

Women's Participation in State Legislatures, Lok Sabha & Rajya Sabha: The Case of Maharashtra

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Abstract

Democracy is a system where power is derived from people and a democratic country approved right to its citizen to participate for their sovereignty. India is appeared same with equal rights and opportunities by a true democratic constitution. But world of politics in India which is intrinsically antithetical is inimical for the women till today. Historically leadership has carried the notion of masculinity and the belief that men made better leaders is still common. Consequently a nation like ours could not be benefitted politically from her half population. Being her part, The State of Maharashtra has appeared same. Independence has give birth a "new women". Her voice is now emancipated to express political idea inside and outside of home. But the question is if they really emancipated or still influenced? My thrust is to draw attention towards its various reasons.

The popular meaning of empowerment is 'the capacity of individuals, groups and/or communities to take control of their circumstances, exercise power and achieve their own goals, and the process by which, individually and collectively, they are able to help themselves and others to maximize the quality of their lives'¹. So we can states in simple manner that empowerment is a process through which one or all can achieve mastery over life and choices.

At present times 'gender empowerment' rather 'women empowerment' is very significant topic of discussion. It generally includes gender equality, women's right and their status in society, what is the marginalized manner to address women empowerment. The real empowerment expands the choices which are not restricted to establish their status in society or guarantee gender equality or provide jobs and other economic sources which enable them to maximize the quality of life. It is broader than these assumptions. Women empowerment must ensure women's position in working atmosphere whether in home or outside of home. The mutual supporting settings increase women to achieve empowerment. Also the independence in families can make women empowered so they can make fullest contribution to society. Here empowerment should stress on increase of women potentiality to realise their strength.

'Creating confidence among women and bringing awareness² to fight for their rights is empowerment'. For achieving this self reliance women need a platform to make powerful decisions through the access to information and resources where political participation and leadership position can open this broader window.

¹ Adams, Robert. *Empowerment, Participation and Social Work*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, p.xvi

² Janapathy, Varalakshmi. *Women key to Successful Democracy*. Delhi: Kalpaz Publications, 2009, p.34

In India, patriarchal structure of society has denied its women to enter into politics. Here women are compelled to bear lower status than men. Even unequal gender norms are present in respect of education and employment. The women here have minimal say regarding economical issues of a family. Their exposure to information and resources are also controlled by the patriarchal norms. It means their lesser status affects their political participation too. Consequently a nation like ours could not be benefitted politically from her half population.

Of course, gender equality is approved by Indian constitution to provide equal political opportunity to all her citizens and more and it also empowers state to take beneficiary steps in favor of women. These procedures have elevated her status and provide opportunity to enter. But women empowerment is a matter of continued attention and a united approach which will ensure their success. Of course, the 73rd amendment of Indian constitution has succeeded to drag women out of their kitchen to main stream of life. Women are now walking with their head held high and participating in decision making politics at rural level. 33% reservation of seats for women in Panchayat level (1993) and their after 50% reservation of seats on panchayats (2009) have made women self confident to join hand with their male counterparts. It is a major achievement to bring women empowerment.

Thus, reservation gives women a space in the politics but their independent appearance is yet to come. It is very interesting that, in 75th years of independence India is still fighting for emergence of her daughters. Women leaders attained a clear leadership position only after they set up a party of their own or with the patronage of male leaders or mentors. The belief that men make better leaders than women is still common today. Women members are given tickets either as an act of pseudo participation or as an opportunity to attract people's sympathy. Those who crossed these impediments, face boycotts, non-co operations, and even derogatory remarks. From panchayat to national level they have been placed in less prestigious positions like health, education, social welfare etc than central areas of power reflection such as finance, defense, agriculture, planning etc. Educational backwardness, economical dependence and lack of administrative knowledge, and communicational gap also made women less interested towards politics. Some make a distance from politics or power for long tradition of violence. The elected members either come from families who are deeply connected to politics or social welfare or new entrants without any political experience. Political participation in a shape of voting, campaigning or joining organizations are less influenced by these above situation than that of participating actual power acquiring.

The actual participation in decision making to create 'empowered' women in our society is still over due. The participation of women in decision making is needed reservation of seats in parliament as well as state legislatures so a major number of women can enter into core politics to elevate their status. But it is still in queue. The bill supporters preach that women of India are deprived from their natural rights. To fight with discrimination and inequality they need maximized political participation for what this reservation process will help them a lot. It will also establish the gender equality in real sense. The opponents argue that this reservation will play for elites. In this way the Women Reservation Bill has been a political issue from more than a decade (since 1996). Here my thrust is to drag attention towards the question that- is reservation the ultimate remedy? Or how far it is helpful for women's political empowerment?

Keyword: Women, Empowerment, Political Participation, Gender Inequality, Reservation

Objective: In this chapter my attempt has been to highlight the electoral politics and the participation of women in the state of Maharashtra. It is imperative to evaluate the political participation of women to identify the gaps to facilitate their larger participation in the politics. From time and again India has always felt the need to measure the gender statistics on political participation since its independence. In post-independent politics, Indian women were guaranteed political equality by means of certain constitutional amendments. Owing to such initiatives the number of women participating in the electoral process has increased manifold but the number of representation in the formal political structures has been abysmally low as it has never exceeded 15 percent of the total seats. At the state legislature level, it is even lower than in the parliament. It will be relevant to mention that the figures for Maharashtra are 3.8% of women representation in state legislatures in the year 2009 whereas for Lok Sabha the figure stands at 6.25%.³ As such through the introduction of democratic governance into our system, Indian women have obtained right to vote, right to participate in the election but their percentage of representation has remained extremely low even though Constitutional Amendments were enacted to address the problem. It is a matter of concern for the cause

³ Election Commission of India statistical report on Election for Maharashtra
17596

of women empowerment, although in 2011 Government of India has approved 50% reservation for women in the Panchayati Raj Institutions but the 33% women's reservation in the Parliament is still a matter of uncertainty. As such it can be inferred that India has still been fighting for her daughters so is Maharashtra.

Demographical figures of Maharashtra:

The State of Maharashtra is the third largest state in India in terms of the land area and second most populous state with 11,23,74,333 as per census 2011 data. The growth rate of Maharashtra during 2001-2011 is 15.99% which is less than national growth rate of 17.64%. The density of population for the state is 365 persons per sq. km whereas the density of population of India is 382 persons per sq. km. Sex Ratio in Maharashtra is 929 i.e. for each 1000 male, which is below national average of 940 as per census 2011. In 2001, the sex ratio of female was 922 per 1000 males in Maharashtra. The state shared its boundaries with neighbouring states like Gujarat to the North West, Madhya Pradesh to the North, and Chhattisgarh to the east, Andhra Pradesh to the south east, and Karnataka to the south and Goa to the south west. The geographical area of Maharashtra is 3,07,713 sq. km. Maharashtra has always been an industrialized state since its inception and the proportion of urban population in Maharashtra is high with 45.2 per cent of population residing in urban areas which is higher than that of the national average of 31%. However the gender inequality has been a major problem in the state since its formation.

Table 1

Year	Population	Growth Rate	Sex Ratio
1961	03,95,53,718	23.59%	936
1971	05,04,12,235	27.45%	930
1981	06,27,82,818	24.54%	937
1991	07,89,37,187	25.73%	934
2001	09,68,78,627	22.73%	922
2011	11,23,74,333	15.99%	929

Source: Census 1961 to 2011

Table 2

Year	Sex Ratio	
	Rural	Urban
1961	995	801
1971	985	820
1981	967	850
1991	972	875
2001	960	873
2011	948	899

Source: Economic Survey of Maharashtra 2012-2013

Maharashtra has been one of the socially progressive states of India and also has a history of active political performances in national arena. It has been a major contributor in the struggle for independence wherein prime political activities can be seen in the Tilak era and Gandhian era. Presently it is contributing 48 seats to Lok Sabha, 19 to Rajya Sabha of Indian parliament and 288 seats in the state legislative assembly or Vidhan Sabha. In Table 3 below, we can see as per the data available as on date, the percentage of women representation in the state assembly of Maharashtra is below than that of the national average. Here, with this scenario my thrust is to analyze the pattern of political participation of women in Maharashtra in terms of their political supremacy and leadership.

Table 3

State	Male Representation	Female Representation	Percentage of Women Representation
Maharashtra	264	24	8 %
West Bengal	255	39	13%
India	3759	476	11%

Source: Women & Men in India, 2019

Introduction:

Democracy through the political participation of people is a symbolism of a good system. The yardstick for measuring the same not only includes the traditional political activities but also some new modules of political attribute which may have not been institutionalized but have great impact on politics and society. Definition of present day's political participation can be derived from Myron Weiner's statements, "the concept of political participation refers to any voluntary action, episodic or continuous, employing legitimate or illegitimate methods intended in influencing of choices of public policies, the administration of public affairs or choice of political leaders"⁴. With the changed global context of politics, women constitute an important component of the system. Considering the new age aspect of relationship between women and the political life, political think tanks should pay an intensive attention towards her empowerment. As such it's the representation only through which the attitudes, preferences, view points of the entire citizenry or part of them are expressed, or given a shape into governmental action. One of the psychological constraints women citizens have to face in their political endeavor has been the physiological differences in men and women due to its distinctive nature. The first assumption in this regard is that women's physiological characteristics are not conducive to political activities such as the election campaigning, the electoral system and all these hectic activities require a sound and stout physiological order. The second assumption is that politics is a world of diverse environmental tributaries owing to its requirement of multilayered manipulative actions where the women members are considered 'misfit to'. Cultural constraints gave emphasis on male domination in the society. The cultural constraints for women in politics have primarily been the notion of lacking certain political attitudes like aggression, independence, competitiveness, leadership, innovation, assertiveness, discipline, analytic mind, courage, non-sentimentality, rationality, confidence and emotional control which are considered inherent masculine qualities. In opposite to these for women the traditional belief is that woman should concentrate on values such as affection, nurturing offspring's, domestic activities etc. Throughout the ages women have to prove their competence in public sphere to the society beyond their role in the domestic sphere. Their struggle seemed to have been enlightened by all the social reforming activities across the centuries. The history of struggle for Maratha women related to the empowerment and equal status could be traced back from the 19th century's reform movements. It was extended by freedom struggle movement during the period of 1917-1927. The push to the cause of emancipation of the women's role in the Maratha society was enlightened by the social reformers like Pandita Ramabai, Dhondo Keshav Karve, Jyotiba Phule, Savitri Phule and others. Their tireless efforts had prepared the background for the women entries into the political life of Maharashtra.

Women began to participate in an active political life with their moral high owing to their elevated social status. Thousands of women participated in Quit India movement in 1942. Hence it was very much obvious that owing to their social and political awareness the new age Maratha women would play a more active role in the independent Indian as well as the Maharashtra politics. However the scenario changed drastically. With the declaration of the independence all those women who had been a part of an active political movement seemed to have lost the goal and will power to pursue a career in the Politics. It may be ascribed to the absence of a mass and common agenda which the struggle for Independence had given into. It may also be the lack of encouragement from the then political fraternity which seemed to have caused the women to quit from day to day active political life. Women Politician like Prema Kantak and Padmavati Harolikar were kept away from participation into active politics. Other young women members of Maharashtra, who had diligently worked with devotion during the Quit India movement also felt abandoned in their cause and distanced themselves away from the political activities and engaged their effort to social work through trade unions and women's organizations. It may be inferred that the entire back drop that was prepared by the social reformers throughout the years and subsequent participation of women in the struggle for independence was going in vain. The position that was achieved by our women overcoming multiple social and political obstacles was becoming vacant again. The post independent Maharashtra Politics witnessed a new generation of women politician who prefers to take a backseat in their political ambition as they were making entry into the political life owing to their virtue of being a relative of some male political strongman. Such women political representation is pseudo in nature as their political venture was solely meant to be controlled and influenced by the male members.

⁴ Aviel Joann Fagot, "Political Participation of Women in Latin America, The Western Political Weekly, Mar 1981 17596

Sl. No.	Year of General Election	Total No of Seats	Total No. candidates	No. of Women Contestants	Total No. of Women Members	Percentage of Seat with Women as Members from Maharashtra	Percentage of Women Members Pan India
1.	1952 [#]	37(45 [*])	148	NA	4	8.9 %	4.9 %
2.	1957 [#]	58 (66 [*])	159	5	3	4.5 %	5.1 %
3.	1962	44	168	2	1	2.3 %	7.4 %
4.	1967	45	89	4	2	4.4 %	6.3 %
5.	1971	45	149	NA	2	4.4 %	5.1 %
6.	1977	48	211	8	3	6.25 %	3.3 %
7.	1980	48	415	17	3	6.25 %	5.8 %
8.	1984	48	498	12	3	6.25 %	8.5 %
9.	1989	48	593	20	2	4.2 %	5.4 %
10.	1991	48	862	34	3	6.25 %	7.1 %
11.	1996	48	1065	42	2	4.2 %	7.3 %
12.	1998	48	377	20	2	4.2 %	8.1 %
13.	1999	48	261	17	4	8.3 %	8.8 %
14.	2004	48	412	29	5	10.4 %	8.1 %
15.	2009	48	819	55	3	6.25 %	10.64 %
16.	2014	48	897	69	5	10.4 %	11.42 %

Lacking any motivation and ability to lead the people those dummy representations of women did not project any positive vibe in the mind of the rest of the women citizens. As a result one can witness a gradual decline in the proportions of women representatives in Post-Independent Maharashtra politics in comparison to the scenario before the independence. Minal Mahtre⁵ stated that “rising protests as mothers and wives and not as citizens of the country, it narrowed down the political strength of women's movements”. In view of the inactive participation of the women members in politics, the elections held for the Parliament after independence had witnessed the underrepresentation of women as candidates. The number of women members, who had been elected to the Lok Sabha from the earlier Bombay Presidency and later Maharashtra, was extremely low. In fact, till the emergence of Maharashtra and Gujarat from the Bombay Province, hardly one or two women candidates were projected by the Indian National Congress, all of whom were able to emerge as winners.

Table 4
Women Representation in Lok Sabha from Maharashtra (1952-2014)

*# Data pertaining to the State of Bombay *45 seats= single member constituencies 29 + 8 dual member constituencies*

**66 seats= single member constituencies 50 + 8 dual member constituencies*

Source: Election commission of India, General Election statistical report <https://eci.gov.in>

As per data given in Table 4 it is clear that the number of women members in Lok Sabha from the state of Maharashtra has never achieved a double digit number and even it has never crossed the number 5 in any election in Post-Independent Maharashtra. This data indicates the validity of the argument of underrepresentation of women members in terms of Lok Sabha. If we compare the percentage of women representation in Lok Sabha from the state with the pan-India scenario we can see that except few of the instances predominantly it has always been below the national average.

In this context it will be very much relevant to mention that though the state of Maharashtra (earlier Bombay province) has been an economically affluent state together with a strong background in social reform initiatives in the late 19th century, however in terms of representation of women in the Lok Sabha where women are being elected from the state to represent in the national arena there has been a steady decline in the percentage of women members since the independence. Promoted by the trend of having women in a role of active politics in the pre-independent era we had 4 women members getting elected in the First Lok Sabha election in 1952 from the then Bombay province. However the numbers of women members in subsequent Lok Sabhas have been irrationally low. As in the independent India it was expected that woman will be put in front to lead an active role in the political and social life following the pattern that had been established by the engagement of women in the struggle for freedom in an active manner. Hence in Post-Independent Maharashtra politics the gradual decline in the degree of participation of women members in Lok Sabha may be considered the true reflection of their changing status in the society. It took almost half a century from 1952 till 1999 when the strength of women members from Maharashtra in Lok Sabha reached the numbers that were produced by the first Lok Sabha. Although the proportion of allocating the seats to the women

candidates have been constantly on the rising trend but the same has not been reflected on the number of women emerging as winners. It proves that though woman have been given a chance owing to the constitutional or social obligation or to entice the women voters but she was never been considered as genuine prospective candidate to bank upon. All these have resulted in the low numbers of women representing in the lower house of the Parliament of India.

Table 5

Women Members of Parliament from Bombay Province (Maharashtra & Gujarat) during First, Second, Third & Fourth Lok Sabha:

Tenure	Name of the Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
First Lok Sabha(1951-1952)	Maniben V Patel	Kaira(South)	Indian National Congress
First Lok Sabha(1951-1952)	Indira M Anant	Pune (South)	Indian National Congress
First Lok Sabha(1951-1952)	Jayshri N Raiji	Bombay Suburban	Indian National Congress
Second Lok Sabha(1957)	Jayaben Vajubhai Shah	Gimrar	Indian National Congress
Second Lok Sabha(1957)	Maniben V Patel	Anand	Indian National Congress
Second Lok Sabha(1957)	Anasuyabai Purushottam Kale	Nagpur	Indian National Congress
Third Lok Sabha(1962)	Sharada Subroto Mukherjee	Ratnagiri	Indian National Congress
Fourth Lok Sabha(1967)	Sharada Subroto Mukherjee	Ratnagiri	Indian National Congress
Fourth Lok Sabha(1967)	M.V.R.Bhonsle	Hatkanangle	Peasants and Workers' Party

Source: Women in Maharashtra Electoral Politics: A Case Study of Women's Political Participation in Maharashtra, Minal Mhatre(2009)

In the above Table 5 we have depicted the list of women members pertaining to the First, Second, Third & Fourth Lok Sabha from the earlier Bombay Province (Bombay & Gujarat) & Maharashtra. It can be seen although the numbers a few only but all the members are having their political affiliation from Indian National Congress only as it was the single largest political group in post-independent India. It would be relevant to refer that although women in large numbers participated in the quit India movement started from 1942 under the political banner of Indian National Congress only, even then it was not possible for the same political outfit to converge its entire female political enthusiast to produce a significant proportion of female representation in post-independent scenario.

In the election to 6th Lok Sabha from Maharashtra, only three out of the eight women could win. Out of them, Ahilya Rangnekar and Mrinal Gore won the election on their own backed by their goodwill of fighting for the cause of the common people. On the opposite side, Premalabai D Chavan won the election by the virtue of contesting the election under the political banner of Indian National Congress and also because she happened to be the wife of late Dajisaheb Chavan.

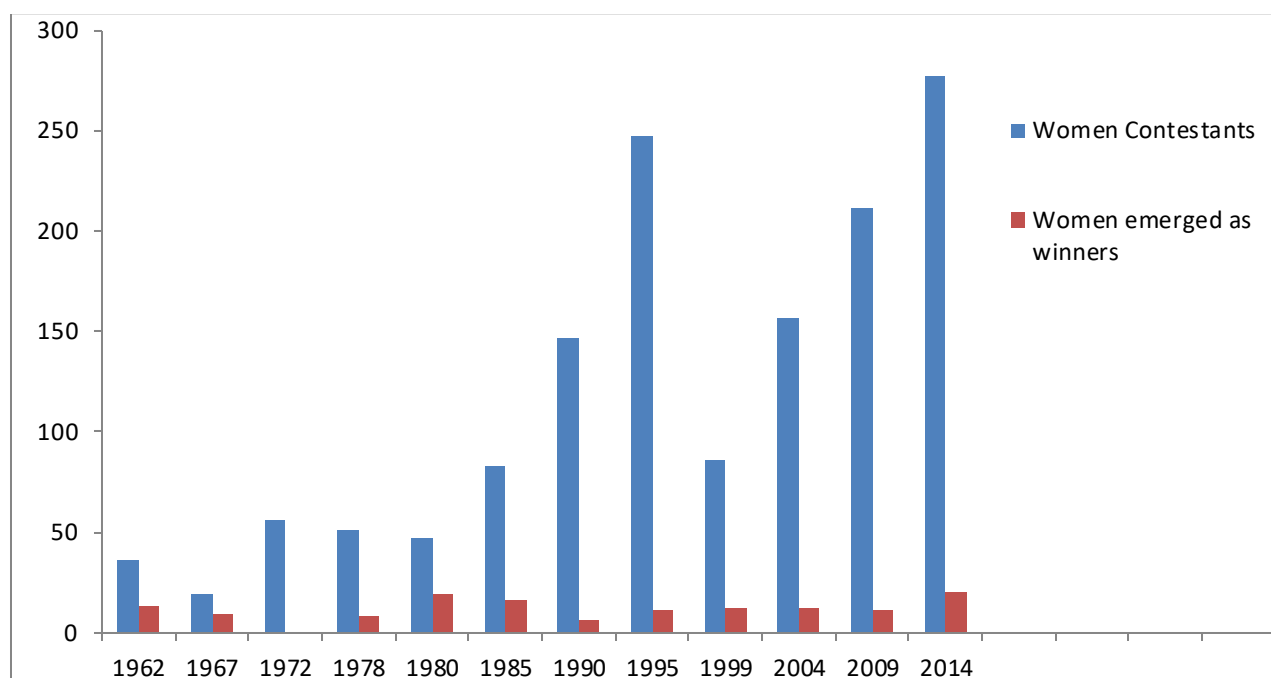
The 1980 elections for the 7th Lok Sabha were held after the lifting of Emergency throughout the country. As the misdoings of emergency had adversely affected the image of Indian National Congress (led by Indira Gandhi), which in turn resulted in its candidates losing the elections, to the benefit of the Janata Party that came into prominence after Emergency was over. Such was the impacts that even a political heavy weight like Shalinitai V. Patil wife of Vasantdada Patil, the strongman of Maharashtra, could not succeed to win the elections to the 7th Lok Sabha under the banner of INC (Indira) fraction. Even after the turnaround of the fortune of INC (Indira)'s at the 8th Lok Sabha, Shalinitai V Patil could not able to win the election as Indian National Congress candidate owing to her problems with the State level Maratha leaders of the INC, especially like of Sharad Pawar. All these facts justify the argument of having a persistent misogynistic element in the political system of Maharashtra so that the credibility of women to be chosen in the elections was majorly dictated by their political affiliation rather than their personal traits.

Sl. No.	Year of Election	Total No of Seats	Total No. contestants	No. of Women Contestants	Total No. of Women Members Elected	Percentage of Seat with Women as Members
1.	1962	264	1161	36	13	4.9 %
2.	1967	270	1242	19	9	3.3 %
3.	1972	270	1197	56	0	0 %
4.	1978	288	1817	51	8	9.1 %
5.	1980	288	-	47	19	6.6 %
6.	1985	288	-	83	16	5.5 %
7.	1990	288	3772	147	6	2.1 %
8.	1995	288	4714	247	11	3.8 %
9.	1999	288	2006	86	12	4.2 %
10.	2004	288	2678	157	12	4.2 %
11.	2009	288	3559	211	11	3.8 %
12.	2014	288	4119	277	20	6.9 %

Table 6
Women Representation in Maharashtra State Legislatures (1962 - 2014)

Source: STATISTICAL REPORT ON GENERAL ELECTION TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MAHARASHTRA, Election Commission of India, eci.gov.in

Referring to the position of women from Maharashtra in both the State Assembly and Parliament, it has been observed that in spite of implementation of the Articles 325 and 326 of the Constitution of India guaranteeing political equality to the men and women, women from Maharashtra have not been able to enjoy the benefits granted by these constitutional provision. Though women population accounts almost half of the population of Maharashtra, the case of underrepresentation prevails also in the state legislature of Maharashtra or earlier Bombay province. As per the data given under Table 6 it is very much evident that the number of women members in the Maharashtra Assembly has never crossed the mark of 20 or 10 % of the total strength of the seats. As we have already discussed earlier it is once again proved from the data given in Table 6, though the volume of women representation has been ensured by the Constitutional compulsion but quality of representation is entirely dependent of the will of the contemporary political fraternity. If we refer to the number of women contestants against the women emerged as winners one can clearly observe the drastic fallacy of the political will of our system. This has been clearly depicted through the Chart 2 as given below, where one can witness the comparison between the women candidates participated in the Maharashtra state assembly election with that of the women winning members between the periods of 1962 to 2014. The numbers of women who were able to emerge as winners (shown in red in the chart) have always been minimal in comparison to the women contestants (shown in blue). Most surprisingly the trend has remained the same across the elections held over a period of 52 years.

Chart 2

It can be clearly understood that though the constitutional provisions has granted the women the platform to participate in the active political set-up but their possibility to emerge as winners seems to be controlled by different others social parameters. As a result the numbers of successful women members who were able to represent in the Maharashtra assembly during the years between 1962 -2014 have not witnessed the rising trend that was supposed to be expected owing to all the constitutional provisions. If we discuss the pattern of participation of women in different years of Legislative elections the ongoing discussions can be understood in a more logical manner.

Table 7**Elections to the Maharashtra Assembly, 1967**

Constituency	Name of candidate	Party	Result
Sangameshwar	1. L.B.Bhuwad	Indian National Congress	Won
Mazgaon	2. L.B.Melville	Independent	Lost
Ghatkopar	3. A.N.Magar	Indian National Congress	Lost
Jawahar (ST)	4. K.S.Karawande	Indian National Congress	Won
Deolali	5. S.D.Dani	Republican Party of India	Lost
Sinnar	6. R.V.Waze	Indian National Congress	Won
Malegaon	7. S.D.Bhalerao	Independent	Deposit Forfeited
Chopda	8. S.S.Patil	Indian National Congress	Lost
Bhusawal	9. S.S.More	Republican Party of India	Deposit Forfeited
Edlabad	10. Pratibha D.Patil	Indian National Congress	Won
-	11. A.S.Pandit	Peasants and Workers Party	Deposit Forfeited
Buldhana	12. S.S.Patil	Indian National Congress	Won
Murtazapur	13. P.B.Tidake	Indian National Congress	Won
Nagpur (W)	14. S.Balraj	Indian National Congress	Won
-	15. V.Mesram	Independent	Deposit Forfeited
Hadgaon	16. L.D.Dange	Independent	Deposit Forfeited
Akalkot	17. N.V.Bhonsle	Indian National Congress	Won
-	18. P.M.Shah	Swatantra Party	Deposit Forfeited
Barsi	19. P.S.Zadbuke	Indian National Congress	Won

Source: *Women in Maharashtra Electoral Politics: A Case Study of Women's Political Participation in Maharashtra, Minal Mhatre(2009)/ STATISTICAL REPORT ON GENERAL ELECTION TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MAHARASHTRA*

The election of 1967 was the first State Legislative election to be held following the bifurcation of the Bombay province into Maharashtra and Gujarat. In that particular election, 19 women had contested for the first time. Out of the 19 candidates 11 were nominated by the Indian National Congress, two by the Republican Party of India, one each by the Swatantra Party and Peasants and Workers' Party⁶. Four women had also contested as Independents. However none of the independents and those contesting other than Indian National Congress could emerge as winners. The number of women contesting the election rose to 56 at the 1972 Maharashtra Legislative Assembly, and with not an exception to the earlier term, majority of them had contested under the Indian National Congress banner. Except Laxmibai B Bhuvad (INC, Sangameshwar), all others were first timers to contest the elections.

Table 8
Elections to the Maharashtra Assembly, 1972

Constituency	Name of candidate	Party	Result
Sangameshwar	1. Laxmibai B.Bhuvad	Indian National Congress	Won
Mahad	2. Kamal Vichare	Indian National Congress	Lost
Colaba	3. Aloo Chibber	Indian National Congress	Won
Girgaum	4. Y Vinayak Khadikar	Indian National Congress	Lost
Walkeshwar	5. J Navinchandra Mehta	Bharatiya Jana Sangh	Lost
Dadar	6. (Name?)	(?)	Lost
Matunga	7. Kamala Raman	Indian National Congress	Won
Vile Parle	8. Kantaben Chandulal Shah	Indian National Congress	Won
Malad	9. (Name)	(?)	Deposit Forfeited
	10. Mrinal Gore	Samyukta Socialist Party	Won
Thana	11. (Name)	(?)	Deposit Forfeited
	12. Vimal K Rangnekar	Indian National Congress	Won
Kalyan	13. (Name?)	(?)	Deposit Forfeited
Deolali	14. (Name?)	(?)	Deposit Forfeited
Malegaon	15. Aisha Chirag Hakim	Indian National Congress	Won
Sakri	16. (Name?)	(?)	Lost
Shahada	17. (Name?)	(?)	Deposit Forfeited
Sindhkheda	18. Lilabai V Patil	Indian National Congress	Won
Dhulia (S)	19. Kamalabai Chhaganlal	Indian National Congress	Won
Chopda	20. Sharadchandrikabai	Indian National Congress	Won
Bhusawal	21. (Name?)	(?)	Deposit Forfeited
Edlabad	22. Pratibhatai D Patil	Indian National Congress	Won
Shegaon	23. Yaminibai D Alsi	Indian National Congress	Lost
Murtazapur	24. Pratibhadevi Tidke	Indian National Congress	Won
Daryapur	25. Kokila J Patil	Indian National Congress	Won
Phulgaon	26. Prabha Rau	Indian National Congress	Won

⁶Election Commission of India (eci.gov.in)

Nagpur (N)	27. Name (?)	(?)	Deposit Forfeited
Nagpur (E)	28. Name (?)	(?)	Deposit Forfeited
Nagpur (W)	29. (Name?)	(?)	Deposit Forfeited
	30. Sushilabai Balraj	Indian National Congress	Won
	31. Sumati B Siklikar	BJS	Lost
Gondia	32. (Name?)	(?)	Deposit Forfeited
	33. (Name?)	(?)	Lost
Jamgaon	34. (Name)	(?)	Deposit Forfeited
Adyar	35. (Name)	(?)	Lost
Saoli	36. (Name)	(?)	Lost
Wani	37. Vimalatai D Gohokar	Indian National Congress	Lost
Hingoli	38. (Name)	(?)	Deposit Forfeited
	39. Ashatai M Tale	Indian National Congress	Won
Vijapur	40. Shakuntalabai Patil	Indian National Congress	Won
Chausala	41. (Name)	(?)	Lost
Ahmedpur	42. Sushilabai M Raddy	Indian National Congress	Lost
Sholapur City (S)	43. Nirmala T Shankar Rao	Indian National Congress	Won
Barsi	44. Shailaja Shitole	Indian National Congress	Won
Ahmednagar (S)	45. Kalabai S Ranade	Indian National Congress	Lost
Pathradi	46. Manikbai Gajre	Indian National Congress	Lost
Kasbapeth	47. (Name)	(?)	Lost
	48. (Name)	(?)	Lost
	49. (Name)	(?)	Lost
	50. Lilabai Merchant	Indian National Congress	Won
Dhaund	51. Ushadevi K Jagdale	Indian National Congress	Won
Bhor	52. Usha Chaudhari	Indian National Congress	Lost
Man (SC)	53. (Name)	(?)	Deposit Forfeited
	54. Prabhavati G Shinde	Indian National Congress	Won
Radhanagari	55. Bakuabai D Khandekar	Indian National Congress	Lost
Kagal	56. (Name)	(?)	Deposit Forfeited

Source: *Women in Maharashtra Electoral Politics: A Case Study of Women's Political Participation in Maharashtra, Minal Mhatre (2009)/ STATISTICAL REPORT ON GENERAL ELECTION TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MAHARASHTRA*⁷

Based on interpretation of the data as given in Table 7 & Table 8 above one common fact that emerges out of the same, though some of the women had come out to contest the election comprising from different political outfits but majority of them lost with their deposit remained forfeited. All the winning candidates majorly bear their political affiliation with Indian National Congress which was the prime political group at that point of time. This pattern clearly indicates that although women were given the chance to participate in the government making however the candidature seems to be rejected by the voters apparently considering their lower turn out ratio as winners. The case of deposit forfeiture of the women contestants shows the apathy of our society to consider the women in making a strong political leader or to contribute in policy making of the system. The phenomenon of having majority of the women MLAs hailing from the Indian National Congress during that period produced a notion that the winning prospect of the women contestants were primarily decided by their political affiliation to the Indian National

⁷ Election Commission of India, eci.gov.in
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Congress, the ruling political party of the country and the state at that point of time. The political influence of the male members also could have impacted the chance of emerging the women contestants as winners.

Subsequent to the formation of state of Maharashtra, the number of women candidates contesting the elections to the Lok Sabha and the State Assembly began to increase. Apart from the Indian National Congress, other parties also started nominating women candidates but the proportion of women representation from Congress was better than other political parties. However, at no time in the history of the political representation of Maharashtra legislature, women have constituted more than 10 per cent of the total number of members of the Legislative. After the lifting of the emergency across the nation, in the elections held to the state assembly in Maharashtra, as many as 51 women contested the elections, out of which only 8 could win. The winning members had five candidates belonged to the Janata Party. In line with the all-India trend following the emergency period, except two (Prabha Rau and Rajkumari G.N.Bajpayee), 19 of the 21 candidates contested under the Indian National Congress (Indira led) lost the election, some of them even had to face their deposit stands forfeited. However the mandate that the Janata Party received at the 1978 elections was soon found to be fading away as when people felt betrayed for having elected a non-performing government. Intra-party issues combined with ego clash within the top echelon of the Janata Party (a combination of several parties) resulted in the resignation of Morarji Desai and selection of Chaudhari Charan Singh as the new Prime Minister, with Indira Gandhi led Congress supporting from outside. Even Charan Singh did not last long to the chair as he had to tender his resignation even without seeking a vote of confidence in the Parliament. Subsequently the country went to polls in 1980, both at the Centre and in the States, Indira Gandhi's INC (I) was brought back to power with majority. Considering the emergence of the "Indira Wave" across the nation sixteen of the 21 women candidates who contested the state assembly elections from Maharashtra under the INC (I) banner were elected. Women members like Prabha Rau and Laxmi Bhuwad were the only members who lost the election. Later elections to the Maharashtra Assembly in 1985 constituted a large number of participation women contestants. However, out of the 83 candidates, only 16 could win the election and it would be worthy to refer that all the independents either lost or forfeited their deposits. In the year 1990 assembly election as many as 144 women contested the 1990; however, only 6 were successful to win the same with almost all the independents losing their security deposits this time also⁸. The Bahujan Samajbadi Party, which is basically a 'North Indian Party', fielded 7 women candidates in the elections to the Maharashtra assembly but all the women contested lost their deposits.

All these dismal performances by the women participants didn't seemed to be causing any disheartening impact to the mind of all the women political aspirants as the continuing trend of women participation was gradually increasing with time as all the independent contestants showed their strong desire to enter the active political life of Maharashtra Legislative Assembly. It may also be referred that such was the zeal that it even prompted one of the candidate naming Suman Muralidhar Bodwade⁹ to contest as an Independent candidate from three constituencies viz., Jalgaon, Bhusawal and Raver, even though it had resulted in her losing the security deposit from all the three constituencies. The 1995 assembly election witnessed a further increase in the number of women contestants from 144 in 1990 to 247 in 1995¹⁰ with 165 of them were independents reflecting the urge among the women to establish a mark on state political setup. The contestants also included 14 Muslim women showing the indication of the encouragement of the minority women of our society to build a career as a policy maker of the system. The elections of 1990 saw only 11 women candidates emerging as winners.¹¹

On the contrary to the earlier trends, an increased participation in the 1999 polls was witnessed where 86 women had contested the election of which only 12 were successful to win. Whereas in the 2004 polls though 157 women had contested only 12 women were successful to win. As such it leads to a figure that in an Assembly with 288 total members, just 4.1 per cent are women. It will be noteworthy to refer that the State that has 47.9 % of women in its population share as per 2001 census data. Out of the 12 women members who were elected in 2004, five were enjoying re-election. If we analyze the party wise distribution of women elected representative in the 2004 assembly election we could see that all of the five women candidates from Nationalist Congress Party's (NCP) won; two each were won by Shiv Sena and Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) and Three by Indian National Congress (INC). The Bahujan Samaj Party (Mayawathi) and Samajwadi Party (Mulayam Singh Yadav) that time also drew blank to their seat account in Maharashtra assembly. As usual, none of the women who had contested as independents could win as their non-affiliation to any political party did not contributed to help them emerge as winners. Of the nine Muslim women who had contested the election, two were on BSP ticket, one under the SP ticket whereas four Muslim women contested as independents and the remaining two under local political parties and as expected all the nine women had their deposit forfeited.¹²

⁸ STATISTICAL REPORT ON GENERAL ELECTION, 1990 TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MAHARASHTRA <https://eci.gov.in/files/file/3720-maharashtra-1990>

⁹ STATISTICAL REPORT ON GENERAL ELECTION, 1990 TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MAHARASHTRA, <https://eci.gov.in/files/file/3720-maharashtra-1990>

¹⁰ STATISTICAL REPORT ON GENERAL ELECTION, 1995 TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MAHARASHTRA, <https://eci.gov.in/files/file/3720-maharashtra-1995>

¹¹ STATISTICAL REPORT ON GENERAL ELECTION, 1995 TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MAHARASHTRA, <https://eci.gov.in/files/file/3720-maharashtra-1995>

¹² STATISTICAL REPORT ON GENERAL ELECTION, 2004 TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MAHARASHTRA, <https://eci.gov.in/files/file/3720-maharashtra-2004>

Whereas women belonging to other communities performed poorly in elections of Maharashtra hence it was very much expected that Muslim women wouldn't had higher chances of winning elections to the State Assembly only with an exception in 1967 election. While most of the Muslim women had contested as independent candidates, and few also tried their luck with other "secular" parties but that could not even changed their fate. It may be striking that in most cases they could not get even got 100 votes, which goes to show that even the Muslim community did not wish to vote in favor to one of their own candidates.

Table 9
Representation of Muslim Women in Maharashtra Assembly Election¹³

Election Year	Constituency	Name of Candidate	Party	Result
1967	Malegaon	Aisha Chirag Hakim	INC	Won
1978	Malegaon	Aisha HC Pathan	INC(I)	DF
1980	Haveli	Shahida M Karim	IND	DF
1980	Akola	Pramila Asghar Hussain Tople	BJP	Lost
1985	Bhusaval	Amtul Latif Zafarali Kazi	IND	DF
1985	Parbhani	Ayeshabegum Iqbal Hussain	INC	Lost
1985	Bhavanipeth	Aishabai Syed Nazir	IND	DF
1985	Chinchpokli	Khatunbi Md. Yusuf Ansari	IND	DF
1990	Nagpada	Anjum Ahmad	SHS	Lost
1990	Manjilegaon	Nasimsultana Abdul Rehman	IND	DF
1990	Solapur City (S)	Amirun Harun Wangikar	IND	DF
1990	Bhavanipeth	Gulshamim Sk. Abdul Karim	IND	DF
1995	Shriwardhan	Rehana A Rahim Undre	PWP	Lost
1995	Umardhadi	Amina Syed Mohammad	INC	DF
1995	Mazgaon	Rashida Jumman Khan	IND	DF
1995	Vandre	Tasneem Khan (Advocate)	JD	DF
1995	Vandre	Zaheeda Khan	IND	DF
1995	Borivali	Shaikh Asghari	IND	DF
1995	Trombay	Hamida Masum Ali Mistry	MUL	DF
1995	Trombay	Noorjehan A Inamdar	IND	DF
1995	Kurla	Ashrafbegum B Khan	IND	DF
1995	Malegaon	Swaleha A Gani	IND	DF
1995	Nagpur Central	Naseem Siddqui	IUML	DF
1995	Darwah IND DF	Bilkisbegum T Deshmukh	IND	DF
1995	Nanded IND DF	Alimunnisa Z Khurshed	IND	DF
1995	Ahmednagar	Shahin Nisar Pawar	ICS	DF
1999	Vandre	Farida Rahamt Ali Sayyad	SJP(M)	DF
1999	Junnar	Parveen Noor Md. Shaikh	BSP	DF
1999	Amboli	Aisha Riyaz Shaikh	SP	DF
1999	Trombay	Shama Parveen Md. Hanif	NLP	DF
1999	Umred	Sk. Zebunnisa Md. Nazir	BSP	DF
1999	Aurangabad	West Nasimabi Abdul Syed	NMP	DF
1999	Ahmednagar (S)	Hawabi Sk. Umar	IND	DF
2004	Umerkhadi	Sabira Aslam Sikwani	BSP	DF
2004	Bandra	Hawabai Khan	BMSM	DF
2004	Santacruz	Tahira Bastiwala	BSP	DF
2004	Goregaon	Putlibegum Abdul Sk	AIKC	DF
2004	Kandivali	Salma Salim Almelkar	IND	DF
2004	Trombay	Naseem Qureshi	IND	DF
2004	Mangrulpir	Zulekha Salim Saye	IND	DF
2004	Kalamnuri	Raisa Md. Osman Qureshi	IND	DF
2004	Solapur City (S)	Sk Haji Shahanaz Mahabub Sab	SP	DF

The Table 9 comprise the data of Muslim women representation in Maharashtra assembly elections from 1967 to 2004. The data as given is completely in accordance and relevant to our discussion. It is very much eminent that although the Muslim women have come forward with an aim of participating in the active political system of the state, however they have only received a kind of mass rejection from the voters of their community as majority of the contestants had to forfeit their security deposit.

¹³ Women in Electoral Politics: A Case Study of Women's Political Participation in Maharashtra: Minal Mhatre (2009) 17596
ijariie.com 5386

Table 10**Women in Portfolio as Ministers from Maharashtra¹⁴**

Sl. No.	Year	Name of Minister	Portfolio Held
1.	1967	Pratibha Devi Sinh Patil	Public Health, Prohibition
2.	1969	Pratibha Devi Sinh Patil	Public Health, Tourism, Prohibition, Legislative Affairs
3.	1972	Pratibha Devi Sinh Patil	Social Welfare & Cultural Affairs
4.	1974	Pratibha Devi Sinh Patil	Social Welfare
5.	1974	Prabha Rau	Planning, Education & Industry
6.	1975	Pratibha Devi Sinh Patil	Public Health & Social Welfare
7.	1975	Prabha Anand Rau	Education
8.	1976	Pratibha Devi Sinh Patil	Prohibition, Rehabilitation and Cultural Affairs
9.	1976	Prabha Anand Rau	Education, Youth Services & Sports
10.	1977	Pratibha Devi Sinh Patil	Education
11.	1977	Dr.(Smt.) Sushila Balraj	Urban Development
12.	1978	Prabha Rau	Co operation, Tourism
13.	1978	Shanti Narayan Naik	Social Welfare, Housing
14.	1980	Shalinibai V Patil	Revenue & Rehabilitation
15.	1980	Pramilaben Bhanushankar Yagnik	Slum Improvement, Housing, BMRDA, Social Welfare and Tribal Welfare
16.	1980	Tarabai Narsinha Vartak	Public Works, Transport, Social Welfare, Khar Lands
17.	1982	Sharadachandrika Suresh Patil	Education and Employment, Technical Education & Training, Sports, Youth Welfare
18.	1982	Rajani Shankarrao Satav	Public Health and Family Welfare, Cultural Affairs, Jails, Tourism and Law and Judiciary
19.	1982	Pratibha Devisinh Patil	Urban Development, Social Welfare, Housing and Slum Improvement
20.	1982	Sharadchandrika Suresh Patil	Education, Cultural Affairs, Technical Education & Training
21.	1982	Shalinitai Vasantrao Patil	Public Works, Employment, Food and Civil Supplies
22.	1982	Kamalabai Chaganlal Ajmera	Public Health & Family Welfare, Social Welfare
23.	1982	Rajani Shankarrao Satav	Public Health & Family Welfare, Medical Education and Drugs, Cultural Affairs and Social Welfare
24.	1983	Pratibha Devisinh Patil	Food and Civil Supplies and Social Welfare
25.	1983	Dr. Lalita Rao	Public Health, Family Welfare, Medical Education and Drugs
26.	1983	Yashodhara Bhagirath Bajaj	Public Works
27.	1983	Parvati Gurlingappa Malgonda	Education
28.	1985	Celine Aloysius D'Silva	Finance, Planning, Social Welfare and Tourism
29.	1985	Rajani Shankarrao Satav	Revenue, Rehabilitation Cultural Affairs & Law and Judiciary
30.	1985	Celine Aloysius D'Silva	Finance, Planning and Tourism
31.	1985	Damayantibai Madhukar Deshabhratar	Forests, Social Forestry, Social Welfare and Legislative Affairs
32.	1985	Rajanitai Shankarrao Satav	Public Health & Family Welfare, Medical Education and Drugs and

¹⁴ RTI 3020/C.R. 14/18(O & M) dated 27 February 2020, General Administration Department, Government of Maharashtra in response to RTI query dated 13 January 2020
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			Cultural Affairs
33.	1986	Kumari Chandrika P. Kenia	Law and Judiciary, Education, Technical Education and Employment
34.	1986	Rajanitai Shankarrao Satav	Public Health & Family Welfare, Medical Education and Drugs, Social Welfare and Tribal Development
35.	1988	Prabha Anandrao Rau	Revenue and Cultural Affairs
36.	1988	Rajanitai Shankarrao Satav	Social Welfare, Public Health and Medical Education
37.	1988	Pushpatai Vyankatrao Hirey	Transport and Energy
38.	1990	Pushpatai Vyankatrao Hirey	Public Health & Family Welfare, Medical Education and Drugs & Cultural Affairs
39.	1991	Pushpatai Vyankatrao Hirey	Public Health & Family Welfare, Medical Education and Drugs
40.	1991	Pushpatai Vyankatrao Hirey	Public Health & Family Welfare, Medical Education and Drugs
41.	1993	Pushpatai Vyankatrao Hirey	Public Health & Family Welfare, Medical Education and Drugs
42.	1994	Pushpatai Vyankatrao Hirey	Public Health & Family Welfare, Medical Education and Drugs
43.	1994	Vidya Belose	Women & Child Welfare, Employment and Employment Guarantee Scheme
44.	1995	Shobha Madhabrao Phanadbis	Food & Civil Supplies
45.	1995	Shobha Madhabrao Phanadbis	Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Protection
46.	1998	Shobha Madhabrao Phanadbis	Employment Guarantee Scheme & Horticulture
47.	1999	Shobha Madhabrao Phanadbis	Employment Guarantee Scheme & Horticulture
48.	1999	Manisha Manohar Nimkar	Textile & Tourism
49.	1999	Shobha Madhabrao Phanadbis	Employment Guarantee Scheme & Horticulture
50.	1999	Manisha Manohar Nimkar	Food & Civil Supplies
51.	1999	Basudhatai Pundalikrao Deshmukh	Public Works(excluding PSU) Finance & Planning
52.	1999	Bimaltai Nandkishore Mundada	Women & Child Welfare, Law & Order, Earthquake Rehabilitation & Relief
53.	1999	Sulekha Narayan Kumbhare	Water Supply & Sanitation
54.	1999	Meenakshi Prabhakar Patil	Fisheries & Port
55.	2004	Bimal Nandkishore Mundada	Public Health & Family Welfare
56.	2004	Basudhatai Pundalikrao Deshmukh	Public Works(including Public Enterprises), Irrigation & Beneficiary area Development
57.	2004	Sulekha Narayan Kumbhare	Animal Husbandry, Sanitation, Rural Development & Special Assistance
58.	2009	Bimal Nandkishore Mundada	Public Works(Public Enterprises)
59.	2009	Shobha Dinesh Bachhav	Public Health, Family Welfare, Food & Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection
60.	2009	Fauzia Tehsin Khan	General Administration, Information & Publicity, Cultural Affairs, Protocol, School Education, Women & Child Welfare, Public Health & Family Welfare, Minority Development(including Aukaf)
61.	2009	Varsha Eknath Gaikwad	Medical Education Higher & Technical Education, Tourism &

			Special Assistance
62.	2010	Varsha Eknath Gaikwad	Women & Child Welfare
63.	2010	Fauzia Tehsin Khan	General Administration, Information & Publicity, Cultural Affairs, Protocol, School Education, Women & Child Welfare, Public Health & Family Welfare, Minority Development(including Aukaf)
64.	2014	Pankaja Gopinath Munde	Rural Development, Water Conservation, Women & Child Development
65.	2014	Vidya Jayprakash Thakur	Rural Development and Water Conservation, Women & Child Development

Source: RTI 3020/C.R. 14/18(O & M) dated 27 February 2020, General Administration Department, Government of Maharashtra in response to RTI query dated 13 January 2020

Chart 3

Comparison of Numbers of men and women as Ministers in Maharashtra Cabinet

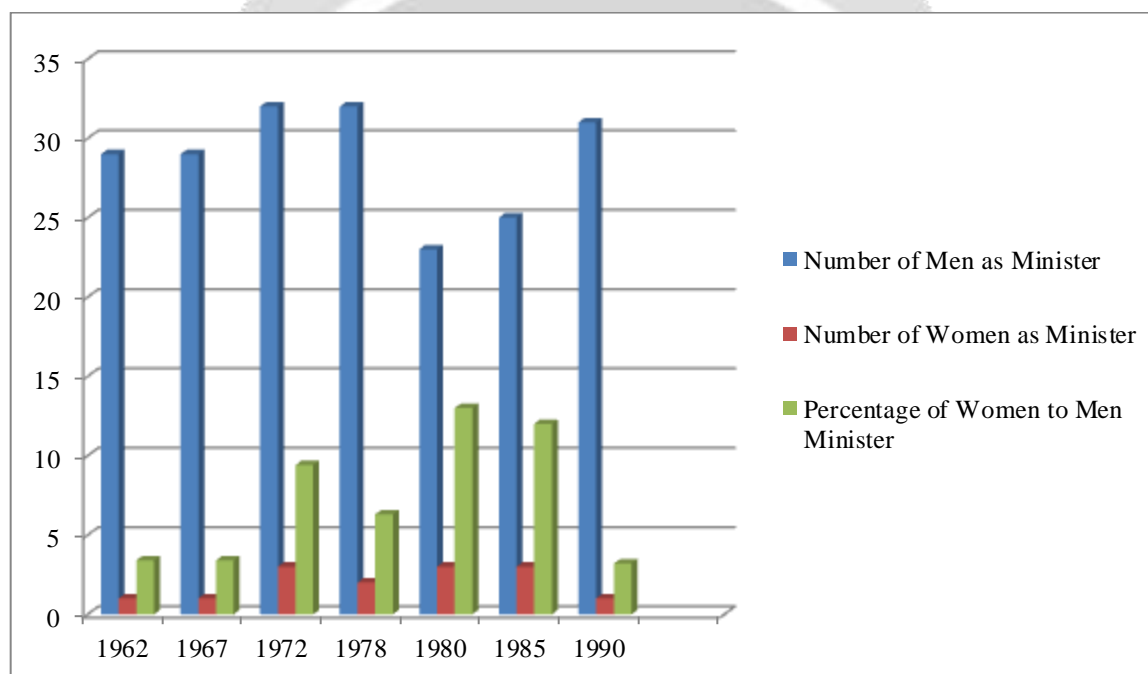


Table 11

Women Members in Rajya Sabha from Maharashtra (1952-2003)

Sl. No.	Name of Representative	Political Affiliation	Tenure
1.	Shrimati Tara Ramachandra Sathe	INC	1962-1968
2.	Shrimati Vimal Punjab Deshmukh	INC	1967-1972
3.	Dr. (Kumari) Sarojini Krishnarao Babar	INC	1968-1974
4.	Shrimati Sushila Shankar Adivarekar	INC	1971-72, 72-78 & 78-84
5.	Miss. Saroj Khaparde	INC	1972-1974, 1976-1982, 1982-1988, 1988-1994, 1994-2000
6.	Shrimati Premilabai Dajisaheb Chavan	INC	1980-1984
7.	Dr. (Smt.) Najma Heptulla	INC	1980-1986, 1986-1992, 1992-1998, 1998-2004
8.	Shrimati Sudha Vijay Joshi	INC	1984-1990
9.	Shrimati Pratibha Devisingh Patil	INC	1985-1990
10.	Shrimati Suryakanta Patil	INC	1986-1992

11.	Shrimati Chandrika Abhinandan Jain	INC	1990-1996
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Source: Women Members of Rajya Sabha,

If we refer the data as given in Table 11 we can see the story has never been different if we consider the degree of women representation in the upper house of our Parliament where a woman can only win based on the voting rights conferred to the State legislative members. Apparently it may be understood that a member of state legislative assembly is bound to be much aware of the equal rights of our women fraternity having granted by our constitution than a common elector; however when come the matter of opting a women as a member for the upper house of Parliament of our nation the same story of underrepresentation prevails. If the name of the members elected in the Rajya Sabha from 1962 till 2003 are followed we can see during this period Maharashtra has only given 11 women members to the upperhouse of the Parliament.

Few eminent women politicians of post-independent Maharashtra

Pratibha Patil¹⁵: The discussion of eminent Marathi women politician in post-independent period can never be started without referring the name Shrimati Pratibha Patil, (born December 19, 1934, Jalgaon, Maharashtra, India). She was a lawyer by profession and a successful politician to become the first woman to serve as the President of India from 2007 to 2012. Shrimati Patil earned her master's degree in political science and economics from Moolji Jaitha College, Jalgaon and later received a degree in law from Government Law College, Mumbai (Bombay). At the young age of 27 years, she successfully contested her first election to the Maharashtra State Legislature from the Jalgaon Assembly constituency. Subsequently she was continuously elected four times as MLA from the Edlabad (Muktai Nagar) constituency till 1985. Thereafter, she served as a Member of Parliament in the Rajya Sabha from 1985 to 1990 and later elected as a Member of Parliament to the 10th Lok Sabha in the 1991 General Elections from the Amravati constituency. She enjoys the unique distinction of not having lost a single election that she contested till date. Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil in her long political career in Maharashtra has held various positions both in the Government and the Legislative Assembly of Maharashtra. She was the Deputy Minister, Public Health, Prohibition, Tourism, Housing and Parliamentary Affairs, Government of Maharashtra from 1967 to 1972, Cabinet Minister, Social Welfare, Government of Maharashtra from 1972 to 1974, Cabinet Minister, Public Health and Social Welfare, Government of Maharashtra from 1974 to 1975, Cabinet Minister, Prohibition, Rehabilitation and Cultural Affairs, Government of Maharashtra from 1975 to 1976, Cabinet Minister, Education, Government of Maharashtra from 1977 to 1978, Cabinet Minister, Urban Development and Housing, Government of Maharashtra from 1982 to 1983, and Cabinet Minister, Civil Supplies and Social Welfare, Government of Maharashtra from 1983 to 1985. While in the Opposition, she also served as the Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Assembly of Maharashtra from July 1979 to February 1980. While being the member of Rajya Sabha, Smt. Patil was the Deputy Chairperson, Rajya Sabha from 1986 to 1988 and also served as the Chairperson, Rajya Sabha from 25.7.1987 to 2.9.1987 as Dr. R. Venkataraman got elected as President of India that time. She was also the Chairperson, Committee of Privileges, Rajya Sabha and Member of Business Advisory Committee, Rajya Sabha from 1986 to 1988. In her long public life, she has been associated with several institutions in wide ranging capacities. She had served as Chairperson, Maharashtra State Water Pollution Control Board from 1982 to 1985. She was also selected the President, Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) from 1988 to 1990. In addition to this she also had the position of Director and Vice-Chairperson, National Federation of Urban Cooperative Banks and Credit Societies. She served as Member, Governing Council, National Cooperative Union of India and Chairperson, 20-Point programme Implementation Committee, Government of Maharashtra. Shrimati Patil had worked actively for the welfare of women and children and the underprivileged sections of society. For their benefit, she established several institutions in the state. Smt. Patil has represented India in various international forums as she led the Indian delegation to the Conference on the 'Status of Women' in Austria and was a delegate at the World Women's Conference, Beijing, China in September 1995. In 2007 she took the prestigious office of the President of India in July 2007 to become the first woman to do so.

Shalinitai Patil¹⁶: Dr Shalinitai Patil, was the wife of late Shri Vasantdada Patil, the strong man of Maharashtra politics. She had joined Congress Party on the demise of her husband and got elected to the Assembly. She was made the Revenue Minister in the cabinet. In 1981 she played a vital role in removing A.R.Antulay, then Chief Minister from power but later she left the Congress party to join the Shiv Sena in 1995, when it came to power in the State. Later, she also left the Shiv Sena to join in hand with Sharad Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party despite the fact that Sharad Pawar never had good terms with Vasantdada Patil and in fact, in 1978, he pulled the post of Chief Minister from Vasantdada Patil. Shalini Patil had differences with the NCP on certain issues which made her vocal by making a demand at a public meeting (2003) that "reservation of seats in Government jobs & Educational institutions based on Economic considerations rather than Caste basis." She represented Sangli constituency in the Indian parliament (Lok Sabha) during a period in the 1980s. She represented the constituency of Koregaon, Satara in the Maharashtra state legislative assembly, the (Vidhan Sabha) from 1999 to 2009. Before this she unsuccessfully contested the seat in 1990 and 1995 for the Janata dal and as an independent respectively. She was very strong in her criticism of the

¹⁵ <http://pratibhapatil.nic.in/profile.html>

¹⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shalini_Patil

Centre's move to extend 27.5 % reservation for OBCs in the central academic institutes such as IIT and IIM. On this issue she had even appreciated the stance of Shiv Sena chief Balasaheb Thackeray as Thackeray was known for his blunt stand against reservations. In view of above Shrimati Patil was served a show cause notice and later in August 2006, the NCP expelled Shalini Patil for six years from the party. Shalinitai Patil also demanded the scrapping of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. Shrimati Patil held that the act was being misused¹⁷. In December 2008 she floated a new political party, the Kranti Sena Maharashtra which later was merged with Congress.

Prabha Rau (4 March 1935 – 26 April 2010)¹⁸: Prabha Rau (Congress) began her political career as the President of the District Central Co-operative Bank. In 1972, she was elected as MLA from Deoli constituency, and she continued to win the same seat for five more terms. She had almost spent nearly 22 years as a member of the State Assembly (1972 to 1990 and 1995 to 1999). She was also elected to the Lok Sabha from Wardha constituency in 1999, but lost in 2004 elections. Prabha Rau had successfully handled several Ministries in the State Government. She also happens to be the Chairperson of the Maharashtra State Commission for Women (1993-1995). Being a known loyalist to the Nehru-Gandhi family, she had served as General Secretary of the All India Congress Committee in charge of Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Goa, Rajasthan, Delhi and Gujarat. She was also appointed chief of MPCC in June 2004, a position she held till her appointment, in July 2008, as Governor of Himachal Pradesh. Later she was made Governor for the state of Rajasthan and she died in 2010.

SuryaKanta Patil¹⁹ : SuryaKanta Patil (NCP) was originally with the Indian National Congress as she began her political career back in 1971 as President of the District Congress Committee (women's Wing) from Nanded and General Secretary of District Youth Congress (1972-74). Being a Municipal Councillor of Nanded during 1980, she got elected to the Maharashtra Assembly (1980-1985). Later she was elected to the Rajya Sabha for the term 1986-91. She had contested and got elected to the 10th and 12th Lok Sabha elections as a Congress candidate. Later she shifted to NCP as she contested the 1999 Lok Sabha elections and lost the same. However, she was re-elected to 14th Lok Sabha (2004) on NCP ticket and became the Union Minister of State for Rural Development and Parliamentary Affairs in May 2004. Later in 2014 she resigned from NCP to join Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Supriya Sule²⁰ (1969- Till date): Supriya Sule is an active politician from Maharashtra. She is the daughter of Shri Sharad Pawar, the President of the Nationalist Congress Party. Smt. Sule started her political career being a member of Rajya Sabha in 2006 later she won the parliamentary election from Baramati Lok Sabha Constituency in 2009 for 15th Lok Sabha as the seat was previously retained by her father Sharad Pawar. She got reelected in 2014 Lok Sabha election. In 2015 she was appointed as member for the committee for empowerment of women.

Conclusion:

To conclude it is apparent from our discussion that the degree of representation in both the level of state legislatures and Lok Sabha has never been up to the expected mark. Following issues pertaining to women electoral politics in the state of Maharashtra have been analysed in this chapter. This chapter throws light on two significant aspects: the first is the analysis of political participation of women in the political arena of post- Independent Maharashtra whereas the second aspect critically examined the factors behind the under representation of women in the state legislative assembly of Maharashtra as well as their representation in the Parliament. We have witnessed in a number of cases where though the women have been given the chances in the disguise of our constitutional obligation, however they have never been considered to be worthy to be elected in the democratic electoral system. To combine with this, even if a woman have witnessed an electoral mandate in her favour, in majority of the cases we have found there may be a strong chances of having a patriarchal pattern for the women to emerge as winners.

As such in our discussion we have found that for election to state legislature and to the Parliament, there is no minimum proportion fixed for women participation. Rather the extent, to which women should be given an opportunity to contest election, entirely depends upon the will of political top notches at state and national level. The reasons behind the low participation of women are numerous. The absence of any effective women lobbies, lack of network in the present groups, and institutions working in the cause of women are the prime factor behind the hindrances being faced to emancipate the representational agenda. In Indian societal structure a woman seems to present a picture of oppressed class. As such it can strongly be presumed that unless some percentage of the seats contested within a state-whether for Parliamentary or State Legislature is reserved for women, there is no chance of women improving their presence in the Parliament or State Legislature. It is very much clear in our views that the ratio of success between men and women candidates is generally close to the ratio in which tickets were allocated to

¹⁷ <http://news.webindia123.com/news/Articles/India/20081113/1103866.html>

¹⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prabha_Rau

¹⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suryakanta_Patil

²⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supriya_Sule

men and women candidates. On the contrary the probability of success appears to be more on the side of women than men. One logical conclusion that can be drawn in these circumstances is that given more opportunities in allotting more seats for contesting election, women have a higher chance to improve their representation in the policy making bodies. With women constituting almost 50 percent of the electoral strength, the above inference held true on its merit. As such it is a broadly accepted fact that the reservation policy should be continued till our women attains the position they deserve.

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