



Women Empowerment through Participation in Indian Politics with Special Reference to Rajasthan

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Abstract

Women empowerment is an essential feature of social development, promoting gender equality and fostering a fair and inclusive society. The contribution of women's participation in Indian politics has lagged behind the country's female population. Women are underrepresented in administrative processes in the country because of a diversity of socioeconomic and cultural factors. However, the constitution provides the equal rights to women for participation in democracy with equal political representation. An authentic democratic representation encourages sufficient involvement of women in politics. Gender equality is a crucial indicator in democratic governance to confirm the representation of women in the Indian Parliament. This study is based on election commission's report on electoral participation and representation of women in Indian Parliament from first election after independence to recently held general elections in 2024 and also to narrow things down, 40 decades of state legislative elections in one state, Rajasthan, were studied to see how women's representation has changed over time. The analysis was done based on data collected from the recorded documents. The finding was obtained after a detailed analysis of women's political participation and representation from being electorate to voters from women as candidate to women as political representatives in parliament of India and assembly of Rajasthan state. This study looks at how representation of women in India's parliament has improved since independence. It assesses patterns in involvement of women as elected representatives; the consequence of legislative reforms of the Women's Reservation (Nari Shakti Vandan) Act, and the specific dynamics of Rajasthan's electoral politics. While representation has grown modestly, structural challenges continue to limit meaningful empowerment.

Keywords: Indian parliament, women empowerment, women participation



Introduction

Neither the chains of dictatorship nor the fetters of oppression can keep down the force of freedom for long. - Angela Merkel, the Chancellor of Germany (Afridi, 2013)

The term “women empowerment” remained in debate since so long extended years of political representation (Sharma, 2019). The meaning of political involvement is exercising the right to vote, power of sharing, electoral campaigning, political activism, membership of political parties, focusing party meetings, grasping party positions, contesting election, co-decision making, co-policymaking at all levels of governance of the state. In other words, it is a process for individuals to penetrate in political life deciding the common goals of the society and shaping the best way to achieve it (Roja, 2022). Democracy is a system of government where people, participate either directly or indirectly in the procedure of governance. For effective governance, women’s involvement in decision making system should be essential with adding the problem of low involvement of women of special concern (Naik, 2017).

Political empowerment opens door to more opportunities for women. Since past few years, gender ratio has been abbreviated world-wide in various fields such as education, job opportunities, access to health facilities, political participation, etc. But in India, the scene is different. India is still far behind in achieving gender equality especially in politics (Sarkar & Parvin, 2021). India is the largest and one of most resilient parliamentary democracies in the world with a female population of 662.9 million and ranked 144th globally in terms of women’s representation in national parliaments (Inter-Parliamentary Union data). Comparatively, countries like Rwanda (61.3%) and Sweden (47%) have demonstrated the potential of gender focused policies to ensure better representation (Yasmeen, 2024).

In the recent Lok Sabha elections, out of 543 members only 78 women were elected. While this marks an increase from previous years, the pace of progress remains slow. While in the Upper House (Rajya Sabha) has been seen similar trends, with women holding only 31 seats out of 238 members. These numbers highlight require for systematic reforms to promote gender parity at the national level (Yasmeen, 2024).

Women played an instrumental role in politics. They not only contributed to freedom struggle but left deep imprints in the people’s mind. Although persecutors did not heard their voices but their sacrifices made them the glorified names in the history of India. Every freedom movement or conspiracy led by men against east India Company equally, constitute women in it. Protuberant names like Rani Lakshmi Bai, Begum Hazrat Mahal, Vijayalakshmi Pandit, Sarojini Naidu, Aruna Asaf Ali, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Annie Besant, Sucheta Kriplani, Bhikaji Cama and many other unsung female heroes who equally played their part in the freedom struggle made India a diversified nation where men and women together worked for a peaceful tomorrow. After conquering Independence, the position of women has enhanced incredibly. Many

political women leaders have arise in India. In this context, Pratiba Patil became the first female President and Meera Kumar as the first speaker for Lok Sabha. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit became the first ever President of United Nations General Assembly of free India and the race continued recording some noted names in the annals of Indian history. From Suchitra Kriplani, the first chief ministers of an Indian state (Uttar Pradesh) to Indira Gandhi, the first women Prime Minister of India brought golden days to India, she was known to be the most fierce and strong women holding such a prestigious position with utmost grace and responsibility. She is known to be amongst the few Prime Ministers who not only shaped Indian political space but brought a revolution to the Indians subcontinent with her course of action and international tie-ups (Nayeem & Bhat, 2021).

The involvement of Women in politics has significantly improved in the era of liberalization, privatization and globalization i.e., since 2014 till date. On an international context, Claudia Sheinbaun became the first female President of Mexico (2024), Svetlana Tikhanovskaya, face of opposition leader of Belarus, Giorgia Meloni the first female Prime Minister of Italy (2022), Kamala Harris the first female Vice President of USA (2021), Jacinda Arden become Prime Minister of New Zealand in 2017 who has widely praised her leadership during national crises COVID-19 pandemic, Ursula Von der Layen the first women President of European Commission Union in 2019, Sanna Marin the youngest Prime Minister of Finland at the age of 34 elected in 2019 and Gordana Siljanovska-m Devekova the first female President of North Macedonia elected in 2024 are arisen as global leaders.

In the context of national level, various woman political Indian leaders have arise in these years namely Jai Lalita, Mamta Banerjee, Mayawati and Soni Gandhi in the area of 1991 to 2014 where as during the period of 2014 to 2024, Smriti Irani, Nirmala Sitaraman, Droupdi Murmu, Anupriya Patel, Annpurna Dev, Mahua Moitra, Bansuri Swaraj, Kangana Ranaut, Priya Saroj and Iqra Hassan have been the recent examples of this alteration in Indian context.

The state of Rajasthan, known for its rich cultural heritage and historical significance, has also been a significant arena for political activity in India. Women's participation in electoral process in Rajasthan is a crucial indicator of state's progress in terms of gender equality and democratic inclusiveness (Poonia, 2024). Rajasthan is the one of the India's largest state with 200 constituencies, data processing was challenge due to time constraints, therefore, only the first 70 years after independence and sixteen assembly elections were examined (Muniyappa, 2022).

The present study is focused on the objectives which explore electoral participation and representation of women in Indian Parliament from first election after independence to recently held general elections in 2024 and also to narrow things down, 70 decades of state legislative elections in one state, Rajasthan, were studied to see how women's representation has changed over time. It is also highlighted how

important it is to representation of women in lower house as well as upper house of Indian Parliament and in state assembly of Rajasthan in order to achieve gender equality and the democratic government in India. The research objective is based on research question was answered and analysis was done based on data collected from secondary sources. This paper analyzes developments especially with the concerns of women employment through political representation in Indian Parliament till 2024, additionally with state politics of Rajasthan assembly.

Literature Review

Kumar (2026) revealed how India's first past the post voting system has stayed strong despite rising voter participation and the growth of regional political groups, while also showing a trends towards more completion among multiple parties. Saima (2024) examines the crucial topic of women's reservation in India, emphasizing how it can help close the gender gap in political representation. The historical context, legislative developments, implementation challenges, and overall effects of women's reservations in the nation are all thoroughly examined in this research study. The study evaluates the efficacy of these reservation regulations and looks at societal perceptions of women in politics by using empirical data and previously published academic literature. Additionally, it suggests ways to improve gender equality in political decision-making.

Reddy (2024) studied on political participation of women and representation in politics as a case study. Sengupta (2025) focused her study on parliamentary performances of women MPs in the 18th Lok Sabha in which she analyzed through their participation in debates and questions. Mukhopadhyay and Chattopadhyay (2025) analyzed the trends of women participation in Lok Sabha followed by analysis of trend of women's participation in Rajya Sabha in section V. Section VI makes a review of women's participation at the international level and finally, in Section VII we make some concluding observations. Karia (2024) investigate women's political leadership in both the lower and upper house of parliament, the percentage of women voters nationwide, and women's political awareness.

Sharma and Kumawat (2025) follow a specific approach, combining qualitative and quantities techniques to access the impact of various empowerment initiatives. A judgmental sampling technique was used to ensure representation from different socio economic back grounds. The primary data source was collected from various women registered under women empowerment programme. Sharp et al., 2003, emphasizes their studies on issues and problems of women's assault keen on political affairs across the world and empowerment of women. However most of the researches have been determined to measure the political empowerment of women. Political empowerment provides power to women and supports the economic growth also. In a study, a connection is found between political and economic development and the results found to be positive and satisfactory (Duflo, 2011). In a study it has been observed

that political empowerment and economic privileges are indirectly interlinked with each other (Chakerabarty, 2017). Khatri, 2016 stated that an empowered woman contributes to the progress of the nation. Women in political affairs reflects as long term commitment according to a holistic approach (Harverd Kennedy School: Women and Public Policy Program, 2018; OECD, 2018). So, political empowerment denotes the provisions of a platform for all the women to enable them to actively indulge in the political domain and helping them in acknowledging their worth as an agent of alteration and development at the national as well as international level.

Chattopadhyay and Duflo (2004) discover that female village council heads prefer to channelize infrastructure spending on aspects relevant to women. Zetterberg (2006) had observed that the interlink-age between gender quotas and women's political engagement had not been sufficiently addressed. Domestic obligations and insufficient financial support are increasingly significant obstacles in women's political paths (Times of India, 1998). Iyer and Mani (2019) revealed that females were less inclined to contribute in other electoral activities such as campaign participation, attending speechless or joining political parties.

The emphasis is primarily towards the association between gender norms and rights (Htunand Jones, 2002) or for that matter, the response of women to an overall improvement in their political empowerment (Joshi & Olsson, 2021) after a comprehensive peace arrangement. Comparing state level crime rate in the pre and post-reservation for women, Iyer et.al (2012) find that increased women representation in politics of local government in India positively impacts women violence. These conclusions were also noticed in US, wherein the findings indicate a strong and positive correlation between county rape rates and female socio-political power (Johnson, 2014).

Rosen (2017) shows that reserved seat quotas with a 30% threshold are typically most effective in least developed economies. Bhalotra et al., (2018) determine that sitting female legislators are more likely to re-contest their seats. Many global conferences, including the Cairo Conference on Population and Development (1994), Fourth World Conference on Women (1995), and World Summit for Social Development (1995) have recognized that, despite the progress made globally in improving status of women, gender disparities still exist, especially with respect to involvement in electoral politics.

Methods and Procedures

This research paper follows a qualitative research design with literature review and case studies to gain a widespread perceptive involvement of females in Parliament of India from 1952 to 2024. The research is based on research question was answered and analysis was done based on data collected from the appreciate secondary data from the sources including Election Commission of India's reports, Parliamentary reports, Governmental websites, Rajasthan State Assembly reports, scholarly articles,

diverse array of published resources including research papers published in prestigious academic journals, official reports, legislative documents and biographies of women political leaders in India, are utilized to gather relevant data and insights.

The secondary data for Rajasthan was gathered from constituencies election followed to determine the gender candidate and the constituency from which the women candidate run. In 1957, 1962, 1967, 1972, 1977, 1980, 1985 and 1990, 1993, 1998, 2003, 2008, 2013, 2018, and 2023, the same procedure were adopted to collect the data. After that, an analysis was prepared on the total number of seats and the total number of women candidates elected to those constituencies. Furthermore, a conclusion was come out based on an understanding of the finding of the present study investigation.

Results and Discussion

Women's are the world's largest excluded group in political arena. 21.9 % of the members of national parliament worldwide are women. Women hold 16.0% seats in Arab state, parliaments and 21.8% seats in Sub Saharan's African nation's parliament. In Americas women holds 26.6%, whereas in the developed nations of USA, France and Japan 18.3%, 26.2%, 8.1% respectively representatives in Lower House of Parliament are comprised of women. In India, women comprised only 11.4% of National Parliament (Naik, 2017).

Women in Indian Legislation

Indian parliament is multi- party, with secular based democracy focused on the principles of pluralism and highest decision making body comprising of two houses known as lower house and upper house just similar to the British Parliament. Lower house (also known as Lok Sabha) is the more influential than the upper house (Rajya Sabha) in India. The Lower chamber has the five years tenure and Upper House is a continuing body with six years tenure where one third of the members retires in every two years. The political party holding the majority of the lower chamber constitutes the government and executes its electoral mandate. The parliament of India is considered as most prestigious for Member of Parliament (MPs) in political sphere of India. India has effectively held eighteen elections for the Lok Sabha or Lower House till now. The parliamentary elections of India are measured as the supreme events in human history, with millions of people taking in a single occasion. Indian's democracy is progressing towards maturity through regular and peaceful elections by ensuring smooth transfers of power after every election. However, the table-1 presents the status of gender equality in the Indian Parliament until the present elections.

Women Representation in Indian Parliament as Lower House (Lok Sabha) and Upper House (Rajya Sabha)

Ever since India's after independence, a pattern of alteration has been observed in the circumstances of women. The women become to contribute in national and state

politics. The first assembly had only 2% of women. Subsequently women won 4-5% of seats in lower house (Lok Sabha) and improved up to 4-8%.

Table 1

Representation of Women in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha members of Indian Parliament (1952-2024)

Lok Sabha						Rajya Sabha		
Year	No of Seats	Total Number of Candidates	Women Candidates	Women Elected as MPs	% of Women MPs	No of Seats	Women MPs	% of Women MPs
Frist(1952)	499	1874	43	22	4.41	219	16	7.31
Second (1957)	500	1518	45	27	5.4	237	18	7.59
Third (1962)	503	1985	70	34	6.76	238	18	7.56
Forth (1967)	523	2369	67	31	5.93	240	20	8.33
Fith (1971)	521	2784	86	22	4.22	243	17	7
Sixth (1977)	544	2439	70	19	3.49	244	25	10.25
Seventh (1980)	544	4621	142	28	5.15	244	24	9.84
Eight (1984)	544	5574	164	44	8.09	244	28	11.48
Ninth (1989)	517	6160	198	27	5.22	245	24	9.8
Tenth (1991)	544	8969	325	39	7.17	245	38	15.51
Eleventh (1996)	543	13952	599	39	7.18	223	19	8.52
Twelfth (1998)	543	4750	274	43	7.92	245	15	6.12
Thirteen (1999)	543	4254	278	49	9.02	245	19	7.76
Fourteen (2004)	543	5405	355	45	8.28	245	27	11.1
Fifteen (2009)	543	7054	476	59	10.86	245	22	8.97
Sixteenth (2014)	543	8251	556	61	11.23	241	28	11.62
Seventeenth (2019)	545	8048	726	78	14.4	224	24	10.71
Eighteenth (2024)	543	8360	797	74	13.6	245	42	17.14

Source: Election Commission of India (<https://www.cci.gov.in>)

Table 1 reveals that the depiction of females in 18th Lok Sabha in India (2024) is 74 female members comprised only 13.6% of the entire Lok Sabha MPs. Although it has risen from 11.23% in 2014 followed 14.4% in 2019 (17th Lok Sabha), it is almost the world half average of 22.2%. The Upper House (Rajya Sabha) does not much better representation, with just 42 women member (MPs) comprising 17.1% of the total members of parliament in 2024. Again, while this is an improvement from 2019 figure is 10.71% followed by slightly declining 11.62% in 2014, which is far underneath the world average of 19.6%.

Currently 2 women are cabinet ministers namely Nirmala Sitaraman (Minister of Finance and Minister of Corporate Affairs) and Anupriya Patel (Minister of Women

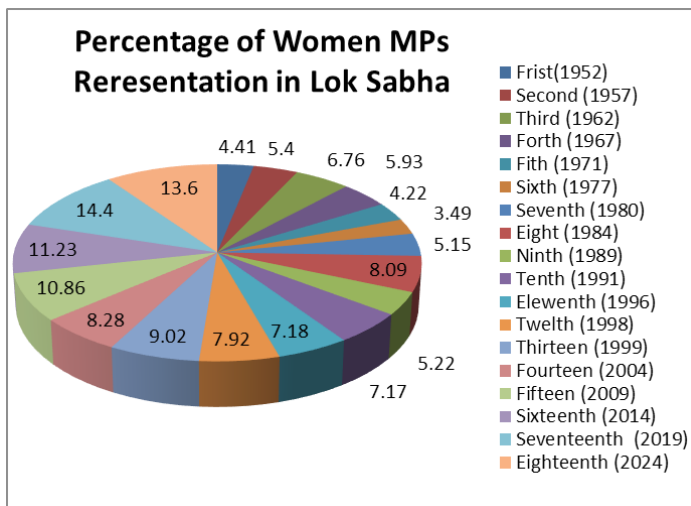
and Child Welfare) and other 7 are Ministers of State namely Anuupriya Patel, Shobha Karandlaje, Nimbun Bambhaniya, Raksha Khadse and Savitri Thakur in the present government of India with Prime Minister Modi administration.

It observes as no surprise that India is ranked 141th in the world rankings of women in national parliaments, compiled by the inter-parliamentary union. India's rank is lowest in the region and its falls below her neighboring countries i.e. Nepal ranked at 40th, Afganistan at 45th, China at 71th, and Pakistan 86th.

Table1 presents the representation of women in the two legislative chambers of Parliament. The above table reveals the percentage of women in Lok Sabha (Lower House) and Rajya Sabha (Upper House) in comparison to the total number of seats. Independent India had its first constitutional multiparty election in 1952 on the basis of universal adult franchise. As mentioned earlier the Indian constitution guaranteed gender equality to women in every sphere of life. However, as reflected in the table the first election resulted in only 4.4% of women being elected to the Lok Sabha. Further, the following elections did not show any significant rise in women's representation. For example, the proportion of women increased marginally in 1957 from 4.4 to 5.4%, and further to 6.7% in 1962. Nevertheless, the percentage declined in 1967 (5.9%), dropped again to 4.2% in 1971, decreased to 3.4% in 1977 which was the lowest level, and then improved slightly to 8.09% in 1984. Thereafter, it increased marginally to 7.1% in 1991, 7.9% in 1998, and 9% in 1999, but declined to 8.28% in 2004. This table indicated that the percentage of women representatives in the Lok Sabha remains very low, and women's representation did not exceed 14.4% during the 17th Lok Sabha in 2019 till date. However graph of percentage declined 13.6% in 2024 during Eighteenth Lok Sabha.

Figure 1

Women Representation in Lok Sabha of Indian Parliament (1952-2024)



The 2019 general elections witnessed an imperative improve in the number of females elected to the Lok Sabha. A record breaking 78 females were elected, comprising approximately 14% of the entire seats. That period was the maximum number of women's MP's in the history of Indian Parliamentary elections. It is also important that these figures reflect the national average, and there are variations in women's representations across different states and political parties. Efforts are ongoing to deal with the sex ratio differences and promote better political involvement of women and depiction in the democracy of India. The proportion of women in different Lok Sabha elections after independence from 1952 to 2024 has been well represented in Figure 1.

The existence of females in the Rajya Sabha (Upper House) has been faintly higher compared to Lower House (Lok Sabha) in Indian democracy, possibly due to indirect voting and recommendation of women members. Since independence, the number of women MPs increased to 78 in the 17th Lok Sabha elections held in 2019 was the highest ever in which 17 MPs are aged below than 40 years comprising 6 MPs from Congress and 40 from BJP women members representing 14% of total house. The table 1 further indicates that the current women representation in the Indian Parliament is merely 13.6%, i.e. out of 8360 members of Lower House or Lok Sabha, only 797 are women. However, the general proportion of women representation is comparatively higher in the Upper House, i.e. 17.14 percent in parliament during the 2024 that reveals the male-dominated Indian society is still not prepared to contribute to the key of power and position to women.

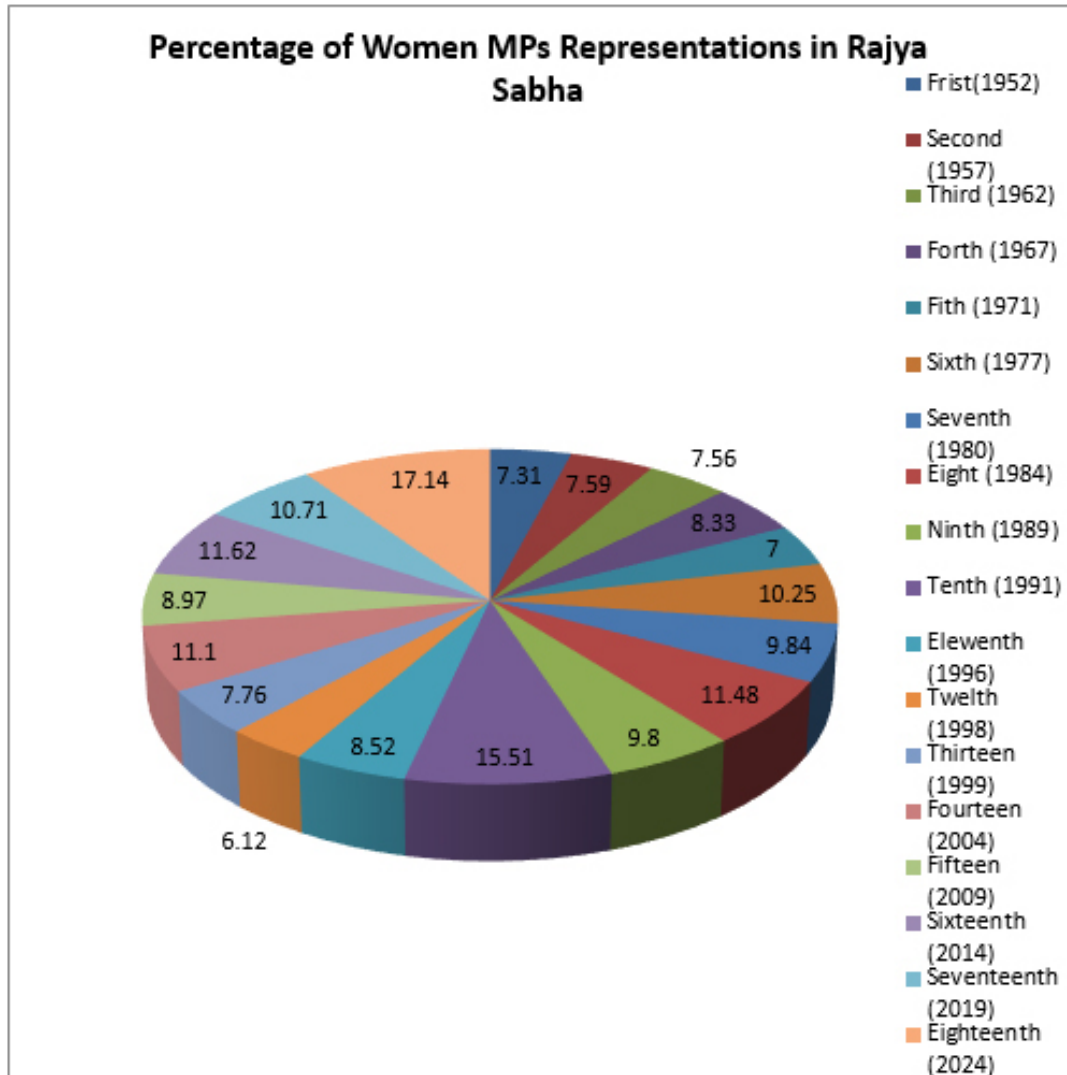
Recently in 2024 election, total 42 women (17.14%) were elected for 245 seats in Rajya Sabha. On the contrary, there has been improvement in women's representation in Rajya Sabha since 1952 to till date (Figure 2), achieving gender parity still remains a challenge. Efforts are ongoing to enhance the women's political participation and increase their depiction in the upper house of Indian Parliament. By investigating the facts from table, it has been observed that participation of women is too much lower in Lok Sabha. So legislatively they have substantial disadvantage in power politics. So still there should be a requirement to be reliable policy to assurance an adequate contribution of women in central legislative and other political institutions. However, some superficial measures have been adopted by center and state governments, not so much to recuperate the circumstances of women but to prevail their support for election purposes. The reservations of 33% seats for women are just one electoral plank. The government has introduced a women's reservation bill, which seeks the 33% reservation of seats for women in Parliament and State Assemblies to guarantee efficient involvement and strengthening the positions of women in democratic institutions. However, the Political Parties came from the promised 33% reservation of seats Assemblies.

By the above discussion and analysis from table 1, it is concluded that a positive correlation is found between the contested candidates and winners in the elections

since by analyzing the past elections. If we see the history from 1952, first election to 2024, the last elections, women have been repudiate appreciate seats for fighting the consecutive elections by the political parties.

Figure 2

Women Representation in Rajya Sabha of Indian Parliament (1952- 2024)



Therefore, it is not achievable for female candidates to absorb a number of seats which reveals the male conquered political structure in Indian democracy including political parties. It is fascinating to observe that the national parties i.e. NC (National Congress) and BJP (Bhartiya Janta Party) parties have not given so much emphasis to the female candidates in party. Whereas, local parties such as UP centric of BSP (Bahujan Samaj Party), INAICTC/TMC (All India Trinamol Congress) of West Bengal

and AIADM (All India Anna Dravida Munnetra) of Tamil Nadu centric are headed by three powerful women leaders, they also have not shown their authenticity in allocate equivalent representations to the women folk which is million dollar question.

Whereas women participation in politics by nationwide and local parties in the Eighteenth Lok Sabha Election-2024, women candidates represent 16%, 13%, 13%, 8% and 38% by BJP, INC, CPI/M, BSP and AITC/TNC respectively. So in 2024 elections, top regional parties by women representation, West Bengal topped the list of higher number of women MPs (11), followed by Uttar Pradesh (7) and Maharashtra (7). Rajasthan has historically elected only three women MPs in recent elections 2024. Among these, Sanjana Jatav (INC) from Bharatpur gained attention as youngest MPs from the state.

Women Representation in State Legislative Assembly Elections: A Case Study of Rajasthan

Rajasthan state is recognized for its rich heritage and historical importance. With addition, this state has a significant arena for political activity in India. Women participation in the electoral process in Rajasthan is an essential indicator of the state's progress in way of sex ratio equality and democratic inclusiveness (Poonia, 2024). The Rajasthan State Assembly Elections are commonly referred as the Rajasthan Vidhan Sabha Elections. 'Vidhan sabha' is the Hindi term of Legislative Assembly, which is the lower chamber of the state legislature, comprising 200 members directly elected by people. Table 2 reveals the depiction of Women in State Assembly Elections of Rajasthan (Rajasthan Vidhan Sabha) during the total sixteenth legislative assemblies till now since independence.

First Legislative Assembly Elections (1951): Rajasthan had held total 16th legislative elections till now in which its first legislative assembly elections was run in 1951 for 140 constituencies in which only two women fight the elections from constituencies of Phagi and Udaipur city among 140 constituencies. No women candidate has success for the victory during this election.

1957s and 1962s: in 1957s and 1962s, women's representation in Rajasthan Vidhan sabha witnessed a gradual increase from 5.88 to 7.95 percent. Total 20 women has represented and ran the elections for the constituencies of Pilani, Kishanpole, Ramgarh, Bhilwara, Pushkar, Karanpur, Sujangarh, and Degana. Only 8 out of 20 women has elected during the 2nd legislative election in 1957 and during this period, the number of assembly constituencies was decreased to 136 in 1957. Whereas in 1962 during 3rd assembly, the number of constituencies was expanded to 176 with 14 women who fight the elections for the constituencies of Jhunjhunu, Bairath, Ramgarh, Pushkar, Chhabra, Bhilwara, Bhim, and Degana and all of were won the elections with women representations of 7.95%.

1967s and 1972s: The women's representation decreased from 3.26 % to 2.17%

in 1967 followed by 1972. In 5th assembly elections of Rajasthan in 1967, only 6 female candidates out of 11 have been selected from the following constituencies i.e. Kolayat, Jhunjhunu, Pushkar, Bhum, Pachpadra, and Degana whereas, in 1972 (6th Assembly) 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.

1977s and 1980s: In 1977 the progress for women representation increased 12% while decreased 5% in 1980. : 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 candidate out of the total of 24. While 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.

1985s and 1990s: In 1985, 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. 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.

1993s, 1998s 2003s and 2008s: Women representations in these elections were 90, 69, 118 and 154 while only 10, 14, 12 and 28 women candidates were elected representing the 5%, 7%, 6% and 14% for the same 200 constituencies in respective years of 1993, 1998, 2003 and 2008.

2013s, 2018s and 2023s: The 2013 general elections witnessed a highest increase of 12.5% of women representation in Rajasthan Vidhan Sabha where 25 women were elected among 166 women candidates for 200 constituencies. Total 24 out of 189 won the election comprising 12% of women representation in 2018. Whereas, only 20 out of 183 women candidates elected constituting the 10% participation in Rajasthan 16th assembly elections.

Before the 2023 state polls, in 2008 of 13th State Assembly Elections, Rajasthan recorded around 28 women MLAs out of 154 women representation (14 %) in a 200 member Assembly, one of the higher proportions among Indian states, although still low comparative to the proposed 33 % quota. In the last recently conducted 2023 Rajasthan Assembly elections, only 20 women MLAs were elected, representing just 10 % of members indicating a decline from previous assemblies and notably below women's formal political representation goals.

Initiative of Government for Women Empowerment

Mhatma Gandhi National Rural Employment

Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)

Swayam Siddha

Swadhar

Indira Gandhi Matrinal Sahyog Yojna

Janani Suraksha Yojna

Government of India consolidated all programs under National Mission of Empowerment of Women (NMEW). The present Indian government focuses on women-led development through initiatives like Mission Shakti, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, and Lakhpati Didi. Key economic and social empowerment schemes include Namu Drone Didi, Stand-Up India, Mudras Yojana, and Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana.

Table 2

Representation of Women in State Assembly Elections of Rajasthan (Rajasthan Vidhan Sabha) since 1951 to 2023

Assembly Elections	Year	No of Constituencies	Women Representation	Women Elected	Percentage
1st	1951	140	2	0	0
2nd	1957	136	20	8	5.88
3rd	1962	176	14	14	7.95
4th	1967	184	11	6	3.26
5th	1972	184	5	4	2.17
6th	1977	200	24	24	12
7th	1980	200	27	10	5
8th	1985	200	38	16	8
9th	1990	200	60	11	5.5
10th	1993	200	90	10	5
11th	1998	200	69	14	7
12th	2003	200	118	12	6
13th	2008	200	154	28	14
14th	2013	200	166	25	12.5
15th	2018	200	189	24	12
16th	2023	200	183	20	10

Source: Oxfaminda.org

Case Studies: Successful Exemplary Women Leaders of Rajasthan

Vasundhara Raje Scindia: Vasundhara Raje Scindia, is a prominent Indian politician and a key leader of BJP, which promotes Hindu nationalism and economic reforms. She graduated from Sophia College, Mumbai, with a degree in economics and political science before entering politics in 1984. She served as Rajasthan's first female Chief Minister (2003–2008, 2013–2018), driving reforms like the Ladli Yojna for girl child welfare and boosting tourism. A five-time Lok Sabha member from Jhalawar Baran and former Union Minister of State for External Affairs, she is known for her administrative acumen and regal persona.

Diya Kumari: Diya Kumari, is a prominent figure in the politics of India and serving currently as the Deputy CM of Rajasthan. She has been source of inspiration for many women inspiring to enter in politics. Her tenure and political journey highlights the potential for women to raise a significant situation in the state.

Kamla Beniwal: Beniwal (1927-2024) was one of the most powerful women politicians of Rajasthan as she served as minister for almost 50 years in the state government (Times of India, 2024). She also served as the governor of three states – Tripura, Gujarat, and Mizoram, between 2009 and 2014, becoming the first woman governor of a northeastern state. She was elected to the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly for seven terms between 1954 and 2003. Beniwal was an Indian independence activist and veteran politician who served as the deputy chief minister of Rajasthan. A leader of the Indian National Congress, she was the first female minister and held cabinet ministerial positions in the state government of Rajasthan for more than two decades between 1980 and 2003 (Times of India, 2025). She was honoured with the Tamra Patra from former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi for her contributions to the freedom struggle.

Girja Vyas: Girja Vyas was the prominent Indian politician and famous women leader of congress. In 1985, Vyas was elected to the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly from Udaipur. She managed diverse portfolios in the Rajasthan government. She was also a member of the Estimates Committee during this period. In 1993, she became president of the All India Mahila Congress, advocating for women's political participation. She served as president of the Rajasthan Pradesh Congress Committee. Between 1990 and her death, she was a member of the All-India Congress Committee, later serving as the chair of its Media Department. Vyas returned to the Rajasthan Assembly in 2008 to resign after a year.

Sanjana Jatav: Sanjana Jatav is among the youngest MP from Rajasthan (Moshra, 2024). She is a member of the Indian National Congress. She was elected to the 18th Lok Sabha, the lower house of the parliament in 2024 from the Bharatpur.

These case studies highlight the remarkable achievements and contributions of female leaders in the politics of India. They have shattered glass ceilings, inspired the countless individuals, and demonstrated the women potential to excel in positions of leadership.

Conclusion

Overall, it is concluded that for a demographic country, it is very significant to both man and women of the motherland equally engage in the governance and law building process. More women's representation involves in politics of India, more it will bring gender equality in India. Active involvement of women in politics will help them to recuperate their respect, dignity, freedom, and authority in homes as well as in the society. Hence political empowerment is a key to attain strengthening of women in India. Women's representation in Rajasthan has progressively improved, from two women running for office in 1951 to 183 women running from office in 2023, despite the fact that the women who ultimately obtained the seats never crossed a total of 28 seats out of 200 seats in the assembly. Nevertheless, this was an important achievement for women's existence in the Indian politics. Although this study was limited and 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 constrained survey, one could conclude that yes, women's representation has improved in India. To enhance more participation of women in Indian politics, the urgent action is needed on long pending Women's Reservation Bill and affirmative action should be happen in quotas in parliament or in the political parties mobilization of women around an integrated development agenda is crucial. The formation of caucus of women political leaders across the party lines to enhance women participation within political parties and to advocate for the Women's Reservation Bill must be as a collective voice.

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