



ST. BEDE'S COLLEGE

*Unveiling the legacy- Igniting the future
Your guide to celebrating
the remarkable journey of women
in politics*



IT'S POLITIC-AL

From Suffrage to Power : Celebrating women in Politics

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Voice that 'should' never go unheard: Voice of strong women

-Shruti

BA III Year



The story of a woman begins in her mother's womb. She knocks at the door of her mother, comes out and for the very first time, feels the touch of her mother. She loves her mother the most. But as she looks at the world, she gets a jolt as neither her mother nor she as a girl are recognised, but rather disapproved, discriminated against and condemned by society.

"Women are not born but made." How far is it true? We believe it or not, but no one can contemplate the intensity of suffering women face. What we can contemplate and say for sure is that women suffer. Out of their sufferings, turmoils and plights, women are 'made'. The struggle of women from suffering to suffragette— from suffragette to suffrage and holding onto the highest power is long drawn. Tracing the journey of gender stereotypes in ancient societies like Greek city/states, women were neither considered citizens nor were given basic freedom. Leave aside freedom, women were 'kept inside' and their sexuality was controlled. Very similar was the condition of women in the Indian context as well. But the valour to break the glass ceiling and strength to come out of the four walls are the inherent virtues of women which reflect women as strong and women as gallant. As centuries passed, women have also undergone various phases. From women, who were just confined to homemaking, they now influence society with their commendable contributions in terms of fighting for those, who can not fight for their rights. As Malala Yousafzai, a women's rights activist rightly puts it—"I raise my voice not so I can shout, but so that those without a voice can be heard. We can not succeed when half of us are held back." These lines resonate with the key instruments like voice, unity, and syncretism to bring the desired changes in society.



We can not overlook the past, where women spearheaded movements, and raised their voices for 'Equality'; we can not sideline that they brought to the forefront their aspirations to formulate a level playing field such as Mary Wollstonecraft who brought to the table —aspirations to build an equal society. She puts forth her aspiration well in her book —'A Vindication of the Rights of Women', in which she doesn't preach about ousting men from society, but desires to build an 'egalitarian society' where men and women can 'live' harmoniously.



In a true sense, the inclusive participation of women has been vivid from the 20th century onwards. The feminist movements that started in the West had innumerable impacts on women's situation in other societies too, especially India. Yes, it was pathetic and the 'worst' to be ruled under the British for over two centuries, but introducing Western education in India was their 'best' move as it helped Indian intelligentsia, freedom fighters in ousting colonisers from our land and emancipating us from age-old evils like gender stereotypes. In this regard, we must admire women like Savitribai Phule who sacrificed their lives to uplift the future of the world—women. Similarly, Babasaheb Ambedkar's contributions should never be overlooked with respect to providing social justice to Dalits and women. It is because of the affirmative contributions of these great leaders that we can see a delightful morrow, which is, to a great extent, devoid of sorrow. So remarkable was it that right after independence, unlike almost all other countries of the world, India gave voting rights to all Indian citizens despite their gender while keeping age into consideration.



I am confident in calling India a nation in which women have the same voting rights as men. However, we should be concerned about the fact that despite the similar proportion of men and women throughout the world, why is women's participation low in politics? Undoubtedly, voting rights are essential, especially in a democratic country, so it is a concerning issue even if a single adult woman is missing from the polling booth. Women need to come out and vote, only then can their choices be recognised. Similarly, they should come into power, so their voices can be heard. It is their power, power which lies within them. It is a 'vote' that allows a nation to grow as it symbolises progressivism and betterment. There have been myriad women who have outshined our nation holistically and contributed to outshining the world as a whole with their smart bouts. From commendable women like Sarojini Naidu to Rajkumari Amrit Kaur; from the first female prime minister of the United Kingdom, Margaret Thatcher to the first Indian woman Prime minister, Ms. Indira Gandhi, India has shined 'by toil to stars'. Humongous differences can be seen, and ample potential is there to bring a change that is dreamt of.

"Change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability, but comes through continuous struggle"

—Martin Luther King JR.

SHEetry:

Empowering Voices

WE RISE ABOVE

- Priya Bhaskar
B.A. II Year

"We rise above"

She rises from her adversity,
But never forgets her roots,
She learns from her past and keeps moving smooth.
Even though the path gets tough,
she rises and rises above.

With many difficulties walking on the road, she knows how to transform
and mould.

She crosses rivers and climbs mountains of various lengths,
She walks miles and miles transforming her strength.

She is frightened of the world,
Holding the sword full of opinions and viewpoints fully reserved.

Despite hurdles and burdens, we will rise.

With the power of the mind, together we will fight with every emotion
inside,

Raise your voice, twice and thrice.

For our rights, we'll rise and shine.

With passion and compassion,

We are born as a strong lady with many talents and ambitions.

There is a power within us, acknowledge it, and own it with faith and
dignity.

We are power,

We are strength,

We are unstoppable,

Till the very end.

HERE
SISTER,
Let
ME
HELP
you
UP!

Evolution of Women's Participation in Politics

-Suhani Negi
B.A. II Year

Over the last century, women's involvement in politics has undergone astonishing evolution, marked by not only significant achievements but also numerous challenges. Initially confined to the domestic sphere, women fiercely struggled for suffrage rights, eventually gaining the right to vote in many countries by the mid-20th century. This marked a profound shift as women began challenging societal norms, asserting themselves as self-determined agents, and demanding representation in decision-making processes.

Throughout this period, the history of women in politics has showcased both progress and setbacks. Despite the increasing number of women elected to office globally, a noticeable gender gap in political representation persists. Systemic discrimination, biased gender attitudes, and limited access to resources hinder women's participation in the workforce, comparing unfavorably to their male counterparts.

Women have confronted various barriers to leadership, including issues such as gender equality, reproductive rights, and social justice. Nevertheless, they have demonstrated their capacity as effective leaders, addressing societal concerns at the political table and driving positive change through policy formulation.

In the face of persistent challenges, there is a growing acknowledgment of the need for concerted efforts to break down barriers. Initiatives promoting education and awareness about gender equality, along with mentorship programs, can play a crucial role. By fostering an inclusive environment that encourages women's active engagement in political processes, we not only enhance democratic representation but also ensure a more comprehensive and equitable approach to addressing the multifaceted issues our societies face.

"Women in Politics: Progress and Challenges"

-Mehak Chauhan
B.A. II Year

Women's participation in politics has evolved significantly over the years, marked by notable milestones and gradual shifts in societal attitudes. Historically, women were marginalized from political engagement, with limited opportunities for involvement beyond the domestic sphere. However, the suffrage movements of the late 19th and early 20th centuries paved the way for women's enfranchisement in many countries, granting them the right to vote and participate in the political process.

Despite gaining suffrage rights, women still faced systemic barriers to political participation, including discriminatory laws and cultural biases. Over time, concerted efforts by activists and policymakers have sought to address these inequalities and expand women's roles in politics. Affirmative action measures, such as quotas and gender-sensitive policies, have been implemented to increase female representation in elected offices and decision-making bodies.

Moreover, the rise of feminist movements and advocacy groups has helped raise awareness about gender disparities in politics and mobilize support for gender equality initiatives. As a result, women's participation in politics has seen a gradual but steady increase, with more women occupying positions of power and influence at local, national, and international levels.

However, challenges persist, including entrenched patriarchal norms, gender-based violence, and institutional biases. Continued efforts to dismantle these barriers and promote inclusivity are essential for achieving true gender equality in politics. Despite the progress made, there is still much work to be done to ensure that women's voices are heard and their contributions valued in the political arena.

Celebrating the trailblazing spirit of Indian women in politics, our newsletter dedicates this section to honor the impactful contributions of visionary leaders. From pioneering social reforms to shaping national policies, these remarkable women have left an indelible mark on India's political landscape.

SUCHETA KRIPLANI: Indian Aide and Independence fighter

-Meenakshi Kumari

B.A. III year

"A person of rare courage and character who brought credit to Indian Womanhood" -

-Mahatma Gandhi.

India, renowned as the largest democracy in the world, has undergone significant political changes since achieving independence in 1947. Within the dynamic landscape of Indian politics, the emergence of women leaders stands out as a powerful testament to breaking gender barriers. Sucheta Kripalani serves as a symbol of women's empowerment and political leadership in India, having left an indelible mark as the first female Chief Minister of India. Sucheta's early exposure to the Jallianwala Bagh massacre and family discussions about it ignited a fervor for activism in her heart. As the Quit India Movement gained momentum, Sucheta Kripalani emerged as a fearless freedom fighter, actively participating in protests and actions against British rule. Her collaboration with Mahatma Gandhi during the partition riots further solidified her commitment to the cause. She played a pivotal role in the Constituent Assembly, contributing to the Drafting Indian Constitution and advocating for women's rights by founding the All India Mahila Congress. Following India's Independence, Sucheta Kripalani transitioned into a political career. She contested and won the first Lok Sabha elections in 1952 from New Delhi on a Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party (KMPP) ticket, a party founded by her husband, J.B. Kripalani. Over the years, she continued to serve as a Member of Parliament, displaying strong and decisive leadership.

In October 1963, Sucheta Kripalani made history by becoming the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, becoming the first woman to hold such a position in India. Her tenure was marked by her firm handling of a state employees' strike that lasted for 62 days, where she stood her ground and refused to give in to their demands for a pay hike. Sucheta Kripalani's legacy endures as a symbol of resilience, determination, and pioneering leadership. She left an indelible mark as a freedom fighter, constitutional contributor, and India's first female Chief Minister.



THE CHARISMATIC LEGACY OF INDIRA GANDHI :

Shaping Indian Politics

**-Jahnvi Bhardwaj
B.A. II Year**

Indira Gandhi, a name that resonates with power, leadership, and a magnetic charisma that captivated a nation. As the first woman to hold the office of Prime Minister in India, her legacy remains etched in the annals of history, her charismatic presence casting a long shadow over the landscape of Indian politics.

Indira Gandhi's charismatic leadership was evident from the very beginning of her political career. With her commanding presence and magnetic personality, she captured the hearts and minds of millions across the nation. Her ability to connect with people from all walks of life, coupled with her powerful oratory skills, made her a force to be reckoned with in the political arena. However, it wasn't just her personality that made her charismatic. Indira Gandhi was also really smart when it came to politics. She knew how to get things done and how to stay in power. Even when things got tough, she didn't give up. That determination and political smarts earned her a lot of respect. One of the hallmarks of Indira Gandhi's charismatic leadership was her unwavering commitment to the welfare of the people. She championed the cause of the downtrodden and marginalized, implementing policies aimed at alleviating poverty and empowering the masses. Initiatives such as bank nationalization and the Green Revolution transformed the socio-economic fabric of India, earning her widespread adulation and support.

Even on the world stage, Indira Gandhi was a big deal. As a leader of the Non-Aligned Movement, she played a key role in shaping India's foreign policy and advocating for the interests of developing nations. Her strong stance on issues such as nuclear disarmament and decolonization earned her international acclaim and bolstered India's standing in the world.

Of course, Indira Gandhi's time as Prime Minister wasn't always easy. Some of her decisions, like declaring a state of emergency in 1975, were really controversial. But even when people disagreed with her, they couldn't deny her charisma and the impact she had on Indian politics.

Indira Gandhi's legacy is a reminder of how powerful charisma can be in leadership. She showed us that being a leader isn't just about making decisions; it's about inspiring people and making them believe that things can get better. And that's something we can all learn from as we think about the future of our country.



NIRMALA SITHARAMAN: An Architect of Change in Indian Politics

- Riya Sharma
B.A. II Year

Nirmala Sitharaman has emerged as a formidable force in Indian politics, showcasing a remarkable journey marked by dedication and accomplishments. Starting as a spokesperson for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), she swiftly climbed the political ladder.

Sitharaman's tenure as the Minister of Finance holds significant importance. She played a pivotal role in steering the Indian economy through various challenges, implementing key reforms, and presenting Union Budgets aimed at fostering growth and development.

Her initial foray into politics involved serving as a member of the National Commission for Women. Subsequently, she held key roles within the BJP, including spokesperson and national executive member, showcasing her articulate communication skills and commitment to the party's ideologies.

In 2014, Nirmala Sitharaman created history by becoming India's first full-time woman Defence Minister. During her tenure, she displayed strategic acumen, focusing on modernizing the armed forces and addressing national security concerns.

As Finance Minister, Sitharaman introduced and implemented several economic reforms, including the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC). These measures aimed to streamline taxation and enhance the business environment.

Her political journey is marked by resilience, breaking gender barriers in a predominantly male-dominated arena. Sitharaman's commitment to public service is evident in her efforts to drive economic growth and strengthen India's position on the global stage.

Nirmala Sitharaman's achievements extend beyond her ministerial roles, encompassing a dynamic political career that has contributed significantly to shaping India's economic and strategic landscape. Her story serves as an inspiration for aspiring leaders and underscores the transformative power of dedicated leadership.

SHE SEATS 101: Decoding the Women's Reservation Bill

- Recently, the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha jointly passed the Women's Reservation Bill 2023 (128th Constitutional Amendment Bill) or Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam.
- The bill's primary provision is the reservation of one-third of seats in various legislative bodies, including the Lok Sabha, State legislative assemblies, and the Delhi assembly. This reservation extends to seats already earmarked for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) in the Lok Sabha and State Legislatures.
- The dialogue surrounding the women's reservation bill dates back to the tenure of Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 1996. However, due to a lack of majority support, the bill couldn't secure approval at that time.
- The proposed Bill introduced Article 330A to the constitution, drawing inspiration from the existing Article 330, which caters to the reservation of seats for SCs/STs in the Lok Sabha.
- The Bill suggested a rotational allocation of reserved seats for women across different constituencies within states or Union Territories. Furthermore, it aimed to reserve one-third of seats for women on a rotational basis within the SCs/STs reserved seats.
- The introduction of Article 332A mandated the reservation of seats for women in every state Legislative Assembly. This included the allocation of one-third of seats reserved for SCs and STs to women, along with one-third of the total seats filled through direct elections to Legislative Assemblies.
- The effectiveness of the reservation is contingent on the census conducted after the commencement of the Bill, followed by delimitation to determine the specific seats reserved for women.
- The proposed reservation is set to be in force for a period of 15 years, although it is subject to continuation as per the determination of a law enacted by Parliament.

CONTROVERSIAL STANCE

Notably, the Bill lacks specificity regarding the election cycle from which women will derive their due share of reserved seats, raising questions about the implementation timeline.

- It's crucial to acknowledge that the current Bill excludes the provision of women's reservation in the Rajya Sabha and State Legislative Councils, despite the Rajya Sabha having a lower representation of women compared to the Lok Sabha.
- Advocates for gender parity argue that representation should be an ideal reflected in both the Lower and Upper Houses, emphasizing the importance of inclusivity in legislative bodies.



Poli- Teasers

A playful peek into political wit

Unlock the mysteries of Indian politics with our Riddle Section, where we've crafted brain-teasers inspired by influential female political figures. Test your wit as we delve into the enigmatic world of political prowess!

1. Breaking norms, shattering the ceiling, in politics, my power revealing. A dynasty's pride, with leadership as my guide. Who is this political stride?

2. I started with dance and grace, now I lead a powerful state. Guess who am I?

3. From television star to political force, I advocate for the common course. Who am I?

4. As a leading TV news anchor, I stand for transparency and am a truth seeker. Guess my name.

5. Once a sports icon, now a leader with a vision, I champion education, a future ambition. Who am I?

Answers: 1) Indira Gandhi 2) Hema Malini 3) Smriti Irani 4) Rubika Liyaquat 5) Mithali Raj

STYLE and GRACE: the elegant achiever ✨

We proudly feature Jagriti Sharma, a remarkable achiever from the Political Science department (B.A. II Year). Jagriti clinched the second runner-up position in the Most Vivacious Miss Himachal 2023 pageant, showcasing her talents in cultural events, rafting, modelling and more. The event took place from November 23rd to 25th, 2023, at Hamirpur's Basant Resort in which Jagriti's triumph earned her a cash prize, a trip package, and a well-deserved trophy. Congratulations on this outstanding accomplishment!



BREAKING BARRIERS, SHAPING NATIONS: The rise of Women in Politics

-Mavy Dutta
B.A. II Year

In recent years, a notable shift has occurred globally, marking a new era for women in politics. Across the world, an increasing number of women are entering the political arena.

In India, the waves of reform before and after independence paved the way for women to gain political influence. Post-independence, a groundbreaking stride was achieved with the reservation of seats for women in panchayats and other public bodies.

Remarkably, Indian women secured their political rights, including the right to vote, without undergoing the struggles witnessed in the United States and many Western countries. Even before independence, Indian women actively participated in politics, setting a precedent. Noteworthy figures like UNO Secretary Vijay Laxmi Pandit, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, Chief Ministers Sucheta Kriplani, Jayalalitha, Uma Bharati, Mayawati, and Vasundhara Raje, as well as President Pratibha Patil, have all left indelible marks.

Political activism and voting stand as the pillars of women's political participation. Indira Gandhi's monumental achievement during the 1971 election was India's decisive victory over Pakistan, a pivotal moment in the Bangladesh Liberation War.

Other influential leaders, such as Sonia Gandhi, Mamata Banerjee, Sushma Swaraj, and Sheila Dikshit, have played crucial roles in shaping India's political landscape. Their diverse contributions range from consecutive electoral victories to advocating for LGBT rights.

Internationally, figures like Park Geun-hye of South Korea and Jeannette Rankin, the first woman elected to the U.S. Congress, showcase the global impact of women in politics.

Addressing societal concerns, women in politics frequently advocate for issues like drinking water, road improvements, violence against women, childcare, and maternal health.

India has seen a steady increase in women's participation at various political levels, thanks to initiatives by political parties. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), for instance, has fostered women's leadership through programs, financial aid, and a 33% reservation for women in party leadership positions.

The significance of women in politics transcends the right to vote, encompassing active participation in decision-making processes, political activism, and political consciousness. In India, women continue to surpass men in voting participation, running for public offices, and engaging with political parties at lower levels, reflecting a positive trend that underscores the importance of further enhancing women's involvement in Indian politics.

PolitiCANVAS

a canvas of creativity shaped by the talented minds within our Political Science Department.



-Aditi Thakur
B.A. III Year



-Samridhi Pathak
B.A. III Year



Shaping tomorrow's politics: UN Women's Drive for Inclusive Governance and Women's Political Participation

**-Triveni Thakur
B.A. II Year**



The active involvement of women in politics stands as a foundational prerequisite for both gender equality and the authenticity of democracy. It serves as a direct conduit for women to engage in public decision-making, fostering a pathway to heightened accountability towards women. While augmenting the representation of women in decision-making positions is an initial step towards political accountability, it is imperative to recognize that the journey does not conclude there.

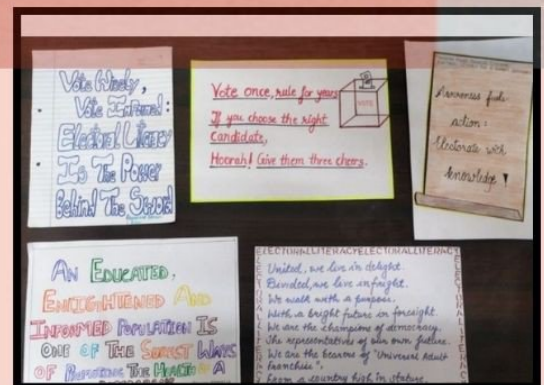
What emerges as essential are governance reforms that are sensitive to gender dynamics, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of all elected officials in championing gender equality within public policy and ensuring its robust implementation. UN Women has identified the advancement of women's political participation and the promotion of good governance as core elements of its mission. This pursuit seeks to instill participatory, responsive, equitable, and inclusive dimensions into decision-making processes. The strategic entry points focus on catalyzing broad, enduring impacts that elevate the status of women. Support is extended to empower women in translating the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), now ratified by a majority of the world's governments, into legal safeguards for gender equality.

Another strategic avenue involves collaboration with various stakeholders, including women's organizations, governments, the UN system, and the private sector. This collaborative effort aims to usher more women into government roles, provide training for women leaders, and enhance the skills of women to actively participate in elections as both candidates and voters.

DEMOCRACY IN ACTION: Insights from the Electoral Literacy Club

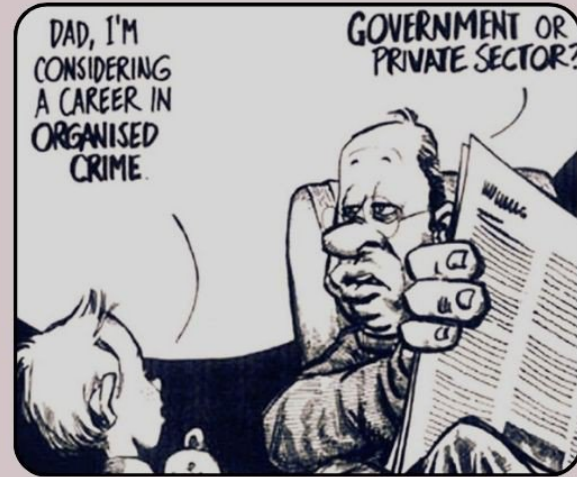
The Electoral Literacy Club, an integral part of our esteemed Political Science Department, stands as a beacon of democratic empowerment. Committed to fostering informed and engaged citizens, our club orchestrates a diverse array of activities aimed at promoting electoral literacy among students. From voter registration drives to insightful panel discussions, we strive to equip our members with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate the intricacies of the electoral process. The Electoral Literacy Club spearheaded a series of impactful events aimed at enhancing civic awareness and participation. From tackling the menace of fake news in elections through "Fake News and its Impact on Elections: A Call for Media Literacy" to amplifying voter voices with "Electoral Echoes: Stories that Count," our club engaged students in critical electoral discussions. Through a dynamic Discussion Forum on Electoral Insights, we delved into the nuances of democratic processes. Additionally, our vibrant Slogan Writing Competition, themed "Informed minds, engaged citizens: Electoral literacy for a vibrant democracy," inspired creative expressions of civic responsibility and awareness among participants.

Join us as we continue to empower the next generation of informed and active voters!!!



Poli-LAUGHS: A political jest junction

**How many female politicians does it take to change a light bulb?
One, but she'll need the support of her colleagues to get it approved in the budget.**



**Why don't politicians in India play hide and seek?
Because good luck finding them once the elections are over!**

**How does a politician in India clean their hands?
By washing them with promises during election season!**





**"THERE IS
NO FORCE
MORE
POWERFUL
THAN A
WOMAN
DETERMINED
TO RISE."**



THANKING OUR CONTRIBUTORS :)

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THANKING OUR PARTICIPANTS:)



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