



A Study of Awareness and Attitudes of Teacher Educators Toward Women's Reservation

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Abstract:

As discussions on women's reservation continue, it's important to understand the perspectives of people in education, especially teacher educators. Many studies on gender focus mainly on teachers and students, but very few focus on teacher educators. The objective of this study is to examine the awareness and attitudes of teacher educators regarding the women's reservation with reference to the Women's Reservation Act, 2023. Data was collected from teacher educators across Delhi NCR using a descriptive survey method. A structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree) was employed, and convenience sampling was used to collect responses from 46 teacher educators through Google Form. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. To understand the distribution of responses, percentages were calculated. The findings reveal a good level of general awareness among the teacher educators. But they do not show uniformity in their understanding of key aspects, such as details of the implementation process and factual awareness of the percentage of seats reserved for women. Also, teacher educators showed positive attitudes toward the women's reservation, as it may promote inclusivity and gender equality. Although they critically reflect on the effectiveness of the reservation policy, they argue that the women's reservation policy alone may not address deeper social inequalities. The study suggests policy-related discussions in educational settings to raise awareness among teachers and students. They can play a role in addressing social issues by adopting a positive attitude towards reducing social inequalities.

Keywords: *Women's Reservation, Awareness, Attitudes, Teacher Educators, Gender Equality, Political Participation*

Introduction

Women's representation in politics is crucial for ensuring equal participation in decision-making. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare's most recent 5th report of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5, 2019–21) states that there are more women than men in the population overall, with 1020 females for every 1000 males (Press Information Bureau, 2022). And only 74 MPs (14%) elected to the 18th Lok Sabha are women. Hence, there exists a huge gap between women's share of the population and their representation in politics. This gap is often linked to deeper sociocultural barriers that limit their participation in political representation (Kumar & Bhatt, 2020). Therefore, increasing women's representation to 33% is essential, as their underrepresentation in decision-making roles may limit the diversity of perspectives needed to address complex social issues. Iyer et al. (2012) found that there was an increase in the reporting of crime against women and minorities, and police responsiveness in the areas where women were in higher positions.

The discussions on the Women's Reservation Act, 2023 (Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023) have recently been in the news, as legislation allocates a 33% reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and legislative Assemblies to enhance their participation in political decision-making. The act came into effect on April 16, 2026, amid ongoing debates regarding delimitation and census. But it cannot be immediately implemented due to an issue related to delimitation. This raises important questions about public awareness and understanding of this long-awaited policy across different sections of society. Nowadays, people often follow trends rather than understand the basics of the policies they either support or protest against.

The policy has been discussed before, but remains primarily a topic of debate. The issue concerning federal balance and state representation has arisen because it is based on delimitation dependent on state populations, which may change seat distribution among states. Also, there are discussions about the lack of clear provisions for sub-quotas within women's reservations for marginalized groups. These complexities reveal a gap between political intent and actual implementation. This can be a good step towards women's empowerment, but it can take some time to be implemented properly.

In the context of women's reservation, understanding how individuals involved in education perceive and comprehend this policy is crucial, especially given education's role in societal empowerment. Teacher educators work with prospective teachers and students, so it is important to assess their awareness and attitudes toward women's reservation. The results can shed light on how such policies are interpreted within the educational sphere and how they may influence wider societal views. Thus, this study aims to investigate teacher educators' awareness and attitudes toward women's reservation.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the level of awareness among teacher educators regarding women's reservation.
2. To explore the relationship between awareness and attitudes toward women's reservation.
3. To analyze the attitudes of teacher educators toward women's reservation.

Review of literature:

Priebe (2017) concluded that women living in areas with a female village head exhibit higher levels of political participation and empowerment. Women elected through reservation tend to focus on public goods and make meaningful contributions to local governance. That means political representation can improve women's status in society. Therefore, the effectiveness of reservation policies depends on the creation of a supportive environment. These policies can function successfully only if socio-cultural structures are reformed to facilitate the meaningful empowerment of women. Responsibility for this transformation lies not only with the government but also with all members of society.

One-third (33%) of seats in PRIs were reserved for women under the 73rd and 74th amendments (1992). The objective was to increase women's representation at the grassroots level (Observer Research Foundation, 2023), which is now 50%. Despite these provisions, challenges such as socio-cultural barriers and limited leadership opportunities for women persist, hindering the full effectiveness of these policies (Singh & Verma, 2025). For instance, the practice like "Panchayat Pati", where husbands or the male relatives of elected women leaders in India's Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) exercise authority and make decisions in their place, violates the constitutional mandates for women's empowerment (Press Information Bureau, 2025).

Kumar and Bhatt (2020) argued that many structural factors, such as social conditioning, economic dependency, and limited political awareness among women, contribute to the underrepresentation of women in political spheres. Further analysis suggests that persistent sociocultural constraints keep women's participation symbolic, even when institutional provisions for representation exist. The study also emphasizes that education can play an important role in enhancing women's political awareness and enabling them to actively participate in decision-making processes. Education can also play a role in

women-led development. Presently, women are mostly the recipients of welfare; it's important that they lead the process of empowerment. To increase women's participation in politics, it is important to raise awareness and offer education that helps them see and use the opportunities available. As a result, schools and teachers play a key role in shaping attitudes about getting involved in politics.

Krook (2009) found that the perception of the public towards gender quotas influences their acceptance and support in the process of implementation. The role of education in fostering attitudes toward gender equality is widely acknowledged, with educational institutions and teachers playing a major role in shaping perspectives on social and political issues (UNESCO, 2019). It can be inferred that for the success of the current reservation policy, the perception of people can play a crucial role. If the objectives of policies are not understood well, they may face opposition or remain just a symbolic measure. Here, the role of education becomes important in creating awareness among people so that they develop an informed attitude towards the inclusivity and political representation of women. A top-down approach can be more effective if not just students, but also teachers, are sensitized and educated regarding the reservation policies.

In general, studies show that measures like political reservations for women can help increase their participation in decision-making. For these efforts to work well, it is important to change cultural and social norms and raise awareness about gender equity and inclusion. While studies focus on teachers and students, research on teacher educators remains limited, prompting the researchers to explore awareness and attitudes among individuals involved in education, particularly teacher educators.

Methodology:

This study used a quantitative survey to collect data from teacher educators to explore their levels of awareness and attitudes toward the Women's Reservation Act, 2023, particularly regarding the Act and their general understanding of the concept of reservation. A descriptive survey design was adopted. Convenience sampling was employed. The sample comprised 46 teacher educators from different institutes of the Delhi-NCR region. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data. The tool included 20 questions to assess awareness and attitudes on women's reservation measured on a 5-point Likert scale (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree). Data was collected through an online survey using Google Forms. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The percentages were calculated for each item, and the responses were analyzed to understand teacher educators' awareness and attitudes.

Demographic Profile of the sample used in the study

The study included 46 teacher educators from various institutions across the Delhi NCR region. 82.6% of the participants were female, and 17.4% were male. Respondents ranged between age groups, with most under 30 years, followed by those aged 30-40 and 41-50 years. The teaching experience of the respondents ranged widely: 84.8% had 5 years or less, 8.7% had 6 to 10 years, and 4.3% had more than 10 years. The respondents from various institutional types, including 56.5% from private institutions, 34.8% from government institutions, 6.5% from aided institutions, and 2.2% from trusts, reflect a diverse range of institutional backgrounds.

Results:

Table 1: Responses of teacher educators on Awareness of Women's Reservation

Item No.	Statement	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)
1.	Awareness of Women's Reservation Act (Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023)	0%	2.2%	19.6%	54.3%	23.9%
2.	Awareness of the key provisions of the Women's Reservation Act	2.2%	8.7%	21.7%	54.3%	13%
3.	Awareness of the implementation process	6.5%	6.5%	32.6%	45.7%	8.7%
4.	Awareness of sub-quota discussions	6.5%	10.9%	26.1%	52.2%	4.3%
5.	Following policy debates	4.3%	10.9%	19.6%	56.5%	8.7%
6.	Understanding of the broader objectives of the reservation	2.2%	6.5%	17.4%	63%	10.9%

According to the findings in Table 1, teacher educators show a good level of awareness regarding women's reservation. Most respondents show agreement, especially regarding the Women's Reservation Act and its main objectives. However, responses on other aspects of the reservation policy seem to be inconsistent. Many of the responses were neutral on the implementation process and sub-quota discussions, revealing uncertainty about the procedures and structure of the policy. This variation indicates that the idea of women's reservation is generally known, but the knowledge of the details involved in the functioning of the policy is uneven.

In addition to self-reported awareness, item 7 included a knowledge-based question to assess respondents' factual understanding of the women's reservation. Results showed that 80.4% of respondents correctly identified that 33% of seats are reserved under the Women's Reservation Act, while about 19.6% could not. This, combined with neutral responses to some awareness items, indicates that overall awareness among teacher educators is relatively high, whereas their detailed understanding of the policy may still be limited.

Table 2: Responses of teacher educators on their attitudes towards women's reservation

Item no.	Statement	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)
8.	Women's reservation is a necessary measure to address the gender imbalance in political representation	0%	2.2%	15.2%	56.5%	26.1%
9.	Women's reservation can improve inclusivity in decision-making processes.	0%	4.3%	13%	47.8%	34.8%
10.	Structural barriers justify the need for reservation for women.	0%	2.2%	15.2%	58.7%	23.9%
11.	I feel that women's reservation is important for achieving social justice	0%	2.2%	13%	52.2%	32.6%
12.	I believe women's reservation is a progressive policy reform.	0%	2.2%	15.2%	54.3%	28.3%
13.	I would support the implementation of women's reservation.	0%	0%	13%	54.3%	32.6%
14.	Teachers should actively support women's reservation.	0%	0%	10.9%	54.3%	34.8%
15.	I would encourage others to support women's political participation.	0%	8.7%	8.7%	50%	32.6%
16.	I would encourage my students to engage in discussions on women's reservation.	0%	0%	10.9%	50%	39.1%
17.	Women's reservation may compromise merit-based political selection. (R)	6.5%	28.3%	21.7%	34.8%	8.7%
18.	Reservation policies may lead to symbolic rather than real empowerment (R)	4.3%	19.6%	32.6%	28.3%	15.2%

19.	Women's reservation alone may not address deeper structural inequalities. (R)	0%	15.2%	28.3%	41.3%	15.2%
20.	Women's reservation should be extended to other institutional spaces, such as education.	2.2%	2.2%	10.9%	45.7%	39.1%

In Table 2, the findings indicate that the majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with statements about the importance of reservation in addressing gender imbalance, promoting inclusivity, and achieving social justice. This shows that teacher educators generally have a positive attitude toward women's reservation. Also, they showed high levels of agreement on Items related to supporting the implementation of the reservation and encouraging student discussions. Thus, it can be concluded that respondents are not only supportive of the idea of women's reservation but also willing to promote these ideas in educational settings.

Items related to merit, symbolic representation, and the limitations of reservation in addressing deeper social inequalities drew varied responses, with disagreement and neutrality both common. This indicates that teacher educators support women's reservation and are aware of the potential shortcomings of these policies. Overall, the findings demonstrate a positive attitude toward women's reservation, coupled with a critical understanding of its possible limitations.

Findings and discussion

The responses show that teacher educators generally hold positive attitudes toward women's reservation. They are aware of the Women's Reservation Act, 2023, and its main objectives. But their understanding is not equally developed across all aspects of the policy. Many responses are neutral regarding implementation details and sub-quota discussions. This suggests that while basic awareness is present, clarity about procedures and policy details is still limited. Simply knowing about women's reservations does not always mean fully understanding how these policies function.

Also, the pattern of response is not uniform. Many respondents expressed support for the policy and viewed it as a means to promote inclusivity, gender equality, and social justice. Responses related to encouraging discussions among students and supporting implementation are largely positive. This shows that teacher educators are not just agreeing passively; they are also willing to take an active role. However, some responses also reflect a more critical perspective. Concerns related to merit, symbolic representation, and the limits of reservation in addressing deeper structural inequalities are visible. While reservation is seen as an important step, it is not considered sufficient on its own to address broader systemic issues affecting women's political participation.

These findings are similar to those of Kumar and Bhatt (2020), who argue that women's underrepresentation in political spaces is influenced by deeper sociocultural factors and societal structures. Policy measures alone may not lead to meaningful participation. In the present study as well, awareness and positive attitudes exist among teacher educators, but a deeper level of understanding and engagement with the policy is still required, especially among teacher educators who work with prospective teachers and students.

Overall, teacher educators in this study hold a generally positive perspective toward women's reservation. At the same time, they also recognize its limitations. While they support the idea and possible outcomes of

the policy implementation, gaps in both general and detailed awareness point to the need for greater academic and institutional engagement with issues related to gender equality and increased political participation.

Implications for Teacher Education:

This study highlights important points for teacher education. Teacher educators influence how future teachers think and act, so their understanding and attitudes about policies like women's reservation shape how these topics are discussed in class. If educators only know the basics and lack a deeper understanding, it can prevent real conversations about gender equality and political participation. Teacher education programs should encourage discussions about policies to help educators gain a better understanding of social issues. This way, teacher educators can help student teachers become more involved with gender equity and political participation.

Conclusion

This study explored teacher educators' awareness and attitudes towards women's reservation, with a particular focus on the Women's Reservation Act, 2023 (Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023). Data were collected through a questionnaire on Google Forms. Results indicate that teacher educators generally have good awareness of women's reservation, though their understanding of its implementation and policy specifics varies. Participants also hold positive views about the reservation policy and see it as a potential tool for advancing gender equality and social justice. Nonetheless, the presence of neutral responses and differing opinions on certain topics suggests that awareness doesn't always equate to a thorough grasp of the policy's complexities. The findings also show that while teacher educators support women's reservation, they critically consider its limitations.

To sum up, the findings of the present study suggest a need for greater academic engagement in policy-related discussions within educational settings, given the indispensable role of education. Strengthening awareness and understanding among teacher educators may help create a gender-responsive environment in educational settings, which, in turn, may influence students and encourage broader societal attitudes toward women's political participation.

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