Society & Social Justice · GS - II

Discuss the contribution of civil society groups for women's effective and meaningful participation and representation in state legislatures in India.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2023	GS - II	Society & Social Justice

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Civil society can convert women's numerical presence into meaningful political participation by building leadership, creating political awareness, advocating reforms, challenging patriarchal norms and strengthening women's voices in legislative institutions.

Model Answer

Introduction

Women's representation in legislatures is essential for inclusive democracy. While political parties and constitutional institutions determine formal representation, civil society organisations play an important role in creating conditions for women's effective participation.

Body

Contributions of Civil Society

Political awareness: NGOs and women's organisations conduct campaigns explaining electoral rights, political institutions and constitutional safeguards.

Leadership development: Training programmes build women's skills in public speaking, policy analysis, campaigning and legislative engagement.

Advocacy for reservations: Organisations such as women's rights groups have consistently advocated greater political representation, contributing to public discourse around women's reservation.

Challenging social norms: Civil society campaigns address patriarchy, gender stereotypes, political violence and the perception that politics is predominantly a male domain.

Grassroots mobilisation: Self-help groups, community organisations and grassroots movements create political leadership pipelines, particularly among rural and disadvantaged women.

Accountability: Civil society monitors elected representatives, legislative participation and implementation of gender-related policies.

Policy advocacy: Women's organisations bring issues such as violence, health, education, livelihood and care work into political agendas.

Examples

Women's movements and organisations have historically influenced legislation and public policy on domestic violence, workplace sexual harassment and political representation. SHG networks have also strengthened women's public participation at grassroots levels, creating potential pathways to higher political office.

Limitations

Funding constraints, urban concentration, fragmented organisational capacity, political polarisation and inadequate access to formal political structures can limit impact.

Way Forward

Greater coordination between civil society, political parties and election institutions, leadership training, campaign-finance support and safer political environments can deepen women's representation.

Conclusion

Civil society cannot substitute for political parties or constitutional reform, but it can **create informed, confident and organised women leaders** , thereby transforming representation from numerical presence into meaningful democratic participation.

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