CHAPTER I
CONTRIBUTION OF WOMEN TO THE INDIAN POLITICS – AN OVERVIEW

A. Women’s Status in Post-independence India:

The constitution declared equality a fundamental right. This document also guaranteed equal protection of the law, equal opportunities in public employment, and prohibited discrimination in public places. The Hindu Code, passed as separate Acts between 1950 and 1955, rewrote for Hindus the laws of Marriage and divorce, adoptions, and inheritance. Adults’ suffrage added women to the electoral roles and political parties pledge their commitment to women’s issues. The new state developed a bureaucratic structure designed to meet the specific needs of women. The included creating the National Social Welfare Board, assigning special duties to block development officers, and asking the Department of Health and Welfare to prepare specific plan with women in mind. In the documents of the new Indians state the past had been undone, modernity was triumphant, and women were no longer subordinate to men.

The immediate concerns of people were not constitutional rights but political reality. The partition of British India and Pakistan affected millions of women and men as populations fled both countries. When the migration were over more than eight million people had moved from Pakistan to India or from India to Pakistan. Ritu Menon and Kamala Bhasin have argued that the story of 1947 is:

A gender narrative of displacement and dispossession, of large-scale and wide spread communal violence, and of the realignment of family, community and national
identities as people were forced to accommodate the dramatically altered reality that now prevailed. Many women—estimates range from 80,000 to 150,000—were abducted during this time. Because they were seen as dependants of patriarchal households, India and Pakistan agreed on procedures for recovery and restoration.

Over 30,000 women were “recovered” by 1957, the last year the Abducted Act was renewed. Their stories were not all alike. Some faced horrible brutality and were grateful to be rescued. Others had made peace with their new surroundings by the time they were discovered and saw “recovery” as a second abduction. That state, assuming the mantle of “father-patriarch,” was enforcing the concept of the legitimate family. It is only now that this policy is being questioned by scholars applying a feminist perspective.

Many of the women who participated in the social reform, and political activities of the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s were pleased with the constitutional provisions and legal reform. Belonging to the upper and middle classes of society, they were poised to become the beneficiaries of new opportunities. The Government asked prominent women’s organizations to assist them in developing five-year plans. These women agreed with government that economic growth was the most salient issues and shared the assumption that women would gain from expected prosperity. The best-known of the women’s organizations become institutionalized as they secured permanent buildings, well-staffed offices, libraries, and bureaucracies of their own. They set up and continue to administer programs designed to serve women, especially day care centers, hostels for working women, educational centers, and medical dispensaries. Like the government with which they have been closely allied,
their approach has been “welfares.” Prominent women’s organizations have been criticized for this and faulted for not preparing women for new responsibilities. Pat Caplan, in her research on Madras women’s organizations, observed women blocking change and perpetuating the traditional socialization of women as dependants.

The communist women were the most vocal in expressing their dissatisfaction with constitutional provisions, five-year plans, and government and party promises. In 1954 Vibhal Farooqui and her female colleagues in the CPI organized a national conference to address women’s issues. At this conference they founded the National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW) to focus attention on “struggle for equal rights and responsibilities in all spheres of life and for improvement in their living conditions.” they viewed prevailing political forces as trying to “reduce the role of women’s organizations to charitable work combined with, off and on, passing resolutions” and pleaded for a new orientation. At the same time they found their male colleagues in the CPI indifferent to women’s issues and reluctant to include women on working committees. Vimal Ranadive, secretary of the Communist Party of Bombay from 1951 to 1962 and a trade union worker from 1962 to 1972 recalled another difficulty that of attracting working women to trade union meetings. Leftist women found themselves fighting “feudal ideas” on two fronts: within their parties and in society. there were other women, close followers of Gandhi, who saw economic and social change as more important than legal and constitutional rights. They too were dissatisfied. But many of these individuals also believed in voluntarism and focused their attention on grass-roots projects. Krishnabai Nimbkar, the former Krishnabai Rau who led demonstrations in Madras during the civil disobedience movement and went to jail for her actions, never lost her attachment to Gandhian principles. Antipathetic to bureaucracies and centralized government planning, she
and others like her made small inroads into the system but could not change the
direction of major programs.\(^{13}\)

There are three major observations that can be made about the period
immediately following Independence. First, the celebration of victory was shunted
aside by the refugee issue. Second, even without this tragedy, there would have been
disgruntlement among women over issues of institutionalization and
bureaucratization. And third, during the struggle for independence some women
accepted the domination of Congress but others did not. Many of these women
worked with the revolutionary fringe and these tendencies carried on after
Independence.

Despite sporadic criticism, the Indian government’s commitment to equality
was not seriously challenged until 1974 when Toward Equality, a reporter on the
status of women, was published. In 1971 the Ministry of Education and Social
Welfare appointed a committee “to examine the constitutional, legal and
administrative provisions that have a bearing on the social status of women, their
education and employment” and to assess the impact of this provisions.\(^{14}\) there had
been an internal demand for such a document but the actual timing was in response to
a United Nations requests to all countries to prepare reports on the status of women
for International Women’s Year scheduled for 1975.

Dr.Phulrenu Guha, Union Minister for social Welfare, chaired this committee
with Dr.Vina Mazumdar, appointed in 1972, as member secretary. The remaining
nine members of the committee represented a wide spectrum of interests and
experiences. Only two of the members, Maniben Kara and Dr.Phulrenu Guha had
directly experienced the struggle for independence. Other members had worked
closely with women’s organizations, were well-known academicians, or were involved in politics. The committee was asked to suggest ways to make women full members of the Indian state. In order to write this report, the committee commissioned a number of studies and interviewed about 500 women from each state. By 1973 they had concluded their proceedings. These studies and the report issued in 1974 were the first major effort to understand the extent to which constitutional guarantees of equality and justice had not been met for women. Authors of this report charged that women’s status had not improved but had, in fact, declined since independence:

The review of the disabilities and constraints on women, which stem from socio-cultural institutions, indicates that the majority of women are still very far from enjoying the rights and opportunities guaranteed to them by the constitution… the social laws, that sought to mitigate the problems of women in their family life, have remained unknown to a large mass of women in this country, who are as ignorant of their legal rights today as they were before Independence.¹⁵

This declaration, that social change and development in India had adversely affected women, shocked many Indians. Mrs. Indira Gandhi was Prime Minister and India was one of the few countries in the world that regularly sent women abroad as ambassadors, representatives to the United Nations, and delegates to international conferences. To celebrate International Women’s Year, organizations all over the country were programming special sessions to publicize women’s achievements. Only one year before Towards Equality was released, Femina, a popular magazine for “modern women”, published a special Independence Day issues with a cover
portraying Indira Gandhi as the Goddess Durga. The brief note explaining the cover gloated:

To be a woman - a wife, a mother, an individual - in India means many things. It means that you are the storehouse of tradition and power that can motivate a whole generation to change its values, its aspirations, and its very concept of civilized life.¹⁶

The features story, “Shakti in Modern India,” credited Mahatma Gandhi with bringing women into politics and thereby:

Setting into motion the process of liberation of Indian women. Once out of the home… the Indian woman has been quick to seize every opportunity to free herself from male domination.¹⁷

These contrasting images are startling now and were startling at the time.

Toward Equality’s impact on the history of women in India from Independence until 1970 has been momentous. Following publication of the report the Indian Council of Social Science Research established an advisory committee on women’s studies headed by Dr. Vina Mazumdar. This supported further research into questions raised in the report. Almost all of the research carried out under the direction of this advisory committee attempted to discover the conditions under which women lived and worked in contemporary India. In 1980 the center for women’s development studies, an autonomous research institute, was founded, with Vina Mazumdar as director. This center has carried forward the work of studying the status of women and making recommendations to the government regarding policies. The Research center for women’s studies at SNDT women’s university began its work in 1974 as a research unit. Under the able directorship of Neera Desai, it was accorded
the status of center for Advanced Research in women’s studies by the university grants commission in 1980.

The over-all picture of Indian women presented in Towards Equality and the studies carried out by these and other research institutes is depressing. Much of this literature has focused on the failure of programs and policies. Nevertheless, the advances made by some Indian women have been and continue to be awe-inspiring. Further, institutional changes have made differences, as is evidenced by the leading roles Indian women continue to play in India and on the world stage. They have been strong enough to mount a challenges to ultra-conservative forces that would have been return to “traditional roles” that were fictionalized ideals even in the nineteenth century. But the main point of the report, that millions of Indian women have not benefited from “modernity” whether it be economic, technological, political or social, remains true even today.

B. Women and politics:

The record of Indian women in politics is often cited in rebuttal to accounts and reports that dwell on the subordination of women. Indian women can vote and stand for election to all provincial and central bodies. Women have been ministers, ambassadors and most, notably, the Prime Minister. While the extent of their involvement falls far short of the equality promised by the constitution it is significant in comparison with other countries of the world.

Women vote in approximately the same proportion as men. Analysts argue that most women follow the lead of male family members, but a few surveys and anecdotal accounts suggest that women are increasingly interested in political power
and vote independently. However, it does not appear that women vote for women’s issues or necessarily for women candidates.

The number of women elected to the same often seems larger than it is because of the personalities involved. The first assembly had very few women, about 2 percent, but included Masuma Begum who later became the minister of social welfare and deputy leader of the congress party; Renuka Roy, a veteran social worker; Durgabai (later Durgabai Deshmukh), a well known Gandhian and, after independence, chair of the central social welfare board; and Radhabai Subbarayan, appointed delegate to the first Round Table Conference. Accounts from the time suggest that men in the assembly listened carefully to their speeches.

In the following elections, the return was somewhat better and women consistently held 4-5 percent of the seats in the Lok Sabha (the lower house of India’s Parliament), until the 1980s when their numbers increased 7-8 percent. In the less power full Rajya Sabha (the upper house of parliament), where members are elected by their state assemblies and nominated by the President of India, women have held between 7 percent and 10 percent of the places.\textsuperscript{18}

The number of elected women compares favorably with other countries. Historically women’s representation has reached 30-40 percent only in Scandinavian countries, the former Soviet Union and those countries until recently referred to as the “Eastern Bloc.” As of June 1991, India’s percentage of women in parliament, 7.1 percent, compared favorably with the USA’s 6.4 percent, the United Kingdom’s 6.3 percent and France’s 5.7 percent.\textsuperscript{19}
### Table 1
#### Women in Europe

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Country</th>
<th>Total No. MPs</th>
<th>Total No. Women MPs</th>
<th>Percentage of women MPs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>38.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>34.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>33.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>30.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>577</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
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</table>


### Table 2
#### Percentage of Women Cabinet Minister in Europe

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the country</th>
<th>Total No. Cabinet Ministers</th>
<th>Total Women Cabinet Ministers</th>
<th>Percentage of women Minister</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>44.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>33.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Hansard Society Commission (104), P. 28, London (1990)
### Table-3
Women MPS in Europe, 1989

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>MPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Hansard Society Commission (104), p. 50, London (1990)

Examine next to other nations, India’s record of women in politics is impressive. However, it is not remarkable from a historical perspective. The politics of agitation brought women into all face of the freedom movement where they demonstrated their bravery. Following Independence these women found it difficult to make the transition from agitation politics to electoral politics.

First, there has been the problem of party backing. The political parties all give lip service to the ideal of women in politics but have been reluctant to gamble with seats.

Second, woman candidates have disliked the rough and tumble of political life. While many expressed a willingness to put with the hardship of a political campaign, they have not been able to change social attitudes about women’s proper place. Those women who accepted the challenge have had to endure sexual harassment and sordid gossip. Many women found themselves agreeing with Anutayi Limayi, former member of the Executive Broad of the Praja Socialist party, who
expressed her dislike for the political process and preference for the gentler arena of social welfare work. Ela Bhatt, a trade unionist and the founder of the self-employed women’s Association (SEWA), remembered her early years in trade union work:

There were no other women…I was very shy. Also, our people are not so kind. So they make up all kinds of stories. I had to travel…I had to go by car, and with men. Then you also stay overnight when you go. So it was not much approved. So I had to fight a lot and I used to feel, what am I doing? Am I doing the right thing?

These statements have led some social scientists to suggest the legacy of the freedom movement is the problem. Wendy Singer observed women avoiding the political arena for the security of “behind-the-scenes” petitioning. In Singer’s view, the method that gave women power in the 1930s, marginalized their influence in 1989.

The third problem women in politics face is related to their representation as both “feminine” and “unfeminine”. Indian news media never fail to notice a women politician, but much of the attention focuses on either their performance of traditional roles and dress, appearance, and style or on their masculine traits. In some instances – and Mrs. Gandhi is a case in point – political women becomes icons – dressed in the grab of a powerful goddess or the heroic Rani of Jhansi. But there is little room for either goddesses or warrior queens in day-to-day political life and women politicians must perform like their male colleagues. Like men, women must do battle for the bills they want passed and the constituencies they serve. In short, they must learn the games of power.
What is of attention is the striking number of women who have held responsible positions. For example, Rajkumari Amrita Kaur became union health minister in 1947; Renuka Roy was west Bengal’s minister for Relief and Rehabilitation; and Sucheta Kripalani was general secretary of the congress in 1959, labor minister in the Uttar Pradesh cabinet in 1962, and chief minister of United Province from 1963 to 1967. Vijaya Laksmi Pandit was appointed Uttar Pradesh’s Minister for health and local self-government in 1937 and following Independence was selected as a delegate to the United Nations. In 1947 she was appointed ambassador to the USSR and in 1949 ambassador to the USA. In 1953 she was elected president of the United Nations General Assembly. This is only a short list of the women who have wielded power and influence in post-Independence India.

The most important political women in India was Mrs. Indira Gandhi (1917-84), India’s only women prime minister and the second woman to head a state in the twentieth century. Mrs. Gandhi’s long tenure in office, from 1966 to 1977 and 1980 to 1984, ended with her assassination on October 31, 1984. Her one political defeat was in 1977 following her declaration of an “emergency” in India and the suspension of a number of constitutionally guaranteed civil liberties.

Indira was the only child of Jawaharlal Nehru, India’s “Father of the country,” and Kamala, a Gandhian and leader of women’s demonstration in northern India. Indira was raised on politics. Her grandfather Motilal Nehru, a leading member of Indian National Congress since the turn of the century, was proud to have three generations of his family in prison at the same time. Kamala (1899-1936), Indira’s Mother, was unprepared by her traditional family for the sophisticated atmosphere of the Nehru household, but later took part in demonstrations and
delivered forceful feminist speeches. Indira was nineteen years old when her mother died of tuberculosis. Six years later Indira married Feroz Gandhi; her mother’s devoted friend and confidant. They had two sons, Rajiv and Sanjay, but began to live apart as Feroz’s political career became demanding and to live apart as Feroz’s political career became more demanding and Indira was increasingly occupied with the needs of her father the prime minister.

As her father’s companion, Indira organized his domestic affairs, accompanied him on his many trips abroad, and played the role of official hostess. Older Congress bosses considered her malleable and since they thought they had nothing to fear, made Indira president of the Indian National Congress Party in 1959. Neharu died in 1964. Lal Bahadur Shastri succeeded him but died unexpectedly in 1966 leaving the country without a leader. Indira’s candidacy was supported by Congress Party leaders who wanted “a Neharu” in office and believed she would be easy to control.

In office, Indira demonstrated more than predicted. By 1972 she was victorious at home, with congress in power both at the center and in many of the states; and triumphant abroad having supported Bangladesh in its war of independence against Pakistan. Three years the high court at Allhabad overturned her election. Mrs.Gandhi refused to accept their decision, declared a state of emergency, and temporarily saved her own power. In the process she sanctioned measures that brought about the Congress Party’s first defeat at the center since Independence. Mrs.Gandhi was in opposition between 1977 and 1980 when she was returned to power. That year her favored younger son, Sanjay, was killed when the plane he was flying crashed.
Back in office, Indira Gandhi responded in a patterned fashion to threats to her power. She proclaimed dissident states ungovernable, declared president’s rule, and used the central police and intelligence force to suppress regional opposition. In 1984 Indira was assassinated by two Sikhs from her own guards. They were enraged by operation blue star, the invasion of the Golden temple of Amritsar, Sikhism’s holiest shrine. This assault was designed to capture Sant Bhindravale, the leader spearheading a violent movement for an independent Sikh state. Rajiv Gandhi, Indira’s eldest son, won the following election and remained Prime Minister until his defeat in 1989. He was assassinated in 1991 while campaigning to return to office.

Indira Gandhi consistently denied she was a feminist. Speaking at a New Delhi college, she said, “I am not a feminist and I do not believe that anybody should get a preferential treatment merely because she happens to be a woman.” But at the same time she referred to women as “the biggest oppressed minority in the world,” and said Indian women were handicapped from birth, but in talking about herself, she denied gender had played a role in either her socialization or her political success. When McCall’s—a US publication designed for women, purchased a full-page advertisement in the New York Times to promote a feature story on her elevation to head of state in India, Indira was not pleased. She told reporters, I do not regard myself as a woman. I am a person with a job to do.”

Mrs. Gandhi frequently talked about the importance of women as mother and home makers and extolled women’s traditional roles. Interviewed by Meher Pestomji of Eve’s Weekly, Mrs. Gandhi said her greatest fulfillment came from motherhood. Indira said that the emancipation she wanted for the average woman in
India, was “an honorable status, in life, and that she should able to exert her influence for the good and benefit of the community.”

When asked about the role of women in politics, Mrs. Gandhi replied that Indian men, beginning with Mahatma Gandhi, welcomed women to share power. Moreover, men fought for women’s rights in the past and they could be trusted to do so in the future. The Prime Minister did not think having more women in parliament would affect the political scene. Female emancipation would come when women, and men like her father, worked to make the constitution a reality.

Asked about Toward Equality’s conclusion that the position of women had not improved since Independence Indira answered: “the people who sit on these committees look at us from Western standards. Very few of them have their feet firmly on Indian soil.” Indians, she declared, were not sexist and very barely cognizant of the fact that the country was led by a woman.

Regrettably, feminist scholars, with the exception of Rajeshwari Ranjan who has looked at issues associated with representation, have not yet tackled questions associated with the Prime Minister gender, what this meant to the country, and the extent to which her policies were relevant for women. Recent books on women in contemporary India have either ignored the fact that India had a women holding the most important political office, or claimed that reverence for the goddess operates in attaining political power.

It is interesting that in Toward Equality the only reference to the Prime Minister’s gender was included in two general sentences about women in politics:
Through only a very few women were able to reach the highest level of power and authority, those who did so were recognized for their administrative skills and capacity to manage their affairs. Since 1952 there have been 13 women been Minister in the Union Government – 6 of them Deputy Ministers, 5 became Minister of State, 1 attained cabinet rank and other Prime minister – a position which she has retained since 1966.  

How should one understand the elevation of a number of Indian women to prominent and what does this mean for women in India? Ashis Nanday has termed this apparent inconsistency between highly placed political women and the status of the masses of Indian women “commonplace paradox of every social interpretation of the Indian woman.” He explains women’s political success in terms of the cultures non – gendering of aggressive and activist traits. This hypothesis, with its focus on culture, is akin to those which articulate the cultural/symbolic linkage between shakti (power) and the feminine. Taking a slightly different tack in his discussion of the relationship between cultural values and social structure, Gerald D. Berreman recognizes that women’s roles are subordinate to those of men, but argues that women’s roles are subordinate to those of men, but argues that women are taken seriously as human beings. Women’s activities may be circumscribed but women themselves are never trivialized.

Other scholars have focused on the elite status of women in prominent positions. While it is true that most of the women who attained positions of power belonged to “political families,” they did not all belong to an elite in the sense of a wealthy and powerful minority. There was a vast difference between Amrit Kaur and Durgabai Deshmukh and between Vijayalaxmi Pandit and Krishnabai Rau. To label
them elites and suggest they were the beneficiaries of dynastic politics, fails to recognize the differences in actual status and the value of the tutelage these women received. It also overlooks their personal political savvy.\textsuperscript{43} To understand the elevation to power of certain women I think it is far more useful to look at family culture, opportunities, and individual personality.

The political scientist Mary Katzenstein has summed up the prominence of Indian women in politics as “the Mrs. Gandhi anomaly.” According to Katzenstein, political factors, especially the mobilization of women during the struggle for independence and Gandhian ideology, as well as the importance of kinship, have combined to create opportunities for women to move into leadership position.\textsuperscript{44}

Have the women in positions of political power effective? As far as solving the problems of India’s women, the answer is no. In India women vote in substantial numbers and hold high political office yet rarely have they used their vote or office to consistently advance women’s because. Many of the women in power have referenced their gender in political campaigns, referring to themselves as mothers, wives or dutiful daughters, but they have not engendered their political roles. Only a few women have focused specially on women’s problems. For example, Mrinal Gore, a member of the Legislative Assembly of Maharashtra in the 1970s and member of lok sabha in 1980, was fondly called “Paaniwalibai” (the water woman advocate) for organizing women against price rises and chronic water problems. Time and again, Mrinal Gore returned to what she argued were fundamental problems for women: “In so many villages today, I think half the life of a woman is spent in fetching water.”\textsuperscript{45} extraordinary women like Mrinal Gore, Phulrenu Guha, and Renuka Roy, to name
only a few, have made their mark but they have not had the political clout to improve the lot of women as a whole.

The exigencies of political life concentrating only on issues of interest to women or approaching all issues from a feminist perspective. Nevertheless, women in political positions are highly visual and may serve as models of empowered women. Ela Bhatt, a member of the Rajya Sabha, said that having a woman as Prime Minister made all women more aware of their rights.\textsuperscript{46}

If the question is whether or not women can be effective politicians the answer is yes and the degree of success would be ascertained by examining individual careers. Indira Gandhi may have owed her ascent to power to dynastic politics but she was certainly an effective politician. But the fact remains, political participation has not benefited Indian women to the extent envisioned in the 1920s and 1930s by those working for female enfranchisement.
REFERENCES:


3. Ibid

4. Ibid

5. The review of women studies section in the April, 1993 issue of EPW, 28, no 17 (April 24, 1993)


8. See Patricia Caplan, Class and Gender in India (London, Tavistock Publications, 1985)

9. Tenth congress of the National Federation of Indian Women, Trivandrum, December, 1980 (Delhi, NFIW,1980), p.3

10. Ibid


18. Wendy Singer, Department of Political Science, Kenyon College, Ohio, is now engaged in a study entitled “‘women’ and elections in India: 1936 – 1996.” this will be the first study of women as voters, candidates, and audience for campaign rhetoric.


21. Quoted in Elisabeth Bumiller, May You Be the Mother of a Hundred sons (New York, Random House, 1990), and p.137.


24. Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike was Prime Minister of Sri Lanka (then called Ceylon) from 1960 to 1965.


27. Indira Gandhi, India’s Programme for International Women’s Year,” Lok Sabha (April, 1975), Indira Gandhi, p.137.


32. Indira Gandhi, “All Women are Teachers,” speech, Landy Lrwin College, New Delhi (November 1967), Indira Gandhi, p. 141.

33. “All Eyes on Mrs. G!” p.15.

34. Indira Gandhi, “Task before Indian Women,” speech, SNDT Women’s University, Bombay (June 1968), Indira Gandhi, pp. 162 – 83.

35. “All Eyes on Mrs. G!” p.15


46. Bumiller, May you be the mother, p.151.