

# **Elitism in Political Representation of South Asian Women**

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## **Abstract**

South Asia is second only to Scandinavia in having had more women heads of government than any other region in the world. South Asia witnesses women at the top of the political helm. But the participation of South Asian women in politics in the past years was almost insignificant. Only few women rose to position of leadership in politics in south Asia and attained high levels of economic and social participation. Political participation of south Asian countries occurs in the context of constitutionalism. The constitutional process of democracy stands for a system of governance on the basis of rule of law and popular sovereignty: and the principle of popular sovereignty implies the absence of gender, racial, religious or economic obstacles to political equality.

However the post independence politics in South Asia has been closely related to the socio – economic conditions of the colonial period. Several important points can be noted; origin of modern economy and its existence, alongside traditional subsistence - economy, emergence of the new "national elites" and power sharing between colonial masters and the national elites and population growth and the evolution of increasingly diverse social groups. In this background roots of social economic as well as political inequalities in modern South Asia could be seen through this dualistic change. The aim of the present paper is to examine the elitism in political participation in South Asia with special reference to India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Pakistan.