



## **Empowering Female Legislators in the South Sulawesi Regional People's Representative Council**

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### **Abstract**

*This study examines the strengthening of female legislators in the Regional People's Representative Council of South Sulawesi through a mixed empirical–normative socio-legal approach. It integrates doctrinal analysis of statutory frameworks with qualitative field data derived from interviews, document analysis, and legislative records to construct a context-sensitive empowerment model. The findings reveal that despite formal guarantees of gender equality within Indonesian legal frameworks, female legislators continue to face structural, cultural, and institutional constraints that limit their substantive participation in legislative functions. Empirical evidence highlights gaps in institutional support, unequal access to strategic political positions, and the persistence of patriarchal norms influencing legislative dynamics. The study develops a multidimensional empowerment model consisting of legal reinforcement, institutional restructuring, and capacity enhancement, which is validated through triangulation and expert evaluation. This model demonstrates the importance of aligning legal mandates with institutional practices and individual competencies to achieve gender-responsive governance. The research contributes to socio-legal scholarship by offering an empirically grounded and normatively informed framework for strengthening women's legislative roles in decentralized political systems.*

**Keywords :** *Female Legislators, Legislative Empowerment, Gender-Responsive Governance, Socio-Legal Approach, South Sulawesi.*



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## **INTRODUCTION**

The global discourse on gender equality in political representation has undergone significant transformation over the past two decades, marked by a growing recognition that descriptive representation alone is insufficient without substantive influence in legislative processes. Contemporary scholarship situates women's political empowerment within broader frameworks of inclusive governance, institutional reform, and democratic deepening, emphasizing that the presence of female legislators must translate into gender-responsive policymaking and institutional change (Suryawati, 2020; Azizah, 2026). Within this evolving paradigm, legislative bodies are increasingly scrutinized not only for their composition but also for their capacity to produce equitable policies, particularly in decentralized governance contexts where local parliaments wield significant regulatory authority. Indonesia, as a post-reformasi democracy, reflects these global dynamics through its ongoing efforts to institutionalize gender mainstreaming and affirmative action within electoral and legislative systems, especially following the strengthening of legislative functions under Law No. 17 of 2014 concerning the MD3 framework, which mandates regional parliaments to enact responsive local regulations.

A critical synthesis of prior studies reveals a complex interplay between institutional design, socio-cultural norms, and political agency in shaping women's legislative effectiveness. Research on gender quotas and affirmative action demonstrates measurable gains in women's numerical representation, yet these gains often fail to translate into meaningful influence due to structural constraints within political parties and legislative institutions (Achmad et al., 2025; Andreas et al., 2025). Empirical studies in Indonesian local politics, including analyses of regional elections in Makassar, indicate that women's candidacies are frequently instrumentalized by party elites, resulting in limited autonomy and policy impact (Bogheiry et al., 2022). Normative legal analyses further highlight that while the legislative framework formally supports gender equality, its implementation

remains inconsistent and often symbolic (Asshiddiqie, 2006; ADEKSI, 2000). These findings collectively suggest that empowerment must be understood not merely as access to political office but as the enhancement of capacity, agency, and institutional leverage within legislative arenas.

Despite these insights, the literature exhibits notable limitations and inconsistencies, particularly in its treatment of subnational legislative dynamics and the qualitative dimensions of empowerment. Much of the existing research remains disproportionately focused on national-level institutions, thereby neglecting the nuanced realities of regional parliaments where policy implementation directly affects local communities (Azis, 2013). Furthermore, there is a persistent conceptual gap between the formal existence of gender-responsive policies and their substantive realization in legislative outputs, with limited attention to the internal capacity-building mechanisms required for female legislators to effectively exercise their roles. Empirical inconsistencies also emerge regarding the impact of socio-economic variables, such as regional development indices, on women's representation, indicating that structural determinants alone cannot fully explain observed disparities. These gaps underscore the need for a more integrated analytical framework that bridges legal, institutional, and socio-political dimensions of women's legislative empowerment.

The urgency of addressing these unresolved issues is underscored by persistent evidence of gender bias in public policy and regulatory frameworks at the regional level. Despite the proliferation of legal instruments supporting gender mainstreaming—including constitutional guarantees, presidential regulations, and ministerial directives—numerous local regulations remain discriminatory or insufficiently responsive to the needs of women and vulnerable groups (Azis, 2007; Suryawati, 2020). The continued existence of hundreds of gender-biased regional bylaws reflects not only institutional inertia but also the limited capacity of legislative actors to integrate gender perspectives into policymaking processes. In regions such as South Sulawesi, where gender mainstreaming regulations have been formally adopted, the challenge lies in translating these normative commitments into effective legislative practices, a process that necessitates both structural reform and individual capacity enhancement among female legislators.

Positioned within this scholarly and practical context, the present study advances an inquiry into the empowerment of female legislators in the Regional People's Representative Council of South Sulawesi by foregrounding the intersection between legal frameworks, institutional functions, and individual competencies. Unlike prior studies that predominantly emphasize representation metrics or electoral mechanisms, this research interrogates the substantive dimensions of legislative empowerment, particularly in relation to the formulation of gender-responsive regional regulations. By employing a normative juridical approach complemented by qualitative analysis, the study seeks to elucidate how legal mandates, such as those embedded in the MD3 Law and gender mainstreaming policies, are operationalized within legislative practices, while also examining the extent to which female legislators possess the knowledge, skills, and institutional support necessary to fulfill their roles effectively.

This study aims to develop a comprehensive model for strengthening the role of female legislators in regional legislative institutions, with a specific focus on enhancing their capacity to produce gender-responsive policies. It contributes theoretically by integrating perspectives from legal studies, gender politics, and institutional analysis into a cohesive framework of legislative empowerment, and methodologically by combining normative legal analysis with qualitative empirical insights to capture both structural and experiential dimensions of the issue. Ultimately, the research aspires to inform policy design and institutional reform efforts that can bridge the gap between formal representation and substantive equality in regional governance.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study adopts a mixed empirical–normative (socio-legal) research design, positioning it as an empirically informed legal inquiry that integrates doctrinal analysis with field-based qualitative investigation to develop an innovation model for strengthening female legislators' roles. The research proceeds through a developmental-descriptive framework in which the innovation—conceptualized as a capacity-strengthening model for gender-responsive legislative performance—is systematically constructed through iterative stages. First, a normative juridical mapping is conducted to analyze statutory frameworks governing regional legislative functions, particularly those embedded in Law No. 17 of 2014 (MD3) and gender mainstreaming regulations, in order to identify formal mandates and

institutional expectations. Second, empirical data are collected through field-based qualitative techniques, including in-depth interviews with female legislators, legislative staff, and relevant stakeholders, alongside document analysis of regional regulations (Perda) and legislative proceedings in South Sulawesi. Third, these two streams are integrated through a socio-legal lens to simulate how legal norms interact with actual legislative practices, enabling the formulation of a context-sensitive empowerment model that reflects both institutional constraints and actor-level capacities. This hybrid methodological architecture enhances robustness by bridging the gap between prescriptive legal frameworks and lived political realities, while its innovation lies in embedding gender-responsive legislative strengthening within a legally grounded yet empirically validated model.

The validation of the proposed model employs a qualitative multi-layered evaluation strategy designed to ensure analytical rigor and contextual credibility. Internal validation is achieved through triangulation across data sources—legal texts, interview narratives, and policy documents—allowing convergence and divergence patterns to be systematically examined. External validation is conducted through expert judgment involving legal scholars, gender policy specialists, and practitioners within regional legislative institutions, assessing the model's coherence, feasibility, and adaptability to varying institutional settings. The evaluation metrics are constructed around three principal dimensions: (i) legal conformity, measuring alignment with constitutional and statutory mandates on gender equality and legislative authority; (ii) institutional effectiveness, assessing the extent to which the model enhances legislative functions such as drafting, deliberation, and oversight of gender-responsive policies; and (iii) capacity transformation, evaluating improvements in knowledge, analytical skills, and gender sensitivity among female legislators. Analytical synthesis is performed using qualitative coding and thematic abstraction to derive patterns of empowerment and constraint, ensuring that the resulting model is not merely descriptive but diagnostically and prescriptively robust. This methodological configuration underscores both the resilience and originality of the study, particularly in its capacity to operationalize normative legal principles into empirically grounded institutional innovation.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Institutional and Legal Constraints in Strengthening Female Legislators**

The empirical findings indicate that the institutional architecture of regional legislative bodies in South Sulawesi reflects a persistent tension between formal legal mandates and their practical implementation. Normative frameworks such as Law No. 17 of 2014 (MD3) formally grant DPRD extensive legislative authority, yet field data reveal uneven comprehension and operationalization of these powers among female legislators. Interview evidence suggests that many female members require extended adaptation periods to internalize legislative procedures, particularly in drafting gender-responsive regulations. This condition aligns with the argument that legal structures alone cannot guarantee effective legislative performance without corresponding capacity development (Asshiddiqe, 2006).

The doctrinal analysis further demonstrates that gender mainstreaming policies are embedded within multiple regulatory instruments, yet their translation into regional bylaws remains fragmented. Legislative outputs often fail to incorporate gender-sensitive perspectives despite formal commitments at the national and regional levels. Qualitative data highlight that female legislators frequently encounter institutional barriers when attempting to integrate gender considerations into policy deliberations. These findings resonate with prior research emphasizing the symbolic rather than substantive implementation of gender policies in legislative contexts (Suryawati, 2020).

Empirical observations also reveal that party structures significantly shape the legislative agency of women. Candidate selection processes frequently prioritize loyalty networks over competence, thereby limiting the entry of qualified female politicians. Informants reported that quota compliance is often treated as a procedural obligation rather than a strategic investment in gender equality. This phenomenon reflects broader patterns of affirmative action distortion identified in electoral studies (Achmad et al., 2025).

The socio-legal analysis highlights that patriarchal cultural norms continue to influence legislative dynamics in South Sulawesi. Female legislators often face implicit expectations that confine them to less strategic roles within parliamentary committees. Such structural positioning constrains their ability to influence core legislative functions, including budgeting and regulatory drafting. This

condition supports the view that cultural factors remain deeply embedded within political institutions (Azis, 2007).

Field interviews further reveal disparities in political experience among female legislators, particularly those transitioning from domestic roles into formal political institutions. Respondents emphasized the challenges of navigating complex legislative procedures without prior exposure to political processes. This lack of preparedness affects their confidence and participation in deliberative forums. Similar patterns have been documented in studies on women's political entry pathways in Indonesia (Isnainy & Oktariyanda, 2022).

**Table 1. Distribution of Female Legislative Capacity Indicators in South Sulawesi DPRD**

Indicator	High Capacity (%)	Moderate (%)	Low (%)
Legislative Drafting Skills	22	48	30
Understanding of Gender Policy	18	52	30
Political Experience	25	40	35
Institutional Support Access	20	45	35

Source: Field Data Analysis (2026)

The data presented in Table 1 illustrate that a significant proportion of female legislators fall within moderate to low capacity categories across key indicators. The distribution suggests that institutional support mechanisms have not been fully optimized to enhance legislative competencies. The relatively low percentage of high-capacity legislators indicates a structural gap in capacity-building initiatives. This finding corroborates arguments emphasizing the importance of continuous institutional training (ADEKSI, 2000).

Further analysis indicates that disparities in capacity are closely linked to unequal access to political resources. Female legislators with stronger party backing and prior organizational experience demonstrate higher legislative competence. In contrast, those entering politics through quota mechanisms often lack comparable support systems. This divergence reflects structural inequalities embedded within political party dynamics (Andreas et al., 2025).

The legal-institutional framework also reveals inconsistencies in the operationalization of legislative functions across regions. While some DPRD units actively engage in gender-responsive policymaking, others remain largely procedural in their approach. These variations highlight the absence of standardized mechanisms for integrating gender perspectives into legislative workflows. Comparative studies similarly note uneven implementation of legislative mandates at subnational levels (Mansur et al., 2025).

The findings further suggest that legislative empowerment is contingent upon both structural and individual factors. Institutional rules shape opportunities, yet individual agency determines the extent to which these opportunities are utilized. Female legislators who actively engage in policy learning and networking demonstrate greater influence in legislative processes. This observation aligns with socio-legal perspectives that emphasize the interaction between law and human behavior (Rahardjo, 2009).

The discussion underscores that strengthening female legislators requires a multidimensional approach that addresses legal, institutional, and socio-cultural constraints simultaneously. The persistence of capacity gaps and structural barriers indicates that current empowerment strategies remain insufficient. A more integrated framework is necessary to bridge the gap between formal representation and substantive legislative impact. These findings provide a critical foundation for developing a context-sensitive empowerment model tailored to regional legislative institutions.

### **Political Agency, Cultural Dynamics, and Strategic Adaptation of Female Legislators**

Empirical findings reveal that the political agency of female legislators in South Sulawesi is shaped by a dynamic interaction between structural constraints and adaptive strategies developed through lived political experience. Field interviews indicate that women legislators actively negotiate their roles within party hierarchies and legislative forums, often relying on informal networks to

enhance their influence. This adaptive behavior reflects a form of pragmatic agency that emerges in response to institutional limitations rather than formal empowerment mechanisms. Such patterns resonate with studies emphasizing the strategic navigation of power structures by women in political institutions (Kamal et al., 2023).

The data further indicate that political participation among women is not solely determined by formal access but is deeply embedded in socio-cultural contexts. In South Sulawesi, patriarchal norms continue to shape expectations regarding women's roles in both public and private spheres, influencing their engagement in legislative activities. Female legislators frequently encounter implicit biases that question their competence or prioritize their domestic responsibilities. This aligns with broader findings on the persistence of patriarchal influence in political participation across Indonesian regions (Lapian et al., 2022).

Qualitative evidence also highlights the importance of political socialization and voter education in shaping women's legislative trajectories. Informants emphasized that early exposure to political discourse and community engagement significantly enhances confidence and effectiveness in legislative roles. Programs aimed at increasing political literacy among women have contributed to gradual improvements in participation rates. This observation supports research demonstrating the impact of community-based voter education strategies on women's political engagement (Kadir et al., 2024).

The role of electoral strategies emerges as a critical factor influencing the success and performance of female legislators. Women candidates often adopt personalized campaign approaches that emphasize community ties and social credibility rather than ideological platforms. This strategy reflects an adaptation to voter expectations in local contexts where relational politics remains dominant. Similar campaign patterns have been observed in studies of female legislative candidates in urban electoral settings (Isnainy & Oktariyanda, 2022).

Further analysis reveals that communication practices within legislative settings significantly affect the visibility and influence of female legislators. Linguistic strategies, including the use of persuasive and inclusive language, are employed to navigate male-dominated deliberative environments. Female legislators often frame policy arguments in ways that emphasize social welfare and collective benefits. This aligns with findings on the distinctive use of political language among women legislators in South Sulawesi (Maryadi et al., 2022).

**Table 2. Patterns of Political Agency and Strategic Adaptation among Female Legislators**

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Dominant Pattern (%)</b>	<b>Emerging Pattern (%)</b>	<b>Limited Presence (%)</b>
Informal Political Networking	55	30	15
Community-Based Campaigning	60	25	15
Policy Advocacy on Gender Issues	35	40	25
Strategic Communication Skills	50	35	15

Source: Field Data Analysis (2026)

The data in Table 2 demonstrate that informal networking and community-based campaigning constitute the dominant strategies employed by female legislators. These patterns suggest that political effectiveness is closely linked to the ability to mobilize social capital rather than relying solely on formal institutional mechanisms. The relatively lower proportion of strong gender-focused advocacy indicates that structural and cultural barriers still limit substantive policy engagement. This finding reflects ongoing challenges in translating representation into policy influence (Chatun, 2023).

The influence of local socio-cultural systems further complicates the exercise of political agency. In certain areas of South Sulawesi, traditional values and indigenous governance practices shape political interactions and decision-making processes. Female legislators must navigate these cultural frameworks while maintaining their institutional roles. Studies on local political wisdom highlight the

importance of aligning formal governance with indigenous norms to achieve legitimacy (Latief & Syam, 2022).

Network dynamics also play a crucial role in determining electoral success and legislative positioning. Female legislators who are integrated into broader political networks, including alliances with male counterparts and community leaders, tend to exhibit stronger institutional influence. These networks facilitate access to resources, information, and strategic opportunities within legislative processes. Empirical evidence from regional elections underscores the significance of actor networks in shaping political outcomes (Mujiburrahman & Kambo, 2026).

Comparative insights suggest that the challenges faced by female legislators in South Sulawesi are not isolated but reflect broader national and global trends. Cross-country analyses indicate that increasing women's representation does not automatically lead to substantive empowerment without structural transformation. The persistence of gender gaps in legislative influence highlights the limitations of quota-based approaches when not accompanied by capacity-building measures. This perspective is supported by comparative studies on women's parliamentary representation (Makmun & Yandi, 2025).

The findings also reveal that women's leadership trajectories are influenced by intersections between religion, culture, and legal frameworks. In South Sulawesi, interpretations of religious norms can both constrain and enable women's participation in public leadership roles. Female legislators often reinterpret these norms to legitimize their political engagement. Research on women's leadership in religious institutions illustrates similar patterns of negotiation and reinterpretation (Fatmawati et al., 2024).

The persistence of gender inequality in political institutions is further linked to broader socioeconomic conditions affecting women's access to resources. Economic disparities and limited access to education continue to shape women's entry into politics. Female legislators from more privileged backgrounds tend to have greater access to political opportunities and support systems. This observation aligns with analyses of structural inequalities affecting women's political participation (Noerdin, 2006).

The discussion highlights that political agency among female legislators is not a static attribute but a dynamic process shaped by continuous interaction with institutional and cultural environments. Adaptive strategies, while effective in navigating constraints, may also reinforce existing power structures if not accompanied by structural reforms. Strengthening political agency therefore requires both individual capacity enhancement and systemic transformation. These findings provide a critical basis for advancing a more holistic model of empowerment that integrates agency, structure, and culture within regional legislative contexts.

### **Institutionalization of a Gender-Responsive Legislative Empowerment Model in the South Sulawesi Regional People's Representative Council**

The third analytical focus examines the institutionalization of a gender-responsive legislative empowerment model within the South Sulawesi Regional People's Representative Council by integrating normative mandates with empirically observed practices. The socio-legal synthesis reveals that empowerment is not solely contingent upon numerical representation but is deeply shaped by institutional design, procedural inclusion, and access to legislative resources. Empirical interviews indicate that female legislators often encounter structural limitations in agenda-setting processes, despite formal equality guarantees embedded in statutory frameworks (Asshiddiqie, 2006). This tension reflects a broader disjunction between formal legal recognition and substantive political influence, consistent with critiques of symbolic representation in legislative institutions (Makmun & Yandi, 2025).

The proposed model emphasizes a triadic framework consisting of legal reinforcement, institutional restructuring, and capacity enhancement to address these systemic gaps. Normative mapping demonstrates that while Law No. 17 of 2014 provides a procedural foundation for legislative authority, it does not explicitly operationalize gender mainstreaming within internal parliamentary mechanisms. Field data further reveal that female legislators rely heavily on informal networks to navigate deliberative processes, suggesting institutional deficits in formal support systems (Mujiburrahman & Kambo, 2026). Such findings align with socio-legal perspectives that highlight the importance of institutional culture in mediating the effectiveness of legal norms (Rahardjo, 2009).

Empirical findings also indicate that gender-responsive policymaking is frequently constrained by limited technical expertise and insufficient access to policy analysis tools among female legislators.

Interview data show that participation in drafting gender-sensitive regional regulations remains uneven, often influenced by party hierarchies and committee assignments. This condition reflects the persistence of structural barriers identified in prior studies on women's legislative performance (Sujarwati et al., 2025). The absence of systematic capacity-building programs further exacerbates disparities in legislative engagement, reinforcing the need for institutionalized empowerment mechanisms (ADEKSI, 2000).

**Table 3. Model Components for Gender-Responsive Legislative Empowerment**

Component	Description	Empirical Indicator
Legal Reinforcement	Alignment with gender equality mandates in statutory frameworks	Presence of gender clauses in regional regulations
Institutional Restructuring	Inclusion in strategic committees and agenda-setting bodies	Proportion of women in leadership roles
Capacity Enhancement	Training, policy analysis skills, and gender sensitivity development	Participation in legislative training programs

Source: Synthesized from field data and conceptual adaptation of Azizah (2026), Manurung et al. (2025).

The table above illustrates how the proposed model operationalizes empowerment through interconnected dimensions that reflect both normative and empirical considerations. Legal reinforcement ensures that gender equality principles are embedded within legislative outputs, while institutional restructuring addresses procedural barriers to participation. Capacity enhancement, meanwhile, targets individual competencies necessary for effective legislative engagement. These dimensions collectively form a holistic framework that bridges doctrinal expectations with practical realities (Azizah, 2026).

Further analysis reveals that cultural factors significantly influence the implementation of empowerment strategies within the legislative context. South Sulawesi's socio-cultural landscape, characterized by entrenched patriarchal norms, continues to shape perceptions of women's political roles (Fatmawati et al., 2024). Interview narratives suggest that female legislators often negotiate their authority through culturally acceptable discourse strategies, reflecting adaptive agency within constrained environments (Maryadi et al., 2022). This dynamic underscores the importance of culturally sensitive institutional reforms that recognize local socio-political contexts (Latief & Syam, 2022).

The interaction between electoral dynamics and legislative empowerment also emerges as a critical factor in shaping women's political trajectories. Studies indicate that electoral competition, candidate selection processes, and party support significantly affect the entry and sustainability of female legislators (Isnainy & Oktariyanda, 2022). Empirical evidence from South Sulawesi suggests that women who benefit from strong political networks and voter education initiatives demonstrate higher legislative engagement (Kadir et al., 2024). These findings highlight the interconnectedness of electoral and institutional dimensions in fostering sustainable empowerment.

Normative evaluation further indicates that affirmative action policies, while instrumental in increasing representation, require more robust enforcement and contextual adaptation. Disparities in the implementation of quota systems continue to limit their effectiveness in achieving substantive equality (Achmad et al., 2025). Comparative studies reveal that quota policies without institutional support mechanisms often result in tokenistic participation rather than meaningful influence (Failaq & Monati, 2023). This reinforces the argument that empowerment must extend beyond numerical targets to encompass structural transformation (Wahyuningsi, n.d.).

The analysis also identifies the role of feminist institutionalism in explaining the persistence of gender inequalities within legislative bodies. Feminist perspectives emphasize that formal rules often coexist with informal practices that disadvantage women, thereby limiting their agency (Kamal et al., 2023). Empirical findings from this study corroborate this perspective, showing that informal hierarchies and patronage networks continue to shape legislative outcomes. Addressing these informal

structures requires targeted interventions that promote transparency and inclusivity within institutional processes (Bogheiry et al., 2022).

Comparative insights further suggest that Indonesia's experience with women's representation reflects broader global patterns of gradual but uneven progress. Cross-national studies indicate that while representation has increased, substantive empowerment remains contingent on institutional quality and political will (Makmun & Yandi, 2025). In this context, South Sulawesi serves as a microcosm of national dynamics, where formal progress coexists with persistent structural challenges. This underscores the need for context-specific models that integrate global best practices with local realities (Chatun, 2023).

The validation process confirms that the proposed empowerment model demonstrates strong alignment with legal mandates and institutional needs, while also addressing capacity gaps identified through empirical analysis. Expert evaluations highlight the model's adaptability and relevance for enhancing legislative effectiveness in gender-responsive policymaking. The integration of legal conformity, institutional effectiveness, and capacity transformation ensures a multidimensional approach to empowerment (Nurcholis & Nur, 2023). This multidimensionality enhances the model's potential to generate sustainable improvements in legislative performance (Suryawati, 2020).

The findings ultimately contribute to the development of a socio-legal framework that redefines empowerment as a dynamic interaction between law, institutions, and individual agency. The study demonstrates that effective empowerment requires not only legal recognition but also institutional commitment and continuous capacity development. Empirical and normative integration enables a more nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing female legislators in South Sulawesi. This analytical synthesis advances the discourse on gender-responsive governance by offering a contextually grounded and theoretically informed model of legislative empowerment (Lapian et al., 2022; Mansur et al., 2025; Suswanta et al., 2023; Syam et al., 2026; Andreas et al., 2025; Noerdin, 2006).

## CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates that strengthening female legislators in the South Sulawesi Regional People's Representative Council requires an integrated approach that bridges normative legal mandates with empirical institutional realities and actor-level capacities. Legal frameworks provide a formal foundation for gender equality, yet their effectiveness remains contingent upon institutional arrangements, political dynamics, and socio-cultural contexts that shape legislative practices. Empirical findings reveal that structural barriers, including limited access to strategic positions, weak institutional support mechanisms, and entrenched patriarchal norms, continue to constrain substantive representation despite increased numerical participation. The proposed empowerment model, grounded in legal reinforcement, institutional restructuring, and capacity enhancement, offers a comprehensive and adaptable framework capable of addressing these multidimensional challenges. Its validation through socio-legal integration and expert assessment underscores its relevance for enhancing legislative performance and promoting gender-responsive policymaking. This research advances the discourse on women's political empowerment by demonstrating that sustainable transformation requires the alignment of law, institutions, and agency within a coherent and contextually grounded governance framework.

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