



India

Measurement of Women's Political Participation at the Local Level: India Experience

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Outline

Introduction

Women Political Participation: Historical Context

Current Framework

Challenges in Measuring Women Political Participation

Possible Approaches for a robust measurement framework

Conclusion



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Introduction

Priority of a True Democracy

- “...True democracy is a system which is a government of the people, by the people and for the people...” *Abraham Lincoln.*
 - ✓ Government chosen by all the sections of society
 - ✓ Government working for all the sections of society
 - ? **Government comprises of all the sections of society**

Measurement Of Women Political Participation

- The measurement of women political participation is essential to identify the need of policy intervention.
- India records gender statistics on political participation since its independence.
- Efforts are being done to further improve the present infrastructure.



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Women's Participation in Indian Politics

The status of women in India has seen many ups and downs since ancient times - from at par status in ancient history to be in veils (Parda System) during the Medieval period.

- Women in independent India have been participating in almost all type of activities
- India has elected a woman prime minister, Indira Gandhi, and a woman president, Pratibha Patil.
- In the present central government, women comprise roughly quarter of the Indian cabinet with portfolios like external affairs, commerce and human resource development and also the speaker in the lower house.
- At the ground level, India has a significant proportion of women in local level politics which has been achieved by reserving seat for women.
- Still lot needs to be achieved for women to get an equal political participation.



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Women Reservation Bill

- To enable better women participation in active politics, authorities have been trying to put in reservation for women.
- Reservation Bill is still pending in Lower House after which women would get 33% reservation in all political process.
- Reservation has already been provided at local level in 1993.

Women Reservation
passed at
'Panchayat' Level

Women Reservation
Bill passed in Upper
House



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Panchayati Raj Reforms

- The states have been empowered through law for composition of 'Panchayats'.
- The 73rd Amendment in 1993 provided for reservation of both seats and leadership positions for women.
- This has helped women to share the responsibility of governance and development at sub-district levels.
- The number of women elected representative at local level has sharply increased.
- India has been maintaining the record of number of women representatives at the 'Panchayat' level
- Statistics indicate that 30-50% of local level elected representatives are women.



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Why Women to participate in Politics

- To represent the half of the population
- To speak about the issues of women and have policies marked for themselves.
- Commitment of women for promoting policies to address their socio-economic and political challenges.
- Women participation often promote honest government.
- Women are better peace builders.
- Women bring about better development in social sectors of education, health, etc.



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Why measure the participation

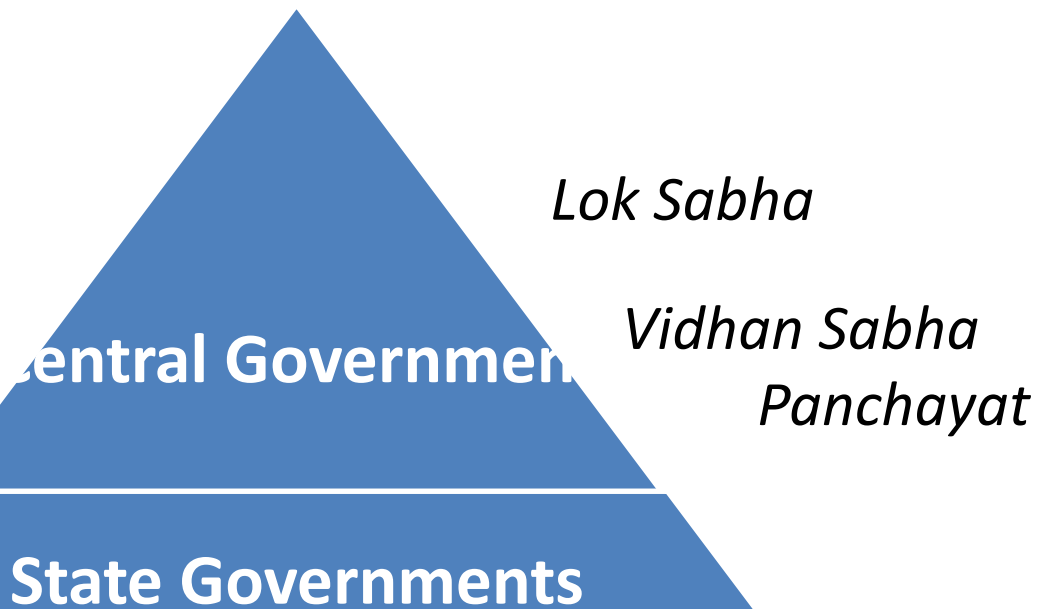
- To study the gender gap
- To take measures to improve the participation
- To study the level of development vis-à-vis women participation



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Indian Electoral System

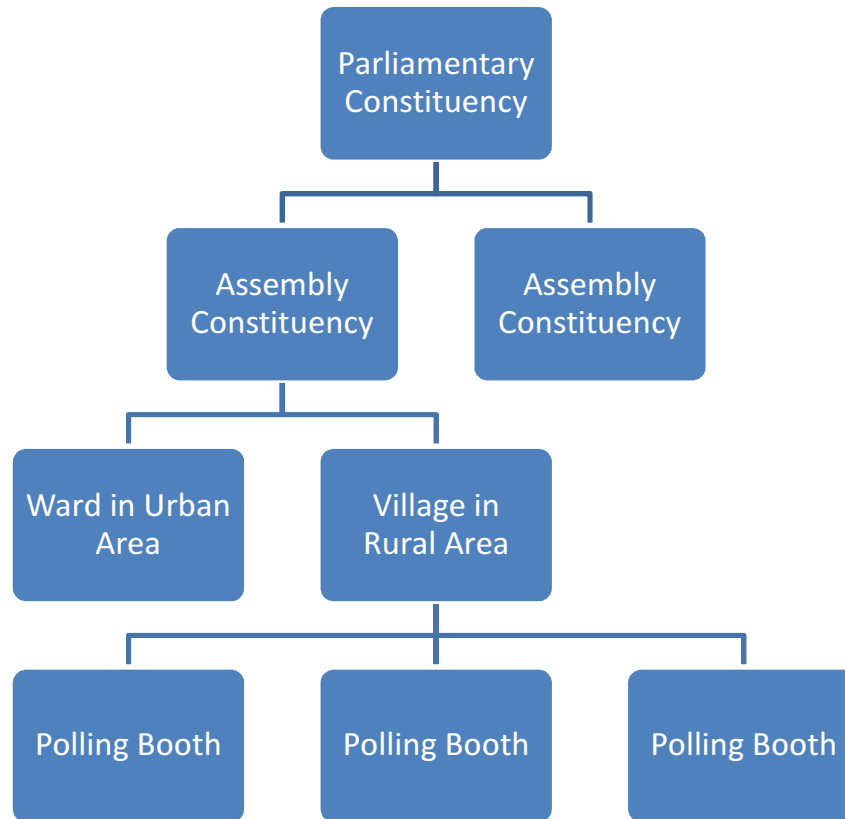
- Three tier of Governance Structure.
- Elections to all three is conducted by independent Election Commission.
- Unlike other democracies, India has given equal voting rights to Women.
- Women participation as well as its measurement differs at the three levels.





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Electoral Statistics in India



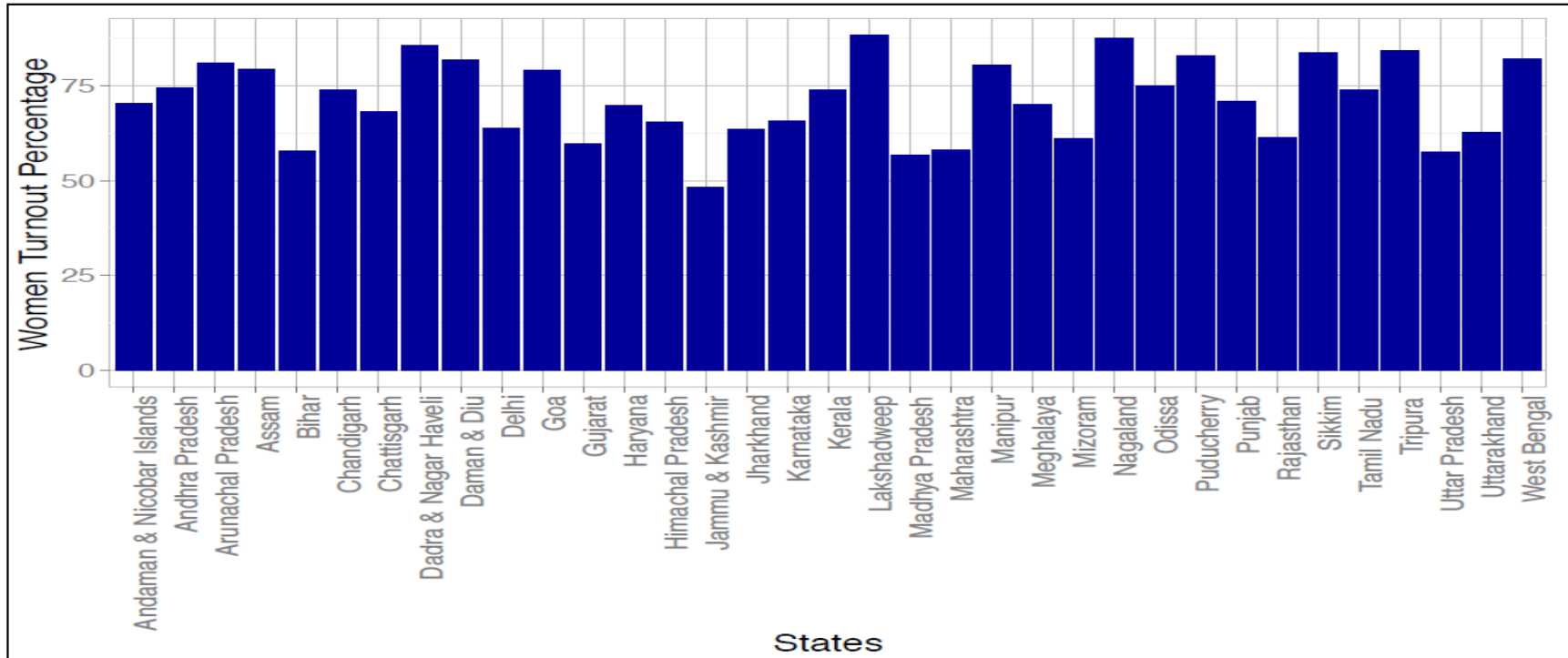
Electoral Statistics is maintained at Polling Booth level



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Women Turnout Percentage

- Women Participation as a voter is fairly good across states. Overall 66% women participated in the 2014 Lok Sabha Elections.



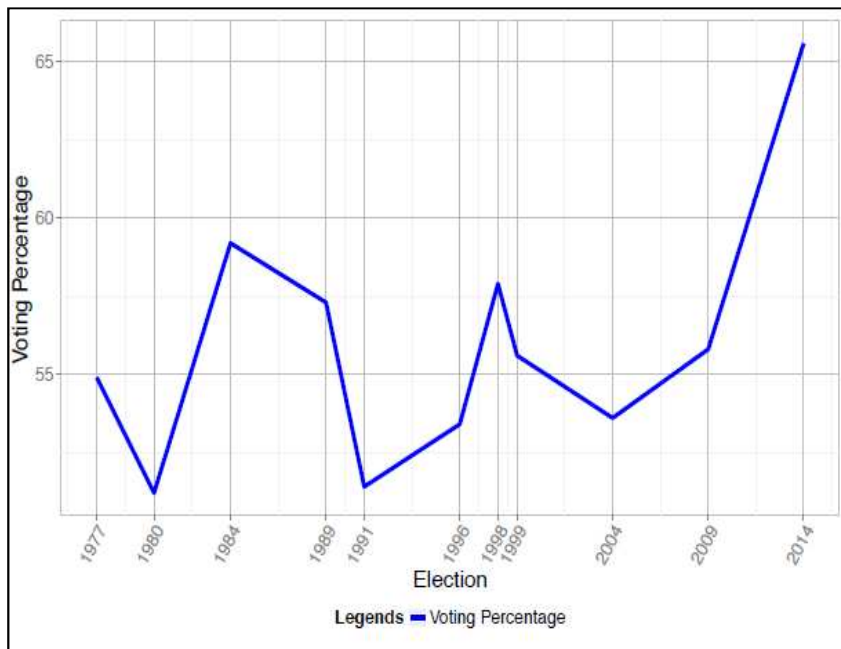
Women Turnout Percentage in various States (2014)



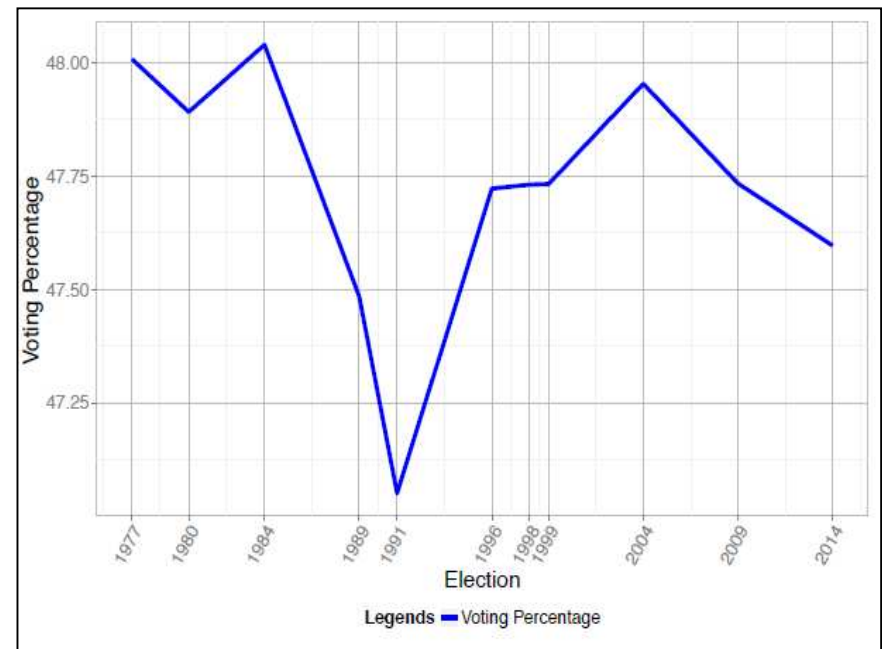
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Women Participation through Time

- Women Participation as a voter has been increasing over time.
- Percentage of women voters is roughly 50%.



Voting percentage of women in Indian elections



Percentage of women voters out of total voters



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Women In the Centre

- In 2014, women occupy 7 out of 45 Ministerial positions, a little more than 15%
- Around 8% of total candidates were women
- 62 women have been elected in 2014 Elections constituting more than 11% share in the Lower House
- 20 are in the age group 41-50 and 34% of the women MPs are social & political workers and 44% are Post Graduate

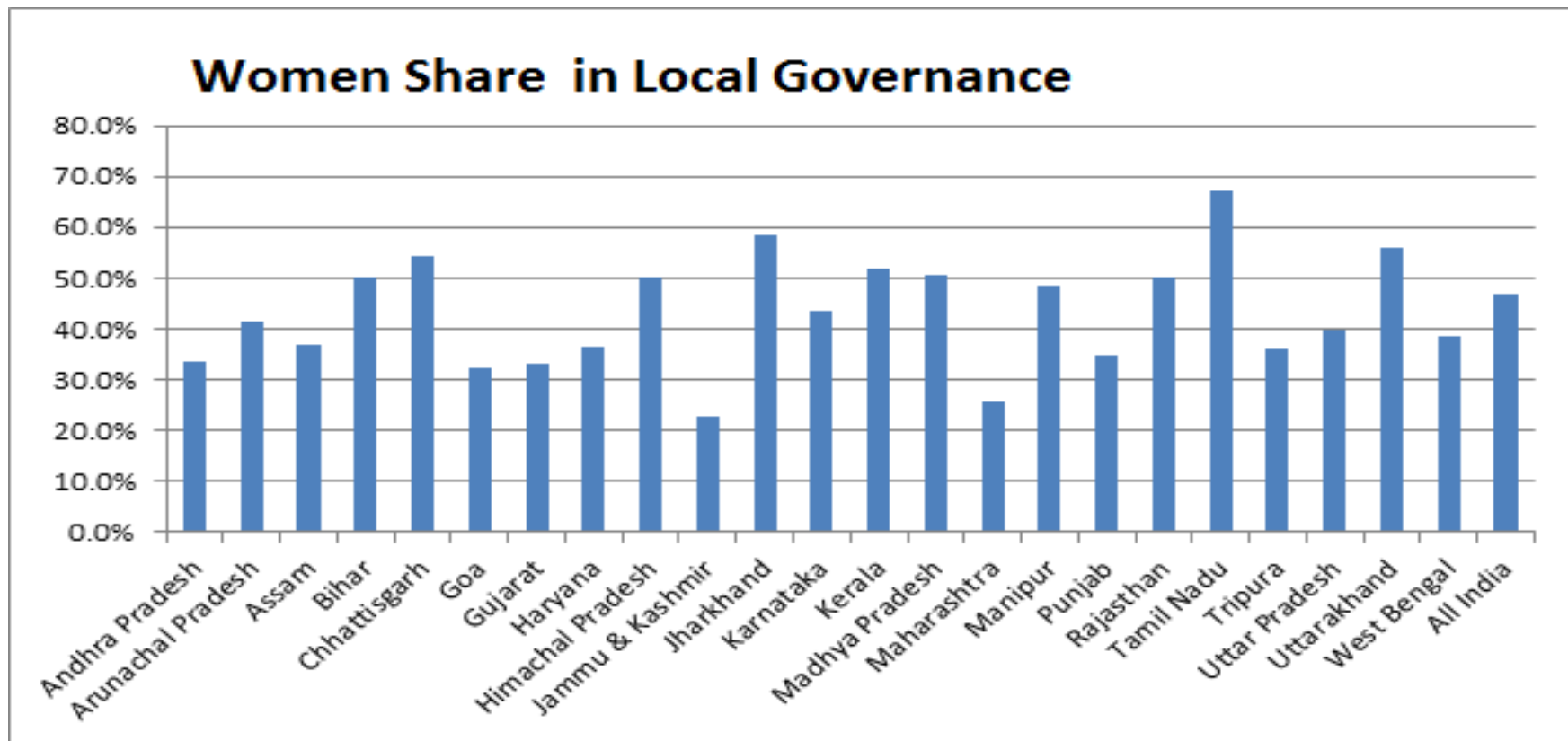
Women Turnout Percentage in various States (2014)



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Women Participation in Local Governance

- overall 46.7% women are present in various levels of Panchayats





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Women in Local Level Development

- Panchayati Raj reforms have increased political participation of women at local level.
- The numbers have gone up substantially
- The biggest problem in such statistics is to identify proxy participation.
- States have been advised to initiate departmental proceedings against the officers in whose presence meetings with proxy attendance are held.
- All the States have been asked to ensure the safety of Elected Women Representatives
- Inclusion of at least half of number of women voters has been mandated in the quorum of Gram Sabha.



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The Challenges

Participation as a proxy candidate

Due to reservation policy, certain women got elected into the setup, but they act merely as the mouth-piece of their male family members.

Measurement of Decision Making Initiatives

Qualitative data on their active participation including the utilization of the decision-making functionality is not being measured properly

Data sanity checks for micro level data

Data at the micro level may not be relied with full confidence. Additional checks and surveillance may be required.



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The Way Forward

APPLICATION OF TECHNOLOGY

DIGITAL COMMUNICATION ADVANCEMENTS

- ✓ Decentralized data capturing.
- ✓ Capturing participation at Panchayat level.

PORTALS & MOBILE APPLICATIONS

- ✓ Capture women voice on issues.
- ✓ Recording women concerns

APPLICATION OF ANALYTICS

ADVANCED ANALYTICS

- ✓ Validation of Data
- ✓ Segmenting Information
- ✓ Predictive Analytics

BIG DATA TECHNIQUES

- ✓ Capturing and analysis of micro information.
- ✓ Social media analytics for quantifying local sentiments.

WOMEN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION SCORE

COLLECTION OF DATA

- ✓ Women as electorate
- ✓ Women as representatives
- ✓ Women as policy makers

CONVERT INFORMATION INTO INDICATORS

- ✓ Single score: weighted average of normalized version of different dimensions



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Conclusion

- India has a rich history of measuring political participation of women.
- Statistics has been used for proper gender budgeting which ensures inclusive growth of women.
- With decentralization of governance, India has started initiatives to record data at the lowest possible level.
- Identification of proxy participation and measuring actual decision making are two prime challenges India is facing.
- Indian Government has a lot of emphasis on utilizing technology and advanced analytics to overcome the present challenges.
- With more responsive data on women participation, better gender budget initiatives, India aims to move towards a gender equal society.



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“If by strength is meant brute strength, then, indeed, is woman less brute than man. If by strength is meant moral power, then woman is immeasurably man’s superior. Has she not greater intuition, is she not more self-sacrificing, has she not greater powers of endurance, has she not greater courage? Without her, man could not be.”

--Mahatma Gandhi