

10/06/2024**(MODEL ANSWER)**

- Q. Analyse the representation of women in Indian politics, especially in the context of the recently held Lok Sabha elections. Discuss the impact of the Women's Reservation Bill and compare India's situation with global trends, citing relevant examples.

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Answer Template:**Introduction:**

- The representation of women in Indian politics has long been a topic of scrutiny and debate, with efforts made to enhance their participation in decision-making processes.
- According to the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), only 9.6% of all candidates in the 2024 elections were women. The 18th Lok Sabha will have 74 women and 469 men, comprising only 13.6% of all MPs, which is lower than the share of women elected in 2019 (14.4%).
- The Women's Reservation Bill was passed to allocate 33% of seats in the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies to women. However, its impact was not significantly reflected in the election results.

Body:

- **Current Status of Women in Indian Politics:**
 - Despite comprising roughly 48% of India's population, women continue to be underrepresented in political spheres, including the Lok Sabha.
 - **Women as Voters:**
 - Women were an important demographic in the election, but they remained limited to voters and beneficiaries, not so much leaders and representatives.
- **Challenges to Women's Political Participation:**
 - **Social and Cultural Barriers:**
 - Deep-rooted patriarchal norms and societal expectations often deter women from actively participating in politics.
 - **Limited Access to Resources:**
 - Women often face barriers in accessing political resources such as funding, education, and networks, hindering their electoral prospects.
 - **Violence and Harassment:**
 - Instances of gender-based violence and harassment in political arenas discourage women from engaging in politics.
 - Misogynistic Jibes: Several women who contested the polls faced misogynistic jibes from their peers, indicating the challenges women face in politics.
- **Impact of the Women's Reservation Bill:**
 - The Women's Reservation Bill ensures a minimum of one-third representation for women in the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies, thereby addressing gender imbalances.

- All political parties expressed support for the bill and claimed credit for its passage. However, this did not translate into a higher number of women candidates or elected representatives.

Conclusion:

- While the Women's Reservation Bill was a step in the right direction, the 2024 Lok Sabha elections showed that more needs to be done to improve women's representation in Indian politics.
- Learning from countries like Mexico, India needs to implement comprehensive reforms, including mandatory gender parity in candidate lists and measures to combat gender-based violence in politics.

Related News/ Editorial/ Article (THE INDIAN EXPRESS):

- *ONLY 13.6 PER CENT: Women were central to poll promises in 2024, but fewer were elected. - (Page 10)*

