

# Transforming Gender Identities through Quota System- Confronting the Question of Women's Representation in Politics

Dr. Anupama Singh

Public Administration, ICDEOL, HPUniversity, Summer Hill, Shimla, Himachal Pradesh, India

**Abstract-** Today quotas are being introduced in countries where women only constitute a small minority in parliament, and the world is witnessing historical transformations in women's representation, for example from 19 per cent women in parliament to 35 in one election (Costa Rica) or 36 per cent women in the very first democratic parliamentary election (South Africa). Such great historical fundamental changes might not occur without quota provisions, but the focus here is on electoral gender quotas as a special measure to increase women representation. It is argued that a new international discourse on women in institutional politics is an important factor behind recent introduction of quotas all over the world, even in countries that previously had a very low representation of women. However, the fact that some countries have opened up for quotas, while others have not, and secondly, the fact that specific types of quota systems do seem to occur in regional clusters, all point to the need for contextual based research about what we will call the translation of this international discourse into individual countries and regions, and about the mechanisms behind the introduction of quotas nationally. The study will be done with a search light on situation in India and other political systems.

**Index Terms-** Gender Quotas, Political Power, and Women's Representation

## I. INTRODUCTION

It is surely a truism today that women's issues no longer belong exclusively to the women's movement, if they ever did. This situation is especially visible in the world of politics, and finds its clearest expression in proliferating references to 'gender': in local, national and international fore, among state functionaries, development experts, academics and activists - many of whom would not think of themselves as feminists - one hears repeatedly of gender bias, gender sensitisation, gender planning and gender training, to mention just some of the more common examples of its contemporary use. At the global level, an enabling environment has been created under the UN aegis, where women's networks have learned about lobbying and advocacy, come together to debate and promote their views, to negotiate with Government representatives and hold them accountable for global conventions and resolutions (Kardam, 2004). In many countries, women's movements have also successfully pressured Governments from below to change legal institutions, laws and policies.

From such arguments it is often swiftly imputed that the global trend towards the quota system of public roles, resources and responsibilities is also good for women. The logic is as follows: because prevailing gender relations in most parts of the world continue to see women as responsible for the domestic sphere, women are more likely to be concerned with things homebound and local. As such, reservation is often regarded as an important vehicle for increasing women's representation and advancing women's rights. The reality, however, is not so clear-cut. First, quota system has its limits and there is reason to believe that effective voice and distributive policies are better exercised at national level. Second, even where the benefits of quota system can be clearly demonstrated, it is not guaranteed that these are extended to women. Third, 'women' constitute a heterogeneous constituency and even where quota system has benefits in terms of advancing gender equity, these do not necessarily extend to all categories of women with similar effect. The paper is based on the first worldwide overview of the use of quotas ([www.quotaproject.org](http://www.quotaproject.org)). Only electoral gender quotas are discussed in this paper, defined as legal rules (constitutional or legislative) or internal party regulations that set up a fixed minimum of women or of either sex among the political parties' candidates for public election.

## II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Thus the aim of this paper will be

i) to analyze quota discourses, ii) to identify different quota systems and iii) to discuss which factors have facilitated the introduction of electoral gender quotas in various countries in the last decades.

## III. METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on secondary data collection. The secondary data was collected by various published sources like Quota Project Reports, Inter Parliamentary Union Reports, Books, Journal, Magazine, etc. The findings were discussed in the light of published literature.

## IV. ENGENDERING THE POLITICS

### Why do we need Gender Quotas?

New demands by feminist movements have opened a different question. Women (as well as many others) ask not for

representation as individual citizens, but as members of a group. They ask not only that citizens who happen to be women be represented, but also that women be represented because they are women. What does this demand mean? On what grounds can we argue that women are entitled to representation as members of a group rather than, simply, as individuals? Is the demand for representation of women simply or necessarily a demand for more women in political office? These questions point to vast gaps in political research, gaps that exist for two reasons. One is that barely a decade and a half has passed since the development of interest in the study of women and politics; one could hardly expect scholars in a new field to ask and answer all of its research questions in that amount of time, particularly given the lack of training in women's studies available in universities. The second problem is that most political scientists who study core political questions such as representation have tended to ignore issues concerning women or have regarded such issues as "special topics" worthy of only limited interest.

Political scientists have shown little inclination to pursue questions concerning women. The term, "women's issues" usually refers to public concerns that impinge primarily on the private (especially domestic) sphere of social life, and particularly those values associated with children and nurturance. But even within this domain "women's issues" can be interpreted in three distinct, although related ways. One interpretation is simply that women are more interested in these issues than in others as a result of their "parochial" domestic concerns (suggested by Lane, 1959). Another is that they are more interested in these issues than are men—that there is, in a sense, a division of labor in political attention. Finally, one could say that regardless of their relative level of concern with these issues, women have a "special" interest, or a particular (potential) viewpoint from which their positions or preferences might be derived. In discussing representation, we are more concerned with the latter two, and especially the final interpretation. The first is the problem of women's "objective situation" and its relevance to political interests; the other is the hardly less difficult question of women's consciousness of their own interests and the "subjective" condition of women. Research in various fields of social science provides evidence that women do have a distinct position and a shared set of problems that characterize a special interest. Many of these distinctions are located in the institutions in which women and men are probably most often assumed to have common interests, the family.

## V. RELEVANCE OF GENDER QUOTAS

The current debate on the gender quotas has raised a host of questions - relating to liberal democracy, egalitarianism and the under representation of women; interest-group politics and the political inclusion and exclusion of certain identifiable group interests; the notion of 'participatory democracy' and the relationship between women's political representation and processes of further democratization; the normative basis of demands for equality and social justice; the meaning of equal opportunity and the need for more vigorous advocacy and positive intervention on behalf of women. Feminist perspectives on the state, democracy and notions of political equality and participation have emphasised that without formal mechanisms

for ensuring women's representation in political structures it will not be possible for women to cross formidable barriers to their entry into active electoral politics as it denies their viewpoints sufficient opportunity to be integrated in the political system. Law and policy serve as direct and indirect buttresses of such differentiation and stratification. In addition, gender differentiation and stratification in private life buttresses the political economy, affecting, at minimum, child care and welfare, education, consumption, employment and labor supply, and property and wealth arrangements. Law and public policy continue to create and reinforce differences between women and men in property and contract matters (especially regarding marriage, divorce, and widowhood), economic opportunity (including employment, credit, and social security), protection from violence (rape and wife battery), control over fertility and child care, educational opportunities, and civic rights and obligations. Marxist and non-Marxist scholars alike understand a group's relation to the mode of production, their relative control over both processes and products, as at least part of the basis for defining political interests. Children are perhaps the most important "products" of a society. Reproduction must be considered in a serious way as a factor in the political economy of governance (as in Eisenstein, 1979; Delphy, 1980).

If we take the example of India, the Indian democratic state is committed to the protection of individual rights within the context of citizenship, a closer look at how it operates for the women reveals that these rights are not accessible in the public and private spheres in their full potential to all the women in India. There are historical, social and cultural factors that have limited women's capacity and chances to exercise their freedom to participate in the political processes. The evolution of Indian democracy through the 14 general elections so far has reflected a low representation of women in Parliament, State legislatures, in political parties and other decision-making bodies. The under representation of women in the political sphere is inextricably linked with the low and inferior status of women in society in India especially in the context of the declining sex ratio, increasing violence and crimes against women and their marginalized status in employment, education and health sectors. (Human Development in South Asia:2012). The comparative position of gender-related development index (GDI) reveals that among 177 countries, India ranks 134th, indicating its very low gender-equity status.

Anne Phillips argues that the "contemporary demands for political presence have often risen out of the politics of new social movements and they all reflect inequalities other than social class ....."

She further adds that :

"the emphasis on political exclusion and what counts as political inclusion, significantly alters the framework for debates on political equality. The main achievement of nineteenth and twentieth century democracy was to make citizenship more universal, pulling down, one after another all these barriers that excluded women, people with wrong religion, the wrong skin colour or just people with too little property. Subsequent debates have focused on what else might be necessary – in the shape of

more substantial equalities in our social and economic life - to realize the promise of democratic equality. The demand for equal or fairer representation of women with men or demand for political inclusion of groups that see themselves as marginalized, is a major reframing of the problem of democratic equality.... The 'politics of ideas' (what is represented) is being challenged by an alternative 'politics of presence'. Further elaborating her ideas she says that "The politics of presence is not about locking people into pre-given essentialised identities, nor is it, just a new way of defining interest- groups that should jostle for attention. The point, rather, is to enable those now excluded from politics to engage more directly in political debate and political action". (Phillips,1994).

If this is not the case, it signifies deep flaws within the political system. Representation is not only a means of ensuring individual participation. It is also the responsibility of the representatives to act on behalf of the constituents, including women, who elected them and reflect their ideas and aspirations. Women's disproportionate absence from the political process would mean that the concerns of half the population cannot be sufficiently attended to or acted "Women must have votes and an equal legal status. But the problem does not end there. It only commences at the point where women begin to affect the political deliberations of the nation". The second part of the anticipated change never started, the vision faded out of the Indian scene once theoretical equality was incorporated in the Constitution. (Sharma,1984).

The research shows that a critical mass of women in governing institutions promotes collaboration across ideological lines and social sectors. Less than two years after the Rwandan genocide, women legislators established the Forum of Rwandan Women Parliamentarians. The FFRP has screened laws to eliminate discrimination, promoted women's and children's rights, led consultative processes, and developed legislation against gender-based violence—the first legislation to originate in the parliament rather than the executive (Kagame, 2003). Sudanese women followed suit, establishing the only all-party caucus in the national assembly since the Comprehensive Peace - Agreement in 2005.

When women are involved in the governing process, they broaden the political debate to address constituent matters, social concerns, and local issues. In Colombia, Argentina, and Costa Rica, women legislators assign higher priority to women's, children's, and family issues and are more likely than their male colleagues to initiate related bills. Local women government officials in India are more focused on providing social services. They have expanded the political agenda to include water infrastructure, children's education, and gender and matrimonial issues. In Namibia, women spearheaded efforts to combat employment discrimination and land reform as well as gender-based violence. Field research from Rwanda shows that women candidates and officials are perceived to be more likely than men to address the social and economic welfare of constituents.

In Bhopal, India, the last of four women rulers introduced compulsory education for girls throughout their kingdom. This contributed to Bhopal having universal education for girls to this date. Nation-wide, the presence of a chairwoman on the Indian University Grants Commission was critical in a marked increase in women's accessing grants. In addition, India is also one of the

few countries in which women parliamentarians have succeeded in persuading their fellow parliamentarians during the budgetary hearings to set a target of 30 per cent for women in the earmarking of total development funds—an achievement that parallels the South African Women's Budget Initiative documented by chapter 6 of this volume. In Uganda, the Women's Caucus in Parliament succeeded in increasing the government's budget allocations for nutrition and for childhood development projects. Similarly, in the Philippines, committed women parliamentarians introduced the very principle of targeted budget allocations for women and achieved an initial rate of 5 per cent. In 1998, their efforts also led to the adoption of a bill on rape.

## **VI. Legislation Meaningful to Women's Lives**

Again in Uganda, women introduced the issue of women's equity into the overall land reform bill. Kenyan women have repeatedly striven, inside and outside Parliament, to persuade the government to give women title to land and to establish bank accounts in their own name without the approval of their fathers or husbands. In Jamaica, women parliamentarians have helped set up a number of special funds, detailed in chapter 11, that directly or indirectly benefit women. The *interpretation* of law is equally important. Most observers credit the new force of sexual harassment law throughout the USA to the presence of two women Justices on the nine member Supreme Court, who mobilized their colleagues into considering a case, even in a primary school. In that country, legislation on sexual harassment is an issue left to the each of the 50 states (as is capital punishment and most education and health matters).

### **Women's Impact on Corruption**

As noted in the Overview chapter of this volume, a recent World Bank study indicates a close correlation between women's representation in parliaments and a decrease in the incidence of corruption. If the finding of this initial 1999 inquiry, "Are Women Really the 'Fairer' Sex", is borne out by further study, the implications are immense for women's entry into politics, as well as for government efficiency.

### **Women's Networking for Regional Learning and Co-operation**

From the 1992 Earth Summit on, women caucused formally or informally at all the major UN conferences of the 1990s. Many took this experience back to the national level in structures ranging from parliaments through municipal assemblies—Uganda being only one example, which has had its own ripple effect throughout Sub-Saharan Africa. Similarly women's regional and international networks disseminated knowledge of the South African Women's Budget. This initiative is being replicated as far from that country as Barbados.

### **Changing Institutional Structures and Processes**

Again in South Africa, women parliamentarians— together with civil society representatives and committed individuals— changed that country's electoral college system (including its competency requirements) to broaden the access of women to electoral posts. Similar movements are underway in countries as different as Botswana and Uruguay.

### Result based Idea of Equality

In 1995 the United Nations Human Development Program (UNHDP) officially confirmed what many would confess to knowing: "In no society today do women enjoy the same opportunity as men." This harsh reality stands in sharp contrast to the global legal norms that, since the UN Charter entered into force in 1945, have promised the equality of men and women. This commitment has subsequently been reaffirmed in the Universal Declaration and in numerous other human rights conventions and conference documents. As Mary Meyer, one of the editors of Gender Politics in Global Governance, notes in her interesting chapter on the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, women have been continually concerned about and involved with international issues since early in the nineteenth century. The activities of that organization itself have ranged over eight decades, and it continues to have a central role in organizing women's efforts on behalf of world peace and human rights. In the context of this long and ongoing history of women's international involvements, 1975 was a landmark year: it was declared by the United Nations as the International Year of the Woman, which became the first year in the United Nations Decade for Women. The decade included three conferences, the first of which was held in Mexico City in 1975, a year that proved to be a turning point for women: their participation in discussions by and about the role of women in global politics and governance took a decidedly public and activist turn. The Mexico City conference was marred by tensions between competing geopolitical blocs (West/North, South, and East). It underscored not just the breadth and complexity of "women's issues," but their indivisibility from, and interdependence with, larger issues of global politics and economics. The second women's conference, a 1980 meeting in Copenhagen, was also tense and problematic. The third, however—the 1985 meeting in Nairobi—was much more successful, resulting in the publication of Forward Looking Strategies, a document that centered women on the international agenda and specifically included (for the first time in such an international document) the issue of gender violence. It was this issue that, because of its prevalence, would later prove to be a unifying theme for women from across the globe. Ten years later, in 1995—coincidentally the year that the year the UNHDP acknowledged the persistent inequality of women—the UN-sponsored Fourth World Conference on Women produced the Beijing Platform of Action, a comprehensive document addressing ongoing issues, concerns, and needs of women—ranging from education to violence, from peace to health. These four conferences and the events surrounding them are significant signposts of the cultural changes that have occurred with regard to the discursive space of women in the international arena. It is the activism that these conferences engendered, coupled with the work of women in or around international organizations, which inspired Meyer and Pruihl's book, the central goal of which is to "compile empirical work documenting the intersection of feminist activism and international politics." This intersection not only "constitutes a significant aspect of globally oriented feminist politics but . . . provides material for current reconceptualization of the international that reach beyond the interstate arena".

The under representation of women is crucial in thinking about democracy and gender (Philips, 1991) and as showed before, there are reasonably sound argument to increase women participation in politics. Among other means (such as pool-enlarging strategies, or gender preferences) a strategy that has gained increasing currency within the movement, and relates primarily to the issue of women's political representation with liberal democracies, is that of introducing gender quotas, whether in political parties or in local or national legislatures (Randall, 1998). The evident success of such policies in the Nordic countries has inspired imitation elsewhere and has been the most widely used affirmative action policy in Latin America (Htun, 1998).

Sun-uk (1995) argues that the need for a quota system stems from the lack of opportunities for women to perform their potential capabilities. If women do have the capabilities and the power to choose, a quota system is not needed. In favour of a quota scheme implementation are arguments such as the belief that it is the most effective way of translating legal equality between men and women into de facto equality by guaranteeing women's presence in leadership in the immediate term (Htun, 1998). It has also been considered as a starting point that could balance women's participation in various fields because women leaders also function as role models for other women, and serve as evidence that society is inclusive and egalitarian. (Sun-uk, 1995).

Opponents of quotas, who include both men and women, argue that they are discriminatory and that will elevate under-qualified women to power, stigmatize beneficiaries, and that above all, they are unnecessary. There are also fears that the introduction of a women's quota will prompt other groups – ethnic minorities, homosexuals, farmers, etc. to demand their own quota. Htun (1998).

### VII. Identifying different quota systems

Women's representation in formal politics matters both normatively and practically. From a normative standpoint, political elites should represent the interests of all citizens, including traditionally marginalized groups such as women (Williams 1998; Phillips 1991). Practically, a lack of female participation can result in a state that legislates in the male interest (MacKinnon 1989; Connell 1990; Waylen 1994). In that case, society-wide decisions in the form of legislation and the allocation of resources may not be enacted in women's interests. In addition, political position carries highly visible status and prestige.

While women have made remarkable inroads into both tertiary education and traditionally male occupations, the political sphere remains an arena in which women have not yet gained comparably visible status. Women are highly underrepresented in national politics, with the average percentage of women in parliaments only 19.5% in 2012 (IPU 2012) up from 15.2% in 2004 (IPU 2004). To understand the overall position of women within society it is therefore necessary to examine women's underrepresentation within the political structure. The quantitative literature on women's presence in legislatures can generally be classified into two approaches. The *first approach* focuses on national-level patterns of women's parliamentary representation. In this approach, country-level

variables are used to explain variation in the percentage of women in national legislatures across countries (Kenworthy and Malami 1999; Paxton 1997; Paxton and Kunovich 2003; Matland 1998; Reynolds 1999). For example, the percentage of women in the labor force of a country is hypothesized to represent the “supply” of women available for public office and therefore increase numbers of women in parliament (e.g., Paxton 1997). These studies tend to be large-*N*, crossnational, statistical studies with the goal of explaining variation *across* countries. A **second approach** focuses instead on *party*-level differences in the representation of women. This research has asked why parties differ with respect to the number of women they nominate as candidates, where those parties rank women on party lists, and the proportion of women they send to parliaments (Caul 1999; Gallagher and Marsh 1988; Kunovich 2003; Matland and Studlar 1996; Tremblay and Pelletier 2001; Sanbonmatsu 2002; Mateo Diez 2002; Welch and Studlar 1996). For example, leftist parties are hypothesized to provide greater support to women’s candidacies because they espouse egalitarian ideologies (e.g., Caul 1999; Beckwith 1992). Similarly, parties with women in positions of power are hypothesized to positively affect the adoption of measures favoring female candidates (e.g., Tremblay and Pelletier 2001). Because the focus is on very detailed information about parties, these studies tend to focus *within* particular countries, or a small number of countries, across a range of parties.

From above, it can be said that countries which are implementing quotas, are looking for two main objectives. On the one hand, to influence policy towards women interests and on the other to gain a greater level of women’s participation in other spheres of society. It seems that this idea may work properly in developed democracies where the parliament plays a key role in the political game and in the decision-making process. However this might not be the case in weak or “thin” democracies where the parliament is frequently bypassed by strong presidents, such as some Latin American countries where the democratisation process after military government has advanced slowly and the institutions are still weak. (O’Donnell, 1994, Munck, 1997, Tedesco, 1999). Under these circumstances, increasing the percentage of women in parliament does not necessarily lead to a change and it would be reasonable to expect that the policy influence of more women in parliament would be limited.

**Different Quota Systems**

There is however, some confusion about what constitutes different quota regimes. In the book, *Women, Quotas and Politics* (Dahlerup, ed. 2006, p.19-21), a distinction is made between two separate dimensions in the definition of quota systems: The first dimension covers the questions that has mandated the quota system, while the second dimension indicates what part of the selection and nomination process that the quota targets.

**"If the leading party in a country uses a quota this may have a significant impact on the overall rate of female representation."**

As for the mandating, *legal gender quotas* are mandated either by the constitution (like in Burkina Faso, Nepal, the

Philippines and Uganda), or by the electoral law (as in many parts of Latin America, as well as, for example, in Belgium, Bosnia—Herzegovina, Slovenia and France. But quotas may also be decided for voluntarily by political parties themselves, *voluntary party quotas*. In some countries, including Germany, Norway and Sweden, a number of political parties have introduced quotas for their own lists. In many others, though, only one or two parties have opted to use quotas. However, if the leading party in a country uses a quota, such as the ANC in South Africa, this may have a significant impact on the overall rate of female representation. Yet, even if gender quotas are increasingly popular, most of the world’s political parties do not employ voluntary gender quota at all.

Concerning the second dimension, quotas may target the first stage of the selection process, the stage of finding *aspirants*, e.g. those willingly to be considered for nomination, either by a primary or by the nominations committee and other parts of the party organization. Gender quotas at this stage are rules that demand a certain number or percentage of women or either sex be represented in the pool of candidates that are up for discussion. This has been used in countries with plurality-majority electoral systems, like the controversial ‘all-women short lists’ used for some elections by the British Labour Party. In general, it is rather complicated to construct a gender quota system that matches a majority system, but it is possible (as for instance in India and Bangladesh at the local level and elections for the new Scottish parliament).

The second stage is the actual nomination of *candidates* to be placed on the ballot by the party. This frequently used quota system implies that a rule (legal or voluntary) is installed according to which for instance 20, 30, 40 or even 50 percent of the candidates must be women. This may as mentioned above be formulated in a gender-neutral way, stating that no sex should have not less than for instance 40 percent and no more than 60.

At the third stage, those elected, we find quotas as reserved seats. Here it is decided that a certain percentage or number among those elected must be women. Increasingly, gender quotas are being introduced using reserved seat systems, and increasingly women elected on reserved seats quota systems are not appointed, but elected like in Jordan, Uganda and Rwanda.

Figure 1 shows variation in quota types when these two dimensions are combined, that is, firstly the questions of mandating and secondly the question of where in the nomination process quotas are placed.

**Figure 1. Types of Electoral Quotas**

Mandated by	At What Level?		
	Aspirants	Candidates	Elected
Legal quotas (Constitutional or electoral law)	Primaries	Candidate quotas	Reserved seats
Voluntary party quotas	Aspirant quotas (Short lists)	Candidate quotas	Reserved seats <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Agreements among political parties reserving a certain number of seats for women like in the case of Morocco.

Source: Dahlerup (ed.): *Women, Quotas and Politics*. London: Routledge 2006, p.21, updated.

**"The crucial question is, whether the nominated women are placed in a position with a real chance of election."**

Even if constitutional amendments and new electoral laws providing gender quotas may seem more commanding, it is not at all evident that these methods are more efficient than political party quotas when it comes to increasing the number of women in parliament. It all depends on the actual rules and the possible sanctions for non-compliance, as well as on the general opportunities that exist for quotas within the country. Concerning rules for nomination, the crucial issue is whether there are any rules concerning the *rank order* on the list. A requirement of say 40 percent may not result in any women elected, if all women candidates are placed at the bottom of the list. The crucial question is, whether the nominated women are placed in a position with a real chance of election.

Gender quotas may be introduced at any level of the political system: federal, national, regional or local. Examples of strong quota regimes at the local level are the 50 percent quotas at the local level in France and the 20-33 percent gender quota for the local councils in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. In India, this gender quota system is combined with the older system of quotas for the scheduled castes.

Quotas work differently under different electoral systems. Quotas are most easily introduced in proportional representation (PR) systems. However, quotas have also been implemented in some majority systems as this web site demonstrates. But even in PR-systems, some political parties and parties in some constituencies may have difficulties in implementing quotas because the quota may be viewed as interference in the usual prerogatives of the local party organization to select their own candidates.

**VIII. Factors which have facilitated the introduction of electoral gender quotas in various countries in the last decades**

This intervention aims at providing some statistics and data on women in parliament and in politics since 1945 and in particular since the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing. It presents trends of progress and setbacks and discusses some of the main challenges that women face when running for election, based on research carried out by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and other organizations. There has been significant progress since 1945 on increasing the proportion of women in parliament, from around 3 percent of women in parliament, on average, across both upper and lower houses to 18.6 percent in 2009. This represents a six-fold increase – a relatively slow rate of progress. It is significant that there is an unequal division within the regions of the world. The Nordic countries have an average proportion of 42 percent women in their parliaments, and this percentage has been increasing year on year. Two regions of the world are above the world average: the Latin American countries and the European countries, with 22 percent and 21 percent, respectively. Two other regions have reached the world average of 18.6 percent across both houses – Asia and sub-

Saharan Africa. The remaining two regions, the Pacific and the Arab states, have made progress in recent years but are far from the world average. There have been some significant achievements in recent years. In 2009, 15 percent of parliamentary chambers worldwide had 30 percent or more women members. This is a first and represents important progress. The lower house in Rwanda became the first to elect a majority of women parliamentarians in September 2008, putting Rwanda at the top of the list with women making up 56.3 percent of parliamentarians. Rwanda also elected a woman Speaker for the first time in its history. The first upper chamber to appoint a majority of women in parliament.

**Two Concepts of Equality**

"Real equal opportunity does not exist just because formal barriers are removed. Direct discrimination and hidden barriers prevent women from getting their share of political influence."

In general, quotas for women represent a shift from one concept of equality to another. The classic liberal notion of equality was a notion of "equal opportunity" or "competitive equality". Removing the formal barriers, for example, giving women voting rights, was considered sufficient. The rest was up to the individual women.

Following strong feminist pressure in the last few decades, as expressed for instance in the Beijing "Platform for Action" of 1995, a second concept of equality is gaining increasing relevance and support: the notion of "equality of result". The argument is that real equal opportunity does not exist just because formal barriers are removed. Direct discrimination and a complex pattern of hidden barriers prevent women from being selected as candidates and getting their share of political influence. Quotas and other forms of positive measures are thus a means towards equality of result. The argument is based on the experience that equality as a goal cannot be reached by formal equal treatment as a means. If barriers exist, it is argued, compensatory measures must be introduced as a means to reach equality of result. From this perspective, quotas are not discrimination (against men), but compensation for structural barriers that women meet in the electoral process.

**IX. Conclusion: Do quotas work?**

"And yet, women's representation might increase as a result of the very debate about introducing quotas. But further research is needed about the implementation of quotas."

Now through [www.ipu.org](http://www.ipu.org) it is possible to see how many countries have adopted reserved seats quotas, legislated candidate quotas and political party quotas. However, from the figures of women's actual political representation, it does illustrate that quota requirements are not actually always *implemented*. It further reveals discrepancies between quota requirements and actual representation. Since it only gives information about quotas rules that have been adopted, and not about the compliance in practice in individual parties, it is not possible to make conclusions about the connection between types of quota provisions and women's representation — other than that many quota provisions are not properly implemented. And yet, women's representation might increase as a result of the very debate about introducing quotas. But further research is needed about the implementation of quotas.

The result of introducing quotas should be studied quantitatively as well as qualitatively. Electoral statistics on the country pages show the number of women elected at the last election. Unfortunately, official electoral statistics in many countries do not provide details of the candidates *nominated* for election by sex, which then must be provided through other channels, including through political parties. The effect of quotas should also be studied in qualitative terms, looking into the intended (empowerment) as well as the unintended consequences (e.g. stigmatization, glass ceilings that may prevent women from increasing their numbers above the specified quota requirement or unintended fractions between different groups of women). The use of quotas is increasingly influenced by international recommendations and from cross-country inspiration. It seems important, however, that quotas are not just imposed from above, but rest on grass root mobilization of women and the active participation of women's organizations. Quotas in themselves do not remove all the other barriers for women's full citizenship. But under certain conditions electoral gender quotas can lead to historical leaps in women's political representation.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] Connell, R. W. 1990. "The State, Gender, and Sexual Politics." *Theory and Society* 19:507-44.
- [2] Dahlerup, Drude (2001), *The Women's Movement and Internationalization. Disempowerment or new opportunities?* GEP-series, text.no.1-2000. Aalborg University.
- [3] Dahlerup, Drude : "Increasing Women's Political Representation: New Trends in Gender Quotas", in Ballington and Karam, eds. *International IDEA. 2005: Women in Parliament. Beyond Numbers* (revised edition). Dahlerup,Drude ed., *Women, Quotas and Politics*. Routledge 2006.
- [4] Delphy, Christine (1980). "The Main Enemy." *Feminist Issues* 1: 23-40.
- [5] Dubeck, Paula J. (1976). "Women and Access to Political Office: A Comparison of Female and Male State Legislators." *Sociological Quarterly* 17: 42-52.
- [6] Htun M. (1998) "Women's political participation, representation and leadership in Latin America", Washington, DC: Inter-American Dialogue, November.
- [7] Kagame urges Women to stand for public office." Government of Rwanda Press Release.23 April 2003. Available from: <<http://www.gov.rw/government/042203.html>>.
- [8] Kardam, Nuket, "The Emerging Global Gender Equality Regime from Neoliberal and Constructivist Perspectives in International Relations", *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 6:1, March 2004, 85-109.
- [9] O'Donnell, G. (1994), "Delegative Democracy" *Journal of Democracy* N ° 5, pp 55-69. <http://www.iadialog.org/htunp>. Phillips+, (1991) (1991) "Engendering democracy" Polity Press, Cambridge.
- [10] Randall (1998) "Gender and Power. Women engage the State" in Randall, V., and Waylen, G. (Eds.), *Gender, Politics and the State*, Routledge, London.
- [11] Sun-ukK(1995), 'Meaning of the quota systems a policy for women and its introduction methods' *Women Studies forum*, Vol.11(1995),29-5.
- [12] Tendler, J. (1997) *Good Government in the Tropics*. Baltimore/London: John Hopkins University Press.
- [13] Phillips, Anne. 1991. *Engendering Democracy*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- [14] Phillips, Anne, (1995) *The Politics of Presence*; Clarendon Press, Oxford.
- [15] Sharma, Kumud, (1984) *Women in Focus*, Sangam Publishers, New Delhi.
- [16] Meyer, Mary K. and Elisabeth Priugl ,*Gender Politics in Global Governance*,1999 Edited by Lanham MD, Boulder CO, New York, Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield. Pp. xii, 299.
- [17] Waylen, Georgina. 1994. "Women and Democratization: Conceptualizing Gender Relations in Transition Politics." *World Politics* 46 (3): 327-54.
- [18] Williams, Melissa S. 1998. *Voice, Trust, and Memory: Marginalized Groups and the Failings of Liberal Representation*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

#### AUTHORS

**First Author** – Dr. Anupama Singh, Public Administration, ICDEOL, HPUniversity, Summer Hill, Shimla, Himachal Pradesh, India, [anupamakanwarhpu@gmail.com](mailto:anupamakanwarhpu@gmail.com)