

# Women in Politics - A Comparative Analysis of Gender Quotas in Different Countries

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## Abstract

In order to evaluate the efficacy of gender quotas in boosting women's representation and involvement in politics, this research paper compares the implementation and results of these policies in a number of different nations. Through an analysis of the legal structures, cultural backgrounds, and implementation strategies supporting gender quotas across a range of nations, this research aims to comprehend the disparities in the rates of success in attaining gender parity in political institutions. The study assesses the effects of various quota types (legislated vs. voluntary party quotas) and the influence of both internal and foreign forces on these policies using qualitative and quantitative analysis. Furthermore, the research delves into the opposition and criticism directed towards gender quotas, in addition to their enduring consequences on the political terrain.

**Keywords:** Political Representation, Electoral Systems, Feminist Theory, Gender Equality, Quota Adoption, Legislative Quotas, Party Quotas, Comparative Politics, Women's Political Empowerment

## Introduction

One of the main concerns in global gender politics has been the pursuit of gender equality in political representation, which has prompted the implementation of a number of initiatives meant to increase the number of women in positions of decision-making. Gender quotas have been a popular tool among these techniques to alleviate the gender gap in political institutions. These quotas, which set a minimum percentage of female candidates or elected officials, are intended to guarantee that women participate in politics and have an impact on governance and policy.

In order to better understand gender quotas and their effects on women's political representation, this research paper compares gender quotas across several nations. By exploring the nuances of gender quotas in many legal and cultural contexts, the research seeks to identify the circumstances that lead to the success or failure of these laws. The underlying assumption of the analysis is that, whereas gender quota represents a substantial their effectiveness as a first step toward gender equality in politics depends on a number of variables, such as the kind of quota, the methods used for enforcement, and the larger socio-political environment.

This study is important because it adds to the current discussion about the best ways to attain gender parity in political representation. Knowing the ins and outs of gender quotas can help countries tackle the issues of gender inequality by providing important insights into tactics that can promote more fair and inclusive political systems. This study intends to educate policymakers, activists, and researchers about the promise and limitations of gender quotas in the quest of political gender equality by offering a thorough analysis of the global landscape of this policy.

110 nations have implemented some form of national election gender quota to date, primarily in the past 20 years. Presently, over 70 nations have amended their constitutions or implemented new electoral regulations mandating that a specific proportion of female candidates or parliamentary seats be held by women. In other cases, political parties have independently and freely implemented quotas. These quotas have changed the amount of women in politics and have appeared in every part of the world, frequently in unexpected places. At the sub national level, gender quotas have also grown quickly, giving more women than ever access to local political decision-making. Despite the recent explosion of political science research on gender quotas, little is known about how quotas could alter individual beliefs and behaviours. The majority of political science research on electoral quotas has focused on developing theory, typically by analyzing individual or comparative case studies. Most of the research done to far on quotas has focused on trying to figure out how these policies spread and whether they work to increase the proportion of women in politics (Bush, 2011; Dahlerup, 2006; Jones, 2009; Krook, 2009; Schwindt-Bayer, 2009; Tripp & Kang, 2008). More inclusive and diverse legislatures are crucial for the democratic legitimacy of elected bodies, according to theoretical and comparative literatures on women's descriptive representation. This is partly because they give historically underrepresented groups a voice (Lovenduski, 2005; Mansbridge, 1999; Phillips, 1995; Pitkin, 1967; Schwindt-Bayer & Mishler, 2005; Williams, 1998; Young, 2000). The initial wave of quota scholars has contributed the theoretical foundations for verifiable theories on a variety of possible consequences of gender parity in politics, such as the symbolic implications of electoral gender quotas (see Franceschet, Krook, & Piscopo, 2012). This study investigates the impact of election gender quotas on female citizens' political engagement by testing earlier theoretical findings. It accomplishes this by utilizing a statewide randomized policy experiment in Lesotho, a country in southern Africa, wherein thirty percent of single-member election districts were set aside for female community councilors. Notably, women defeated male candidates in districts without reservations to win an additional 26% of seats. The primary findings, which are paradoxical and perplexing, are as follows: women who live in districts designated exclusively for female community council members are less politically involved than women who live in districts that are not reserved, on multiple attitudinal dimensions. I contend that rather than a general rejection of female representation, this result is the result of female citizens' mistrust of affirmative action policies for women in politics, using lessons learned from the policy experiment

### **The Literature review**

The literature on gender quotas in politics is diverse, with a wide range of theoretical underpinnings, empirical studies, and methodological techniques. This diversity of methods reflects the intricate and multidimensional character of this intervention, which aims to increase the representation of women in political arenas. The majority of the literature from the past addresses the moral and theoretical foundations of gender quotas, discussing the need for them from the standpoints of justice, equality, and democratic representation. Academics like Phillips and Young engage in discourse regarding the significance of descriptive representation, promoting political structures that reflect the demographic heterogeneity of the communities they serve.

As the conversation progresses, focus turns to classifying gender quotas into distinct categories—such as party quotas, reserved seats, and legally mandated candidate quotas—and analyzing how these policies are applied in various political contexts. For example, seminal works by Dahlerup and Freidenvall offer

a thorough examination of the mechanisms underlying the implementation of various quota systems and their effects on political representation.

Empirical study has focused on how well gender quotas work to increase the presence of women in politics. Research by academics such as Krook and the joint work of Franceschet, Krook, and Piscopo examine how quota design and implementation context impact results by presenting data from several nations. This line of investigation goes beyond simply counting the number of women in politics to investigate the qualitative effects of gender quotas, such as changes in political language, policy goals, and the dynamics of empowerment within political parties and institutions.

A significant portion of the literature also discusses the political, cultural, and ideological obstacles to the successful implementation of gender quotas, as well as the resistance and backlash that these policies frequently encounter. Scholars like Dahlerup and Davidson-Schmich investigate these issues and shed light on how divisive quota policies are.

Furthermore, regional studies and comparative analyses add a great deal to the body of literature by providing complex insights into the ways in which different political, economic, and cultural circumstances affect the implementation and efficacy of gender quotas. This method is demonstrated by the works of Htun and Jones, Hughes, Krook, and Paxton, and emphasizes the significance of taking local dynamics into account while analyzing gender quotas.

The field's current discussions and future possibilities are explored in recent literature; topics include intersectionality, men's contributions to gender equality in politics, and the possibility of expanding quota laws to other industries. Academics who are leading these conversations and expanding the conversation on gender quotas include Dahlerup, Leyenaar, Hughes, and Tripp.

Numerous recent comparative studies look at the connection between women's political participation and the number of female lawmakers, but they don't specifically address the issue of quotas. In a sample of 28 Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) nations, Wolbrecht and Campbell (2007) find that when there are more female MPs, women are more likely to discuss and engage in politics. This effect is particularly noticeable among young women. In a similar vein, Norris and Krook (2009) discover that in a broader cross-national sample, countries with more gender-equal parliaments have greater rates of civic involvement among women. Furthermore, Barnes and Burchard (2013) look at cases from sub-Saharan Africa and discover that nations with a larger proportion of female parliamentarians had higher levels of women's political participation.

Scholars of American politics have also produced a significant body of empirical research linking women's political engagement to the presence of female candidates or public officeholders. Here, conflicting results are found. According to a number of studies, when there is a female representative or a higher number of visible female candidates for office, women talk about politics more frequently, feel more internally and externally politically efficacious, and engage in political activities to a greater extent (Atkeson, 2003; Atkeson & Carrillo, 2007; Burns, Schlozman, & Verba, 2001). Nevertheless, several studies have observed that these seeming impacts are significantly reduced when party congruence is appropriately taken into account, indicating that the candidate's or officeholder's ideology matters more than their gender (Dolan, 2006; Lawless, 2004; Reingold & Harrell, 2010).

Crucially, none of the aforementioned research specifically look at how gender quotas mediate this relationship, or whether female citizens' political engagement is impacted by the way women occupy political office. Fewer research have examined the direct relationship between gender quotas and women's greater participation in municipal or national politics, and the findings have generally been

conflicting. For example, Kittilson and Schwindt-Bayer (2012) discover in a cross-national sample that the inclusion of a gender quota reduces the gender gap in political engagement in certain aspects (political interest), but not in others (political knowledge and discussion). Additionally, the authors discover that men's diminished interest in politics rather than women's greater interest is the reason for the narrowing gender gap in political interest (Kittilson & Schwindt-Bayer, 2012). Two more recent studies have directly examined the role of gender quotas in this area, using cases from Latin America; their findings are nil. Zetterberg (2012) examines how quota adoption varies among Mexican states and concludes that neither female leadership nor quota experiences have a systematic effect on women's self-reported political interest across 17 Latin American countries (Zetterberg, 2009).

Nonetheless, a number of case studies have described the generally favorable symbolic consequences that followed the swift spread of gender quotas throughout African nations. These studies have shown how quotas have altered political cultures to be more accepting of women's viewpoints and how, on the whole, quotas may legitimize the presence of women in atypical domains (for a review, see Bauer, 2012). Burnet (2011), for example, notes that while measuring women's political engagement in an increasingly authoritarian state proves difficult, “gender quotas and the increased representation of women in the political system have encouraged women to take leading roles in other areas of Rwandan society.” Burnet uses over ten years of ethnographic research to examine the impact of the highly lauded Rwandan gender quota.

Economists have also looked at behavioral and attitudinal changes at the individual level in political activity after the establishment of gender quotas in related studies. The majority of this study has come from India, particularly because causal analysis is made possible by the way the Indian quota is designed. India has, since 1993, set aside one-third of the representative seats in local-level single-member districts for women, a policy comparable to Lesotho's subnational quota. Since 1998, the majority of states have randomly rotated these districts in each election cycle. Using the random assignment of reservation, Beaman, Duflo, Pande, and Topalova (2010) demonstrate that when a woman is designated as the local political leader, there is a 25% increase in the likelihood that a woman will speak at a village assembly. According to the authors, the increased readiness could be a direct consequence of the female leader's attendance at the meeting or an indirect consequence of the way that female leadership has changed social standards. Examining the Indian scenario as well, Chattopadhyay and Duflo (2003) and Deininger, Jin, and Nagarajan (2011) discover that districts designated for women have a much greater percentage of women who attend and actively engage in local meetings. Furthermore, even when quotas are eliminated, Bhavnani (2009) finds that female candidates have a higher chance of running for and winning elected local governmental offices.

Overall, there have been conflicting results in the research about the relationship between female representation and female citizens' political participation. Furthermore, all of the aforementioned studies—aside from Zetterberg, 2012—have solely examined the impact of female representation in the context of affirmative action policies. This research is the first to provide causal as well as observational data on the varying impacts of various forms of female representation on public perceptions and actions at the same time in the same country.

### **Gender and Comparative Politics**

Gender studies in comparative politics are currently viewed as merely another branch of comparative politics. Gender scholars examine a variety of comparative phenomena, including the influence of

gender on political attitudes and behaviors, the role played by women's movements during democratic transitions, the gendered nature of political and economic institutions and how these structures either facilitate or obstruct political processes, and the effect of gender on political representation. However, because of its focus on gender, this study is classified as gender and politics research as opposed to studies on representation, regime transition, public attitudes, political institutions, or comparative political economics. The focus on women and gender distinguishes this research from previous comparative politics studies on these subjects and establishes it as a distinct subgroup of comparative politics. This means that when it comes to researching related phenomena such as mass behavior, regime transition, institutions, economics, or representation, gender and non-gender experts seldom ever collaborate. This makes it more difficult to investigate significant issues and reduces how truly comparable the research may be.

Research on gender, democracy, and institutions in Latin American politics provides an illustration of this division. In Latin America, comparative studies of authoritarianism's causes and effects emerged in the 1970s, and a sizable body of literature on social movements' opposition to the authoritarian government emerged. Academics attempted to comprehend the reasons for the emergence of these movements, the issues that drove them, their objectives, and the degree to which they succeeded in achieving their diverse aims. Gender was a significant factor that gave rise to these movements. Women's movements were important players that pursued both strategic and practical gender interests, such as gender equality, anti-discrimination, and boosting political participation, in addition to collaborating with other movements to overthrow authoritarian governments. Practical gender interests included access to clean drinking water, healthcare, and education for children, among other necessities. Maybe as a result of women's movements' particular focus Research on these anti-state movements emerged as "social movement research" and "women's movement research," focusing on women and concerns that set them apart from other kinds of movements. The two literary genres—social movements and women's movements—grew mostly apart from one another, as Georgina Waylen has pointed out, even though gender concerns are evidently intertwined in both fields of study.

Authoritarian regimes in Latin America toppled in the 1980s, and nearly all of the countries in the area now have reasonably stable democratic administrations thanks to the third wave of democratization. Gender studies have persisted in concentrating on players beyond the state, analyzing the developments of women's movements following the shift to democracy and the ways in which governments handle women's policy issues. However, gender and institutions are receiving more attention now. Examining the causes for the creation of gender-specific institutions like electoral gender quotas in Latin America is a crucial field of study. Examining how different institutions affect men and women is another. Examples include how quotas affect elections for men and women, how electoral and legislative rules influence gender differences in legislative behaviour, and how electoral institutions elicit different reactions from male and female voters. This literature is cohesive, in part, because gender is a recurrent theme. However, the research is connected to a larger body of work on comparative political institutions. However, there is frequently very little overlap between gender-specific institutional research and non-gender institutional research; in the rare instances where there is, it is due to gender academics referencing actual data and non-gender institutional theories. Despite a definite overlap in their efforts, the two fields are evolving mainly apart.

A "gender and comparative politics" approach has a number of issues. First, gender research might be ignored, marginalized, or tolerated by the rest of the comparative field if it is seen as separate from other

research areas within the subject. Gender research was heavily marginalized when it initially entered the comparative arena in the 1970s. It was just not thought that gender was a worthy subject for study. Even though general research is becoming more popular, it is still seen as a separate field of study. This separation encourages attempts to overlook gender when it becomes "inconvenient" and makes it simple for those who still marginalize it to do so.

Second, a gender and comparative politics strategy that isolates gender research from other research fields impedes the flow of ideas and methodological advancements between research fields. Few people recognize that gender issues affect practically all comparative politics study. This overlap makes it easy to overlook significant theoretical and empirical advances in gender research that could be helpful to scholars studying institutional or comparative political economy, for example. It also makes it possible for scholars studying gender and politics to overlook theoretical, empirical, and methodological advances in the non-gender-specific literature that could support their investigations into the role of gender in the field. Due to this phenomena, attempts made recently in comparative politics to highlight the increased use of comparative methods and to break down region-specific research by developing more universal theories have not benefitted gender and politics study. Research on women's movements in Latin America remains segregated from research on women's movements in Africa, just as studies on how gender influences policymaking continue to focus on explanations unique to Western Europe or Latin America rather than attempting to construct more broadly applicable explanations that apply to all democracies. The comparative quality of research on gender and politics is still lacking.

### **Mapping Women's Political Representation: Some Reflections from Asia**

Recently, there have been enormous attempts made to increase the number of women in politics, which is a common measure of women's standing in society. They are still underrepresented in national legislatures and high positions in the government, nonetheless. The association of sociological, cultural, and religious attitudes that seem to have an impact on women's political participation provides part of the answer. However, the character and extent of women's political representation are also influenced by the voting pattern and election system (Norris 2006). For instance, compared to majoritarian systems, proportional representation offers more opportunities for women to participate. A comprehensive analytical approach is necessary to comprehend the issues influencing women's political representation (Tremblay, 2007). As political institutions, organizations, and the dominant norms that control public areas are shaped by the innate patriarchal bias, it becomes more difficult to represent women in politics. Gendered outcomes in institutions, programs, and policies occur from the replication of these patriarchal norms and prejudices in political attitudes and actions (Singh & Sharma, 2019). Since women are still underrepresented in legislatures, courts, political parties, and bureaucracy, as well as in all upper echelons of government nationwide, none of these institutions has been exempt from patriarchal prejudices.

### **Women Leaders in Asian Politics**

Asia has produced a number of well-known female political leaders who attracted international notice. On the other hand, their ascent represents certain patterns of their connection to dynastic politics and family relationships. This aspect of Asian politics clearly raises the important question of how these female politicians attained the highest political positions in a culture characterized by rigidly patriarchal norms. How much of their rise has been attributed to family ties, and do their positions in these positions

significantly improve the standing of women in society at large? When analyzing the nature of women's political representation in Asia in comparison to more established Western democracies, certain questions stand out. Some of the first female political leaders in Asia, especially in South Asia, inherited their positions of power from their male relatives when they were widows, wives, or daughters (Jahan, 1987). They were useful in keeping the party's internal factionalism in check and frequently possessed inherited charm. The political heritage of their male family members legitimized the rise of female leaders such as Aung San Suu Kyi in Myanmar, Bandaranaike and Kumaratunga in Sri Lanka, Indira Gandhi in India, Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan, Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina in Bangladesh, and Khaleda Zia and Khaleda Zia in Bangladesh. Similar advantages in securing prominent positions were enjoyed by Corazon Aquino in the Philippines, Megawati Sukarnoputri in Indonesia, and Yingluck Shinawatra in Thailand due of their familial connections with male leaders. Certain female politicians, such as Tanaka Makiko in Japan and Soong Ching Ling in China, did not hold the highest positions. Because of the legacy left by their father and spouse, they were still able to have a significant impact on politics. The unique political attribute known as "moral capital," which female dynastic monarchs skillfully employed, also contributes to their demise. When they are accused of corruption, scandals, and controversies, they are frequently held to the highest moral standards. (Louisa & Chao, 2020).

### Women Head of the State in Asia

<i>Name of Political Leader</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Serving period</i>
Sukhbaataryn Yanjmaa	Mongolia	1953-1954
Sirimavo Bandaranaike	Sri Lanka	(1960-65, 1970-77, 1994-2000)
Indira Gandhi	India	1966-77,1980-84
Soong Ching-Ling	China	1968-1972
Golda Meir	Israel	1969 to 1974
Corazon Aquino	Philippines	1986-1992
Benazir Bhutto	Pakistan	1988-90, 1993-96
Khalida Zia	Bangladesh	1991-96,2001-2006
Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga	Sri Lanka	1994-2005
Sheikh Hasina	Bangladesh	1996-2001, 2009-till date
Gloria Macapagal- Arroyo	Philippines	2001-2010
Megawati Sukarnoputri	Indonesia	2001 to 2004
Pratibha Patil	India	2007-2012
Roza Otunbayeva	Kyrgyzstan	April 2010 to December 2011
Yingluck Shinawatra	Thailand	2011-2014
Park Geun Hye	South Korea	2013- 2017
Bidhya Devi Bhandari	Nepal	2015-till date
Aung San Suu Kyi	Myanmar	2016 till 2021
Tsai Ing-Wen	Taiwan	2016 till date
Halimah Yacob	Singapore	2017-till date

Women's "participatory exclusion" but "partaking inclusion" is another common pattern in women's political representation in various Asian nations. Even though women have actively participated in the

democratic transition and anti-colonial movements against authoritarian regimes, their contributions are marginalized in the post-transition eras that represent marginalization. This illustrates a paradox of participation that prevents formal engagement in the creation of institutions, political power, and decision-making (Razavi, 2001; Waylen, 2010). For instance, in spite of their significant contribution to the Indian independence movement, no attempt has been made to independently record the type and extent of women's political participation, and doing so could guarantee any official position for women in the political system (Kumar, 1993). Similar to Corazon Aquino in the Philippines, Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan, Khaleda Zia, Sheikh Hasina in Bangladesh, Megawati Sukarnoputri in Indonesia, Aung Sang Suu Kyi in Myanmar, and Wan Azizah Wan Ismail in Malaysia, several women leaders have spearheaded democratic uprisings against dictatorship.

### **India's new gender quota law is a win for women**

A historic bill was enacted by the Indian legislature mandating that one-third of the seats in the country's state legislative assemblies, the Delhi Legislative Assembly, and the Lok Sabha, the lower house of parliament, be reserved for women. The reform opens the way for many more women to enter national politics and marks a substantial change in a nation that now ranks 141 out of 185 countries in the world with regard to women's political representation.

In India, attempts to enact a national gender quota are not new; drafts of the same legislation have been pending in Parliament since 1996. The resistance of smaller regional parties, many of whom required that the gender quota include a sub-quota for women representing historically disadvantaged castes, was a major factor in the failure of six prior attempts to approve the policy. This time around, a wide range of political parties and proponents of women's rights applauded the law. However, a number of obstacles and developments, such as postponed implementation and democratic reversals, pose a danger to the quotas' many advantages.

The new law won't take effect prior to the elections of the following year. It says that the gender quotas won't start until delimitation, or redistricting as it's called in India, is finished and based on data from the first census conducted following the act's enactment. Gender reservation may not be enforced until the general elections of 2029 since India's decadal census, which was supposed to take place in 2021, has been postponed indefinitely.

The reservation will guarantee a notable rise in women's political representation once it is put into effect. Only 15.2 percent of seats in the Lok Sabha and 13.9 percent of seats in the Rajya Sabha, the upper chamber, are held by women as of 2023; however, the latter is exempt from the new law. Even less representation exists in all state legislative assemblies except for two. As an example, in the There is just one woman among the sixty-eight members of the Himachal Pradesh state assembly. The proportion of women holding parliamentary positions is 26.5 percent worldwide.

The low number of Indian women seeking office is one aspect of the issue. Less than 10% of candidates in 2019 were female. Traditional gender conventions that restrict women's duties, mobility, and influence outside the house are some of the barriers. Other barriers include limited political literacy, safety concerns, sexism and discrimination within political parties, and concerns about safety. Even if most Indians are in favor of women in politics, it might be difficult for them to rise in their parties without the assistance of strong male leaders.

Some opponents contend that gender quotas, particularly those that reserve female parliamentary seats, merely serve to tokenize women by allowing male party leaders to choose candidates they can influence



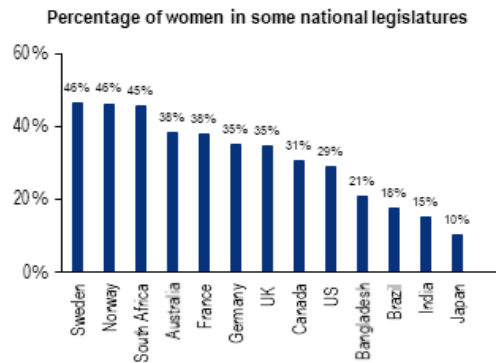
in secret. Evidence from India's local governments indicates that quota changes can have a positive impact on women's rights and governance, even though they are rarely enough to completely abolish patriarchal practices and hierarchies. India has allocated one-third of village council leadership posts to women since the early 1990s (and the reserved seats rotate each election). According to research, this policy has improved government responsiveness to female citizens, increased the number of women in politics and in leadership roles, raised girls' aspirations and educational attainment, spurred rising investments in public goods that women favor, and increased the reporting of crimes against women. These results confirm worldwide trends. As of right now, 137 nations have imposed some kind of gender quota in their legislative bodies. Increases in health spending, new laws pertaining to women's rights, and a greater willingness on the part of lawmakers to listen to their female voters have all been brought about by these reforms. Quotas have, nevertheless, occasionally also caused opposition. Gender-neutral property inheritance rules in India have been enforced more frequently by women leaders in the community. As a result, there has been a rise in male resistance, with brothers frequently pressing their sisters to give up their rights and fighting their land claims.

There is a purpose behind the new gender reservation bill's timing. Prior to the crucial elections in India in 2024, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the government The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is keen to win over women, who for the first time ever cast ballots in equal numbers with men in 2019.

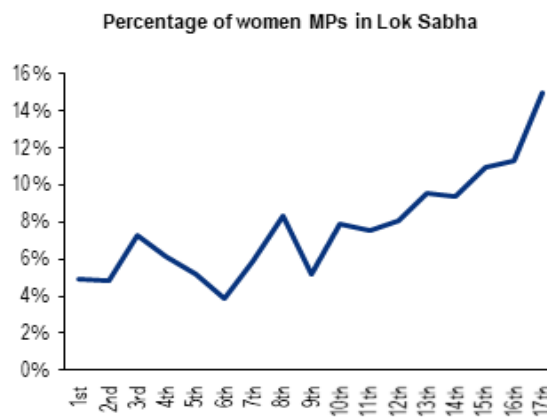
Future elections in India are happening in the midst of a decline in democracy. Modi has been using the BJP's electoral domination more and more over the past few years to suppress criticism in the media, academia, and civil society, erode the limits on executive power, and marginalize the political opposition. The Hindu nationalist language and goal of the BJP, which has encouraged attacks on minority rights and an increase in extralegal violence, is the foundation of these antidemocratic trends. Nonetheless, Modi is still a highly regarded leader, especially with women. During his term, he has consistently emphasized women's empowerment as a means of strengthening his legitimacy. He has addressed women's issues at public rallies and positioned himself as a manly figure of protection. The BJP became the party with the most female voters in 2019, fielded more female candidates than any other party, and increased its outreach to rural and lower-class women. Additionally, the party has supported social welfare programs like the distribution of gas cylinders at a family that are subsidized and mostly help women. These are hardly rare endeavors. Women's rights are frequently used by authoritarian authorities throughout the world to support their domestic legitimacy and present a modernizing image to the outside world.

### **Women in Parliament and State Assemblies**

The Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Eighth Amendment) Bill, 2023 was introduced in Lok Sabha on September 19, 2023. The Bill seeks to reserve one-third of all seats for women in Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies. A similar Bill had been introduced in Rajya Sabha in 2008, and was passed by the House two years later. It lapsed after the dissolution of the 15<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha in 2014. This note takes a look at participation of women in Parliament and State Legislative Assemblies.

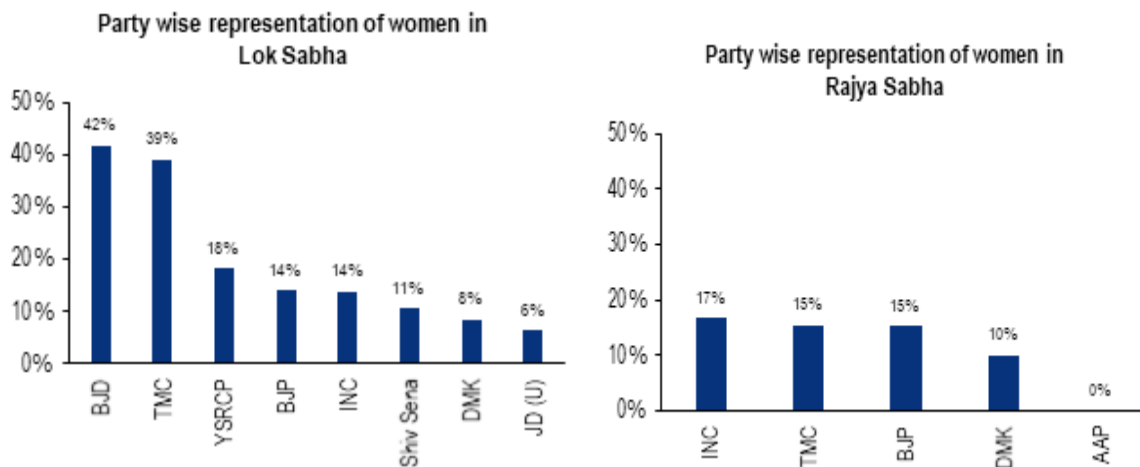


Source: Gender wise statistical list , lok sabha , 2019



Source : Inter Parliamentary Union Website as accessed on Sep ,19

- Women representation in Lok Sabha has increased from 5% in the first Lok Sabha to 15% in the current Lok Sabha.
- Scandinavian countries such as Sweden and Norway, and South Africa have more than 45% women representation in their national legislatures. Japan at 10%, lags behind India.



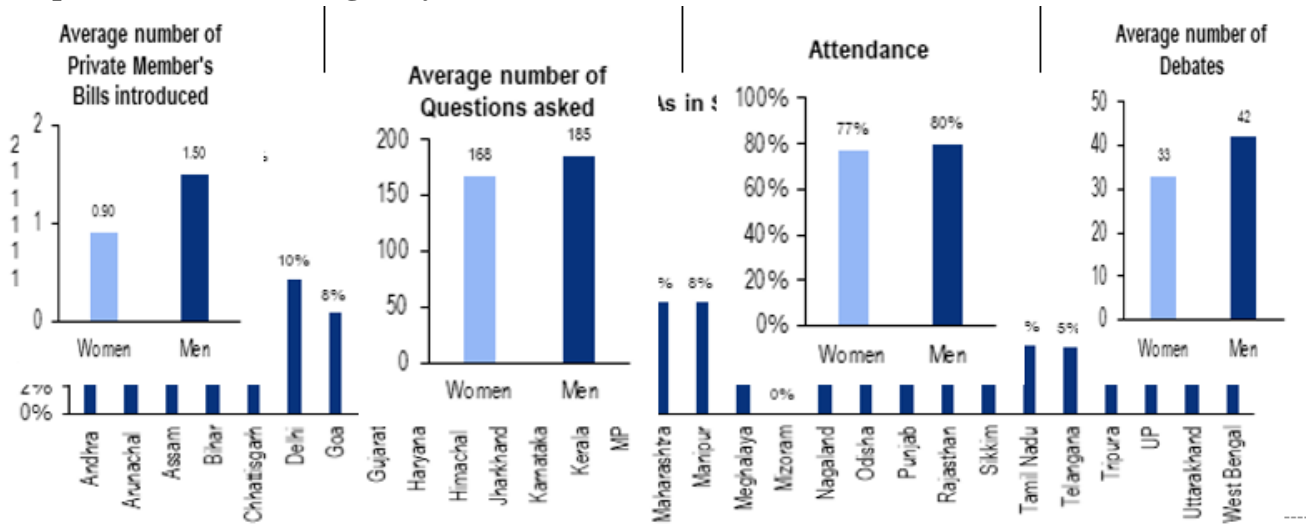
**Note:** Only parties with 10 or more members are shown.

**Sources:** Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha Websites as accessed on September 19, 2023; PRS.

➤ Currently, 15% of Lok Sabha MPs and 13% of Rajya Sabha MPs are women.

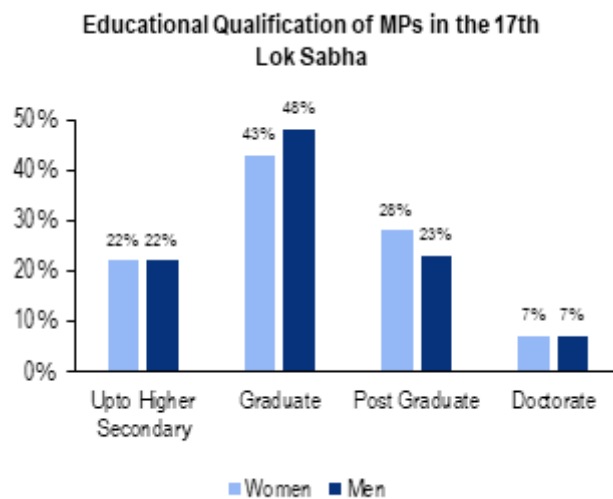
- Among parties with more than 10 seats in Lok Sabha, 42% of BJD MPs and 39% of TMC MPs are women. In Rajya Sabha, 17% of INC MPs are women.

**Participation of women marginally less than men in the 17<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha**

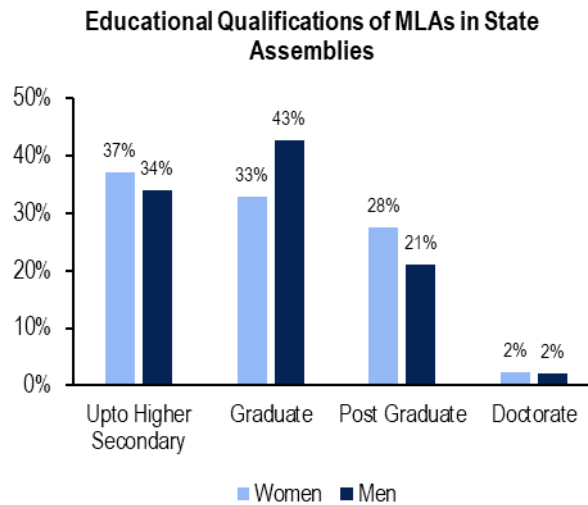


- Both men and women have more than 75% attendance in Lok Sabha. Attendance and participation in Lok Sabha ensure that members are performing their legislative duties. Sources: Websites of State Assemblies; PRS.
- No state has more than 20% women representation in its Assembly. Chhattisgarh has the highest representation with 18% women MLAs, while Himachal Pradesh has just one woman MLA and Mizoram has none.

**Women and Men legislators have similar Educational Backgrounds**



\*Based on data available for 464 MPs.



\* Note: Based on data available for 4,030 MLAs. Sources: Websites of States Assemblies, Election Affidavits, Election Commission India; PRS.

## Conclusion

Gender quotas often result in a large rise in the number of women holding political office, helping to offset long-standing gender disparities, despite the fact that their effectiveness and reception differ greatly throughout countries. Nations having carefully crafted and strictly enforced quotas have witnessed higher significant and ongoing gains in the proportion of women in politics as compared to countries with laxer or nonexistent quota systems. This comparative analysis emphasizes how crucial it is to contextually tailor quotas to the political, cultural, and social environments of each nation in order to maximize their efficacy. Gender quotas are a useful instrument for advancing gender equality in politics, but they work best when combined with more comprehensive policies that address the underlying reasons of the gender gap in political representation and involvement. Different countries have implemented gender quotas in different ways to guarantee women's representation. These include reserved seats, voluntary party quotas, and legal mandates. There is no denying the efficiency of these quotas in raising the representation of women in politics; nations that have enacted strong gender quota systems have seen notable increases in the proportion of female lawmakers. For example, Rwanda's national legislature boasts the highest percentage of female legislators in the world thanks to its quota system. Similar gains in women's representation have been made in Sweden and Norway thanks to voluntary party quotas, underscoring the importance of social values and political resolve in advancing gender equality. But not everyone agrees that gender quotas are effective. Quota efficacy is frequently influenced by the political, cultural, and legal environment in each nation. Quotas are sometimes opposed because they are thought to undermine meritocracy or be tokenistic gestures that don't address the underlying causes of gender imbalance. Furthermore, as women politicians frequently deal with the same patriarchal prejudices and pressures that present in their cultures, the sheer fact that they are in politics does not guarantee that the goal for gender equality will develop. The comparative analysis also highlights the need for laws and other enabling frameworks in order to optimize the effects of gender quotas. For instance, nations that have combined quotas with policies like family-friendly legislative schedules, gender-sensitive training, and campaign finance reforms have seen greater success in raising

the proportion of women in political office as well as improving their effectiveness and influence. Furthermore, the conversation surrounding gender quotas has changed to take intersectionality into account, acknowledging that women are not a homogeneous group and that gender intersects with other characteristics to affect political representation and participation, including color, ethnicity, class, and disability. This necessitates the development of increasingly complex quota plans and regulations in order to guarantee inclusive and varied representation of women in politics. In conclusion, the comparative examination of gender quotas across nations shows that, although they can be an effective instrument for raising the representation of women in politics, the effectiveness of gender quotas depends on the particulars of the system, the political and cultural environment, and the structures and policies that support it. It emphasizes how crucial it is to address the root causes of gender disparity and make sure that women in politics actually influence decision-making processes by going beyond just numerical representation. The experiences of many nations with gender quotas provide insightful lessons on the opportunities and difficulties of guaranteeing women's equal participation in political life, as the globe continues to strive for gender equality.

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