

Women's participation in Indian Politics: A Historical review

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Women constitute an important part political life in any society. Therefore, it is expected that they should participate with men in all political activities. If we glance through pages of history we will find that during the feudal political system, women were not given any political rights. However, it was at the advent of modern democratic political system that it became incumbent upon every man and women to participate in the political process. But even when the development of democratic political system was being shaped they were not given equal right with men. However it was through continuous struggles and political movement that women could gain equal political freedom. Their demand for equal right was raised for the first time during the mid nineteenth century. In fact, the Movement for granting political equality and freedom to women dates back to the time when Susan Anthony gave a call to women to fight for their rights. In fact, the movement for their rights was launched in the United States of America which received a good response from women's organizations all over the world who demanded that the enfranchisement of women would also raise them up to position of high authority in parliament and professions.¹ It would elevate their status and improve their condition in the society.

These movements not only made women conscious of the need for political equality and freedom but also inculcated among them a feeling that social oppression of women would not come to an end without gaining political freedom.

At the close of nineteenth century, a small fraction of women started participating in the political movements of their countries which compelled their governments to concede them their demand to the right to franchise. The following table would show as to when the right to vote was granted to the women of various countries.²

Non-Asian countries	Year of suffrage
New Zealand	1893
Australia	1899
Finland	1906
Scandinavian countries	1915
United Kingdom	1918
United States	1920
France	1944
Asian countries	
Mongolia	1924

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