politics was very low. Only four out of eight female candidates ran in the 1972 elections, which were won by males. Zainab Begum, Hajra Begum, Nirmala Devi, and Shanta Bharti were the four women that were elected. There were only four women candidates in the 1977 election, and only one of them, a special seat for female candidates, managed to win.

Women made up 70.48 percent of the electorate in 1983, however there were only seven candidates, and no woman was elected. During the 1987 and 1996 elections, there were a total of thirteen and fifteen female candidates, but only one and two of them were able to win, respectively. In 2002, only 709 people cast ballots, only 13 of whom were female candidates, and only two of whom were elected; in contrast, in the most recent elections, a record number of women voted. Only three of the 1354 total candidates in the 2014 election were women, and of those three, only two were elected. Despite the 73rd and 74th amendments to the Indian constitution, women members had some chance of gaining confidence. Revaluation of 33 percent in local self-government has been brought about by these changes to panchayat raj institutions (PRIs).

**Table 1: Women in Jammu and Kashmir assembly**

Year	Total seats	Women candidate	Elected women	Runner up
1962	75	01	00	00
1967	75	01	00	00
1972	75	06	04	00
1977	76	04	01	01
1983	76	07	00	01
1987	76	13	01	01
1996	87	15	02	03
2002	87	30	02	02
2008	87	67	03	04
2014	87	26	02	01
	Total	117	16	13

## Women candidate



Figure 1: women candidate

Women's participation in this election was also notable. 33 percent of the panch seats were dedicated for women for the first time. However, the majority of the female candidates were first-timers in public life as well as politics. As a result of the guys being unable to run for office, they had encouraged their wives to run for office instead. However, the whole family was engaged in the voting process. During the 2012 Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj Elections, between two and four women ran for office in Jammu and Kashmir's Panchayati Raj Institutions. The number of women running in the elections has risen significantly in each panchayat. Around 10,000 women were elected panches at the completion of the election process. A state where the presence of women in political parties and elections has been almost nonexistent is undergoing a major shift as a result. Women make up 33.3 percent, or 9,424 of the 28,248 elected panches in the state (the remaining 1,471 seats were vacated). Women in J&K, on the other hand, have been unable to break into the state's male-dominated politics for sarpanch roles. Only 28 women were elected as sarpanches in the state's 22 districts, making up a low success percentage of 0.68 percent (Directorate of Rural Development, Jammu, 2011). In 11 of the state's 22 districts, there are no female sarpanches. Only two of the Valley's ten districts — Baramulla in north Kashmir and Shopian — have elected female sarpanches, making the total number of female sarpanches in the region only three. In Leh and Kargil, two districts where women are perceived to be more aggressive than their counterparts in other districts, no female sarpanch has been elected. Kishtwar is the only district in the Jammu division without a female sarpanch.. Electing women sarpanches is an option in the region's other nine districts, but again, the number of women who win is insignificant. Five women were elected in Udhampur and Rajouri, with four each in Poonch and Kathua.

Table 2: General constituency: winning women candidates

Constituency	Women MLA	Party	Year
Hazratbal	Asiea	PDP	2014
	Shameema Firdouse	NC	2014
Amirakadal	Zainab Begum	NC	1972
Wachi	Mehbooba Mufti	PDP	2008
Noorabad	Sakina Itoo	NC	2008
	Sakina Itoo	NC	1996
Bijbehara	Mehbooba Mufti	INC	1996
Phalgam	Mehbooba Mufti	PDP	2002
Banihal	Hajra Begum	INC	1972

Basohli	Kanta Andotra	INC	2004
Tikri	Normal Devi	INC	1972
Jandrah Gharota	Shanta Bharti	INC	1972

Source: [http://eci.nic.in/eci-main/1/Election\\_statistics.aspx](http://eci.nic.in/eci-main/1/Election_statistics.aspx)

**Table 3: Status of women in various parties in Jammu and Kashmir Assembly**

Party	Winner	Runner up	Total
PDP	03	02	05
NC	04	03	07
INC	08	04	12
JANATA PARTY	01	01	02
BJP	00	02	02
INDEPENDENT	00	01	01
G T	16	13	29

Source: [http://eci.nic.in/eci-main/1/Election\\_statistics.aspx](http://eci.nic.in/eci-main/1/Election_statistics.aspx)

**Table 4: Women voters' turnout in assembly elections in erstwhile state of J&K (1962-2014)**

S. No	Year	Total no of women voters	Women voters who cast their vote	Total percentage
01	1962	--	--	--
02	1967	635181	337052	53.06
03	1972	1062399	572886	53.92
04	1977	1253302	756898	60.39
05	1983	1413017	995824	70.48
06	1987	1618445	1138744	70.36
07	1996	2185882	1007249	46.08
08	2002	2770407	1060143	38.27
09	2008	3097492	1823212	58.86
10	2014	3462092	2294469	66.27

Source: Election Commission of India

Following is a breakdown of the number of women who voted in the several state assemblies in the former state of Jammu and Kashmir throughout time. Winning as a candidate in the former state of Jammu and Kashmir is

harder for women than it is for males, as seen by the results of the last general election. There were no women registered to vote in Jammu and Kashmir's first assembly election in 1962. Women's turnout increased in following elections, such as those in 1967 (53.06 percent), 1972 (53.92 percent), and 1977 (77.4 percent) (60.39). 1983 and 1987 saw a significant rise in the number of female voters (70.36). Nonetheless, between 1996 and 2002, the percentage has dropped from 46.88% to 38.27%. Increasing from 58.86 percent in 2008 to 66.27 percent in 2014, the number of female voters was higher both times.

#### 4. LEADER OF THE PARTY

They are positioned at opposing ends of the political spectrum, two of the most well-known women in Jammu and Kashmir politics today. Party founder Mufti Mohammad Sayeed's daughter, Mahbooba Mufti, is the party's current president and the daughter of Sayeed. In the 1996 Assembly Elections, Mahbooba Mufti was elected to Congress on a party ticket. However, she eventually gave in and joined the opposing party of her dad. Sakina Itoo, a 24-year-old woman who was pressured by militants to run for office in 1996 since her father, the speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir, had been slain by terrorists. For the National Conference's female wing, there are political activists like Shameem Firdouse, a close colleague of Begum Abdullah at the time. Even while Firdouse acknowledges the fall in women's political engagement, she blames it on the inequalities present in Kashmir. According to Mahbooba Mufti, the hurdles that formerly prevented women from participating in politics have now crumbled to nothing. Few Kashmiri Muslim women now get permission to enter politics from their families. For them, the thought of meeting all types of individuals, including terrorists and security agents, without protection is practically unthinkable. Women Kashmiri Pandits who are actively involved in politics have either gone to Jammu or Delhi or are almost nonexistent.

#### 5. CONCLUSION

For any woman to develop in her life, she needs an atmosphere devoid of violence, where human rights are not violated and where she may make her own judgments. For this reason, it is critical that the 24 years of bloodshed in Jammu and Kashmir come to a close. The eradication of violence against women must likewise be a priority. More women from Jammu and Kashmir should be included in the current discussion procedures taking place in the terror-stricken region. There is a need for women in J&K to participate in intra-state dialogues as well. There must be action done to close this critical gap. Again, the status of women in state politics is woefully lacking. As with other Indian states, they have a marginal position in the national discourse. J&K has an appallingly low representation of women in politics. It is safe to conclude that women have not yet fully grasped or taken advantage of the reservation chance to enter politics. While women like Mehbooba Mufti, the Chief Minister of Kashmir and Asiya Naqash, a Minister in the current administration have proved that society has changed, there is still a long way to go. But at the grassroots level, women are not aware of their role and importance in political affairs and decision making. Gender prejudices need to be eliminated in all aspects of life. In general, there isn't a lot of effective female representation. So that they may fully participate in our political institutions, women need to be made aware of their role in nation building. As a society, we must educate women about their rights and responsibilities in all aspects of their lives. This may be done in the schools and in the families as well. Local self-governance in Jammu and Kashmir has to be developed and detailed so that all marginalized groups, such as women and ST/SCs, are able to participate in politics."

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