



## **Women's Representation in Indian Politics: An Analytical Study**

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### **Abstract**

*In India, women's representation in politics has lagged behind the country's female population. Due to a variety of socioeconomic and cultural factors, women are underrepresented in decision-making processes in the country. However, the Constitution guarantees gender equality, which includes women's political representation. The reservation was established to allow women to participate, but only in the panchayat system, which is the government's third level. Assembly elections to State Legislative Assemblies and General Parliament elections are not included. As a result, the goal of this study was to learn more about how women have been represented in Indian politics since independence. To narrow things down, only 40 decades of state legislative elections in one state, Rajasthan, were studied to see how women's representation has changed over time. The research question was answered and analysis was done based on the data collected.*

**Key Words:** *Women's Representation, Democracy, Reservation, Gender Equality, Politics*

### **Introduction**

Women in Indian society are frequently subjugated to customary duties, which has prevented them from participating in politics. Women were expected to do domestic responsibilities and were virtually always reliant on men for financial and social support, as was the case in the past. Individualism and liberty have defined the approaching generation in the twenty-first century, and a modest rise has been noted in the way women have begun working to become economically independent as these age-old traditional characteristics appear to fade in prominence over the next few years.



A good example is the National Perspective Plan's recommendation in 1988 to provide a reserve for women in grass-roots politics. Reservations for women in politics, particularly in local self-governing organizations, were important for two reasons: first, to expand the number of women involved in decision-making for nation-building, and second, to give equal opportunities for women. In 1992, the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts recognized this. This amendment stipulated that a minimum of 1/3rd of total seats reserved for SCs and STs be reserved for women belonging to those communities; a minimum of 1/3rd of total seats in each panchayat (including SC and ST seats) be reserved for women; and a minimum of 1/3rd reservation for women for the office of panchayat chairpersons.

Women's progress has been facilitated by this provision of the reserve for women, which is constitutionally protected. Yet, in order for society to flourish internally, women must be supported in political endeavors on an equal footing with males. The issue here is not superficial; rather, it necessitates societal adjustments from the inside. The mentality of how women are regarded and the roles they are assigned must be reconstructed in order to allow for gender equality, which is already guaranteed by the Constitution. As a result, it appears that social variables have a significant influence in determining women's engagement. The purpose of this research is to investigate the growth in female representation in Rajasthan's state legislature. Rajasthan was chosen for research because it has one of the highest percentages of women in local self-government entities.

### **Research Problem**

Societal factors have a significant impact on how women are seen in Indian culture and the roles they are assigned as a result. Some women succeed in breaking through these obstacles and carving out a niche for themselves. On the other hand, not every home allows its women to freely express their political opinions. This is a significant issue in Indian politics, as women are underrepresented in decision-making. As a result, the following research question becomes inevitable: **whether women's representation in Indian politics has improved since independence?**

### **Methodology**

Once referring to the above-mentioned studies in the literature review, actual research began after data was gathered from the election commission's website. Since 1951, the facts of constituency elections provided in statistics reports following each election have been used to



determine the gender of the candidate and the constituency from which the woman candidate ran. In 1957, 1962, 1967, 1972, 1977, 1980, 1985, and 1990, the same procedure was used to collect data. After that, an analysis was made based on the total number of seats and the total number of women candidates elected to those constituencies. Furthermore, a conclusion was reached based on an understanding of the findings of the present study investigation.

### **The scope and objective of the study**

The purpose of this study is to better comprehend the role of women in Indian politics. The goal was to examine one state's legislative assembly representation and determine whether or not there has been an increase in women's representation in Rajasthan's legislative assembly using available statistics. The focus was on one state and only 40 election decades in 72 years of independence because it did not appear feasible to conduct an in-depth study of women's representation across the country because bulk data processing would be required, which was not possible due to time and resource constraints. As a result, the topic has been limited to one state representation.

### **Women's Representation in Indian Politics**

Women's political participation in India was quite high during the pre-independence and post-independence periods, despite its limitations. Women have traditionally been active participants in political movements across the country. In reality, women's resistance against the British Raj and its policies has been credited with the success of several movements. However, post-independence politics at the national level did not reflect this. Domestic labor responsibilities, financial restrictions, child-rearing, patriarchal society beliefs, lack of education, fear of questioning one's character, and corruption were all cited as reasons. Despite these obstacles, many women have fought for their rights. This impact has been fueled by education and awareness campaigns that provide constitutional support and strength to women. As a result, a case study has been undertaken in this research to determine whether or not representation has increased in India.

### **A Case Study Of Rajasthan:**

Rajasthan was chosen for this study because it is one of the states in India with the highest proportion of women in the Panchayati raj system. Data from state assembly elections from 1950 to 1990 was analyzed to keep the context basic and efficient. This was done to see if women's



Representation rose or decreased during the first 40 years of independence. also to see if women's participation in politics was restricted to contesting elections or if it went beyond that, with women participating in the decision-making process as well. The following is the post-independence data by year.

Rajasthan had its first legislative assembly elections in 1951, with 140 constituencies. Only two women ran for election in the 140 constituencies, in the Phage and Udaipur city constituencies. Neither of them was victorious in this election.

1957: The number of assembly constituencies was lowered to 136 in 1957, and 20 women ran for office. Only eight of the 20 women were elected in the constituencies of Pilani, Kishanpole, Ramgarh, Bhilwara, Pushkar, Karanpur, Sujangarh, and Degana.

In 1962, the number of constituencies was expanded to 176 in 1962, with 14 women running for office. Jhunjhunu, Bairath, Ramgarh, Pushkar, Chabbra, Bhilwara, Bhim, and Degana were among the 14 candidates who won elections in the following constituencies: Jhunjhunu, Bairath, Ramgarh, Pushkar, Chabbra, Bhilwara, Bhim, and Degana.

1967: A total of 11 female candidates ran for 184 constituencies in the 1967 assembly elections, with 6 female candidates winning from the following constituencies: Kolayat, Jhunjhunu, Pushkar, Bhum, Pachpadra, and Degana.

1972: There were 184 constituencies contested in this election, with women candidates running in 5 of them. Women won four of the five constituencies, including Dudu, Weir, Pushkar, and Bhinai.

1977: The number of assembly constituencies was expanded to 200 in 1977, with 24 of them being contested by women. Jhunjhunu, Amber, Jaipur rural, Sanganer, Bairath, Kapasin, and Pachpadra were among the seven constituencies won by women candidates out of the total of 24.

1980: The same 200 constituencies were contested by 27 women candidates in 1980, with only 10 women winning seats in Amber, Jaipur rural, Sanganer, Bairath, Weir, Bhinai, Pushkar, Sagwara, Chorasi, Bhim, Ahore.

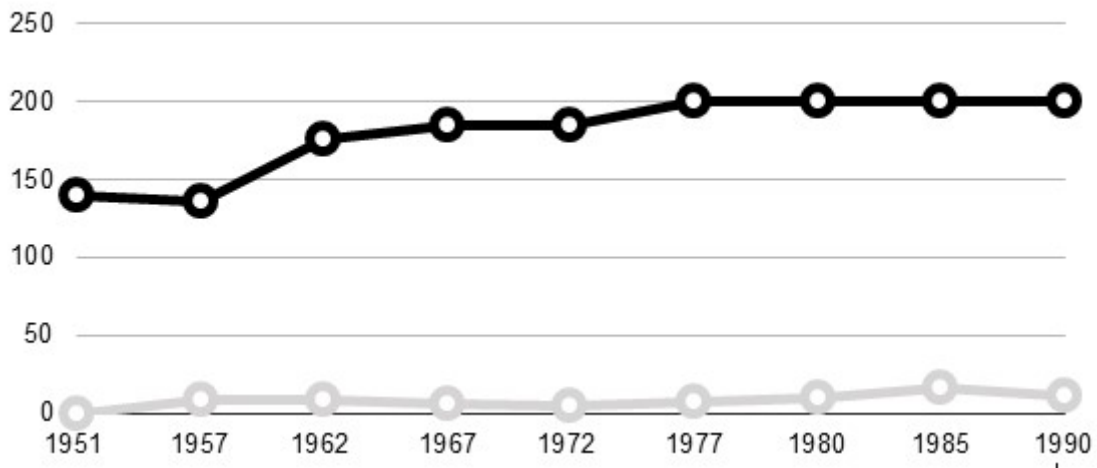
1985: The same 200 constituencies were contested by 38 women candidates in the 1985 election, with 16 seats won by women candidates in Churu, Pilani, Mandawa, Jaipur rural, Sanganer, Bairat, Alwar, Deeg, Dholpur, Tonk, Bhirai, Sagwara, Udaipur, Pali, Sumerpur, and Shergarh.



1990: In the 1990 elections, 60 women ran for 200 seats, but only 11 were elected in the following districts: Nohar, Pilani, Jaipur rural, Sanganer, Deeg, Hindoli, Sagwara, Pali, Sirohi, Gudamalani, and Jodhpur.

#### Analysis of the data

Every year since independence, the number of women running for office has increased. Given that women are not barred from running for office in the state legislature, female candidate turnout has risen over time.



Another noteworthy feature is that in several constituencies, female candidates have consistently won. Pushkar, Sagwara, Jhunjhunu, and Jaipur, for example, are rural areas.

It is also noted that the number of women running for office in 1972 was at an all-time low, with only five women running for office.

#### Conclusion

Women's participation in politics in India is limited due to socioeconomic and cultural factors. Many women have aspired to break free from conventional norms and enter the arena of politics in recent years. With women now leading significant central ministries, the need for a shift in the political climate to make it more women-friendly is higher than ever. Today's biggest cause for women is the political atmosphere, which leaves them vulnerable in a male-dominated industry. Nonetheless, since independence, women's representation has steadily improved and is now far better than it was in the twentieth century.



A briefcase study was conducted to see whether there had been an increase. Rajasthan is the state with the greatest percentage of women in the Panchayat system. A study was conducted solely on the basis of this to examine if the same was reflected in the State legislative assembly as well. Because Rajasthan is one of India's largest states, with 200 constituencies, data processing was a challenge due to time constraints, therefore only the first 40 years after independence and nine assembly elections were examined.

Women's representation in Rajasthan has steadily increased, from two women running for office in 1951 to 60 women running for office in 1990. despite the fact that the women who eventually obtained the seats never crossed a total of 16 seats out of a total of 200 seats in the assembly. Nonetheless, this was a significant achievement for women's presence in Indian politics.

Even though this study was limited and narrowed to the bare minimum, it still demonstrates a trend in how women have taken ownership of their rights and attempted to achieve or fight for equality over time. As a result, based on this restricted survey, one could infer that yes, women's representation has increased in India.

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