

# Enhancing Women's Representation in Legislatures

## *An Alternative to the Rotation System for Women's Reservation<sup>1</sup>*

---

### 1. Introduction

Most countries in the world have failed to give due space and representation to women in their political life. Women are moving in the direction of near equal participation in only a handful of countries, such as Germany, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland. In these societies women have begun to seriously alter the very nature of politics, making enduring, and substantial gains in every field. However, in all other countries, including the supposedly advanced democracies of western Europe and North America, where women exercise certain freedoms and have acquired the wherewithal for economic independence, female presence in legislatures remains small and relatively insignificant.

In India, the problem for women is more serious because government and politics are more important factors in our country's economic, social, and power structures than in most other countries with stronger civil societies, and so, the effect of women's marginalisation in politics is even more detrimental to their well-being. The increasing violence, sexual harassment and victimisation of women at the ground level has made their participation extremely vital now in order to strengthen women's voice in our legislatures, public policy and governance.

There were many more outstanding women leaders and workers at all levels during the freedom movement than there are at present in all parties. In states like Maharashtra and Gujarat, virtually every neighbourhood and most villages could boast of at least one effective woman leader, even into the 1950s. But as politics became more centralised as well as criminalised, thus undermining all other institutions of civil society, women were pushed out of leadership positions to function on the margins, at best relegated to the domain of social work at the local level. Even that tradition eroded from the 1970s onward.

---

<sup>1</sup> This is an updated version of the advocacy paper and draft bill prepared in 1998 by a group of thinkers and civil society leaders viz. Dhirubhai Sheth, Yogendra Yadav, Madhu Kishwar, and Dr. Jayaprakash Narayan.

## 2. Lower Representation in Legislatures

From the thirteenth Lok Sabha to the current seventeenth Lok Sabha, women's share of membership ranged from 8.8 percent to 14.3 percent (see Table 1a). Women membership of Lok Sabha never touched 15 percent. Similar trends can be seen in the Rajya Sabha (see Table 1b) and women represent 13.8 percent of the membership.

<b>Table 1a. Representation of Women in Lok Sabha, 1952-2019</b>			
<b>Lok Sabha</b>	<b>Total number of Seats</b>	<b>Women Members who won</b>	<b>% of Women MPs</b>
First (1952)	489	22	4.4
Second (1957)	494	27	5.4
Third (1962)	494	34	6.7
Fourth (1967)	523	31	5.9
Fifth (1971)	521	22	4.2
Sixth (1977)	544	19	3.4
Seventh (1980)	544	28	5.1
Eighth (1984)	544	44	8.1
Ninth (1989)	529	28	5.3
Tenth (1991)	509	36	7
Eleventh (1996)	541	40*	7.4
Twelfth (1998)	545	44*	8
Thirteenth (1999)	543	48*	8.8
Fourteenth (2004)	543	45*	8.1
Fifteenth (2009)	543	59	10.9
Sixteenth (2014)	543	61	11.2
Seventeenth (2019)	543	78	14.3
*Including one nominated member			
<i>Source: Praveen Rai, Women's Participation in Electoral Politics in India: Silent Feminisation, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies.</i>			

Table 1b. Representation of Women in Rajya Sabha, 1952 - 2023							
Rajya Sabha (Year)	Total Number of Seats	Women Members	% of Women MPs	Rajya Sabha (Year)	Total Number of Seats	Women Members	% of Women MPs
1952	219	16	7.3	1990	244	24	9.8
1954	219	16	7.3	1992	246	17	6.9
1956	232	20	8.6	1994	243	20	8.2
1958	231	22	9.5	1996	243	19	7.8
1960	235	24	10.2	1998	243	19	7.8
1962	223	17	7.6	2000	244	22	9
1964	238	21	8.8	2002	245	25	10.2
1966	239	23	9.6	2004	245	28	11.4
1968	239	22	9.2	2006	245	25	10.2
1970	241	14	5.8	2008	244	24	9.8
1972	243	18	7.4	2010	245	27	11
1974	242	17	7	2012	244	24	9.8
1976	244	24	9.8	2014	242	31	12.8
1978	245	25	10.2	2016	245	27	11
1980	245	29	11.8	2018	239	28	11.4
1982	242	24	9.9	2019	240	26	10.83
1984	244	24	9.8	2021	237	29	12.24
1986	243	28	11.5	2023	239	33	13.8
1988	245	25	10.2				

*Source: Open Government Data Platform, Government of India*

The states are at the cutting edge of governance as most issues related to people's lives are shaped at state and local level. Inadequate representation of women in state legislatures is therefore worrisome and inimical to public good. In state legislatures (see Table 2), it ranges now between 1.47 percent in Himachal Pradesh to 13.6 percent in West Bengal. Only once in Jharkhand (2019-2023), 21.3 percent of women legislators were elected. With that lone exception, women never touched 15 percent of membership of any state legislature. This despite the fact that all major parties in recent years have declared through their manifestos that they would implement a 33 percent reservation for women in all legislatures.



**Table 2. Representation of Women in State Legislatures, 1952 - 2023 (% of Women MLAs)**

State	1952	1957	1960-65	1967-69	1970-75	1977-78	1979-83	1984-88	1989-92	1993-97	1998-02	2003-08	2009-13	2014-18	2019-23	Average
Andhra Pradesh	2.9	3.7	3.3	3.8	9.1	3.4	4.1	3.4	3.7	2.7	9.5	8.8	11.5	8	8	5.7
Arunachal Pradesh	-	-	-	-	-	0	3.3	6.7	3.3	3.3	1.7	0	3.3	3.3	3.3	3
Assam	0.5	4.6	3.8	4	7	0.8	0.8	4	4	4.8	7.9	10.3	11.1	6.3	4.6	5
Bihar	3.6	9.4	7.9	2.2	3.8	4	3.7	4.6	2.8	3.4	5.8	10.2	13.9	11.5	10.6	6.5
Chattisgarh	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5.5	12.2	11.1	14.4	-	10.8
Goa	-	-	-	6.7	3.3	3.3	0	0	5	10	5	2.5	2.5	5	7.5	4.2
Gujarat	-	-	8.4	4.8	3.2	-	2.7	8.8	2.2	1.1	4.3*	8.7	8.7	7.1	7.6	5.8
Haryana	-	-	-	7.4*	6.2	4.4	7.8	5.6	6.7	4.4	4.9	12.2	9	14.4	10	7.8
Himachal Pradesh	0	-	-	0	5.9	1.5	4.4	4.4	5.9	4.4	8.8	6.5*	4.4	5.8	1.47	3.9
Jammu & Kashmir	-	-	0	0	5.3	1.3	0	1.3	-	2.3	2.2	3.4	-	0	-	1.6
Jharkhand	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.7	9.8	10.3	21.3	11.3
Karnataka	2	8.7	8.7	3.2	5.1	4	0.9	3.9	4.5	3.1	2.3	1.9*	2.6	3.1	-	4
Kerala	0	4.8	3.9	0.8	1.5	0.7	3.2	5.7	5.7	9.3	5.7	5	5	5.7	8.57	4.4
Madhya Pradesh	2.1	10.8	4.9	3.4	5.4	3.1	5.6	9.7	3.4	3.8	8.1	9.5	13	9.1	-	6.6
Maharashtra	1.9	6.3	4.9	3.3	9.3	2.8	6.6	5.6	2.1	3.8	4.2	4.1	3.8	6.9	8.3	4.9
Manipur	-	-	-	-	0*	-	0	0	1.7	0	1.6*	0	5	3.3	8.3	2.3
Meghalaya	-	-	-	-	1.7	1.7	0	3.3	-	1.7	5	2.4*	6.6	5	-	3.1
Mizoram	-	-	-	-	0	3.3	3.3	2.5	0	0	0	0*	0	0	0	1
Nagaland	-	-	-	0	-	-	0	1.7	-	0	0	0*	0	0	0	0.2
Odisha	9.6	3.6	1.4	3.6	1.4*	4.8	3.4	6.1	4.8	5.4	8.8	7.4	4.7	7.4	8.9	5.7
Punjab	2.2	5.8	5.2	1*	5.8	2.6	5.1	3.4	5.1	6	6.3	6	11.9	5.1	11.1	5.8
Rajasthan	0	5.1	4.5	3.3	7.1	4	5	8	5.5	4.5	7	10*	14	12	-	6.2
Sikkim	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	6.3	3.1	3.1	9.3	12.5	9.3	9.3	5.9
Tamil Nadu	0.3	5.9	3.9	1.7	2.1	0.9	2.1	3.4	9	3.8	10.6	9.4	7.2	9.3	5.1	5
Telangana	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	5
Uttar Pradesh	1.2	5.8	4.4	2.8*	5.9	2.6	5.6	7.3	3.3*	4*	6.4	5.7	8.6	10.5	11.6	6.3
Uttarakhand	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5.7	5.7	7.1	7.1	11.4	7.4
West Bengal	0.8	3.6	4.8	2.9*	1.6*	1.4	2.4	4.4	7.1	6.8	9.5	12.5	11.5	13.9	13.6	7.1
Delhi	4.2	-	-	-	7.1	7.1	7.1	-	-	4.3	12.9	7.1*	4.2	8.5	11.4	7.4
Pondicherry	-	-	6.7	3.3	0	0	3.3	3.3	1.7	3.3	0	0	0	13.3	3.3	2.9
<b>Period Average</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>8.9</b>	<b>5.2</b>

Note:

1. Table entry stands for % of women MLAs elected to state legislature in the relevant period.
2. (-) States did not exist or elections did not happen during that period.
3. (\*) Two elections were held during that year and the figure given in the average of those two.

Source: Statistical Reports, Election Commission of India

One of the most puzzling features of this depressed level of women's political representation in our legislative bodies is that it seems to have no direct correlation with literacy and other apparently related indicators. A comparison between the states of Kerala and Rajasthan, whose literacy rates are at opposite ends of the spectrum, demonstrates this clearly.

In Kerala, the overall literacy rate is 96.2 percent<sup>2</sup>, with 95.2 percent female literacy. By contrast, in Rajasthan, the total literacy rate is 69.7 percent, with female literacy even lower at 57.6 percent. Kerala has a matrilineal tradition in which women have a much larger measure of autonomy and freedom of movement. Kerala's women also tend to marry at a much later age compared to women in other states. Most women in Rajasthan live far more restricted lives in aggressively patriarchal communities that still practice purdah and perform child marriages. But the cultural and educational advantage that women in Kerala have, does not translate into higher political participation as compared to Rajasthan. The percentage of women in the legislative assemblies of both states is lower than 15 percent. In Kerala it rose from less than one percent in 1967-69 period to 8.57 percent now (2019-23). However, in Rajasthan, the representation of women was three percent in 1967-69 period but has now reached twelve percent in 2014-18 period.

Similarly, the State of Manipur, with its tradition of women playing the dominant role in both the family and the community (again due to a matrilineal heritage), has elected its first legislator only as late as 1990. Nagaland and other North-eastern states which have less repressive cultures for women have similarly low levels of women's representation. By contrast, take the proportion of women in politics in UP, Bihar, and Madhya Pradesh. Though these states are known for their low education levels and repressive cultural norms for women, they have not only sent a relatively larger proportion of women to the Lok Sabha than those from the North-East, but have also elected relatively more women MLAs.

In independent India, pervasive gender discrimination has resulted in sidelining even veteran women politicians. It is difficult for women to establish a foothold without patronage from powerful men in the party - that too through close personal relations, as wives, daughters and

---

<sup>2</sup> Statement 3.1.2, Household Social Consumption on Education in India Report, NSS 75th Round, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI), Government of India.

sisters. This is indeed a matter for serious concern because the level of political participation among women in any society acts as a reliable barometer of the health of its democracy.

It is significant that stagnation and/or decline in the rate of women's political participation runs contrary to trends in many other fields. Women in India have made major inroads in various male-dominated professions, including the governmental bureaucracy. In the fields of business, medicine, engineering, law, art, and culture, women who were given opportunities to acquire the necessary skills and education have proven themselves capable of holding their own, without availing of any special measures to facilitate their entry. But they have failed to gain ground in the field of politics. Moreover, the agenda of women's empowerment seems to have lost the kind of moral and political legitimacy it enjoyed during the freedom movement.

All these trends indicate that women's representation in politics requires special consideration, and cannot be left to the forces that presently dominate our parties and government. Today, even the best of our female parliamentarians feel sidelined and powerless within their respective parties. The few women in leadership positions have not been able to encourage the entry of greater numbers of women in electoral and party politics, and are an ineffective minority within their own respective political groupings.

Despite declared intentions, major political parties have not been successful in their efforts to include women in party decision-making, or even to help create a conducive atmosphere for women's participation in their own organisations. In fact, women's marginalisation is even more pronounced in the day-to-day functioning of almost all political parties than in the legislatures. Therefore, it is urgently required that we take special measures to enhance women's political participation in ways that help them influence decision-making at all levels of our society and polity. Our democracy will remain seriously flawed if it fails to yield adequate space to women.

Given this worrisome scenario, the national debate and efforts to provide constitutional and legal mechanisms to enhance women's participation in legislatures are welcome and long-overdue.

### **3. Constitution (One Hundred Twenty-Eighth Amendment) Bill**

The 128th Constitutional Amendment Bill, as introduced in the Lok Sabha on September 19, 2023 includes the following key provisions:

1. One-third of all seats in the Lok Sabha and the Vidhan Sabhas shall be reserved for women.
2. Such reservation shall also apply in case of seats reserved for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs).
3. There shall be rotation of seats so reserved for women
4. Such rotation shall take effect after each exercise of delimitation. As the delimitation should take place after each census, rotation will apply once every ten years.

This Bill is seriously flawed, insofar as it mechanically provides for entry of women members to fill one-third of vacancies in Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabhas. Such mechanical reservation and rotation suffers from serious defects:

- 1. Necessitates automatic rotation causing tremendous disruption:** In the proposed model, one-third seats are reserved, and such reserved seats are rotated after every delimitation. This rotation will automatically result in two-thirds of incumbent members being forcibly unseated in the election after every delimitation. The remaining one-third will be left in limbo until the last moment, not knowing if their constituency will form part of the one-third randomly reserved seats. This will require them to scramble at short notice to find another seat from which to contest.
- 2. Concerns with reserved seats for SC/STs:** There is already resentment about reserved seats for SCs and STs being frozen in the same constituencies over a long period of time. Inevitably, there will be vociferous and justified demands for rotation of seats reserved for scheduled castes, and in some cases scheduled tribes, where their population may not be very large. This will trigger further instability in our polity.

- 3. Rotation of reserved seats after every census will foster instability:** The population of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes is now estimated to be around 16 percent and 8 percent respectively, on an all India basis. In certain states, their combined population is much higher, reaching 35 percent or more. In the event of rotation of all reserved seats (women plus SCs, STs) with one-third seats reserved for women, every single seat will be rotated after every census. This will result in practically every member of a legislature being unseated with each delimitation (see Table 3).

<b>Table 3. Rotation of Seats</b>	
	<b>% of Reservation</b>
Reservation for SCs	15.46
Reservation for STs	8.65
Total	24.11
Balance Seats	75.89
Reservation for Women (33.33% in General Quota)	25.29
Open for All	50.6
<i>Source: Delimitation of Parliamentary and Assembly Constituencies Order, 2008</i>	

Such compulsory unseating violates the very basic principles of democratic representation. It jeopardises the possibility of sensible planning to contest and nurture a political constituency for both male and female candidates.

- 4. Incentivises predatory and unaccountable politics:** As legislators do not have the incentive to seek re-election from the same constituency after delimitation, politics will be even more predatory and unaccountable. This will contribute to a more unstable political process, and make it difficult for women to build their long term credibility as effective representatives, since they will not be able to contest twice from the same constituency.



**5. Implications of exclusive women-only reservations - proxy leadership:**

- a. If seats are reserved exclusively for women through territorial constituencies, voters in such reserved constituencies would have no choice but to elect women only, violating the basic principles of democratic representation.
  - b. Those men who get pushed out of their constituencies or who see their allies sidelined will either sabotage female contenders in revenge, or spend much of their political capital helping their own female relatives in cornering these reserved seats. Such proxies would be expected to keep the seat "safe" for the men until the next rotation, when they would again try to reclaim their seats. Such women would lack legitimacy in the eyes of the voters.
  - c. Even though there will be no legal bar on women standing from general constituencies, it is highly unlikely that any women will obtain party tickets to run for office outside the reserved constituencies. This same pattern is evident with SCs and STs who have been permanently ghettoised to fixed reserved constituencies.
- 6. Lack of opportunity for organic growth of leadership:** Women elected in reserved constituencies will be contesting against other women only, and will lack the legitimacy and opportunity needed to prove their ability and acceptability. Leadership acquired in such a manner will be seen as unnatural, artificial and foisted. When elected, women legislators will not be able to nurse their constituencies on a long- term basis, and thus will be deprived of a strong political base and will forever be regarded as lightweight politicians. This in effect will make their presence in legislatures ornamental, and will not lead to a more effective participation in politics.
- 7. Global experience with Fixed Quotas:** The experience of fixed quotas in a few countries where it has been tried, such as Nepal, the Philippines, and the erstwhile Soviet Union, has not produced very successful results for women's political participation.
- 8. Omission of Backward Classes:** While this Bill provides for election of SC and ST

women as legislators, it does not adequately address the issue of participation of backward castes (BCs) and minorities. As parties have no choice about the seats reserved for women, they will be unable to nominate women candidates from these under-represented sections in constituencies where they stand a reasonable chance of success.

- 9. No formula for representation in Rajya Sabha and Legislative Councils:** This Bill is completely silent about women's representation in the Rajya Sabha and the Legislative Councils.

#### **4. Proposed Alternative Women's Reservation Model**

Given the serious infirmities listed in the previous section, it is necessary to design better models for enhancing women's representation in legislatures. Therefore, we present an alternative which will address many of the flaws listed above. The important provisions of the proposed Alternative Model are as follows. The text of the Model Bills are attached as Annexures.

1. A law should be enacted amending the Representation of the People Act, 1950, to make it mandatory for every recognised political party to nominate women candidates for election in one-third of the constituencies.
2. Among seats reserved for SCs and STs also, one-third of the candidates nominated by recognised parties shall be women.
3. Each party can choose where it wishes to nominate women candidates, duly taking local political and social factors into account.
4. To prevent a party from nominating women candidates only in states or constituencies where the party's chances of winning election are weak, and to ensure an even spread of women candidates, the unit for consideration (the unit in which at least one out of the three party candidates shall be a woman) for the Lok Sabha shall be a state or union territory; for the State Legislative Assembly, the unit shall be a cluster of three contiguous Lok Sabha constituencies.

5. In the event of any recognised party failing to nominate one-third women candidates, for the shortfall of every single woman candidate, two male candidates of the party shall lose the party symbol and affiliation and all the recognition-related advantages.
6. A law amending Article 80 and Article 171 of the Constitution should be enacted providing for women's reservation of one-third of the seats, elected or nominated, to Rajya Sabha or Legislative Councils. Corresponding amendments need to be made in the Fourth Schedule of the Constitution and the Representation of the People Act, 1950.

#### **4.1. Advantages of this model**

1. **Politically Viable:** Parties will be free to choose their female candidates and constituencies depending on local political and social factors. Parties will nurture women candidates where they can offer a good fight rather than in pre-fixed lottery based constituencies, where they may or may not have viable women candidates. Thus there is flexibility and promotion of natural leadership. This method is mostly likely to find favour with political parties and incumbent legislators, as there will be no fear of being uprooted at short notice by draw of lots. Both compulsory reservation and regular rotation are avoided.
2. **Eliminates need for reservation and automatic rotation:** There will be no need for rotation of reservation. Though seats are not reserved, there will be a large pool of credible and serious women candidates in the fray. This is so because the real contest in elections is only among candidates nominated by recognised parties. Table 4 clearly shows that the role of Independents in our elections is marginal and declining. In Lok Sabha elections, nearly 100 percent of the Independents have in fact been losing their caution deposits since 1971.

<b>Table 4. Independents elected to Lok Sabha, 1952 - 2019</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of Seats filled</b>	<b>Number of Independents elected</b>	<b>% of Independents who lost deposit</b>
1952	489	38	66.6
1957	494	42	60.1
1962	494	20	79
1967	520	35	86.2
1971	518	14	94
1977	542	9	97.2
1980	529	9	98.9
1984	542	5	99.7
1989	529	12	98.9
1991	534	1	99.5
1996	542	9	99.7
1998	542	6	99.1
1999	543	6	99.1
2004	543	5	99.3
2009	543	9	98.3
2014	543	3	99.9
2019	543	3	99.9

*Source: Statistical Reports, Election Commission of India*

### **3. Opportunity for rise of sustainable leadership:**

- a. A woman candidate will be contesting both against female and/or male candidates of rival parties. Therefore, the democratic choice of voters is not restricted to compulsorily electing only women candidates.
- b. At the same time, in the absence of reserved seats, there will be healthy competition for nomination for a particular seat between men and women politicians.
- c. A winning woman candidate will have been elected on her own strength, backed by party support. She will not be a mere proxy or political lightweight.
- d. As women members are elected in competition with other candidates - without

reserving seats - they will be seen as legitimate representatives in the eyes of the public and not just beneficiaries of charitable measures.

- e. Additionally, unlike with the lottery system of reserved constituencies, in which women's presence is likely to get ossified at 33 percent since there would be resistance to letting women contest from non-reserved constituencies, this model allows for far greater flexibility in the number and proportion of women being elected to legislatures. If women are candidates for one-third of all seats contested by each party, theoretically they could even win the vast majority of seats - all on merit.

**4. Representation of Backward Classes feasible:** Parties will be able to nominate women from Backward Classes (BCs), minorities and other communities for elective office in areas where there is electoral advantage to them. This obviates the need for a 'quota within quotas' - a concern raised by many parties. Depending on the local circumstances, parties will be able to field as many women candidates from various social groups as they deem appropriate.

**5. Provision for representation in Rajya Sabha and Legislative Councils:** This model also provides for reservation of seats for women in the upper houses.

In this model of party quotas, past experience shows that about one-third of the contested seats will be won easily by women. But this percentage is likely to grow over time as women gain more confidence and strength. It also ensures that their presence in legislatures more closely reflects their actual electoral strength so that they are not seen as mere recipients of charitable measures.

It is noteworthy that women's participation has increased dramatically, to near equal or even higher than equal participation, only in countries like Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Germany and the Netherlands which have implemented party-based quotas of the kind we are proposing.

## 4.2. Plugging Possible Loopholes

- 1. Insincere nomination of women leaders:** A party may be tempted to nominate women from constituencies where it is weak. However, by making the unit of consideration the state or union territory for Lok Sabha, and a cluster of three Lok Sabha constituencies for the Legislative Assembly, this risk is avoided. Parties will be compelled to nominate women in all states and regions. No serious party seeking power can afford to deliberately undermine its own chances of election on such a large scale. It is also mandatory to nominate women in one-third constituencies because otherwise twice the number of male candidates of the party will lose party nomination.
- 2. Possible bias of the electorate towards male candidates:** In the absence of actual reservation of seats, there could be fears that women may not be elected in one-third constituencies, as the voters may prefer a male candidate over a female candidate on account of gender bias. However, evidence so far suggests that women candidates of parties have not suffered any gender discrimination at the hands of voters. In fact, very often, the percentage of success of women candidates is higher than that of male candidates. Table 5 shows that the success rate of women candidates in Lok Sabha elections has been uniformly higher than that of their male counterparts in every general election. It is possible to argue that the few women who contest are more often party candidates, and therefore, their success rate is exaggerated. However, Table 6 clearly shows that even among candidates of recognised political parties, the success rate of women candidates is higher than that of men. While 32.53 percent of women candidates of recognised parties have been elected to Lok Sabha since 1984, the success rate of male candidates is only 26.50 percent. This trend is seen in all general elections since 1984, except in 1989. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that women will be elected in large numbers, and that, in fact, their presence in Lok Sabha will exceed one-third in many cases. In any case, past evidence suggests that in at least a quarter of the constituencies, women are likely to get elected if recognised parties nominate them in at least one-third constituencies.

Table 5. The Gender Advantage, 1952 - 2019								
Year	No. of Seats	Total No. of contestants	Male			Female		
			Contested	Elected	% Winning	Contested	Elected	% Winning
1952	489	1874	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
1957	494	1518	1473	467	31.7	45	27	60
1962	494	1985	1915	459	24	70	35	50
1967	520	2369	2302	490	21.3	67	30	44.8
1971	520	2784	2698	499	18.5	86	21	24.4
1977	542	2439	2369	523	22.1	70	19	27.1
1980	542	4620	4478	514	11.5	142	28	19.7
1984	542	5570	5406	500	9.2	164	42	25.6
1989	529	6160	5962	502	8.5	198	27	13.6
1991	521	8699	8374	492	5.9	325	39	12
1996	543	13952	13353	504	3.8	599	39	6.7
1998	543	4750	4476	500	11.2	274	43	15.7
1999	543	4649	4365	494	11.32	284	49	17.25
2004	543	5435	5080	498	9.8	355	45	12.68
2009	542	8070	7514	484	6.44	556	58	10.43
2014	543	7583	7577	481	6.3	668	62	9.2
2019	543	8048	7322	465	6.3	726	78	10.7
<b>Winning Average</b>					<b>13</b>	<b>22.5</b>		
NA - Not Available								
<i>Source: Statistical Reports, Election Commission of India</i>								

Table 6. Comparative Performance of Men and Women Candidates of Recognised Parties in Lok Sabha, 1984 - 2019									
Year	Total Party candidates contested	Elected	%	Men			Women		
				Contested	Elected	% Winning	Contested	Elected	% Winning
1984	1394	510	36.6	1327	469	35.34	67	41	61.19
1989	1523	498	32.7	1437	474	32.99	86	24	27.91
1991	2319	516	22.2	2180	479	21.97	139	37	26.62
1996	2269	530	23.3	2153	493	22.9	116	37	31.7
1998	1964	488	24.8	1831	451	24.63	133	37	27.82
1999	2049	527	25.7	1890	479	25.34	159	48	30.19
2004	2152	523	24.3	1976	479	24.24	176	44	25
2009	2334	522	22.4	2147	484	22.54	187	51	27.27
2014	2120	518	24.4	1918	459	23.9	202	59	29.2
2019	1801	533	29.5	1573	458	29.1	228	75	32.8
<b>Winning Average</b>			<b>26.9</b>	<b>26.53</b>			<b>32.85</b>		
<i>Source: Statistical Reports, Election Commission of India</i>									

\*\*\*

## Annexure

---

### **1. A Model Bill to amend The Representation of The People Act, 1950**

(New Section to be added)

Notwithstanding anything contained in this Act, every recognised political party shall nominate women candidates on behalf of that party, as nearly as may be, in at least one-third of the constituencies in which the party is contesting, in every general election.

Provided that for an election to Lok Sabha, the State shall be the unit for such nomination, and for an election to Legislative Assembly, a cluster of three contiguous Lok Sabha constituencies shall be the unit as nearly as may be.

Provided that for Lok Sabha election, in case of States with less than 3 seats, a cluster of States to be defined by the Election Commission shall be treated as a unit.

(For removal of any doubt, these provisions will apply in all States and Union territories for recognised national parties, and in the respective State or States for recognised State parties)

Provided that in respect of seats reserved for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, the State shall be the unit for nomination of women for all general elections; and one-third of all candidates nominated for the reserved constituencies shall be women.

Provided that in case of by-elections, the party shall nominate, as nearly as may be, one-third women candidates for the Lok Sabha and Legislative Assembly, with the nation as unit for Lok Sabha and State as unit for Legislative Assembly. Provided further that, in respect of State parties, this provision will apply for the State as a unit for Lok Sabha.

In the event of a recognised political party not complying with these provisions, for the shortfall of every woman candidate while nominating candidates for elective office, two male candidates of the party in the State or cluster of 3 Lok Sabha constituencies, as the case maybe, as decided by the party shall be deemed to be Independent candidates for all purposes including allotment of symbols.



The Election Commission or the officials authorised by it at the State or Union Territory level shall determine the compliance or otherwise of these provisions after the completion of withdrawal of nominations.

Provided that the candidates so disqualified shall be from reserved vacancies in case the shortfall is in reserved vacancies.

## **2. A Bill to amend Article 80 and Article 171 of the Constitution of India**

In the Council of States, as nearly as maybe, one-third of all seats, whether elected or nominated, shall be reserved for women.

In the States in which Legislative Councils exist, as nearly as maybe, one-third of all seats filled from each category, whether elected or nominated, shall be reserved for women;

Provided that in case of members elected by members of local authorities, graduates, and teachers, the seats reserved for women shall be rotated, and decided by draw of lots.