

# GOVERNANCE MODELS PROMOTING WOMEN'S INCLUSION IN INDIA: IN REFERENCE TO CONSTITUTIONAL, STATUTORY, AND TORT LAW ANALYSIS

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## Abstract:

Women's inclusion in governance is both a constitutional mandate and a democratic imperative in India. Although the Constitution guarantees equality before the law, prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, and ensures equal opportunity in public employment, structural and socio-cultural barriers continue to restrict women's meaningful participation in political, economic, and institutional decision-making. This paper examines governance models that promote women's inclusion through three interrelated legal frameworks: constitutional law, statutory protections, and tort law.

The constitutional framework provides the normative foundation for gender justice by embedding principles of equality, dignity, and affirmative action. Judicial interpretation has played a transformative role in expanding these guarantees, particularly in situations where legislative gaps or institutional inertia hindered progress. In *Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan* (1997), the Supreme Court established binding guidelines to prevent workplace sexual harassment, later forming the basis of comprehensive legislation.

Statutory enactments addressing domestic violence and workplace harassment have further translated constitutional mandates into enforceable rights and institutional obligations. Constitutional tort jurisprudence strengthens state liability when fundamental rights are violated. Despite notable progress, legislative clarity, administrative efficiency, and effective civil remedies.

Harmonizing constitutional principles, statutory protections, and tort-based accountability provides a comprehensive framework for sustainable women's empowerment and inclusive governance in India.

**Keywords:** Women's Inclusion; Constitutional Equality; Gender Justice; Judicial Activism; Statutory Protection; Tort Law; Institutional Accountability

## 1.1.Introduction

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Women's inclusion in governance is critical for equitable development and social justice. In India, historical patriarchy, socio-economic disparities, and gender bias have limited women's participation in decision-making. However, the Indian government and civil society have initiated multiple governance models and policies to enhance women's participation at various levels.

Women's empowerment is multidimensional, encompassing social, political, economic, and legal dimensions. It emphasizes autonomy, participation, decision-making capacity, and the ability to exercise rights with dignity. Despite constitutional guarantees and affirmative measures, entrenched socio-cultural norms, patriarchal structures, and economic disparities have historically constrained women's substantive participation in governance, labor markets, and social institutions. In this context, the judiciary has emerged as a transformative agent, translating abstract constitutional principles into actionable protections. Through judicial activism, the Supreme Court and various High Courts have interpreted statutory provisions expansively, issued binding guidelines, and established jurisprudential standards that promote gender justice. Landmark cases such as *Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan*, etc. demonstrate how courts have protected women from workplace harassment, domestic violence, and other violations while also shaping legislative reforms to address systemic gaps.

Tort law offers a vital, though underutilized, mechanism for restorative justice by recognizing harm, providing compensation, and reinforcing accountability. Its integration into women's rights jurisprudence enhances victim-centric justice and strengthens substantive equality.

## 1.2. Cultural and Social Scenario of Women in India

Women's inclusion in governance cannot be understood without considering the broader socio-cultural context in India. Traditional norms, social structures, and economic conditions have historically shaped women's roles in society.

### a. Patriarchal Social Structure

- Indian society is largely patriarchal, with decision-making traditionally concentrated in male members of the family.
- Practices such as **dowry, early marriage, and son preference** have limited women's autonomy.
- Even when women hold elected positions, sometimes male relatives exercise influence, a phenomenon known as "**proxy leadership.**"

### b. Educational and Economic Scenario

- Female literacy rate is improving but still lags behind males; as per recent data, it is around **70.3%** (**Census 2011 & NFHS 5 updates**).
- Economic dependency reduces women's ability to actively engage in governance or political life.
- Rural women often face multiple burdens, balancing household work with agricultural labor.

### c. Cultural Representation and Leadership Norms

- Women's leadership is often undervalued due to deep-rooted gender stereotypes.
- Certain regions (like Kerala, Himachal Pradesh) show higher acceptance of women in decision-making due to matrilineal traditions or progressive social reforms.
- Festivals, religious practices, and community roles sometimes provide women informal leadership opportunities, which can be leveraged for formal governance roles.

### d. Social Empowerment Movements

- NGOs, self-help groups, and women's collectives are reshaping the cultural mindset around women's participation.
- Media campaigns and government programs increasingly promote **gender equality, women's rights,** and **political literacy.**

### e. Intersectionality Considerations

- Women from marginalized communities (Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, minorities) often face **double discrimination**—both gender and social hierarchy—affecting access to governance.
- Inclusive governance models must consider these intersectional barriers to ensure meaningful participation.

## 1.3. Past, Present, and Future Conditions of Women in India

### A. Past Condition

- **Social Status:** Women historically had limited autonomy due to patriarchy. Practices such as **child marriage, dowry, sati, purdah, and exclusion from property rights** restricted their freedom.
- **Education:** Female literacy was very low; most women were confined to household work with minimal formal education.
- **Political Participation:** Women had negligible representation in governance and decision-making roles. Even with symbolic roles in local bodies, influence was minimal.
- **Economic Role:** Women's work was largely informal and unrecognized, often unpaid household labor or agricultural assistance.

**Example:** Despite leaders like **Rani Lakshmibai** in the 19th century, most women had no political voice at the grassroots level.

### B. Present Condition

- **Social Progress:** There is greater awareness about women's rights and gender equality. Legal frameworks (Constitutional rights, reservation policies, and acts like POSH 2013) protect and empower women.

- **Education & Employment:** Female literacy has improved (~70%), and women are entering education, health, corporate, and government sectors in increasing numbers.
- **Political Participation:** Reservation in **Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)** has allowed one-third of women to participate actively. Urban local bodies and some political parties are promoting women candidates.
- **Economic Empowerment:** Women’s self-help groups (SHGs), microfinance initiatives, and digital platforms (like e-governance services) support income generation and financial independence.

### C. Future Condition (Vision and Opportunities)

- **Inclusive Governance:** Expansion of women’s reservations beyond 33% and support for leadership training can ensure stronger political representation.
- **Social Empowerment:** Continued gender sensitization, media advocacy, and education reforms can normalize women in leadership and decision-making roles.
- **Economic Independence:** Greater access to skill development, entrepreneurship, and digital tools can reduce economic dependence and increase agency.
- **Intersectional Focus:** Policies will need to target marginalized women (SC/ST, minorities, differently-abled) to achieve true equality.
- **Cultural Transformation:** Gradual erosion of patriarchal norms through education, role models, and legal enforcement is expected to create a society that respects women’s autonomy.

**Vision:** Women in India will ideally move from **token participation to meaningful leadership**, influencing policies in health, education, economic development, and social justice.

Let’s understand this in table from

Aspect	Past	Present	Future
Education	Low-literacy, confined to home	~70% literacy, access to higher education	Universal literacy, gender-sensitive curriculum
Political Participation	Restricted autonomy, patriarchal norms	33% reservation in PRIs, urban representation increasing	Higher representation, leadership roles at all levels
Social Status	Restricted autonomy, patriarchal norms	Gradual empowerment, legal protection	Gender equality, social acceptance of women leaders

Economic Role	Unpaid household/agricultural work	SHGs, microfinance, digital/entrepreneurial opportunities	Full economic participation, financial independence
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## 1.4. Governance Models Promoting Women’s Inclusion

### A. Reservation-Based Model

Panchayati Raj System: One-third of seats reserved for women; some states have increased this to 50%.

Political Impact: Increased women’s representation in village councils has led to better attention to health, education, and social welfare.

### B. Quota System in Political Parties

Some parties implement internal quotas to encourage women candidates in state assemblies and parliament.

Example: Biju Janata Dal in Odisha actively promotes women candidates in elections.

### C. Women-Centric Development Programs

Mahila Mandals and Self-Help Groups (SHGs): Empower women to participate in local decision-making and governance.

National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM): Encourages leadership and decision-making among rural women.

### D. Digital and Participatory Governance Models

E-Governance Portals like Digital India Initiative allow women to access services, submit grievances, and participate in planning.

Participatory Budgeting: In some urban areas, women are encouraged to voice priorities for local budgets.

### E. Capacity Building & Training Models

State governments and NGOs provide leadership training for elected women representatives.

Programs such as PRI Leadership Development Programs focus on enhancing governance skills and policy literacy.

## 1.5. Challenges in Women’s Governance Participation

1. **Socio-cultural Barriers:** Patriarchy and social norms restrict women’s mobility and decision-making autonomy.
2. **Limited Political Networks:** Women often lack access to political mentorship and funding.
3. **Tokenism:** Reserved positions sometimes result in proxy participation, with male relatives exerting control.
4. **Capacity Gaps:** Lack of formal training and exposure can reduce effectiveness in governance roles.

## 1.6. Recommendations for Strengthening Women's Inclusion

1. Expand reservations beyond one-third in local bodies.
2. Introduce mentorship and capacity-building programs for women politicians.
3. Promote gender-sensitive budgeting at local and state levels.
4. Encourage political parties to implement transparent quotas and support systems for women candidates.
5. Leverage digital governance to include marginalized women in rural and urban areas.

## 1.7. Statutory Framework for Women's Inclusion in India

India's statutory framework forms the operational backbone of gender-inclusive governance. While constitutional guarantees provide normative principles, statutes translate these ideals into enforceable rights, remedies, and institutional obligations. The legislative landscape addressing women's inclusion in India is extensive and spans domestic relations, workplace rights, political participation, property rights, criminal law reform, labor protections, and social welfare.

Statutory interventions reflect three broad governance objectives:

1. **Protection from violence and discrimination**
2. **Economic empowerment and workplace inclusion**
3. **Structural equality in family and property systems**

Each of these dimensions is discussed in detail below.

### **Protection from violence and discrimination.**

#### **The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005**

The **Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act** represents a paradigm shift in Indian legal governance. Unlike traditional criminal provisions that focused narrowly on physical cruelty, this statute recognizes domestic violence as a multidimensional harm encompassing:

- Physical abuse, Sexual abuse, Emotional and verbal abuse, Economic abuse

The Act adopts a **civil law model** while retaining coordination with criminal remedies. It enables women to seek:

- Protection orders, Residence orders, Monetary relief, Custody orders, Compensation

The significance of this statute lies in its recognition of **domestic space as a site of governance**. Historically, the home was treated as private and beyond state regulation. This law redefines domestic violence as a public concern requiring state intervention.

## 1.8. Criminal Law Reforms Post-2012

Following nationwide protests after the 2012 Delhi gang rape case, Parliament enacted the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013, expanding definitions of sexual assault and introducing stricter penalties.

### Key reforms included:

- Broader definition of rape, Criminalization of stalking and voyeurism, Recognition of acid attacks as specific offences, Enhanced punishment for custodial sexual assault

These reforms reflect how governance can respond to social movements and public accountability demands.

## Economic empowerment and workplace inclusion

### Sexual Harassment at Workplace

The **Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act** codifies protections first articulated judicially in the Vishaka guidelines.

The Act mandates:

- Internal Complaints Committees (ICC) in organizations with 10+ employees
- Local Complaints Committees for informal sector workers
- Time-bound grievance redressal
- Employer liability for non-compliance

This statute integrates governance into private employment structures. It shifts responsibility from the individual victim to the institutional employer, thereby embedding gender sensitivity within corporate compliance mechanisms.

### Equal Remuneration and Wage Equality

The **Equal Remuneration Act** (now subsumed under the Code on Wages, 2019) aimed to eliminate wage discrimination.

The Act:

- Mandated equal pay for equal work
- Prohibited discrimination in recruitment

However, gender wage gaps persist due to:

- Occupational segregation, Informal labour dominance, Care burden on women

Legal equality has not translated into economic parity, indicating structural limitations beyond statutory text.

### Maternity and Care Governance

The **Maternity Benefit Act** (amended 2017) extended paid maternity leave to 26 weeks.

While progressive, the Act creates unintended consequences:

- Employers may hesitate to hire women of childbearing age, Lack of paternity leave reinforces gendered care burdens

True inclusion requires gender-neutral caregiving policies to prevent indirect discrimination.

## Structural equality in family and property systems

### Equal Coparcenary Rights.

The **Hindu Succession Amendment Act** granted daughters equal coparcenary rights in ancestral property.

This reform is transformative because property ownership correlates with:

- Economic independence, Bargaining power in marriage, Protection against domestic abuse

Despite legal reform, social resistance and lack of awareness impede full realization.

## 1.9. Tort Law and Gender Justice in India

Tort law remains an underdeveloped yet powerful instrument in advancing women's inclusion. While statutory frameworks dominate gender discourse, tort principles provide civil accountability mechanisms that complement criminal and constitutional remedies.

### Traditional Tort Remedies

Classical torts applicable to gender harm include:

- Assault and battery, False imprisonment, Intentional infliction of emotional distress, Defamation

In theory, survivors of violence or harassment may sue perpetrators for damages.

In practice, tort litigation is rare because:

- Civil proceedings are lengthy, Costs are high, Compensation culture is weak, Criminal law dominates public discourse

This limits tort law's transformative potential.

### Constitutional Tort Doctrine

The Supreme Court developed constitutional tort principles in cases like **Nilabati Behera v. State of Orissa**, recognizing compensation for violation of fundamental rights by the State.

This doctrine allows courts to award monetary compensation when state negligence results in rights violations.

Application to gender justice includes:

- Custodial rape cases, Police inaction in sexual assault complaints, Failure to prevent honor killings, negligent investigation.

## Expanding Institutional Liability

Future possibilities include:

- University liability for mishandling harassment complaints, Corporate liability for systemic workplace harassment, Municipal liability for unsafe public infrastructure

Recognizing gender-based harm as a systemic failure rather than isolated misconduct strengthens governance accountability.

## Tort Law and Symbolic Recognition

Civil damages serve symbolic purposes:

- Acknowledging dignity violation, Public recognition of harm, Reinforcing constitutional morality

Integrating tort accountability into gender governance would align India with global trends emphasizing victim compensation.

### 1.13. Institutional Governance Mechanisms Promoting Women's Inclusion

Legal texts require institutions for implementation. Governance models promoting women's inclusion rely heavily on administrative, regulatory, and quasi-judicial bodies.

#### National Commission for Women

The **National Commission for Women** functions as a statutory watchdog.

- Reviewing constitutional safeguards, Investigating complaints, Recommending legislative reforms, Conducting research and awareness programs

#### State Commissions for Women

State-level commissions decentralize gender governance.

They: Address local grievances, Recommend policy reforms, Coordinate with state governments

However, political appointments and limited autonomy often affect effectiveness.

#### Panchayati Raj Institutions

The **73rd Constitutional Amendment Act** institutionalized grassroots inclusion.

Women representatives have influenced:

- Water governance, School enrollment, Public health initiatives, Anti-alcohol movements

Challenges:

- Proxy governance ("sarpanch pati" phenomenon), Limited financial autonomy, Inadequate training

Nevertheless, local governance remains India's most successful inclusion model.

## Corporate Governance and Board Diversity

The **Companies Act** mandates at least one woman director for specified companies.

SEBI regulations further encourage diversity in corporate boards.

This reflects a shift from welfare governance to market governance inclusion.

However:

- Women directors are often related to promoters, Representation does not always equal influence

True inclusion requires diversity in executive roles, not symbolic appointments.

### 1.14. Judicial Activism as Governance

The Indian judiciary has played a central role in gender inclusion through:

- Expansive interpretation of Article 21, Recognition of workplace harassment guidelines, Progressive inheritance rulings

Judicial governance supplements legislative action but cannot replace structural reform.

### Civil Society and Community Governance

Grassroots movements, NGOs, and self-help groups contribute to inclusion by:

- Legal awareness campaigns, Economic empowerment programs, Monitoring implementation

Community governance bridges the gap between formal law and lived reality.

### 1.15. Judicial Precedents Shaping Women's Inclusion in Governance.

Judicial interpretation has played a transformative role in advancing women's inclusion within India's constitutional democracy. The following case law demonstrates how constitutional guarantees, statutory frameworks, and tort principles interact to promote gender justice.

### Constitutional Equality and Non-Discrimination

#### Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan (1997)

In *Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan*, (1997) 6 SCC 241, the Supreme Court addressed the absence of legislation addressing workplace sexual harassment. The case arose after the gang rape of a social worker who had attempted to prevent child marriage. Recognizing sexual harassment as a violation of Articles 14, 15, 19, and 21 of the Constitution, the Court formulated binding guidelines to prevent workplace harassment.

The Court relied on constitutional principles and international obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The Vishaka Guidelines remained in force until Parliament enacted the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013.

This case exemplifies judicial activism and transformative constitutionalism, where the judiciary functioned as a governance actor in the absence of legislative action (Bhatia, 2019).

### **Air India v. Nergesh Meerza (1981)**

In *Air India v. Nergesh Meerza*, (1981) 4 SCC 335, the Supreme Court struck down discriminatory service conditions requiring air hostesses to retire upon pregnancy or marriage within a certain period. The Court held such provisions arbitrary and violative of Article 14.

This judgment reinforced equality in public employment and invalidated gender-based stereotypes in service jurisprudence.

### **Reproductive Autonomy and Bodily Integrity**

#### **Independent Thought v. Union of India (2017)**

In *Independent Thought v. Union of India*, (2017) 10 SCC 800, the Court criminalized marital rape for girls aged 15–18 by reading down Exception 2 to Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code. The judgment emphasized child rights and gender justice under Articles 14, 15, and 21.

This decision demonstrates the Court’s willingness to reinterpret statutory provisions to align with constitutional morality.

### **Property Rights and Economic Empowerment**

#### **Vineeta Sharma v. Rakesh Sharma (2020)**

In *Vineeta Sharma v. Rakesh Sharma*, (2020) 9 SCC 1, the Supreme Court clarified that daughters possess equal coparcenary rights by birth under the Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005, irrespective of whether the father was alive at the time of the amendment.

The Court emphasized that economic empowerment is foundational to gender equality. Property rights enhance women’s bargaining power, financial autonomy, and social status.

#### **Mary Roy v. State of Kerala (1986)**

In *Mary Roy v. State of Kerala*, (1986) 2 SCC 209, the Supreme Court struck down discriminatory provisions in Syrian Christian succession laws, granting daughters equal inheritance rights.

This landmark decision restructured family property law and advanced economic inclusion.

## **Domestic Violence and Statutory Interpretation**

### **Hiral P. Harsora v. Kusum Narottamdas Harsora (2016)**

In *Hiral P. Harsora v. Kusum Narottamdas Harsora*, (2016) 10 SCC 165, the Supreme Court struck down the words “adult male” from the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005. This expanded the scope of respondents to include female relatives

The judgment strengthened statutory protection by ensuring comprehensive accountability within domestic relationships.

### **Shayara Bano v. Union of India (2017)**

In *Shayara Bano v. Union of India*, (2017) 9 SCC 1, the Supreme Court invalidated the practice of instant triple talaq (talaq-e-biddat), holding it unconstitutional. The case reinforced constitutional supremacy over personal law practices that violate gender equality.

## **Constitutional Tort and State Liability**

### **Nilabati Behera v. State of Orissa (1993)**

In *Nilabati Behera v. State of Orissa*, (1993) 2 SCC 746, the Supreme Court awarded compensation for custodial death, establishing constitutional tort doctrine. The Court held that compensation is an appropriate remedy for violation of fundamental rights.

Although not gender-specific, this case laid the foundation for compensatory remedies in custodial rape and police negligence cases involving women.

### **Bodhisattwa Gautam v. Subhra Chakraborty (1996)**

In *Bodhisattwa Gautam v. Subhra Chakraborty*, (1996) 1 SCC 490, the Supreme Court directed interim compensation to a rape survivor during trial proceedings. The Court recognized rape as a violation of fundamental rights and emphasized state responsibility in protecting dignity.

This case bridged criminal law and constitutional tort principles by integrating compensatory relief.

## **Workplace and Institutional Accountability**

### **Medha Kotwal Lele v. Union of India (2013)**

In *Medha Kotwal Lele v. Union of India*, (2013) 1 SCC 297, the Supreme Court reiterated the mandatory implementation of Vishaka Guidelines prior to the enactment of the 2013 Act. The Court monitored compliance and reinforced institutional responsibility.

This case underscores judicial oversight as a governance tool.

## Intersectionality and Access to Justice

### Laxmi v. Union of India (2014)

In *Laxmi v. Union of India*, (2014) 4 SCC 427, the Supreme Court issued directives regulating acid sales and ensuring compensation for acid attack survivors. The judgment combined criminal law reform with victim compensation measures.

It reflects an intersectional understanding of gender violence and institutional responsibility.

## 1.16. Global Analysis of Women's Condition and Governance Participation

### A. Political Participation

- Globally, women's representation in national parliaments averages around **26% (as of 2025, IPU data)**.
- **Rwanda** leads the world with **over 60% of parliamentary seats held by women**, largely due to a legal quota system.
- Nordic countries like **Sweden, Finland, and Norway** have near gender parity in political leadership, achieved through proactive policies, quotas, and cultural emphasis on equality.
- In India, women hold about **14% of seats in the Lok Sabha** (lower house of Parliament) and **33% at local government levels** due to reservations, showing progress but still below global averages.

### B. Economic Participation

- Globally, women's labor force participation averages **47%**, with wide regional variation.
- Countries like **Iceland, Norway, and New Zealand** promote policies such as parental leave, flexible work, and equal pay, supporting women's economic inclusion.
- In India, female labor force participation is lower (~23% for 15+ age group), reflecting socio-cultural barriers, unpaid household work, and limited formal sector opportunities.

### C. Education

- Global female literacy rate: ~90%
- India: ~70% (urban higher than rural)
- Countries with high female education (Nordics, Canada, Australia) correlate with higher women's participation in governance, workforce, and decision-making.

### D. Social and Cultural Scenario

- Patriarchy is a global challenge, but cultural norms differ:
  - Middle East: Women gained voting and governance rights more recently; social restrictions persist in some countries.

- Latin America: Strong female political movements and quota systems have improved governance inclusion.
- Sub-Saharan Africa: Women face intersectional barriers but some countries, like Rwanda and South Africa, have successfully used quotas to boost representation.
- In India, social norms (patriarchy, caste system) and regional disparities affect women’s empowerment differently across states.

## E. Governance Models and Best Practices Globally

### 1. Quota Systems:

- Rwanda, Argentina, India (PRIs) – legal mandates increase representation.

### 2. Capacity-Building Programs:

- Nordic countries and Canada provide leadership training, mentorship, and policy literacy for women politicians.

### 3. Economic Incentives:

- Equal pay laws, maternity benefits, and entrepreneurship support encourage women’s participation.

### 4. Digital Governance:

- Platforms like Estonia’s e-governance systems allow women to engage in decision-making online.

## Comparative Insights for India

Parameter	Global Leaders	India	Opportunity
Women in Parliament	Rwanda 61%, Sweden 47%	~14%	Expand representation at national/state levels
Labor Force Participation	47% avg	23%	Promote women-friendly employment, flexible hours
Education	90% literacy	70%	Focus on rural education, skill development
Quotas & Reservations	Widely used in Africa & Latin America	33% in PRIs	Consider higher reservations and party quotas
Social Norms	Varied; cultural support for equality helps	Patriarchy, caste barriers	Social sensitization & media campaigns

## 1.17. Conclusion

Women empowerment in India is not merely a legislative aspiration but a constitutional imperative grounded in equality, dignity, and justice. This research has demonstrated that the Indian legal framework—comprising constitutional provisions, statutory enactments, and judicial precedents—has progressively evolved to address gender-based discrimination and violence. The judiciary, through transformative interpretation and judicial activism, has played a central role in advancing women’s rights, often compensating for legislative gaps and societal resistance.

Women’s inclusion in India’s governance is shaped by patriarchy, social norms, and economic dependence, which limit autonomy and leadership. Female literacy (~70%) and workforce participation (~23%) lag behind global averages, restricting effective political and economic engagement. Legal reforms—such as reservations in Panchayati Raj Institutions, the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, and workplace protections—have improved representation and safety. Judicial activism has strengthened gender justice and property rights. Women-centric programs, SHGs, and digital governance platforms enhance empowerment at grassroots levels. Cultural and regional variations influence acceptance of women leaders. Intersectional barriers persist for marginalized women (SC/ST, minorities). Globally, quota systems, capacity-building, and supportive policies in Rwanda, Nordic countries, and Latin America show higher women’s representation. India’s opportunities lie in expanding reservations, leadership training, gender-sensitive budgeting, and social sensitization. The vision is meaningful participation, economic independence, and cultural transformation toward gender equality. Tort law, especially constitutional tort principles, offers an underutilized mechanism for systemic accountability.

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