

# Human Rights Gender and Environment



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VT. LTD.

elhi-110002

ISBN: 978-93-87273-35-1



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## **The Issue of Women's Political Participation and Representation in India**

**Dr. Jaya Kera<sup>\*</sup>**

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### **Introduction**

The strengthening of women's participation in all spheres of life has become a major issue in the discourse on economic and social development in the last few decades. The study of gender and participation is directly related to the study of representation and its impact on the political system. The American Revolution and French Revolution of 18th century established representation as a Universal democratic right and the following century saw the institutionalization of that right, and since then it is an established fact that democracy and representation go hand in hand. In modern political studies, a democratic system of governance is considered to be most accepted and ideal system and representative government is regarded as an essential part of a democratic state.

A traditional view of liberal democracy and its model of politics assert that varied representation of interests of social groups is of great value to decision making process. As preferences of different kinds gets represented in decision making and it also helps in decreasing the influence of a particular elite group. The most appealing aspect of liberal democracy is the promise of equality of status and opportunity, but how different groups are placed in political and social space is not always equal, especially in diverse and stratified societies. Anupama Roy (2005) describes democratic citizenship as being integrally associated with and embedded in notions of equality and participation. However, considering women's share in the population structure and their active participation in the political and economic development, the socio-political status of women and the quality of their political participation remains weak in most parts of the world.

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