

# A Study Political Change Of Inclusion: Women (Gonda) In Local Governance In Hyderabad Karnataka

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**Abstract:** In India, devolution of power to local institutions is a principle that has been in public perspective since independence (1947). Affirmative action was considered as an important means to ensure that decentralized institutions became participatory, and disadvantaged sections could be represented in political institutions. The 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment of the Constitution furthered the commitment to women (Gonda) in local governance by making provisions through reservation of seats. Seats have been reserved for women (Gonda), Dalits (Scheduled Castes), and Adivasis (Scheduled Tribes groups that were earlier only marginally represented in governance. The inclusion of disadvantaged sections has in principle ensured equality of political opportunities. However, the outcome of these institutional changes has not met expectations. The skewed power relation in local governance is an indication that inclusion alone is not a solution to the earlier exclusion of different sections of the population from politics and governance.

**Key words:** Political, Inclusion, Women (Gonda), Local Governance

## INTRODUCTION

True democracy is a system which in Abraham Lincoln's words is a government of the people, by the people and for the people. While most of the democracies have given a system which has government elected by all the sections of societies, it is debatable whether the government comprises of all the diverse sections and importantly whether the government works for all the people of the democracy. In this context, the problem of low participation of women (Gonda) is of special concern for democracies and without changing that true democracy can never be achieved.

Women (Gonda)'s participation in decision-making is essential for women (Gonda)'s interests to be incorporated into governance. It has been widely experienced that governance structures which do not provide for adequate participation of women (Gonda), often suffer from state interventions which are neither inclusive nor democratic. Including women (Gonda), an especially in local government is an essential step towards creating gender equal opportunities and gender sensitive policies. Since women (Gonda) have different needs and perspectives on social and political issues, it is important to involve women (Gonda) in governments to incorporate all of the societal viewpoints in policy and decision-making processes. Women (Gonda) are actively involved in household and community work and hence well aware of real issues faced by common people. This gives them insight and perspective which can be instrumental in sustainable overall development.

The presence of women (Gonda) in local governments serves as an encouragement for other women (Gonda) to enter diverse professions and leads to breaking stereotypes of women (Gonda)'s roles in society and public space. People had gained confidence in women (Gonda) as good public administrators and local government representatives after seeing women (Gonda) making a positive difference in other people's life. The society acknowledges the sincerity and commitment of women (Gonda) to their duties and their resistance to criminalization of politics.

The measurement of women (Gonda) political participation is essential to identify the need of policy intervention to improve the same. India had understood the need to record gender statistics on political participation since its independence. The process of capturing women (Gonda) participation at the local level is an evolving area and efforts are being done to improve the present infrastructure.

## WOMEN (GONDA) POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN INDIAN POLITICS: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The status of women (Gonda) in India has seen many ups and downs since ancient times - from at par status in ancient history to be in veils (Parda System) during the medieval period. In the post independent India, the status of women (Gonda) regained its strength and has been on a rise ever since. Women (Gonda) in post-independent India have been participating in almost all types of economic activities, day-to-day household chores, voting for better governance and also in active politics. India has elected a woman prime minister, Indira Gandhi, and a woman president, Pratibha Patil. In the present central government, women (Gonda) comprise roughly quarter of the Indian cabinet with portfolios like external affairs, commerce and human resource development. At the ground level, India has a significant proportion of women (Gonda) in local level politics which has been achieved by reserving seat for women (Gonda).

## INDIAN FREEDOM MOVEMENT

Women (Gonda) participated in the freedom movement with true spirit and undaunted courage and faced various tortures, exploitations and hardships to earn us freedom. Many great Indian women (Gonda) like Rani Lakshmi Bai, Sarojini Naidu, Kasturba Gandhi, Vijayalakmi Pundit, and Annie Besant need no introduction for their dedication and undying devotion to the service of India. Indian women (Gonda) who joined the national movement were initially from educated and liberal families. All changed with the advent of Gandhi who converted the freedom struggle into a mass movement involving all sections of society. He understood that true freedom cannot be achieved if all the sections of the society are not truly represented. His most successful campaign against the imperial rule was fought on the issue of salt tax which brought Indian women (Gonda) to the forefront. Local issues started getting debated and women (Gonda) took center stage in this regard.

## **WOMEN (GONDA) RESERVATION BILL**

Post Gandhi, India experienced centralization of planning which resulted in higher inequality in political decision making at the various levels. While Government was deeply concerned of issues of gender equality, women (Gonda) were not always a part of such decision making. Although, India has seen women (Gonda) participating in politics as the longest serving Prime minister, as chief ministers of various states, members in national parliament and state legislative assemblies in large numbers, yet the occurrence of such events has not been commensurate to their population.

In order to enable better women (Gonda) participation in active politics, authorities had been trying to put in reservation for women (Gonda) but have not been successful in true terms due to non-support from some of the regional parties.

Back in history, one of the prominent member of freedom struggle, Sarojini Naidu rejected reservation for women (Gonda), citing that women (Gonda) are not weak, timid, meek. She claimed that the demand for granting preferential treatment to women (Gonda) is an admission on her part of her inferiority and there has been no need for such a thing in India as the women (Gonda) have always been by the side of men.

The issue of women (Gonda)'s reservation again came to limelight in 1973 with voices recommending reservation for women (Gonda) in at least one third of the seats and eventually statutory women (Gonda)'s panchayats at the village level were recommended to take care of the neglect of women (Gonda) in rural development programs through 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendments in 1993.

Women (Gonda)'s Reservation Bill or the Constitution (108th Amendment) Bill, is a pending bill in India which proposes to reserve 33 per cent of all seats in the Lower house of Parliament of India, and in all state legislative assemblies for women (Gonda). The seats to be reserved in rotation will be determined by draw of lots in such a way that a seat shall be reserved only once in three consecutive general elections. Women (Gonda)'s Reservation Bill, was passed in Rajya Sabha on March 9, 2010 But Lok Sabha could not clear the bill due to resistance of some regional parties on certain provisions of the bill.

## **PANCHAYATI RAJ REFORMS**

Indian Constitution made provisions relating to the establishment, powers, and responsibilities of the panchayats through the 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment in 1993 with three tier systems, panchayats (village governance bodies) at the village, intermediate and district levels in every state, except provision of skipping intermediate level in states with less than twenty lakh populations. The states have been empowered through law for the composition of panchayats. The reform provided for reservation of both seats and leadership positions for the Scheduled Castes, tribes, and women (Gonda). A normal duration of five years for panchayats has been provided with the authority of preparing the electoral rolls and conducting elections in the state Election Commission.

The state government is also empowered to make laws providing criteria for disqualification of candidature from panchayat elections and also to legislate with respect to maintenance of accounts by the panchayats and their audit. Apart from providing political empowerment, the Panchayati Raj reforms endow the panchayats with necessary powers and authority to enable them to function as institutions of self-government and for the devolution of powers and responsibilities upon panchayats at the appropriate level for economic development and social justice under their jurisdiction.

This has helped all the sections of the society particularly the weaker sections including women (Gonda) to take part and to share the responsibility of governance and development at least at the sub-district levels. As the legislation provides for reservation for women (Gonda), the number of women (Gonda) elected representative at local level has sharply increased. India has been maintaining the record of number of women (Gonda) representatives at the panchayat level and statistics indicate that 30-50% of local level elected representatives are women (Gonda).

## **CURRENT MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK**

### **Introduction to Indian Electoral System**

India is the largest democracy in the world with a three layer governance structure: central government, state government and city/village government. The election to all these three is done by an independent body of Election Commission which is constituted separately at state and central level.

At the national level, the head of government, prime minister, is elected by the members of Lok Sabha, lower house of the parliament of India. All members of Lok Sabha except two, who can be nominated by president of India, are directly elected through general elections which take place every five years, by universal adult suffrage. Unlike most of the other democracies of the world, India gave women (Gonda) voting right since the first election. Members of Rajya Sabha, upper house of Indian parliament, are elected by an Electoral College comprising of Members of Lok Sabha, elected members of the legislative assemblies of states and Union Territories of India. Similar structure is in place in various states of India with two bodies called Vidhan Sabha and Vidhan Parishad. Data of successive central and state elections show that Indian democracy is truly representative of women (Gonda) when it comes to their participation in elections but it significantly lacks women (Gonda) participation as legislature and executive.

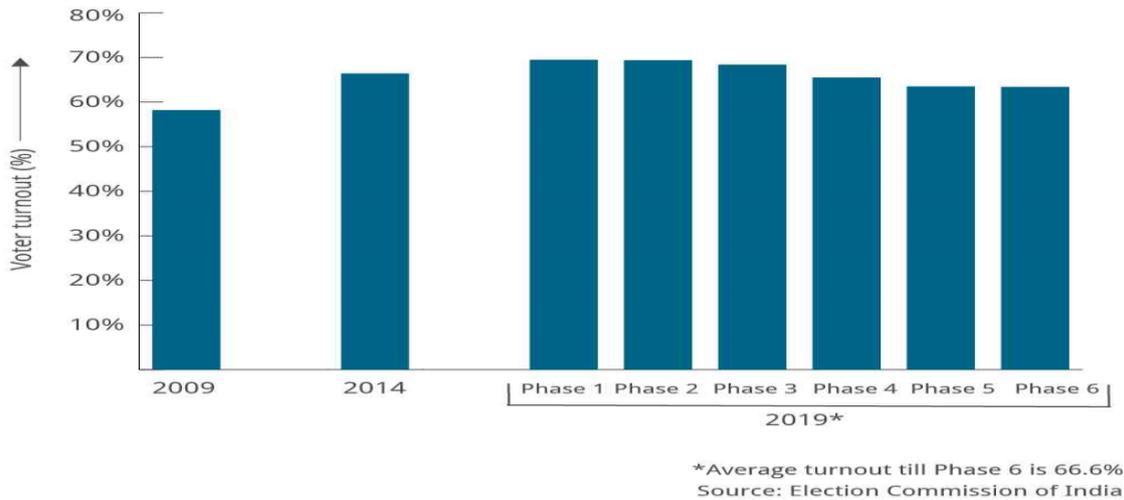
With the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> amendments of the Indian Constitution, a third tier of governance was created. It has helped in providing new opportunities for local level planning, effective implementation and monitoring of various social and economic development programs in the country.

### **ELECTORAL STATISTICS IN INDIA**

An independent Election Commission has been established under the Constitution in order to carry out and regulate the holding of elections in India. The Election Commission is responsible for the conduct of elections to parliament and state legislatures and to the offices of the President and Vice-President.

The Election Commission prepares, maintains and periodically updates the Electoral Roll, which shows who is entitled to vote, supervises the nomination of candidates, registers political parties, monitors the election campaign, including candidates funding. It also facilitates the coverage of the election process by the media, organizes the polling booths where voting takes place, and looks after the counting of votes and the declaration of results. All this is done to ensure that elections can take place in an orderly and fair manner.

### Voter turnout in Lok Sabha elections



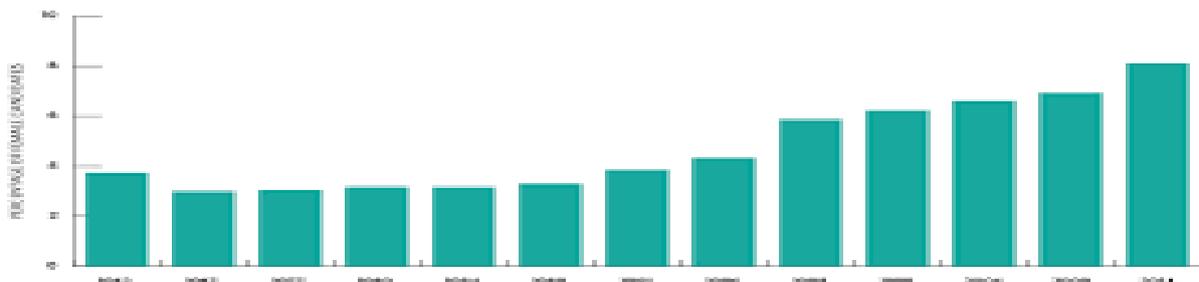
**Fig-1 . Voting percentage of women (Gonda) in Lok Sabha elections**

All the statistics for the elections is primarily maintained by the Election Commission with information on both the voter participation as well as the information on elected representatives. The electoral rolls in India are compiled based on a four stage classification. The entire country has been divided into 543 parliamentary constituencies. Each parliamentary constituency has several assembly constituencies in it. An assembly constituency is further divided into Wards. Each Ward has multiple Poll stations (PS) which are practically smallest manageable unit for conducting voting in that area. The information on voting pattern is accumulated at the polling station level with a field that includes gender information. Extensive data has been captured since the first election which has been made public through digitalization. This allows the government to identify political participation of women (Gonda) in elections at the level of polling station which typically is of the order of 1000 voters. Fig 1 shows the statistics of the voting percentage of women (Gonda) across different states in the recently held Lok Sabha elections.

**POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN (GONDA)**

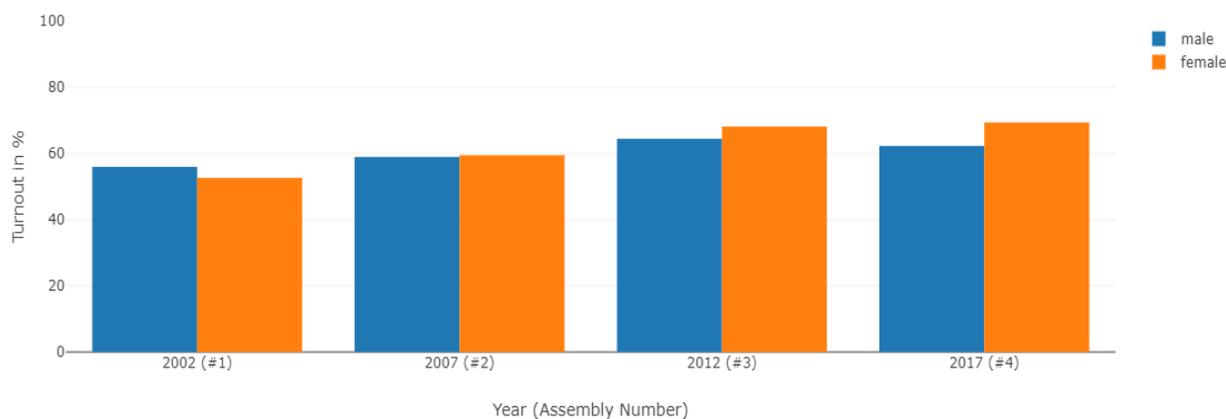
Political participation of women (Gonda) can be measured in three different dimensions: their participation as a voter, their participation as an elected representative and their participation in the actual decision making process. The first of these two dimensions have been measured and reported by the Election Commission from the first election which was held in 1952 with few exceptions. The information on the women (Gonda) participation as a voter is recorded at a booth level which is the smallest possible entity in Indian electoral system. Fig 2 shows the trend of women (Gonda) participation in successive elections.

**Figure-2 Female candidacy in lok sabha Election 2015**



**Fig. 2. Voting percentage of women (Gonda) in Indian elections**

## Voter Turnout across year in Hyderabad Karnataka vidhan sabha



**Fig. 3. Percentage of women (Gonda) voters out of total voters**

With the electoral reforms that have taken place which include the recording of elections at sensitive places, information on women (Gonda) participation can be relied upon with a high degree of confidence. This information is not only helpful for the electoral process but can also be used by the policymakers to identify areas with lesser women (Gonda) participation and take remedial actions. As an example, government can open a girl's school where the difference between men voting percentage and women (Gonda) voting percentage is more than 20%.

The second aspect of women (Gonda) becoming elected representative is also recorded at all the three levels. While India has a good record of women (Gonda) holding all the important posts in the country, the overall participation of women (Gonda) in politics is not very satisfactory.

At the local level, women (Gonda) participation as an elected representative is high primarily because of the reservation introduced for women (Gonda) as per the 73<sup>rd</sup> amendment in the Indian constitution. Concerns have been raised over the genuine participation of women (Gonda) as an elected representative. It has been reported that the men have been ruling with their women (Gonda) as a proxy and presently there are not many robust techniques to identify genuine women (Gonda) participation. Table 1 shows the voting percentage of women (Gonda) in the most recent Lok Sabha, Vidhan Sabha and Panchayat elections.

#### STATISTICS FOR LOCAL LEVEL DEVELOPMENT

The National Statistical Commission (NSC), headed by Dr. C. Rangarajan, while reviewing the National Statistical System made a number of recommendations regarding the basic statistics for local level planning in its report. It stressed on need to develop a system of regular collection of data on a set of core variables. With a view to conceptualize the system, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation constituted a high level expert committee headed by a Member, Planning Commission in 2004. The report of the expert committee submitted to the Government of India in 2006 provided a broad framework for undertaking a schematic approach to get the data collected and compiled through the PRI mechanism for the rural areas.

#### Measurement of Women (Gonda)'s Political Participation at the Local Level

**Table-I.**

District	Lok sabha	Vidhan sabha	Panchayat
Gulburga	7.00%	8.16%	33.46%
Bidar	14.29%	11.90%	36.89%
Bellari	7.50%	14.81%	50.00%
Yadagir	9.09%	11.11%	54.50%
Koppal	0.00%	2.50%	32.33%
Raichur	15.38%	6.59%	33.02%

The Ministry on the advice of the Planning Commission launched a nation-wide pilot scheme in 2015-16 to establish the availability of desired data from identifiable sources with a view to study the need, financial implications and data sources. The findings of the pilot have been disseminated in the form of a report, already uploaded on the Ministries website ([www.mospi.gov.in](http://www.mospi.gov.in)).

Basic Statistics at Local Level Development is scheme for data collection pertaining to local development through the panchayat. As members of the Panchayat setup are much more aware of the local issues and have better knowledge of socio-economic parameters, they are the data informants. Role of women (Gonda) in providing data for these variables is more inclusive as women (Gonda) are better informed about the local knowledge and thus better quality of data may be expected.

As per the provisions of Article 243 of the Constitution, one-third of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in Panchayats (local self-Government) at all levels and also those of the Chairpersons are reserved for women (Gonda). Even some districts like Bidar, Bellari, Gulburga, Yadagir, Raichur, Koppala for 50% reservation for women (Gonda). In Sikkim, reservation for women (Gonda) is 40%. As a result of this initiative, out of about 28 lakh elected members in Panchayats, around 10 lakh are women (Gonda). The last 15 years of Panchayati Raj in India have seen women (Gonda) go from strength to strength in terms of their political participation.

To empower Elected Women (Gonda) Representatives instructions have been issued to all States/UTs and other Central Ministries implementing all the Centrally Sponsored Schemes (by Government of India) as follows:

- All the States / UT Governments may impress upon Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) to ensure the safety of Elected Women (Gonda) Representatives (EWRs) Female Sarpanches (elected village head), particularly those belonging to the weaker sections. They should not be physically harmed, assaulted or humiliated in any manner on any count. Discrimination of any kind against them should not be allowed to remain unheeded and resolved expeditiously.
- To put a curb on the cases of proxy attendance by relatives of women (Gonda) EWRs, States have been advised to initiate departmental proceedings against the officers in whose presence such meetings are held.
- To advise the concerned authorities of PRIs that meeting of Mahila Sabha / Palli Sabha (ladies congregation) be held prior to Gram Sabha Meeting (village meeting) and recommendations/ decisions of Mahila Sabhas mandatorily transmitted to Gram Sabhas who should consider the proposals imperatively.
- In the quorum of Gram Sabha, inclusion of at least half of the number of women (Gonda) voters should be mandated. States which have not mandated such a provision should do so.
- PRIs should be involved in any Integrated Plan of action to prevent and combat women (Gonda) trafficking, problems in disturbed areas, displacement due to land acquisition etc. Related matters may be taken up in Mahila Sabha in case of issues of children and women (Gonda).

The data on political participation of women (Gonda) is of immense use of planners and policy makers to evolve better schemes and programmes, which can be better implemented by women (Gonda) at local level. Women (Gonda) participating in politics have a better understanding of women (Gonda) based issues and their awareness about the know-hows of government functioning render better solutions to the society in terms of bring about gender equity in the country. Once the qualitative data on women (Gonda) participation in politics is captured and analyzed properly, the planners may give shape to more programmes on women (Gonda) empowerment to enhance the radiating effects of women (Gonda) empowerment.

### **CHALLENGES IN MEASURING WOMEN (GONDA) POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**

The measurement of women (Gonda) participation in politics based on voting percentage and election to legislature is relatively easy. The challenge is to estimate the actual participation of women (Gonda) in the decision making process.

### **PARTICIPATION AS A PROXY CANDIDATE**

There have been evidences that due to reservation policy, certain women (Gonda) got elected into the setup, but they acted merely as the mouth-piece of the male family members. This indicates that there is a possibility of on-roll women (Gonda) participation to be higher than what it actually exists on ground. Awareness programs and increase in female education is now taking care of such happenings and women (Gonda) active participation is on an increase. Still there is a need to record data at a more micro level so that women (Gonda) who only act as a proxy can be identified.

### **MEASUREMENT OF DECISION MAKING INITIATIVES**

The quantitative data of political participation of women (Gonda) at local level is available but the qualitative data on the aspects of their active participation including the utilization of the decision-making functionality provided to them is not being quantified properly. Although, the legislature has enabled their huge presence into the state of affairs, but their valuable essence into the system is yet to be established at most of the places. The data on their sensitization about their rights and its usage is still missing. Efforts can be made to capture the performance of women (Gonda) in debates, initiative in brining legislation and participation in other aspects of the democratic process.

### **POSSIBLE APPROACHES FOR A ROBUST MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK**

#### **Application of Technology**

The new government in India has a penchant for using technology for taking government schemes to the remote areas. The mobile penetration in India is even more than the penetration of electricity connections. The digital communication advancements may be introduced to capture the actual participation of women (Gonda) in Panchayat activities by counting their attendance and their vote share in passing a decision in the Panchayat. Portals and mobile applications may be developed to voice the women (Gonda) issues by calling response from general women (Gonda).

#### **APPLICATION OF ANALYTICS**

Advanced analytics can be used to validate, cluster and segment data regarding women (Gonda) participation in local level politics. Big Data techniques have allowed policy planners to work with huge chunk of data which can be both quantitative as well as qualitative. Techniques like text mining and video mining can be utilized to extract meaningful information out of the huge data which can be in the form of recordings, documents and other information. Work has been started by the new government to use social media analytics for grass root development and gender issues can be incorporated into this framework.

#### **Development of Women (Gonda) Political Participation Score**

The collection of data on women (Gonda) participation in politics is essential for policy makers. With lot of related and unrelated data, it becomes imperative to convert that information into an indicator which can be utilized for policy intervention. Data required for this task may include all the three aspects of political participation which are: women (Gonda) as electorate, women (Gonda) as elected representatives and women (Gonda) as policy makers. Other aspects of gender statistics can also be included as an input to give a holistic measure of women (Gonda) participation in that area. A single score which can be weighted average of normalized version of different dimensions can be used for both budgeting and policy intervention purposes.

### **CONCLUSION**

India has a rich history of measuring political participation of women (Gonda) since its independence. The decentralization of governance which is taking place for last two decades has increased the importance of measuring participation of women (Gonda) in decision making. Proper gender budgeting has already been worked out for inclusive growth of women (Gonda) & girls by earmarking one third budget for the women (Gonda) in all the schemes. The Indian Government has a lot of emphasis on utilizing real

time data for measuring different social indicators and using them for policy intervention. With more responsive data on women (Gonda) participation, better gender budget initiatives aim to move the country towards a gender equal society

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