Institutions, Norms, and Self-Belief: A Moderated-Mediated Model of Women's Political Participation

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ABSTRACT

In South Asia, institutional, socio-cultural, and economic barriers prevent women from participating in politics, a prerequisite for democracy. This study examines how educational attainment, economic independence, community and family support, and political party membership affect women's political involvement in Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and India. The study also evaluates the moderating effects of cultural norms and the mediating effects of political self-efficacy using a single analytical approach. A quantitative cross-sectional survey obtained primary data from 1,035 women in all three countries. These women had diverse careers and social backgrounds. The data were evaluated using Structural Equation Modeling to determine direct, mediated, and moderated relationships among constructs. The study shows that educational performance, economic independence, family/community support, and political party inclusion influence women's political involvement. Psychological empowerment converts resources into involvement, and political self-efficacy partially regulates social and institutional support. Limited cultural norms reduce the influence of economic independence and education on political engagement. Combining economic, structural, and psychological factors creates an integrated overview of South Asian women's political involvement. The findings affect policymakers and political organizations seeking to remove cultural and institutional impediments to female empowerment and inclusive governance.

Keywords: Women's Political Participation, Political Self-Efficacy, Gender Empowerment, Cultural Norms, Party Inclusiveness, Structural Equation Modeling
JEL Classifications: D72, J16, Z13.

1. INTRODUCTION

Women's political engagement is essential to gender equality and democratic inclusion. South Asian women are underrepresented in formal politics (Thomas and Kaunain, 2025). Constitutional quotas, societal standards, and civic commitments have impacted Asian women's political involvement (Liu, 2022). Women received 24.4 million votes out of 58.9 million in the 2024

general elections, a substantial increase. The gender gap in voter registration has shrunk from 12.8% in 2013 to 7.7% in 2024. Political parties still prefer male candidates for winnable seats, thereby under representing women in politics and law. Women are underrepresented in India's Lok Sabha. In the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, just 74 women were elected, 13.6% of the 543 seats (Tiwari, 2025). This is down from 78 women MPs (14.7%) in 2019. The Women's Reservation Bill, passed in 2023, reserves

33% of seats in the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies for women. It will come into effect following delimitation, possibly around the 2029 elections. In 2024, just 9.5% of candidates were women (Priyalakshmi, 2023). Sri Lanka was the first nation to elect a female prime minister, yet women's participation in parliament remains low. In Sri Lanka's 225-member parliament, just 22 women (9.8%) have seats (Jayasekara, 2022). Overall, UN Women data shows that Sri Lankan women are underrepresented in national and local decision-making. Women made up 27.2% of single- or lower-house legislators worldwide in early 2025. Political empowerment is one of the slowest-closing gaps. Pakistan's political empowerment parity is barely 15%, putting it 142nd internationally. South Asia has nearly a quarter of the world's women, yet its legislative gender parity is low (Strachan and Adikaram, 2023). Patriarchal standards, party dynamics, and socioeconomic inequality also hinder women's political advancement.

In Pakistan, women's legislative and leadership responsibilities are limited despite reserved seats and rising voter registration, demonstrating that legal frameworks alone are not adequate (Qureshi and Ahmad, 2022). Since India and Sri Lanka have diverse political histories and institutional frameworks, their obstacles and facilitators vary significantly, making cross-country comparisons useful. Understanding these factors may help governments, political parties, and civil society devise policies to increase women's meaningful political participation beyond token representation. Recent trends in South Asian women's political engagement show progress and ongoing problems (Das, 2025). The 2024 Pakistani general elections witnessed increased female voter participation and a narrower gender disparity in registration. The number of women candidates more than quadrupled from 465 in 2018 to 902 in 2024. Women are underrepresented in legislatures and party leadership despite these increases, illustrating the gap between electoral participation and political influence (Scarrow et al., 2025). The 2023 Women's Reservation Bill in India was hailed as a milestone toward political gender parity. The quota will be triggered following a delimitation operation, presumably during the 2029 national elections. The 2024 Lok Sabha elections saw 74 women elected (13.6%), down from the previous term. More women ran (797 in 2024), yet only 9.5% of candidates were women. These findings show that structural and socio-political hurdles to women's admission persist notwithstanding legal advances (Alieva, 2025).

Women hold 9.8% of parliamentary seats in Sri Lanka. Women made up over half of the 2024 presidential electorate, but none of the 38 contenders were women. This lack of women at the top of executive competition suggests that symbolic historical triumphs, such as Sri Lanka's election of a female prime minister, have not led to structural change (DeVotta, 2025). First, gender quotas and reserved seats (e.g., India's 33% reservation) are gaining popularity; it is important to examine how they interact with other social and institutional issues (Kaur, 2025). Second, South Asian democracies' backsliding and political polarization demonstrate the need for inclusive governance, i.e., women's participation in decision-making may improve responsiveness and representation. Third, societal movements for gender equality, political changes,

and civil society involvement create a policy opportunity to translate research findings into meaningful initiatives (Peralta-Jaramillo, 2025). This problem is also pertinent to the SDGs, especially Goal 5 - Gender Equality and Goal 16 - Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions. Greater women's political engagement leads to more inclusive institutions and equitable governance (Mechkova et al., 2024). Comparing three South Asian democracies yields regionally based cross-country policy insights. In conclusion, empirically studying women in politics in various circumstances is politically vital and intellectually relevant. The results may influence reforms, empower women in policymaking, and make South Asian democracies more equal and dynamic.

Based on the discussions, the following are the study's research questions, i.e.,

Q1: How do education, economic independence, family/community support, and political party inclusivity affect women's political engagement in Pakistan, India, and Sri Lanka?

This question examines direct independent-dependent interactions. It examines the strongest predictors of women's political participation ("running for office, voting, activism").

Q2: Does political self-efficacy buffer the link between education, economic independence, family/community support, and party inclusion and women's political participation?

This inquiry analyses whether women's self-efficacy helps them turn their resources (education, income, family, and party) into political engagement.

Q3: How do cultural norms affect women's political engagement in the selected Asian economies?

This inquiry examines whether traditional or contemporary cultural norms (e.g., gender roles) improve or diminish education, economic independence, support, and party inclusivity on women's involvement. The following are the study's research objectives, i.e.,

I. To examine the role of education, economic independence, family/community support, and political party inclusivity in affecting women's political engagement in Pakistan, India, and Sri Lanka.

II. To examine the role of political self-efficacy in mediating the link between education, economic independence, family/community support, and party inclusion and women's political engagement.

III. To determine the influence of cultural norms o on women's political engagement in the selected Asian economies.

This multi-country, comparative empirical investigation in South Asia, an understudied region, adds to gender and politics literature. Previous research has focused on quota systems or socioeconomic issues, but this study includes structural, psychological, and cultural elements (mediated and moderated). The study provides a more comprehensive theoretical model by considering political self-efficacy, cultural norms, education, economic independence, and party inclusivity. It also addresses a gender-and-politics deficit in comparative studies of Pakistan, India, and Sri Lanka. This

study helps South Asian policymakers identify the levers that best encourage meaningful women's political engagement. If economic independence powerfully predicts involvement via self-efficacy, then employment and financial autonomy policies for women are vital. If family support or party inclusion is important, changes might address political party structures, candidate selection, and capacity-building. In addition, understanding how cultural norms shape these pathways helps create culturally responsive therapies for locations or groups with conventional gender norms.

This research may help civil society, women's rights groups, and community-based groups develop political self-efficacy programs for women. Knowing which factors most influence women's desire and confidence to participate might improve empowerment seminars, mentoring programs, and community involvement activities. The results also influence normative change initiatives by emphasizing cultural norms, such as engaging religious or community leaders to alter beliefs that limit women's autonomy. Women's political engagement enhances democracy and ensures that policies represent the demands and viewpoints of half the population.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Socioeconomic and Political Factors Influenced Women's Political Participation

South Asian literature has extensively investigated how education, economic independence, familial support, and political party inclusivity affect women's political engagement (Islam et al., 2023; Prillaman, 2023). Education is a key predictor of women's political activity. Higher education improves women's political awareness, civic engagement, and navigation of political institutions (Willeck and Mendelberg, 2022). Due to greater access to knowledge and a reduced impact of traditional norms, South Asian women with higher levels of formal education are more likely to vote, attend political meetings, and seek public office. Educated women influence not only their own political involvement but also the political interests of their children and husbands, shifting gendered views of political activity (Kestilä-Kekkonen et al., 2025). Economic independence also influences women's political participation. Studies reveal that women with control over their wealth or paid jobs have more home decision-making authority, mobility, and public negotiating power (Daraz et al., 2025). The South Asian gender and development literature indicates that women with independent incomes are more comfortable joining political parties, attending political events, and running for office. Political engagement in cultures that require financial or social obligations is safer with economic independence (Saidin and Azrun, 2025). Comparative studies show that economically empowered women in India and Sri Lanka are more likely to participate in panchayats and local councils. In contrast, employed women in Pakistan exhibit higher political knowledge and greater voting consistency (Panday, 2025).

In patriarchal South Asia, family and community support also affect women's political engagement. The research shows that women's political activity generally relies on household acceptance, especially from males (Bussolo et al., 2024).

Supportive spouses, fathers, or brothers help Pakistani women campaign, attend political meetings, and run for office. In India and Sri Lanka, patriarchal family arrangements may empower or limit women (Simon and Hasan, 2025; Ratwatte, 2023). Community endorsement, especially from religious leaders, elders, and local organizations, can either legitimate or delegitimize women's political involvement. Local community approval affects whether women see politics as a socially acceptable area for their engagement (Chung, 2025). Political party inclusiveness is a widely used structural variable in the literature on South Asian women's political representation. Political parties control nominations, training, campaign support, and leadership. Research shows that Asian political parties are male-dominated and lack official structures to encourage women's candidacy (Sinpeng, 2025). Even in places with significant women's movements, Indian parties frequently field women exclusively in low-win seats. Women have more seats in Pakistani legislatures due to reserved seats, although their roles in parties are generally symbolic or advisory. Sri Lanka also seldom nominates women for winnable seats (Bjarnegård et al., 2022). The research suggests that without significant party-level changes, women's political involvement will remain quota-based. Thus, education, economic independence, family/community support, and party inclusivity influence how South Asian women join, negotiate, and maintain political responsibilities.

2.2. Cultural Norms and Women's Political Participation

Research consistently shows that cultural norms moderate South Asian women's political engagement (Conneely et al., 2023; Nagesh et al., 2024). In Asian economies, traditional gender standards determine whether women's political engagement is acceptable, respectable, or aberrant (Noreen et al., 2025). Comparative gender studies show that cultural norms that inhibit public exposure or leadership can hinder women's political involvement, even among highly educated, economically independent women (Smith and Sinkford, 2022). Cultural expectations about women's modesty and household duties in traditional Pakistan might reduce the favourable influence of education or family support on political engagement. Education typically enhances engagement, but in patriarchal groups, it has a lesser impact (Pervin and Mokhtar, 2023). In India, caste, religion, and patriarchal conventions limit women's opportunities for leadership (Simon and Hasan, 2025). In many rural and semi-urban areas, women running for government may encounter societal pressure, opposition, or hostility, restricting party inclusion or economic independence. Women's mobility, speaking power, and participation in mixed-gender political events may also be limited by culture (Agarwal, 2026). In Sri Lanka, women have greater literacy and health rates than in many South Asian nations, but cultural expectations about caring and subordination limit their political ambitions. The evidence shows that cultural norms affect other structural elements rather than acting as obstacles (Seyfi et al., 2025). They promote patriarchal norms in certain areas and moderate the effects of education, family support, and party inclusivity on women's political engagement. This makes cultural norms a significant moderating variable in research on South Asian women's political involvement.

2.3. Political Self-Efficacy and Women's Political Participation

Political self-efficacy, i.e., the conviction that one can understand politics and influence political decisions, mediates the link between structural factors and women's political engagement (Kestilä-Kekkonen et al., 2025). Feminist political psychology studies suggest that even when women have education or economic independence, they may not participate in politics if they do not think they are capable or legitimate. Early socialization, political party connections, role models, and experiences with public institutions influence political self-efficacy in South Asia. Studies show that women with high self-efficacy attend party meetings, voice political ideas, vote independently, and run for office. In Pakistan and India, families and communities often discourage women from participating in politics, making this crucial (Noreen et al., 2025). Political self-efficacy also converts external support into involvement (Jiménez-Sánchez, 2025). Educated women may have higher political efficacy because they are more confident in their political knowledge. Economically independent women may feel more in control, increasing participation. Offering training, mentorship, or leadership may boost political party inclusivity and self-efficacy (Houston et al., 2025). These structural characteristics and political engagement typically depend on women's political confidence. South Asian studies suggest that developing women's political self-efficacy increases involvement, autonomy, and sustained engagement. Therefore, political self-efficacy is a key mediator that explains why some women actively participate while others with comparable structural constraints do not.

2.4. Research Gaps and Contribution of the Study

Although there is extensive research on women's political engagement, most studies focus on specific countries or isolated issues, thereby limiting their explanatory power (Höhmann et al., 2025; Han, 2025). Socio-economic position, political socialization, institutional support mechanisms, and cultural norms seldom are examined together to see how they affect women's political roles. Many studies use feminist or democratic participation theories, but not intersectional or comparative regional frameworks, to reflect South Asia's distinctive socio-political variety (Rihmo, 2023; Savas et al., 2023). Prior research relied on qualitative case studies or descriptive analyses, missing comparative and mixed-methods approaches that could strengthen cross-country results (Goyal, 2024; Johann, 2022). Even though India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka share colonial histories, patriarchal social structures, and institutional differences that might affect women's political engagement, comparative research has been scarce (Udamini, 2021; de Silva et al., 2025). Thus, there are no comprehensive studies that compare various variables and mediating or moderating factors across these three South Asian democracies. Understanding these complex effects may help researchers and policymakers improve regional women's political representation (Fossati and Wong, 2025).

This multi-variable, comparative paradigm advances discussions of South Asian women's political empowerment in academic literature. The research provides a more holistic, theoretically informed view of how multiple social, cultural, and institutional factors impact women's political responsibilities by examining different independent variables, a moderator, and a mediator. It adds to academic discussions by comparing India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, revealing regional commonalities and contrasts that single-country studies ignore. On policy and practice, the study offers evidence-based advice to governments, civil society, and international development organizations on how to strengthen institutional support, reduce socio-cultural barriers, and enhance political training for women. It shows which factors are most influential, how the moderator conditions these connections, and how the mediator changes political outcomes, helping politicians' priorities reforms. The study promotes comparative, mixed-method, and multi-variable techniques in South Asian political research and provide a methodological and theoretical platform for future research. This study illuminates the complex dynamics that drive women's political engagement and provides an empirical basis for academic research and policy improvements.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Understanding the multidimensional factors that affect South Asian women's political engagement requires a comprehensive theoretical framework. Feminist Political and Social Cognitive theories offer diverse perspectives on how structural, cultural, and psychological factors shape political behaviour and are relevant to primary research and cross-country comparisons (Guo, 2025). Feminist Political Theory critiques social and institutional impediments to women's political engagement. This theory stresses how patriarchy, gendered norms, and institutional institutions affect women's political participation (Khan et al., 2025). Educational achievement, economic independence, family and community support, and political party inclusivity are structural or enabling factors that challenge or reinforce patriarchal limitations. Feminist Political Theory explains why conventional norms and male-dominated political structures may hinder women's political engagement, even with education and economic advantages (Jabali et al., 2025). The moderator supports this hypothesis by showing how society and cultural expectations affect the extent to which structural advantages lead to political activity. As well, political self-efficacy, the mediator, may be defined as the conviction that one can navigate political systems despite social and institutional impediments. This study uses Feminist Political Theory to frame women's political participation as a complex interaction between individual agency, social support, and systemic gendered constraints, making it relevant for comparative analysis across India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. 2025.

Social cognitive theory (SCT), established by Albert Bandura, adds a psychological and behavioural viewpoint to Feminist Political Theory. SCT stresses observational learning, self-efficacy, and reciprocal determinism in human behaviour. This study uses Social Cognitive Theory to explain how women's political self-efficacy, a mediator variable, impacts their political participation (Arslan et al., 2023). Knowledge, skills, and social reinforcement from independent factors, including education, economic independence, family support, and party inclusivity, affect self-efficacy. Educational skills help women comprehend political processes, while family and community support boost confidence and social approbation, boosting self-efficacy (Brown,

Table 1: List of variables and their expected relationships

Variables	Variable type	Symbol	Expected relationship with dependent variable
Women's political participation	Dependent	WPP	—
Educational attainment	Independent	EA	Positive
Economic independence	Independent	EI	Positive
Family/community support	Independent	FCS	Positive
Political party inclusiveness	Independent	PPI	Positive
Cultural norms	Moderator	CN	Negative
Political self-efficacy	Mediator	PSE	Positive

2025). Restrictive cultural norms may undermine the positive effects of education or assistance on self-efficacy, whereas progressive norms may enhance them. Social Cognitive Theory enables the study to model how structural resources, social settings, and psychological variables cause political involvement. It allows systematic evaluation of perceptions, beliefs, and actions across South Asian cultures, making it ideal for primary research utilizing Likert-scale questionnaires (Raza et al., 2025).

By merging feminist political theory and social cognitive theory, the research has a multi-layered explanation that accounts for macro-level structural and cultural restrictions and micro-level psychological processes (Khan et al., 2025). This integrated concept examines how education, economic independence, family support, and party inclusivity affect women's political engagement, tempered by cultural norms and mediated by political self-efficacy. It offers a theoretical basis for collecting primary data in Pakistan, India, and Sri Lanka to support intra- and inter-country comparisons that account for socio-cultural settings, institutional structures, and human agency. The dual-theory method enables the research to characterize participation patterns and explain the processes underlying women's political involvement, contributing to theory and policy (Das, 2025).

4. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The study's conceptual framework outlines the predicted links among explanatory factors, mediators, and moderators in South Asian women's political engagement, particularly in Pakistan, India, and Sri Lanka. Women's Political Participation, the model's dependent variable, measures women's electoral, party, or civic political participation, including voting, campaigning, holding office, and engaging in political decision-making. Educational Attainment, Economic Independence, Family and Community Support, and Political Party Inclusiveness may directly and indirectly affect women's political engagement. Education equips women with the information, analytical skills, and political awareness to navigate complex political contexts, thereby boosting political engagement (Yolmo and Basnett, 2024). Economic independence may boost women's political engagement by boosting their decision-making capacity, mobility, and confidence.

Family and community support is expected to boost involvement by giving social legitimacy, emotional support, and logistical help, particularly in patriarchal settings that scrutinize women's public activity (Yousafzai and Aljanova, 2025). Inclusive party policies, mentoring programs, and opportunities for nomination are intended to directly increase participation by reducing institutional barriers and enabling women to enter official political positions. As a mediator, political self-efficacy reflects women's confidence in their ability to understand and affect politics. Through serial mediation of political trust and self-efficacy, digital literacy affects the participation of rural left-behind women in digital villages. Education, economic independence, family support, and party inclusiveness boost women's self-efficacy, which, in turn, indirectly affects political participation (Alscher and Jana, 2025). This mediating link shows that, even with institutional advantages, women may not participate unless they believe they can succeed in politics.

4.1. Hypotheses Development

The study's conceptual framework generates the following hypotheses to evaluate the links between variables in South Asian women's political engagement, i.e.,

H_1: Educational achievement, economic independence, family and community support, and political party inclusion positively and significantly affect women's political engagement.

This hypothesis states that women with better education, economic independence, family and community support, and inclusive political party cultures are more likely to vote, campaign, or run for office. Education and economic empowerment increase knowledge, confidence, and resources, while social and institutional support reduces barriers to participation, promoting political involvement.

H_2: Educational attainment and economic independence positively affect women's political participation more in communities with progressive or egalitarian cultural norms than in communities with rigid patriarchal norms.

This hypothesis recognizes that societal expectations and traditional gender roles affect how much structural advantage translates into political engagement, so that similar levels of education or economic independence may yield different participation outcomes depending on the cultural context.

H_3: Family and community support, and political party inclusiveness, increase women's belief in their political capabilities, thereby increasing their likelihood of participation.

Structures and social resources may not directly lead to engagement unless women internalize a sense of competence and empowerment. Supportive family and community networks and inclusive party structures foster this self-efficacy, enabling active political participation. Figure 1 shows theoretical framework of the study.

In the conceptual framework, cultural norms moderate the links between independent factors and women's political engagement (Özkılıçcı and Yamaner, 2025). Education, economic independence,

Table 2: Instrument scales, sample questions, and sources

Variables	Sample question	Item's scale	References
Women's political participation	"I actively participate in political discussions and civic activities."	Internal-external locus of control (I-E scale)	Thomas (1970)
Educational attainment	"My level of education increases my awareness of political issues."	Educational attainment scale	Tomlinson-Keasey and Little (1990)
Economic independence	"I can make financial decisions without depending on others."	Perceived independence scale	Bartlett (1993)
Family/community support	"My family encourages me to participate in political activities."	Perceived social support scale	Macdonald (1998)
Political party inclusiveness	"Political parties provide women with equal opportunities to contest leadership positions."	Perceived Political Self-Efficacy (P-PSE) Scale	Bromme et al. (2020)
Cultural norms	"Traditional cultural expectations limit women's political involvement."	Multidomain Gender Norm Attitude Scale (M-GNAS)	Islam et al., (2024)
Political self-efficacy	"I feel confident in my ability to understand political matters."	Perceived political efficacy scale	Caprara et al. (2009)

family support, and party inclusivity may be less effective in patriarchal settings since societal expectations limit women's mobility and agency. In egalitarian groups, these variables may boost engagement more. Cultural norms moderate political involvement in South Asia, explaining that distinct levels of political engagement are exhibited despite identical structural advantages (Islam et al., 2025). The conceptual framework explains women's political engagement by integrating structural, cultural, and psychological factors. It predicts that independent factors increase engagement, political self-efficacy mediates these effects, and cultural norms affect their strength. These factors provide a model that incorporates women's potential and restrictions in South Asian politics and offers a theoretical and empirical foundation for primary data collection. This methodology helps establish hypotheses and examine cross-country variations, revealing the processes behind women's political involvement in Pakistan, India, and Sri Lanka.

5. METHODOLOGY

5.1. Research Design

This quantitative cross-sectional survey analyzed women's political participation in Pakistan, India, and Sri Lanka. The study was done in South Asia. The study adopted this approach to examine the social, economic, institutional, and psychological factors that affect women's political involvement across nations and over time. Cross-sectional surveys are effective for collecting opinions, attitudes, and behaviors from diverse socioeconomic groups across countries. Validated measures of cultural norms, educational success, economic independence, political party inclusion, cultural self-efficacy, and political self-efficacy were collected using a structured questionnaire. The model also enabled advanced statistical modeling, including mediation and moderation analyses, to examine how psychological and structural factors affect women's political involvement across cultures. For the study's comparative goal, the quantitative survey technique provided uniform, reliable, and repeatable evaluation across countries, thereby improving cross-national comparability and enabling broader generalization within the South Asian context.

5.2. Target Population

The study examined 18-year-old women from Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and India with diverse educational, occupational, and sociopolitical

backgrounds. The study focused on women registered voters, community workers, students, government employees, teachers, social activists, political party members, and NGO workers. Community development organizations, civil society groups, public and private universities, and government agencies from the three countries were polled. These groups were selected because they provide socially active women with decision-making forums, opportunities for community participation, grassroots mobilization, and civic debate. The varied answer pool of women from various socioeconomic groups, vocations, and educational levels complemented the study's comparative and explanatory purposes across South Asian political and cultural settings.

5.3. Sampling Technique

Pakistan, Indian, and Sri Lankan respondents used institutional purposive sampling and simple random sampling. Initial recruitment of women from diverse socioeconomic and educational backgrounds was conducted through universities, government agencies, NGOs, and community groups. This allowed students, civic society, and politically and socially active public sector personnel to participate. Second, a simple random sample was used to select respondents within each institution to reduce selection bias and promote representativeness. In situations with participant eligibility lists, a random number generator selected respondents. When lists were unavailable, community or institutional settings were used for systematic random sampling with regular responder selection. This integrated approach balanced scientific rigour and practicality while ensuring appropriate representation across all three national contexts.

5.4. Sample Size Justification

This large-scale social and behavioral research study received 1,035 valid responses from 1,250 distributed questionnaires across Pakistan, India, and Sri Lanka, achieving an 82.8% response rate. Methodology requires a minimum respondent-to-variable ratio of 10:1 to 20:1 for structural equation modeling (SEM) investigations using mediation and moderation. The study would need 120-150 respondents for six primary constructs. It has achieved high statistical power, lower sampling error, and stronger inferential conclusions with 1,035 individuals. Better representation across educational, vocational, and regional categories in a bigger sample improves comparative interpretations and cross-national

generalizability. Diverse socio-cultural and economic factors in South Asia impact women's political engagement.

5.5. Variables and Their Types

The study used one dependent variable, four independent variables, one mediator, and one moderator. These factors explain changes in women's political engagement. Voting, political activity, civic forum participation, and political decision-making were examined to assess women's political participation. Educational achievement, economic independence, family/community support, and political party inclusivity were independent factors. Cultural norms influenced the association between the independent variables and political engagement, revealing gender-based expectations. Political self-efficacy mediated the effects of confidence and perceived power to influence political outcomes on involvement. All factors were examined using 1-5 Likert scale questions. Table 1 shows the list of variables and their expected relationships between them.

5.6. Measurement Instruments and Scale Description

Table 2 presents the operationalization of the study variables, the measurement tools used, typical sample items, scale sources, and references to prior research. Scales validated elsewhere were altered to examine all facets of South Asian women's political participation. It made minor tweaks to the language to make it relevant in context and cross-cultural, without affecting the original ideas. To simplify statistical modeling and SEM analysis, answers were gathered using Likert scales. This study used items that indicated a link between political participation and views about internal and external control to measure women's political engagement using the internal-external locus of control (I-E) scale. The instrument tracks women's civic engagement, voting, community organizing, and political communication. "I actively participate in political discussions and civic activities" is representative. This scale evaluates political participation and self-confidence. Based on Thomas (1970), this redesigned scale examines how locus of control orientation affects political involvement. Higher grades reflect civic and political participation. Educational attainment was measured by respondents' judgments on how their education promotes political knowledge and civic engagement. Education affects political understanding and participation; hence the scale measures more than simply formal education. The sample item is: "My level of education increases my awareness of political issues." Tomlinson-Keasey and Little (1990) emphasized education's role in cognitive and social awareness, and their frameworks underpin the measurement approach. Higher scores increase political educational empowerment.

Economic independence variable examined respondents' financial independence and capacity to make choices in their households and community. The scale measures women's financial and economic control, which affects their civic participation. The sample item is: "I am capable of making my own financial decisions without relying on anybody else." The Perceived Independence Scale, developed by Bartlett (1993), measures economic autonomy. Higher scores boost economic empowerment and financial freedom. The study used perceived social support measures and administered them to the families and communities to evaluate women's social network

support for political involvement. "My family encourages me to participate in political activities." is representative. This evaluation, based on Macdonald's (1998) Perceived Social Support Scale, shows how family and community affect social participation. Higher scores imply more political and civic participation. Further, the study asked respondents about political parties' transparency, fairness, and opportunities for women to engage and lead. The sample item is: "Political parties ensure that women have equal opportunity to run for leadership roles." Bromme et al. (2020) developed the perceived political self-efficacy (P-PSE) scale to measure political institutions' accessibility and responsiveness. This scale adapts that concept. Higher ratings indicate better institutional support and inclusivity for women in politics. Cultural norms affecting women's political engagement were assessed using the Multidomain gender norm attitude scale (M-GNAS). The scale measures gender roles and expectations, which may aid or hinder women's political participation. "Traditional cultural expectations limit women's political involvement." is representative item. A recent cross-cultural study by Islam et al. (2024) confirmed this measure of gender norms across households, communities, and society. A higher score suggests greater cultural restriction. Caprara et al.'s (2009) Perceived Political Efficacy Scale assessed political self-efficacy, the mediating construct in the research. The scale measures respondents' confidence in their political knowledge and participation. Representative item is: "I feel confident in my ability to understand political matters." A higher score indicates greater political confidence.

All items were assessed on a five-point Likert scale from strong disagreement to strong agreement to ensure domain consistency. Before final analysis, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and confirmatory factor analysis within the SEM framework were used to verify the scale's reliability and validity, and to assess measurement robustness across the comparison sample.

5.7. Data Collection Procedure

Data was gathered in Sri Lanka, India, and Pakistan over 3 months to ensure cross-national comparability. Community organizations, educational institutions, government entities, and civil society groups were contacted before data collection. Both hard and digital versions of the survey were distributed to reach a wide range of respondents across all three countries. Institutional coordinators and skilled enumerators delivered surveys at schools, companies, community centers, and NGOs. Online survey URLs were shared with eligible participants to boost participation among working professionals and remote respondents. Participants were informed of the study's aims before enrolling. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were assured that their identities and views would be kept secret and utilized for research. After data collection, every survey was reviewed for missing numbers, consistency, and completeness. Data cleaning removed incorrect or incomplete answers, leaving 1,035 valid responses from Pakistan, India, and Sri Lanka. After cleaning, statistical software was loaded with coded data for processing. It was then studied using advanced statistical methods, including mediation and moderation modeling in SEM. All participating countries adhered to social science research ethics, ensuring anonymity, voluntary participation, and proper data handling.

5.8. Tests for Reliability and Validity

5.8.1. Testing reliability (cronbach's alpha)

This study's measuring instrument's reliability is its internal consistency and stability. Cronbach's alpha was the primary statistical indicator of the dependability of structured questionnaire primary data. Cronbach's alpha measures the extent to which a set of items is similar to determine whether they measure the same construct. Cronbach's Alpha values of 0.70 or above indicated a reliable and internally consistent scale. Between 0.80 and 0.90 is fair dependability, and over 0.90 is great internal consistency; high values may imply redundancy. The reliability test was performed independently for each construct, and items with poor item-total correlations or large reductions in alpha were assessed and deleted to maintain consistency. This process ensured that the questionnaire scales provided reliable measures that could be understood confidently throughout data analysis.

5.8.2. Content validity

Content validity measures how well the instrument's items reflect the full range of the construct. A thorough expert review method confirmed content validity in this research. After reviewing literature on women's political engagement, political psychology, empowerment theory, gender studies, and South Asian socio-cultural dynamics, the original questionnaire was created. These items were derived from verified global and regional study scales. Subject-matter experts from the Political Science, Gender Studies, and Sociology departments of different universities reviewed the questionnaire to enhance content validity. Further, different public-private institutions assessed the instrument for clarity, relevance, comprehensiveness, and cultural appropriateness. Their input clarified disjointed, overlapping, or incorrect information. After adjustments, the instrument properly represented the theoretical structures under inquiry and corresponded with women's socio-political reality. This thorough evaluation ensured questionnaire content validity before administration.

5.8.3. Construct validity

Construct validity examines how well the instrument measures theoretical constructs. This research assessed concept validity using factor analysis for convergent and discriminant validity. Convergent validity was investigated using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) or exploratory factor analysis (EFA), depending on data structure, to discover whether items measuring the same concept were significantly associated. Items with factor loadings over 0.50 were acceptable, but weak or numerous factor loadings were re-evaluated for exclusion. The average variance extracted (AVE) indicated convergence of items within each construct, with values exceeding 0.50. Discriminant validity assessed concept distinction. This was determined by comparing the square roots of AVEs with inter-construct correlations to ensure that each construct shared more variance with its items than with other constructs. These tests showed that political self-efficacy, education, cultural norms, and political involvement were distinct categories. The measurement model's structural integrity was verified through rigorous construct validity assessment, proving that it was theoretically sound and empirically supported for analyzing variables in Pakistani women's political participation.

5.9. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

SEM is a multivariate statistical method that lets researchers study complicated interactions between observable and latent variables. SEM is ideal for this study because it allows for the evaluation of the measurement model and structural relationships between variables. SEM's measurement model component uses confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to assess factor loadings, error variances, and model fit indices to determine whether the questionnaire questions accurately measure latent variables. After validation, the structural model tests the predicted causal routes, assessing independent variables' direct and indirect effects on the dependent variable. SEM permits simultaneous examination of the mediator (political self-efficacy) and moderator (cultural norms), giving a complete knowledge of direct and conditional interactions. The study uses SEM to quantify the impact of educational, economic, social, and organizational variables on women's political engagement while accounting for psychological and cultural causes.

5.9.1. Moderation analysis

Moderation analysis explores whether the moderator (third variable) affects the independent-dependent connection. Cultural Norms moderate the correlations between independent variables and Women's Political Participation in this research. For instance, restrictive cultural norms in certain countries may prevent a highly educated or economically independent woman from participating in politics, while more liberal norms may encourage it. SEM interaction terms between the moderator and relevant independent variables assess moderation. A substantial interaction effect suggests that cultural context affects independent factors and political engagement. Understanding moderation is vital in South Asia, where socio-cultural expectations, conventional gender roles, and societal acceptability substantially influence women's political potential and limits. This methodology helps the researcher determine when women's education or economic independence best leads to political involvement.

5.9.2. Mediation analysis

Intervening variables impact dependent variables in mediation analysis. Political Self-Efficacy mediates how family/community support and political party Inclusiveness affect Women's Political Participation in this research. Mediation research determines if these independent factors change political activity directly or indirectly by boosting women's confidence and perceived power to influence politics. SEM breaks down each independent variable's influence into direct and indirect effects. The indirect impact measures how political self-efficacy converts structural and social resources into political action via psychological empowerment. A statistically significant mediation effect shows that family support and inclusive party cultures boost women's self-efficacy and political involvement. This research relies on mediation analysis to understand how political women absorb and operationalized structural, social, and organizational elements.

5.10. Ethical Considerations

This study followed human research ethics to preserve participants' rights, privacy, and well-being. Participants were informed of the study's goal, scope, and voluntary nature, as well as their freedom

to withdraw at any time without penalty, before data collection. All respondents gave written or verbal agreement to use their data and participate voluntarily. During the study, confidentiality was maintained. To protect privacy, questionnaire answers were coded. Password-protected devices accessible exclusively to the study team saved all data securely. Aggregated data prevented participant, school, organization, and community identification in outcomes reports.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographics give a complete picture of the sample and represent South Asian women's heterogeneous socio-political context (Table 3). Women comprise 60.2% of the 1,035 respondents, underscoring the study's emphasis on women's political engagement. The gender distribution shows a strong representation of female opinions and allows comparisons between male and female respondents. Many responders (43.2%) are young persons aged 18-30, followed by 35.9% aged 31-45 and 20.9% aged 46 and beyond. This distribution includes both new and veteran political players, offering a diverse view of political activity. Nearly half (45.6%) have a bachelor's degree, 27.3% have a master's, and 27.2% have secondary education or less. A well-educated sample is essential for assessing the influence of education on political involvement. With 46.2% employed, 20.4% self-employed, and 33.4% jobless, economic independence, i.e., a significant independent variable affecting women's political participation, varies across these groups. The study's comparative approach is

supported by the balanced response rates in Pakistan (35.9%), India (36.3%), and Sri Lanka (27.8%). Political participation levels vary, i.e., 41.7% are somewhat active, 32.3% are inactive, and 26.1% are very engaged. Sociocultural norms, family/community support, and political possibilities may impact political engagement. The demographic profile shows that the sample is sufficiently varied in terms of gender, age, education, occupation, and political involvement to analyze variables related to South Asian women's political participation. The balance across nations and occupations increases the generalizability of the results and provides a solid platform for inferential statistical studies.

The descriptive statistics, reliability, and validity findings in Table 4 cover the research variables' measurement features and key trends. Educational achievement (M = 4.12), family and community support (M = 4.05), and political self-efficacy (M = 4.01) were strongly agreed upon by respondents. Economic independence (M = 3.95) and political engagement (M = 3.97) both had somewhat high mean ratings, showing respondents felt empowered and politically engaged. Cultural norms scored slightly lower (M = 3.42), indicating that respondents recognized traditional social constraints and gender-based expectations that may limit women's political engagement, supporting the conceptual model's claim that cultural norms moderate. In South Asian settings, respondents' socio-economic and educational backgrounds are varied, as seen by their modest standard deviations of 0.68-0.81. All constructs had Cronbach's Alpha values over 0.80, indicating strong internal consistency and reliable measurement across items for each variable. Educational achievement, family/community support, and women's political engagement were highly reliable, with Alpha values of 0.85, 0.87, and 0.88. The items assessed the required structures without redundancy. Factor loadings and AVE values supported construct validity. All item factor loadings exceeded 0.59, indicating convergent validity, as each item strongly loaded on its construct. AVE values between 0.52 and 0.59 indicated that indicators explained over 50% of each construct's variation, meeting the convergent validity criteria. These results show that the questionnaire reliably and validly measures the intended variables, making it suitable for direct, mediating, and moderating analyses of educational attainment, economic independence, family/community support, political party inclusiveness, political self-efficacy, cultural norms, and women's political participation in South Asia.

Table 5's CFA indicators strongly support the measurement model's content and construct validity. All factor loadings exceeded 0.59, indicating good convergent validity and adequate

Table 3: Demographic profile of respondents

Demographic factors	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage
Gender	Male	412	39.8
	Female	623	60.2
Age group	18-30 years	447	43.2
	31-45 years	372	35.9
	46 years and above	216	20.9
Educational level	Secondary or below	281	27.2
	Bachelor's	472	45.6
	Master's or above	282	27.3
Employment status	Employed	478	46.2
	Self-employed	211	20.4
	Unemployed	346	33.4
Country of residence	Pakistan	371	35.9
	India	376	36.3
	Sri Lanka	288	27.8
Political engagement level	Not active	334	32.3
	Moderately active	431	41.7
	Highly active	270	26.1

Table 4: Descriptive statistics, reliability, and validity of study variables

Variable	Mean (M)	Standard deviation (SD)	Cronbach's alpha	Factor loading range	AVE (average variance extracted)
Women's political participation (DV)	3.97	0.7	0.88	0.65-0.82	0.59
Educational attainment (IV1)	4.12	0.68	0.85	0.62-0.78	0.56
Economic independence (IV2)	3.95	0.74	0.82	0.59-0.76	0.54
Family/community support (IV3)	4.05	0.71	0.87	0.64-0.79	0.57
Political party inclusiveness (IV4)	3.88	0.76	0.84	0.61-0.77	0.55
Political self-efficacy (mediator)	4.01	0.69	0.86	0.63-0.80	0.58
Cultural norms (moderator)	3.42	0.81	0.83	0.60-0.75	0.52

Table 5: Content and construct validity through CFA indicators

Variables	Item loading range	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (CR)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Women's political participation (DV)	0.65-0.82	0.88	0.9	0.59
Educational attainment (IV1)	0.62-0.78	0.85	0.87	0.56
Economic independence (IV2)	0.59-0.76	0.82	0.85	0.54
Family/community support (IV3)	0.64-0.79	0.87	0.89	0.57
Political party inclusiveness (IV4)	0.61-0.77	0.84	0.86	0.55
Political self-efficacy (mediator)	0.63-0.80	0.86	0.88	0.58
Cultural norms (moderator)	0.60-0.75	0.83	0.85	0.52

Table 6: SEM estimates of structural relationships

Path	Standardized coefficient (β)	P-value
EA→WPP	0.28	0.001
EI→WPP	0.24	0.003
FCS→WPP	0.31	0.001
PPI→WPP	0.21	0.005
PSE→WPP	0.35	0.001
EA×CN→WPP	−0.12	0.018
EI×CN→WPP	−0.10	0.025
FCS×PSE→WPP	0.15	0.010
PPI×PSE→WPP	0.13	0.012
Model fit indices		
CFI	0.95	—
TLI	0.94	—
RMSEA	0.045	—
SRMR	0.042	—

item representation of the respective constructs. Cronbach's Alpha values for each construct were above 0.80, confirming strong internal consistency, while composite reliability (CR) values above 0.85 indicate reliable measurement with minimal measurement error. Convergent validity was confirmed by average variance extracted (AVE) values of 0.52-0.59, above the acceptable 0.50. Through serial mediation of political trust and self-efficacy, digital literacy shapes rural left-behind women's involvement in digital villages. These findings support discriminant validity by showing that educational attainment, economic independence, family/community support, political party inclusiveness, political self-efficacy, cultural norms, and women's political participation are theoretically and empirically distinct (Bai and Yang, 2025). The findings support Empowerment Theory (Kabeer, 1999) and show that the instrument can capture the complex impacts of social, economic, and cultural determinants on women's political engagement in South Asia.

Table 6's SEM findings show the structural correlations among the independent variables, the mediator, the moderator, and the dependent variable, Women's Political Participation. All four independent variables significantly impacted WPP, with coefficients ranging from 0.21 to 0.31 (P < 0.01). These findings support Empowerment Theory (Kabeer, 1999), which holds that resources and agency are crucial to political participation (Sokani, 2025). The most significant direct effect of political self-efficacy (PSE) on WPP (β = 0.35, P = 0.001) supports its role as a mediator. PSE partly transfers FCS and PPI effects on WPP, demonstrating that supporting social structures and inclusive party cultures boost political confidence and participation (Van Wart et al., 2023). The study found that cultural norms (CN) moderated the relationship between EA and EI, with adverse interaction effects (β = −0.12,

P = 0.018 and β = −0.10, P = 0.025). These findings show that conventional cultural expectations might reduce the favourable impact of education and economic freedom on women's political engagement. Moderation supports political self-efficacy theory, which suggests that culture either constrains or helps political conduct based on personal resources. The postulated structural model fits the observed data well, with CFI = 0.95, TLI = 0.94, RMSEA = 0.045, and SRMR = 0.042. These findings confirm the study's theoretical and empirical expectations that education, economic resources, social support, inclusive political practices, self-efficacy, and cultural constraints shape South Asian women's political participation (Kestilä-Kekkonen et al., 2025).

Table 7 shows how preconditions and indirect influences shape South Asian women's patterns of political involvement. Cultural norms (CN) substantially affect educational achievement (EA), economic independence (EI), and women's political participation (WPP), according to the moderation analysis. The negative interaction coefficients (EA × CN: β = −0.12, P = 0.018; EI × CN: β = −0.10, P = 0.025) indicate that conventional social expectations undermine the favourable impact of education and economic independence on political involvement. Thus, although better education and financial autonomy improve women's political participation, inflexible cultural standards hinder this. According to political self-efficacy Theory (Bandura, 2013) and Empowerment Theory (Kabeer, 1999), contextual social norms both limit and enable individual abilities, underscoring the need to address cultural barriers to effective empowerment interventions.

The mediation study shows that political self-efficacy (PSE) channels social support and institutional inclusivity to political involvement. Family/community support (FCS) and political party inclusivity (PPI) had substantial indirect impacts on WPP via PSE (β = 0.15, P = 0.010; β = 0.13, P = 0.012). These indirect effects are statistically significant, indicating that supportive family structures and inclusive political environments boost women's confidence and political agency, which increases their political participation. This supports Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 2014) by showing that self-efficacy mediates the link between contextual and structural support and behaviour. Cultural norms limit education and economic independence, while political self-efficacy empowers family/community support and party inclusivity. These findings demonstrate that institutional and individual variables affect women's political involvement. The results indicate that to optimize their impact, interventions to increase South Asian women's political involvement must address personal resources, social support, institutional inclusion, and the socio-cultural environment.

Table 7: Mediation and moderation analysis

Effect type	Path	Standardized coefficient (β)	SE	P-value	95% CI (bootstrapping)
Moderation	EA×CN→WPP	−0.12	0.05	0.018	(−0.21, −0.03)
Moderation	EI×CN→WPP	−0.1	0.04	0.025	(−0.18, −0.02)
Mediation	FCS→PSE→WPP	0.15	0.06	0.01	(0.05, 0.27)
Mediation	PPI→PSE→WPP	0.13	0.05	0.012	(0.04, 0.25)

Figure 1: Theoretical framework
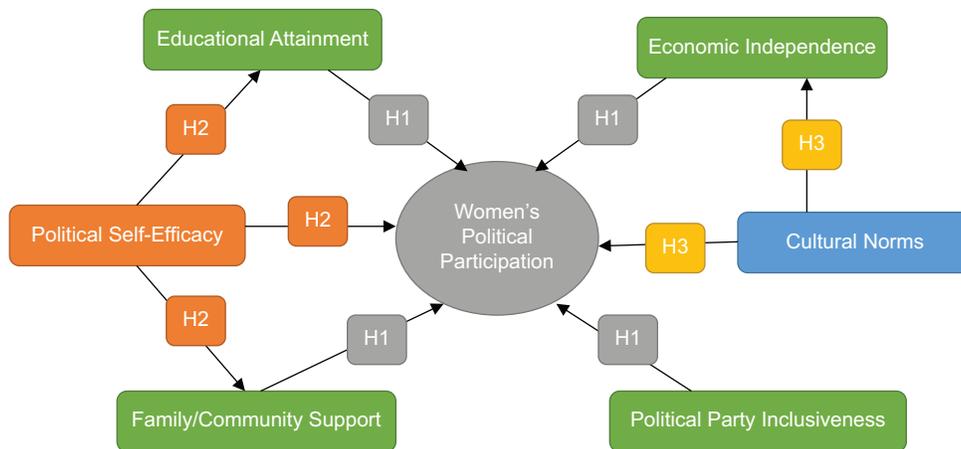
Source: Author's work

7. CONCLUSION

Educational attainment, economic independence, family and community support, and political party inclusiveness were examined as independent variables, political self-efficacy as a mediator, and cultural norms as moderators of women's political participation in South Asia, focusing on India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. The moderation and mediation studies and structural equation modeling (SEM) findings demonstrate the complex interaction of individual, societal, and institutional elements that influence women's political participation. Supporting the first hypothesis that higher education, economic autonomy, supportive families and communities, and inclusive party practices increase women's political participation, all four independent variables had statistically significant positive effects. The most substantial benefits were family/community support and political self-efficacy, indicating the importance of social and psychological resources for women's political empowerment. Political self-efficacy strongly influences the association between family/community support, political party inclusion, and women's political engagement. This supports the second hypothesis that supportive social networks and inclusive institutional contexts boost women's confidence and perceived capacity to participate in politics, thereby increasing their participation. This supports Social Cognitive Theory, which emphasizes self-efficacy as a key predictor of behavioural outcomes and the importance of interventions that boost women's political confidence to turn social and institutional support into participation. Cultural norms strongly moderated the correlations between educational achievement, economic independence, and women's political engagement, supporting the third hypothesis. The adverse interaction effects suggest that traditional societal expectations can limit the positive effects of education and financial independence, demonstrating that personal resources alone cannot ensure active political engagement in contexts with restrictive gender norms. These findings support political self-efficacy theory and empowerment theory, which emphasize the role of human agency and socio-cultural environment in political engagement.

7.1. Policy Recommendations

This research has important implications for policymakers, industry practitioners, and academic institutions, especially in light of South Asia's rising women's political engagement. Results show that policymakers must create and implement evidence-based policies to address structural, social, and cultural barriers to female political participation. The beneficial impacts of education and economic independence on political involvement suggest that initiatives encouraging women's higher education and financial empowerment may significantly increase their political agency. Cultural norms also hinder the conversion of education and economic resources into political engagement, according to the moderation study. Policymakers should use awareness-raising efforts, community discussions, and legislative frameworks to challenge restrictive gender stereotypes and promote equal political leadership for women. These solutions may enable human and structural resources to be used for active political involvement, promoting democratic government and national development.

Political organizations, civil society groups, and women-focused advocacy networks should promote inclusive practices and institutional support. The study demonstrates that political party inclusiveness and family/community support are key determinants of women's political participation, mediated by political self-efficacy. These findings may be used to create mentoring programs, leadership training seminars, and targeted recruiting techniques that encourage women to engage and

boost their political confidence and decision-making. Inclusive policies may help firms overcome cultural norms and provide women equal opportunity for meaningful involvement. This strategy empowers women and enhances political institutions by promoting diversity and representative decision-making. The study offers practical advice for creating an inclusive environment that promotes women's political engagement. These recommendations promote gender equity, democratic processes, and national development by addressing educational, economic, social, and institutional factors and reducing restrictive cultural norms. Evidence-based interventions, targeted capacity-building programs, and institutional reforms can encourage women to participate politically and empower them to influence South Asian governance, making it more representative, effective, and inclusive.

7.2. Study Limitations

This study sheds light on South Asian women's political engagement, but its limitations must be recognized to inform future research. First, Cultural norms, family/community support, and institutional openness may vary widely in various geographical settings, affecting the strength and direction of observed linkages. The research employed a cross-sectional survey design with self-reported questions to capture women's political engagement at a single point in time. Cross-sectional data made causal conclusions about variable interactions difficult, but structural equation modeling (SEM) permitted rigorous examination of direct, mediating, and moderating effects. Educational achievement, economic independence, and political self-efficacy affect women's engagement throughout time and in reaction to changing socio-political situations. Longitudinal research is needed. Although the questionnaire items were taken from established scales and rigorously tested for reliability and validity, self-reported measures are sensitive to social desirability and response biases. Measurement error may have resulted from respondents over- or under-reporting political activity, confidence, or social support. Education, economic independence, family/community support, and political party inclusiveness were examined, but media exposure, political ideology, and prior civic engagement were not reviewed. Though theoretically sound, the variable selection may restrict the model's ability to capture all significant factors. The study's timeframe may have altered respondents' attitudes and involvement owing to political events, election cycles, or socio-economic trends. These temporal considerations may affect the future stability and replicability of the results. Finally, although the study's concentration on women as key respondents is suitable for its goals, it does not address male viewpoints or larger social attitudes that may affect women's political involvement possibilities and limits. While crucial to address the research topic, this gender-specific emphasis may restrict results to larger community or institutional factors.

7.3. Future Directions

The study's results and limitations suggest numerous intriguing avenues for further research on South Asian women's political engagement. Given the geographic and sampling restrictions of the current study, future research might include Bangladesh, Nepal, and Bhutan in addition to India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

Such studies examine how political systems, cultural settings, and policy environments affect women's political involvement, revealing regional trends and enabling context-specific empowering tactics. Comparative research might also reveal local socio-cultural hurdles and possibilities that the present study missed by comparing urban and rural communities. Research on longitudinal designs is another promising avenue. Scholars may examine causal links and the long-term consequences of education, economic independence, family/community support, and political self-efficacy on women's political involvement. To overcome the temporal limitations of cross-sectional designs, longitudinal research might examine how socio-political events, election cycles, and policy changes interact with cultural norms to either hinder or boost involvement. Analytical models may contain more variables in future investigations. For instance, factors such as political philosophy, media exposure, computer literacy, past civic involvement, and intra-party mentoring help explain women's political participation. These supplementary variables would enable researchers to examine more complicated mediating and moderating processes, providing new insights into how personal, societal, and institutional factors influence political conduct. Exploring male allies, intergenerational effects, and national and local institutional regulations may help explain the socio-political ecology that supports or hinders women's involvement. Finally, mixed-method approaches that combine quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews or ethnographic observations might enhance future research. Qualitative insights enhance SEM and mediation/moderation investigations by revealing complex impediments, cultural intricacies, and context-specific incentives for women's political engagement. Multi-level modeling or network analysis may also capture the interaction between individual-level variables and community- or institutional-level impacts, yielding theoretically and practically robust results.

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