

Study of Representation of Women in State Legislative Assemblies: With Emphasis to Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa and West Bengal

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ABSTRACT:

Women's representation in the government will empower women and is required to achieve gender parity. Women, as the conventional caretakers of children, sometimes have a more transparent role than men in advocating for children, which will result in a "double dividend" in terms of the benefits of women's representation. This paper reflects representation of women in State Legislative assemblies and emphasis is given to Bihar, Jharkhand ,Orissa and West Bengal.

Keywords: Representation, Government, Legislative, Assemblies, Employment

I. INTRODUCTION:

The World is urbanising and is projected to grow to two-thirds of total population by 2050 from its present 54 per cent. Women constitute half the world as well as in urban population. Despite their large numbers they have a very limited role to play in urban governance—policy and decision making as they are not adequately and appropriately represented in the Urban Local Bodies .

Women's representation in the government will empower women and is required to achieve gender parity. Women, as the conventional caretakers of children, sometimes have a more transparent role than men in advocating for children, which will result in a "double dividend" in terms of the benefits of women's representation.

While female representation is low in the Lok Sabha, representation in state assemblies is even lower. Over five years to 2017, female representation in state assemblies was the highest in Bihar, Haryana and Rajasthan (14%), according to the 2017 data released by the ministry of statistics and programme implementation. Mizoram, Nagaland and Puducherry had no elected women representatives in their assemblies.

The low socio-economic status of women is also reflected in their absence in State level decision-making bodies. West Bengal with its better gender scenario is equally marked by the invisibility of women at political decision-making levels.

II. WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN THE BIHAR STATE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

The Bihar Legislative Assembly came into existence in 1937. The Assembly had a strength of 152 members. According to the provisions of the Constitution of India, the first General Elections in the state were held in 1952. The total strength of membership in the Assembly was 331, including one nominated member. Dr. Shri Krishna Singh became the first Leader of the House and the Chief Minister, Dr. Anugrah Narayan Singh was elected the first Deputy Leader of the Assembly and became state's first Deputy Chief Minister. It was reduced to 318 during the second General Elections. In 1977, the total number of elected members of the Bihar Legislative Assembly was further raised from 318 to 324. With the creation of a separate State of Jharkhand, by an Act of Parliament titled as the Bihar Reorganisation Act, the strength of the Bihar Legislative Assembly was reduced from 324 to 243 members. The current NDA government formed on 27 July 2017 consists of 73 JD(U), 53 BJP, 2 LJP and 4 Independent MLA's.

The State Legislative Assemblies continue to be male dominated, wherein women are conspicuous by their absence. A State wise analysis of the Legislative Assemblies of the three States reveals a total marginalisation of women in the Assemblies. The Bihar Legislative Assembly, also known as the Bihar Vidhan Sabha, is the lower house of the bicameral legislature of the Indian state of Bihar.

Bihar still one of the India's most backward states, but when it comes to female political representation, it is among the country's best.

The state of 104 million people has 34 female MLAs , one of the highest in the history of female representation in India's state assemblies and the highest in the state's history. Bihar has 28 million illiterate women, India's lowest level of female literacy (53%) and employment.

Below figure represent Women MLAs in Bihar from 1951 to 2010

Women MLAs In Bihar: 1951-2010			
Year	Total Seats	Seats won by Women	Women MLAs in %
1951	276	13	4.7
1957	264	30	11.4
1962	318	25	7.9
1967	318	6	1.9
1969	318	4	1.3
1972	318	13	4.1
1977	324	13	4.0
1980	324	11	3.4
1985	324	15	4.6
1990	324	10	3.1
1995	324	11	3.4
2000	324	19	5.9
2005 (February)	243	3	1.2
2005 (October)	243	25	10.3
2010	243	34	14.0

III. WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN THE WEST BENGAL STATE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

The West Bengal Legislative Assembly, the unicameral legislature of the Indian state of West Bengal. Members of the Legislative assembly are directly elected by the people. The legislative assembly comprises 295 Members of Legislative Assembly, include 294 members directly elected from single-seat constituencies and one nominated from the Anglo-Indian community.

WOMEN MLAs OF WEST BENGAL, 1952-2016

Years of Assembly Elections	Total Seats	Total Women Contestants	Total Women MLAs	Women MLAs (%)
1952	238	-	6	2.52
1957	252	17	11	4.36
1962	280	17	14	5.55
1967	280	20	9	3.21
1969	280	19	7	2.50
1971	294	-	6	2.14
1972	294	-	5	1.78
1977	294	27	4	1.36
1982	294	23	7	2.38
1987	294	35	12	4.08
1991	294	74	23	7.82
1996	294	114	22	7.40
2001	294	114	29	9.86
2006	294	139	37	12.58
2011	294	334	37	12.58
2016	294	194	39	13.26

IV. WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN THE ORISSA STATE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

In the year 1980 elections to the Odisha Legislative Assembly, 5 women members were elected. In the 1985 Assembly elections 7 women members were elected to the Odisha Assembly. Never before such large number of women candidates were elected to the House. In the March 1990 elections seven women members were elected to the Odisha Assembly . Fourteen women members were elected to the Assembly for the first time during the time of Shri Naveen Patnaik , in 2000 and was the highest number of women members ever elected . The trend of the 2009 Assembly Election in Odisha , reflected the poor representation of women candidates. Six women candidates was in the State Assembly and none to Lok Sabha

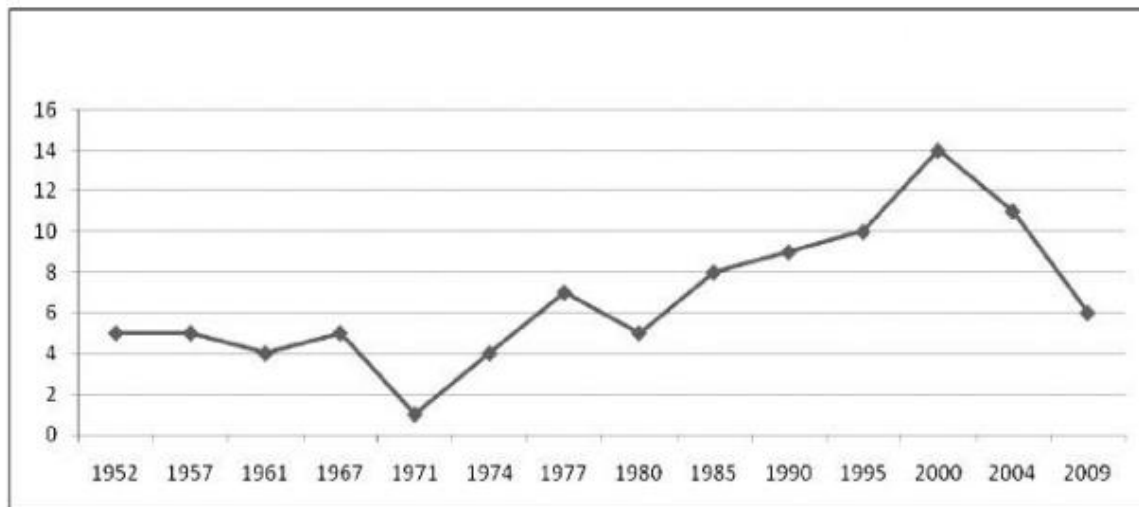


FIGURE : RISE AND FALL OF WOMEN REPRESENTATION IN ODISHA STATE ASSEMBLY

V. WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN THE JHARKHAND STATE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

The Jharkhand Vidhan Sabha or the Jharkhand Legislative Assembly is the unicameral state legislature of Jharkhand state in India. The seat of the Vidhan Sabha is at Ranchi, the state capital . The Vidhan Sabha comprises 81 Members of Legislative Assembly, directly elected from single-seat constituencies.

The Jharkhand Legislative Assembly election, 2014 was held in five phases between November 25, and December 20. The Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) won the elections defeating The Indian National Congress (INC) and its major allies Rashtriya Janata Dal, Janata Dal (United), and Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM). First time , since Jharkhand was created, for a single-party majority in the state assembly, with BJP got 42 out of 81, 1 more that required majority. This had provided for a stable government in the state for past 4 years. Very less no. of Women MLAs was elected.

VI CONCLUSION :

The State Legislative Assemblies continued male dominated.. A State wise analysis of the Legislative Assemblies of four States reveal a total marginalisation of women in the Assemblies. The West Bengal Legislative Assembly, the legislature of the Indian state of West Bengal. Members of the Legislative assembly are directly elected by the people. The legislative assembly comprises 295 Members of Legislative Assembly, include 294 members directly elected from single-seat constituencies and one nominated from the Anglo-Indian community. Total Women MLAs elected in 2016 election were 39. Fourteen women members were elected to the Orissa Assembly for the first time in 2000 and was the highest number of women members ever elected . In 2010 election Bihar has 34 Women MLAs , compared to these states Jharkhand State has very less Women MLAs.

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