

Global Trends in Women's Political Empowerment: A Systematic Literature Review using PRISMA FRAMEWORK, 2020

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The purpose of the study is to know global trends in women's political empowerment, with a focus on the role of gender quotas, systemic barriers, intersectional challenges, and the role of digital platform.

Design/Methodology/Approach: A systematic literature review was carried out in the study using the PRISMA framework on articles available in the Scopus database for the period from 2000 to 2023. The study was started with the selection of 776 publications, out of which only 30 high-quality studies were considered for final analysis. The review brought together evidence from various geographic regions and thematic areas, touching on topics like gender quotas, structural barriers, intersectionality, and digital empowerment.

Findings: The analysis reveals that gender quotas are a means of boosting women's representation, with Rwanda and India standing out as key examples. Rwanda's progress is remarkable with the significant representation of women in Parliament. India's path has been slower due to traditional patriarchal system. In addition, studies show how digital platforms play a role in promoting political engagement.

Originality/Value: The study brings two decades of research, which gives a wide form on the political participation of women from global, intersectional, and digital perspectives.

Paper Type: Review of Literature.

KEYWORDS: Digital Platforms | Gender | Political | Quotas | Women Empowerment

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Introduction

Women in politics ought to have an equal voice in decision-making, free from gender-based discrimination. It reveals from a number of studies that women in politics have a good effect on policies that somehow improve the women's condition in society. Among these are funding initiatives that support women (Chattopadhyay & Duflo 2004), addressing an increase in crimes against women (Iyer et al., 2012), and reducing the gender gap between boys and girls as they mature (Beaman et al., 2012). Additionally, they improve health services, reduce the death rate for girls, increase the visibility of women-owned enterprises, and alter voters' perceptions of women running for office (Beaman et al. 2009; Ghani et al. 2014). Despite the number of positive aspects of women's representation in politics, women continue to be underrepresented in political systems worldwide, and gender equality remains painfully with the global share of women in parliaments is 26.5% (IPU, 2023). In comparing the political standing of women in developed and developing nations, women hold in parliament is 27.5% (USA) and 13.3% (India).

In the past twenty years, a lot of work has been done, both from the top and the grassroots, to correct the gender imbalance. One of the main initiatives leading to greater women's involvement in politics is the introduction of gender quotas. How much quotas can bring about getting statistics in favor of women is a debatable matter dependent on numerous aspects, such as the region in question or even the internal political context. Where we see the success of Rwanda, we clearly show how the quotas can have a positive impact on the governance of the state, while the stories of places like India point to the sheer strength of patriarchal traditions and the structure of the society leaving the status quo unchanged.

It is a fact that gender quotas and related reforms are widely embraced, however, women's political engagement is still limited by barriers that are part of the system. Bias on the part of voters, stereotype of a culture, and financial marginalization are some of the challenges women faces, which either stop them from running for office or turning to leadership positions. Besides that, the problem of intersectionality exacerbates these issues, for example,

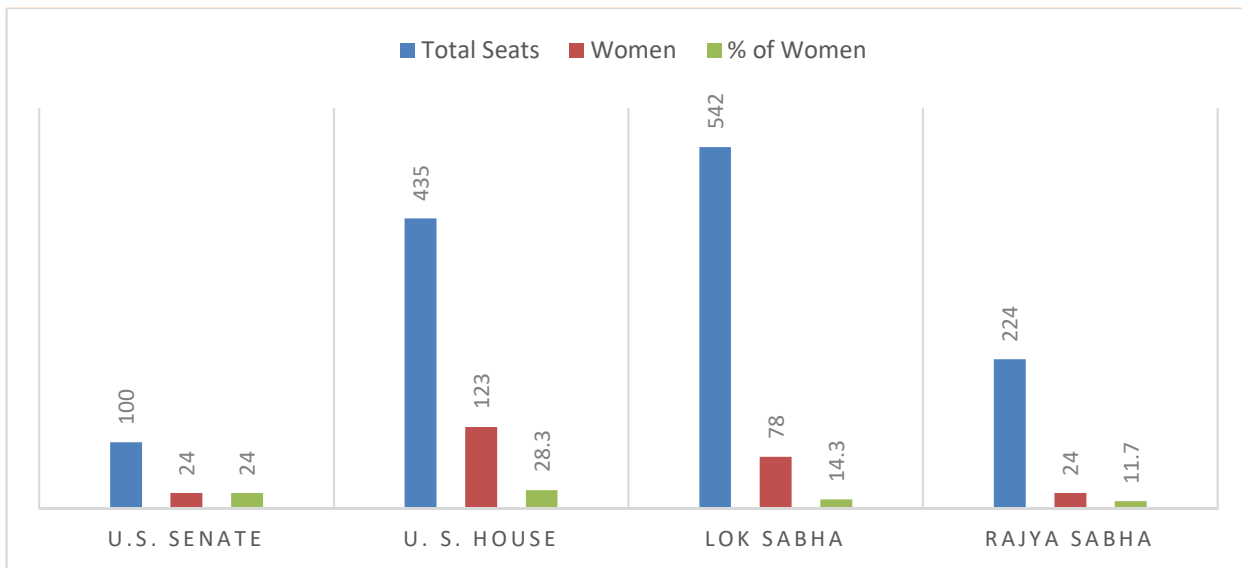


Figure 1. Women in Parliament of India and USA

A group of studies reveals that women are less keen to get involved in politics (Fox & Lawless 2004) and reluctant in competing with men (Gneezy et al. 2003). The reason of their unwillingness are: women often choose family over a political career (Folke & Rickne 2020); face social norms and old-fashioned gender roles (Gneezy et al. 2009); deal with biased voters (Frechette et al. 2008); biased parties (Pas et al. 2022), and encounter orthodox views about women (Moss & Rudman 2010). Most importantly, women often lack the resources they need (Fisher & Naidoo, 2016) and have to navigate a male-dominated society (Setzler 2019), which all contribute to their underrepresentation in politics.

women from ethnic minorities are doubly discriminated against. On the other hand, social media has become an instrument to address the women's groups who are looking for new ways to organize. Social media has found another platform for women that not only provides easier access to the electorate but also allows them to burst the bubble of already existing political elites. These factors not only demonstrate the opportunities for women's empowerment but also indicate the persistent challenges that are present in the global landscape of women's empowerment in politics.

The study is conducted based on the context of these developments. It aims to gather material from contemporary research on women’s political representation across different regions. By bringing together the findings of comparative studies and underscoring the differences between various regions, this research paper is aiming to make contributions within the dialogues around gender, governance, and inclusive democracy. The objectives of the study are:

1. To analyze global trends of research in women’s political representation.
2. To assess how well gender quotas work to increase women’s political representation.
3. To assess the potential and obstacles for women’s empowerment.

Methodology:

This study employs a systematic literature review (SLR) to analyse the global trend of research on women’s political representation, gender quotas, and barriers to empowerment. The methodology adopted in the study is the PRISMA 2020 framework to ensure accuracy, transparency, and replicability (Agrawal et al., 2024). Table 1 discusses the Bibliographic data retrieval process. Search was conducted on the Scopus database, which is a well-known abstract and citation database featuring major articles from prestigious journals with high impact factors and research experts. Search terms include “women in politics”, “gender quotas”, “political representation”, “gender empowerment”. The search was limited to the period from 2000 to 2023 and only English language articles, review and conference papers were included. After refining the errors, 776 publications were considered for bibliometric review.

The selection process is illustrated in Figure 2 (PRISMA Flowchart), which traces the pathway from initial identification (776 records) to the final inclusion of 30 studies.

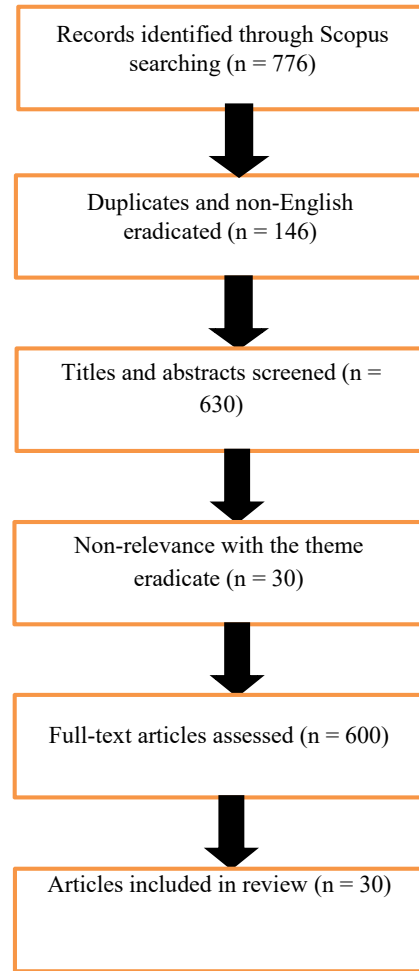


Figure 2: PRISMA Flowchart

Table 1: Bibliographic data retrieval process

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Keywords	‘women in politics’, ‘gender quotas’, ‘political representation’, gender empowerment	-
Timeframe	between 2000 and 2023	-
Extracted Paper for study	776	-
Duplicates	650	126
Language: English	630	20
Relevance based on titles and abstracts as focused on non-political themes	600	30
Articles were retained after screening titles and abstracts	600	-
Full-text reviews were conducted, assessing methodological rigor and thematic relevance	30	570

Findings & Results

The study included 30 studies in the form of papers for review. The selected studies cover a broad range of

geographic regions, research techniques, and themes offering a comprehensive perspective on women's political empowerment (see Table 2).

Table 2: Comprehensive Thematic Study on Women's Political Empowerment

Author(s)	Year	Title	Key Findings	Country/Region
Chattopadhyay & Duflo	2004	Women as Policy Makers	Gender quotas in Indian panchayats increased infrastructure investment and improved access to drinking water.	India
Beaman et al.	2012	Female Leadership Raises Aspirations	Female leaders in India reduced gender gaps in education and increased women's political aspirations.	India
Burnet	2011	Gender Quotas and Female Empowerment in Rwanda	Rwanda's gender quotas led to a female parliamentary majority, driving progressive policies in education and healthcare.	Rwanda
Fox & Lawless	2004	Entering the Arena	Societal biases discourage women from pursuing political roles despite comparable qualifications to men.	United States
Iyer et al.	2012	Political Representation and Crime	Increased female representation in India led to better reporting and handling of crimes against women.	India
Le Barbanchon & Sauvagnat	2022	Electoral Competition and Voter Bias	Voter biases in patriarchal societies systematically disadvantage women candidates.	France
Sharma	2006	Women's Empowerment and State Reformation	Intersectionality of caste and gender creates compounded challenges for women's political participation in India.	India
Markham	2013	Women as Agents of Change	Women legislators prioritize social policies, including healthcare and education, over military spending.	Global
Hassim	2006	Feminism and Democracy in Africa	Grassroots feminist movements have driven political inclusion but face systemic challenges in patriarchal societies.	Africa
Frechette et al.	2008	Gender Quotas and Political Representation	Gender quotas improve symbolic representation but face limitations in patriarchal systems.	France
Wilber	2011	Lessons from Rwanda	Quotas transformed governance in Rwanda, resulting in enhanced focus on healthcare and education.	Rwanda
Schwindt-Bayer & Mishler	2005	Women's Representation and Governance	Women's political participation improves perceptions of government legitimacy.	Latin America
Niederle & Vesterlund	2007	Gender Differences in Competition	Women are less likely to enter political competitions due to societal biases and traditional roles.	United States
Chen	2008	Female Policymakers and Education	Increased female representation leads to higher investments in education.	OECD Countries
Kalsi	2017	Gender Representation and Child Mortality	Increased female leadership in India reduced gender gaps in child mortality rates.	India
Elias	2013	Gender Equality in Global Forums	Women's representation in forums like the UN and WEF highlights the need for gender-sensitive governance.	Global
Burns et al.	2009	Gender and Political Participation	Women's involvement in decision-making bodies benefits communities through gender-sensitive governance.	Global

Author(s)	Year	Title	Key Findings	Country/Region
Strickland & Duvvury	2003	Gender Equity in Peacebuilding	Gender equity in peace processes contributes to long-term conflict resolution and sustainable governance.	Global
Verge & Fuente	2014	Party Politics and Gender Quotas	Gender quotas in political parties have limited impact without broader societal reforms.	Spain
Gneezy et al.	2009	Gender Differences in Leadership	Traditional norms discourage women from competing for leadership roles.	United States
Burnet	2011	Social Impacts of Women in Politics	Women's representation creates cultural shifts, reducing biases and increasing female civic participation.	Global
Chinkin & Charlesworth	2006	Women in Peacebuilding	Women's involvement in peacebuilding improves the durability of post-conflict agreements.	Global
Krook	2018	Violence Against Women in Politics	Violence and harassment are major barriers to women's sustained political participation.	Global
Ghani et al.	2014	Political Reservations and Women's Entrepreneurship	Political reservations in India positively impacted women's entrepreneurship in male-dominated sectors.	India
Asiedu	2023	Women's Political Representation in Developing Countries	Women's representation improves community-level policy priorities and social outcomes.	Sub-Saharan Africa
Devlin & Elgie	2008	The Effect of Increased Women's Representation	Increased representation impacts legislative outputs, particularly on gender equality issues.	Global
Paxton & Hughes	2017	Women, Politics, and Power	Long-term analysis shows incremental but uneven progress in women's political empowerment globally.	Global
Sumbadze	2015	Women's Political Representation in Post-Conflict Zones	Women play pivotal roles in governance and reconstruction in post-conflict zones but face systemic barriers.	Post-Conflict Areas
Öhman	2011	Women and Political Finance	Highlights the financial barriers women face in electoral campaigns, advocating for policy reforms.	Nordic Countries
Kittilson	2006	Gender and Party Systems	Explores how inclusive party systems can drive gender parity in political participation.	Europe

Thematic Analysis

Gender Quotas as a Catalyst for Empowerment

Gender quota has been one of the most studied interventions to increase the political representation of

women. Literature shows that quota increases the number of women in legislative bodies. Case studies from Rwanda and India revealed an example of how quota can give rise to transformational rule (Table 3).

Table 3: Case Studies from Rwanda and India

Author (s)	Year	Key Findings	Country/Region
Burnet	2011	Gender quotas in Rwanda led to a female parliamentary majority, leading to progressive policies in healthcare and education.	Rwanda
Chattopadhyay & Duflo	2004	Quotas in Indian panchayats improved community-level investments in infrastructure and increased women's political aspirations.	India
Beaman et al.	2012	Female leaders reduced gender gaps in education and inspired greater political aspirations among women in India.	India



Barriers to Women's Political Participation

Despite the implementation of gender quotas, several systemic barriers continue to hinder women's participation in politics. These include societal biases, voter discrimination, and limited access to financial resources (Table 4).

Table 4: Systemic Barriers Hinder Women's Participation in Politics

Author(s)	Year	Key Findings	Country/ Region
Le Barbanchon & Sauvagnat	2022	Voter biases in patriarchal societies systematically disadvantage women candidates	France
Fox & Lawless	2004	Societal expectations discourage women from pursuing political office despite equal qualifications	United States
Frechette et al.	2008	Limited financial resources and lack of access to political networks hinder women's political participation	France

Intersectional Challenges

Intersectionality plays a critical role in shaping the involvements of women in politics. Women from marginalized sections, including lower castes, ethnic minorities, and economically disadvantaged backgrounds, encounter compounded barriers (Table 5).

Table 5: Intersectionality Role for Women in Politics

Author(s)	Year	Key Findings	Country/Region
Sharma	2006	Caste-based discrimination in India limits the effectiveness of gender quotas for women from marginalized communities.	India
Hassim	2006	Grassroots feminist movements in Africa have reshaped political participation but face systemic underfunding.	Africa
Sumbadze	2015	Women in post-conflict zones face barriers in leadership but play pivotal roles in governance and reconstruction.	Post-Conflict Areas

Role of Digital Platforms as Enablers

Digital platforms and social media have emerged as an instrument to amplify women's voices in politics (Table 6). They allow women to overcome traditional barriers such as limited access to political networks and financial resources.

Table 6: Social Media Leads Women in Politics

Author(s)	Year	Key Findings	Country/Region
Markham	2013	Social media platforms amplify women's voices and political engagement, leading to increased political participation.	Global
Elias	2013	Digital platforms enhance women's ability to network and engage in political discourse globally.	Global

Discussion

Comparative Insights

In increasing the political participation of women, the effectiveness of gender quota varies greatly in areas affected by both institutional structures and social norms. Linga quota, which makes a certain percentage of women in elected bodies, has proved effective in increasing the representation of women in many parts of the world. However, the results depend on the political and cultural contexts of each country on a large scale.

Rwanda's Success

Rwanda is a prominent example of the effectiveness of the Linga quota. After the massacre in the 1990s, Rwanda implemented a gender quota system, which facilitated the choice of most women in Parliament - which is currently more than 60%. This has a profound impact on the policy, especially in areas such as healthcare, education, and social welfare. Women participation with progressive laws of the country related to gender equality has been credited, and women MPs have made significant progress in addressing social issues. Women in Rwanda have become important

in building the nation after a conflict, not only to increase representation but also perform gender quota capacity in running gender-sensitive policies.

India's Slower Progress

In contrast, India's experience with the gender quota has slowed down and more uneven. Although the local government quota (such as in panchayats) has improved the political representation of women, the same success has not been shown in national politics. While the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments ensured 33% reservation for women in rural and urban local bodies, the national law for representing women has stopped. The Reservation Bill of Women, which proposes 33% reservation for women in the National Parliament, has faced significant opposition from male politicians, which still highlights patriarchal systems that dominate the political landscape of India. Despite the success of women in local rule, voters prejudice, gender stereotypes, and patriarchal resistance often prevent women from climbing high political positions. Cultural dimension that considers women for household activities instead of political leaders, greatly obstruct their progress. In addition, caste intersections, where women from the marginalized section encounter additional problems, make political participation even more difficult for women in India.

Global Insights and Other Regional Variations

Globally, the effectiveness of gender quota also varies from nation to nation, such as Latin America and Northern Europe. In countries such as Sweden and Norway, where political systems are more gender-appointed, the Kota regime has been highly successful in ensuring women's participation in regime. In Latin America, many countries such as Argentina, Brazil, and Costa Rica have adopted Linga quota, resulting in a significant increase in representation of women in national assemblies. However, even in these areas, cultural and institutional challenges remain, as women often marginalize themselves within the political system despite a formal quota. The majority is that while gender quota is a powerful tool to increase representation, their success is casual on political will to implement and implement these quota, as well as cultural references in which they apply. The gender quota should be complemented by social change and structural changes to ensure that the representation of women is transformed into a meaningful political power.

Policy Recommendations

The review of literature and comparative insights reveals that gender quotas, while effective, should be aligned with the structural changes in broader strategy for women's political empowerment. The following policy recommendations aim to address the barriers women face and enhance the effectiveness of gender quotas:

Combine Gender Quotas with Capacity-Building Initiatives

While the gender quota can ensure that women are represented in decision-making bodies, their long-term effectiveness depends on the support of women's leadership development. Capacity-making initiatives such as leadership training, mentorship programs, and political education can help women not only reach their representation in politics, but can also help develop their skills and confidence to make decisions and implement them. For example, programs that provide leadership skills and political campaign technology to young women can help remove political networks, often considered the main obstacles in their participation in politics. These initiatives should also focus on rural and marginalized women who may not have the same access to resources and opportunities as their urban counterparts.

Address Systemic Barriers, Such as Voter Biases, Through Awareness Campaigns

While gender quota enhances the representation of women in number, they do not make any impact on voters bias and traditional views of society for women that often limit women's political participation. Public awareness campaigns are necessary to challenge and break these stereotypes, especially in societies with deep patriarchal systems. These campaigns should focus on educating voters about the importance of women in leadership and the impact of gender equality on social welfare. Awareness initiative may include media campaigns, public debate and community outreach programs that promote positive image of women in leadership and challenge prejudices that voters put against women candidates. These campaigns should also emphasize the importance of equal political participation and social justice, which benefit both men and women.

Leverage Technology to Empower Rural and Marginalized Women

Digital platforms and social media have emerged as a means to raise political, especially between youth and marginalized communities. Digital divide, however, still limits access to rural women and technology without access. To empower women in low areas, government policies should focus on the expansion of Internet access, digital literacy programs, and online political engagement platforms. For example, mobile technology can be used to provide a platform to give their opinion on political training, updates on candidates and policies, and political matters for women. Programs that train women in digital literacy and encourage their involvement in online political discussions can open new avenues for political engagement, especially in areas where traditional political participation is interrupted by logical or cultural obstacles.



Conclusion

This review shows that gender quota is an effective tool to increase the representation of women in politics. However, this success is not guaranteed and is influenced by social norms, cultural approaches, and political structures. Countries like Rwanda have seen remarkable success with Linga Kota, while India has faced resistance due to deep patriarchal systems. Additionally, the intersection plays an important role in determining how accessible politics for women, especially from the background of marginalized. To fully feel the ability of gender quota, they must be part of a broad set of policies aimed at empowering women politically. We can create a more inclusive and representative political system by introducing quota, sensitize the issue of voters' biases, and using digital campaign as a means to address the issue. These efforts will not only increase the number of women in politics but will also ensure that their presence will lead to real changes in governance and policy.

Implications

Theoretical Implications

The study suggests that the gender quota is not universally applied; their results depend primarily on institutional structures, political culture, and social norms. This emphasizes reference-specific theoretical structure when analyzing the status of women in political-face. In addition, the research supports the use of intersections as a theoretical lens and shows how gender interacts with compound obstacles with caste, ethnicity, and economic classes, which expands the discourse on inclusive democracy.

Policy Implications

Quotas should be complemented with supportive measures such as leadership training, mentorship programs, and financial resources to ensure that numeric representation translates into sufficient political influence. Governments and international organizations should implement security measures against voter bias, political violence, and oppression by promoting awareness campaigns to normalize women's leadership in the political field.

Limitations

This study also has some limitations, like other studies. The study collects data from Scopus as a single source, which may have resulted in the exclusion of studies from other prominent databases. The basis of study on single source might have certain biases. Future research might consider several databases in a single study to avoid the chances of biasness.

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Annexure 17.4.8

Submission Date	Submission Id	Word Count	Character Count
21-Oct-2025	4653243 (DrillBit)	4459	31647

Analyzed Document	Submitter email	Submitted by	Similarity
4.1 ROL1_Neeraj_GJEIS Oct-Dec 2025.docx	neerajpant@ipu.ac.in	Neeraj Pant	05%



<p>5 SIMILARITY %</p> <p>6 MATCHED SOURCES</p> <p>A GRADE</p> <p>A-Satisfactory (0-10%) B-Upgrade (11-40%) C-Fair (41-60%) D-Unacceptable (61-100%)</p>		<p>2 gjeis.com 2 Publication</p> <p>4 seahipaj.org 1 Publication</p> <p>5 etheses.lse.ac.uk 1 Publication</p> <p>6 Student Archives Data <1 Student Paper</p> <p>7 iiespace.iie.ac.za <1 Publication</p>
<p>LOCATION MATCHED DOMAIN</p> <p>1 moam.info 2 Internet Data</p>	<p>SOURCE TYPE</p>	

Reviewers Memorandum



Reviewer's Comment 1: The manuscript addresses an important and timely issue by examining global trends in women's political empowerment, with particular emphasis on gender quotas, systemic barriers, intersectionality, and the role of digital platforms. The study successfully brings together evidence from diverse geographic regions and thematic areas, offering a broad and inclusive perspective on women's political participation. However, the review would benefit from incorporating more review studies to strengthen methodological rigor. Additionally, while Scopus is mentioned as a database, the rationale for selecting the time period is not clearly stated. Including more recent studies and explicitly highlighting theoretical implications would further enhance the academic contribution of the paper.

Reviewer's Comment 2: The study makes a valuable contribution by presenting a comprehensive overview of women's political participation from global, intersectional, and digital perspectives. The synthesis of literature across regions and themes such as gender quotas, structural barriers, and digital empowerment is a notable strength. To further improve the manuscript, the authors are encouraged to include more recent and high-impact studies related to the phenomenon. Moreover, the theoretical implications remain underdeveloped; elaborating on how the findings extend or challenge existing theories would significantly strengthen the scholarly relevance of the study.

Reviewer's Comment 3: The manuscript is commendable for its clear purpose and broad scope, offering meaningful insights into women's political empowerment at a global level. The integration of intersectional challenges and digital platforms adds contemporary relevance to the discussion. Nevertheless, the practical implications require further elaboration, particularly in terms of how the findings can assist policymakers, political institutions, civil society organizations, and digital platforms in addressing identified challenges. The paper would also benefit from placing stronger emphasis on directions for future research. Expanding this section could help guide scholars toward unexplored areas, thereby enhancing the long-term impact and usefulness of the study.

Neeraj Pant
"Global Trends in Women's Political Empowerment:
A Systematic Literature Review using
Prisma Framework, 2020"
Volume-17, Issue 4, Oct-Dec 2025. (www.gjeis.com)

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Conflict of Interest: Author of a Paper had no conflict neither financially nor academically.

Editorial Excerpt

The article has 05% plagiarism, which is within the accepted percentage as per the norms and standards of the journal for publication. As per the editorial board's observations and blind reviewers' remarks, the paper had some minor revisions, she was communicated promptly to the authors (Neeraj), and all necessary corrections were incorporated as and when directed. The comments related to this manuscript are closely aligned with the theme "Global Trends in Women's Political Empowerment: A Systematic Literature Review using PRISMA FRAMEWORK, 2020" both subject-wise and research-wise. The paper examines global trends in women's political empowerment by synthesizing existing literature on gender quotas, systemic barriers, intersectional challenges, and the role of digital platforms. It seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors shaping women's political participation and representation across diverse global contexts. After thorough reviews and the editorial board's remarks, the manuscript has been categorized and approved for publication under the "Review of Literature" category.

Acknowledgement

The acknowledgement section is an essential part of all academic research papers. It provides appropriate recognition to all contributors for their hard work and effort taken while writing a paper. The data presented and analysed in this paper by the authors (Neeraj) were collected first handily and wherever it has been taken the proper acknowledgment and endorsement depicts. The author is highly indebted to others who facilitated accomplishing the research. Last but not least, endorse all reviewers and editors of GJEIS in publishing in the present issue.

Disclaimer

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