

## Women Pioneers in Shaping Indian Constitution Nagreddy

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### ABSTRACT:

We have heard about women Scholars like Maitreyi and Gargi during later vedic period in ancient Indian history. In modern India many women leaders were active participators of freedom struggle like Captain Laxmi Sehgal, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, Nellie Sengupta, Sucheta Kriplani, Kasturba Gandhi, Annie Besant and many more. Unfortunately our history and our history books forgot to highlight the role of women constitution makers. The present Paper is an effort to bring out the contributions of women constituent assembly members like Ammu Swaminathan, Annie Mascarene, Begaum AizazRasul, Sarojini Naidu and many others who contributed for the making of Indian Constitution.

### KEYWORDS:

Constituent Assembly, Indian Constitution, Draft Constitution, Women.

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### INTRODUCTION:

We have heard about women Scholars like Maitreyi and Gargi during later vedic period in ancient Indian history. During medieval period Prominent women emperors ruled many Indian dynasties few prominent women rulers were Rani Rudramma Devi, Rani Durgawati, Chand Bibi, Rani Chanamma, Rani Laxmi bai and many more. In modern India many women leaders were active participators of freedom struggle like Captain Laxmi Sehgal, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, Nellie Sengupta, SuchetaKriplani, Kasturba Gandhi, Annie Besant and many more. Unfortunately our history and our history books forgot to highlight the role of women constitution makers. The present Paper is an effort to bring out the contributions of those forgotten women members who played prominent role in framing of Indian Constitution. Let us know one by one their contribution to the making of Indian Constitution.

**Objectives:**

The objective of the paper is to examine the contribution of women Constituent Assembly members in making of Indian Constitution.

**Methodology:**

This paper is presented by reviewing various secondary sources like books, journals, annual reports, and various other webliographical sources.

**Following are the women pioneers of Indian Constitution:**

**Ammu Swaminathan:** Ammu Swaminathan a social worker and follower of Mahatma Gandhi. Expressing her views on fundamental rights Swaminathan reiterates that the fundamental rights, equal status and adult franchise which are provided by the constitution should not only remain in papers but they should be put in to practice by the people of this great nation which makes country happy and prosperous. She was of the view that the constitution should be small and easy to carry in one's pocket. She also foresaw that this constitution upholds human rights and establish strong and vibrant democracy.

**Annie Mascarene:** Annie Mascarene was member of Travancore-Cochin Legislative Assembly during the tenure 1948-1952. She believed Politics as ethics writ large. She also supported centralization of power for stable administration at later stage but not at the very beginning of democracy. She was of the view that centralization of power is more autocratic than democratic at the beginning stage of democracy. She appreciated with her whole heart to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel for his iron will for unifying India without violence.

**Begaum Aizaz Rasul:** Begaum Aizaz Rasul only Muslim woman member of the constituent assembly. She vehemently stood for strong and stable ministry uninfluenced by party politics. She appreciated Right to Equality provided in the draft constitution. She Strongly rejected the reservation of seats for minority and Said that it is quite meaningless and pointless. She requested majority to give due respect to minority and not to discriminate. She opposed sudden imposition of Hindi as official language because majority of Muslims do not know Hindi in Devanagari Script and she appealed to give them sufficient time to adapt to the new official language.

**Dakshayani Velayudhan:** Dakshayani Velayudhan the only Dalit

women of constituent assembly in 1946. She was the first Dalit women degree holder in the state of Kerala. She believed that power comes from the people and expressed the view that harijans will be safe in new India. She opposed separatism and communalism as both of these dogmas are opposed to the nationalism. She opposed centralization of power and advocated for democratic decentralization. She even foresaw the friction between Chief Minister and governors in the long run. She lauded the work of Mahatma Gandhi towards untouchability and firmly believed that unless attitude of people towards untouchability is changed it cannot be abolished. She even recommended for propaganda against untouchability by the government.

**Durgabai Deshmukh:** Durgabai Deshmukh was a freedom fighter, social worker, lawyer and a politician. She said that high courts are the repositories of the constitution. She stressed for independent functioning of judiciary and transparent method for appointing judges. She was of the opinion that right to constitutional remedies is fundamental right to all the fundamental rights guaranteed under the constitution. She firmly believed that wisdom does not depend on age and who was strong supporter in lowering the age from 35 to 30 for conducting state legislations. She also recommended few measures for ensuring the neutrality of governor in the state with the principles of democracy. She wanted films which exhibits our culture and civilization. Films should promote peace and harmony between us and international community. She even stressed for Hindustani should be national language instead of Hindi.

**Hansa Jivraj Mehta:** Hansa Jivraj Mehta served constituent Assembly from 1946–49. She stressed for social, economic and political justice for women of India. She pleaded for Cooperation between men and women to attend equality. She holds the privilege of presenting the first national flag to the constituent assembly on behalf of the women of India. She also remarked that the constitution would be good or bad based on the responsibility of the citizens. She also stressed for common Civil Code and raised her voice against personal laws which are dividing the nation.

**Purnima Banerji:** Purnima Banerji one of the leading women freedom fighter. As a member of constituent assembly she advised states to have control over religious instructions in schools. She was of the view that religious educational institutions may impart religious instructions which might breed fanaticism and religious bigotry among students which

is detrimental to the nation. She even opposed men fulfilling the seats vacated by women in constituent assembly and demanded for those seats to be fulfilled by women member themselves. She expressed that the ultimate Sovereignty of the constitution lies with the people.

**Renuka Ray:** Renuka Ray noted freedom fighter from the province of Bengal. She strongly argued for equality of status on par with men as well as justice for women. She was against women reservation but she wanted woman to be equal partners along with men in all walks of life. She also opposed separate electorates and expressed that these separate electorates will hamper the growth of National interest. She was also a staunch supporter of prevention of trafficking of women as well as a lead voice for abolition of Devdasi system.

**Sarojini Naidu:** Sarojini Naidu known as Nightingale of India was a poet and independence activist. She was disheartened by the separation of India and Pakistan. She opined that this constitution will be inclusive of all caste, creed, tribes and give equal representations to all the communities of the Nation. Sarojini Naidu firmly believed that the national flag represent neither rich nor poor, no prince nor peasant. It represents Mother India with one undivided heart and one indivisible spirit.

**Sucheta Kriplani:** Sucheta Kriplani first woman chief minister of India and the founder of women Congress wing. She sung first few lines of Vataram, SareJahan Se Acha Hindustan Hamara and first verse of Jana Gana Mana Adhi Nayak Jaya Hai.

**Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit:** Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit the sister of Shri Jawaharlal Nehru. She stressed about talks of rights along with obligations to fulfill them. She dreamt of independent India to the fullest economic cultural and Social Justice to individuals and groups through cooperation of entire country. She also stressed for building up one world instead of separating Nations. She upheld that India has the power to contribute for world peace and security.

### **Conclusion:**

Hence to conclude these women contribution in the making of Indian Constitution is of immense value and inspiration for generations to come. Their contributions should be researched more and it should be highlighted to the younger generations through the entire possible medium

of communications to cherish their noble work and give due respect to these women stalwarts of Indian Constitution.

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The Authors have no conflict of interest to declare that they are relevant to the content of this article.

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