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# Women Candidates and Party Nomination Trends in India – Evidence from the 2009 General Election

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**Abstract:** More women MPs than ever before were elected to the lower house of the national parliament of India in the 2009 General Election. Yet, the increase in women's presence in the Lok Sabha cannot necessarily be attributed to the increased willingness of political parties to field more women candidates, despite rhetorical party political support for increasing women's participation in political institutions. This article analyses party political nomination of women as candidates in the 2009 election, and finds significant variations in levels of nomination across parties and across India's states. The article also examines in detail the nomination of female candidates by the two largest political parties, the Indian National Congress party and the Bharatiya Janata Party, both of which support proposals for introducing reserved seats for women in national and state legislatures. The findings reject the proposition that parties only nominate women in unwinnable seats, but finds support for the proposition that parties are risk averse when it comes to nominating women, and that this can restrict the number of women nominated for election. The article concludes with some further questions for future research on gender and political recruitment in India.

**Keywords:** elections, political parties, candidate nomination, political recruitment, women, gender, India

## Introduction

As a result of the 2009 General Election in India, more women MPs than ever before were elected to the lower house of the Indian national parliament, the Lok Sabha (House of the People). The proportion of women MPs in the Lok Sabha surpassed a significant threshold of 10%, with 58 women MPs elected out of a total of 543 elected MPs. In the two previous elections of 2004 and 1999, women MPs made up only 8% and 9% respectively. Thus, the 2009 outcome represented some modest, incremental gains for women's political participation in the national legislature. A consolidation followed shortly after with the election of the first female Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Meira Kumar. Despite these

achievements, this article argues that there is still reason to be cautious about what the 2009 general election in India signified for women's political recruitment and their participation as candidates and elected MPs.<sup>1</sup> Women's political participation in India since the first general election in 1951 has increased only very gradually, in part due to a reluctance of political parties to nominate higher numbers of women to contest elections. Contrary to the rhetoric of political parties supporting efforts to increase women's political participation, in 2009 the proportion of women candidates nominated to contest the election did not increase from the last general election in 2004. Furthermore, the nomination of women candidates continued to be significantly uneven across parties and across states. This paper argues that the increase in women's presence in the Lok Sabha cannot necessarily be attributed to the increased willingness of political parties to field more women candidates.

The unwillingness of political parties to increase their nomination of women candidates is particularly significant given party support for legislative proposals to reserve a third of seats in national and sub-national legislatures for women. Since 1996, a third of all seats in local level councils (panchayats) have been reserved for women as a result of the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendments. Legislative attempts to reserve seats for women in the national parliament and sub-national assemblies have been controversial and ongoing for at least 17 years. At the time of writing, the legislation had been approved by the Rajya Sabha on 9 March 2010 and is due to be introduced in the Lok Sabha but so far has been stalled due to a lack of consensus among parties. The enduring resistance to nominating women as candidates in elections poses important questions for electoral politics in India, whether instrumental in terms of the electoral challenges likely to be faced by political parties in the event that the reservation bill is passed, or normative, concerning democratic legitimacy and justice as long as women's participation remains low.

This article explores the party political nomination of women candidates in the 2009 Indian general election. At the outset it is acknowledged that (i) women in electoral politics are not an homogeneous group; (ii) that there are different reasons for why women are nominated which may be unrelated to issues of gender-inclusiveness, including very experienced female politicians who have served their constituencies over long periods of time, and (iii) that the low presence of women in electoral politics in India, as elsewhere, is a product of various factors not all of which relate to party nomination practices. However, the analysis here focuses on *women* candidates, recognising that women are still a minority in electoral politics, while still recognising that *some* women, such as Dalit women, working class women, and Muslim women, are even less likely to be part of this minority. It also

acknowledges the important role of political parties in acting as gatekeepers to participation in democratically elected representative institutions.

The article begins by outlining pertinent questions on gender and political recruitment, and highlights the lacunae of research on the Indian case (section one). It presents analysis of more aggregate level data on women's candidacy in the 2009 general election (section two), before discussing aspects of women's nomination by the two largest political parties in India, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Indian National Congress party (INC) (section three). This includes a disaggregated analysis across India's states relative to their strength in each state, investigating whether these two parties nominate women primarily in safe seats or unwinnable (marginal) seats. The article concludes by discussing these findings and identifies further questions for research on gender, political recruitment, and elections in India.

### **Gender, representation and party nominations**

Since the 1990s, efforts to increase the political participation and presence of women within legislatures have gathered momentum with an increasing number of electoral systems employing legally mandated or voluntarily constituted affirmative action measures (Krook, 2009). Rationales offered for increasing the numbers of women in electoral politics vary but might include the following: (i) female representatives will represent 'women's interests' better than male representatives (e.g. 'substantive representation'); (ii) women will change the substance and style of politics, making it more co-operative and less corrupt; (iii) that women have a right to participate in democratic politics and should not be prevented from doing so as a result of discrimination (justice argument); (iv) that women's presence in political institutions will increase the democratic legitimacy of these institutions as a result of their increased representativeness of the population, and (v) that higher numbers of women in politics will have a symbolic, role model effect on potential aspirants, altering the notion that electoral politics is a male-dominated domain (Sawer, 2000; Bacchi, 2006; Mansbridge, 1999; Phillips 1991, 1993).

Despite recent gains, it is well established in the literature on political recruitment that a) political parties serve as gatekeepers to elected office via the distribution of candidate nominations for election, and b) gender-based discrimination by party elites during the recruitment process is one among many factors that explains the low proportion of women among candidates contesting elections for political office (e.g. Caul, 1999; Norris and Lovenduski, 1995). The United Nation's Beijing Platform for Action in 1995 called on

governments to ‘encourage political parties to integrate women in elective and non-elective public positions in the same proportion and at the same levels as men’ (Beijing PfA Action 190(b), cited in UN Women (n.d.)). It mandated political parties to ‘consider examining party structures and procedures to remove all barriers that directly or indirectly discriminate against the participation of women’; ‘consider developing initiatives that allow women to participate fully in all internal policy-making structures and appointive and electoral nominating processes’; and to take ‘measures to ensure that women can participate in the leadership of political parties on an equal basis with men’ (Beijing PfA Actions 191 (a), (b) and (c) respectively, in UN Women (n.d)).

Party political nomination practices in India, and their relationship to low levels of women’s participation in electoral politics, remains an under-explored area of research. Most political science analyses of general elections in India which include a focus on gender tend to remain at the aggregate level of how many women contested and were elected, and the proportion of women candidates nominated by each party (e.g. Singh Rana, 2006; Roy and Wallace, 2007). Many of these studies focus on either party nomination trends at the all-India level only, or in one or two states, and rarely do any attempt to compare nomination trends across India’s states. Analyses of the National Election Study which do discuss women and electoral politics often focus on the gaps between men and women’s voting behaviour such as in party political support and attitudes towards party policies (e.g. Deshpande, 2004). Dagar’s analysis of women candidates in the 2009 election provides some disaggregated analysis of women candidates in the 2009 election and is one of a few important exceptions (Dagar, 2011).

Few studies of political recruitment in India exist and even fewer explicitly focus on the recruitment of women.<sup>2</sup> Notable among these are Kochanek’s study of political recruitment processes within the Congress party prior to the 1967 general election (Kochanek, 1967), Palmer’s study of Congress recruitment practices for the 1972 state assembly elections, and a series of articles by Ramashray Roy, again on the Congress, in relation to recruitment practices for the 1957 and 1962 general elections (Roy, 1966, 1967a, 1967b, 1967c, 1967d). Katzenstein’s study (1978) of the political prominence of women in India also acknowledges the role of the Congress Party in selecting women for election. However, these are restricted to the Congress party, understandably given its dominance in the early post-Independence years, and are also somewhat dated. More recent studies of political recruitment in India are few and far between. One focus has been caste-based parties in north India and their shifting recruitment practices in the BSP in relation to expanding their recruitment pool from among

their traditional representational base, the *Dalit* community, to include the recruitment of higher caste candidates (Pai, 1999, cited in Jaffrelot, 2011). Perhaps understandably, political recruitment and selection is notoriously difficult to research, because it concerns the inner workings of parties behind closed doors (Niven, 1998), although occasionally, disputes over nominations are made public, especially when unsuccessful applicants or party workers disagree with nomination decisions; for example, if parties select new entrants to contest elections instead of loyal party workers seeking their party's nomination.

Several studies exist on the profile of women in electoral politics in India, but not necessarily how they are recruited by parties and nominated to contest elections, and many of these studies are dated (Wolkowitz, 1987; Agnew, 1979, Kumari and Dubey, 1994; Kumari and Kidwai, 1998; Rai and Hoskyns, 1998). Mishra's more recent study of women legislators in Orissa is an exception, but he devotes only one chapter to the issue of political recruitment and focuses on the pre-legislative experience of women and their profiles as candidates, but does not pay much attention to party attitudes towards the nomination of women (Mishra, 2000). Manikandan and Wyatt's recent analysis of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) considers *inter alia* the difficulties for women in developing political careers within the DMK, with a lack of access to important party posts (district secretaries) being one of several key impediments (Manikandan and Wyatt, 2013). Rai's recent analysis of the politics of access also contributes an insightful analysis of how female politicians negotiate access to political candidacy (Rai, 2012).

Women's limited participation in Indian democratic politics is well known, but what is missing among studies of India's elections is a meso-level analysis of party political nomination of women, within and across parties and states and in particular constituencies. This is the focus of this article. After a brief macro-level analysis of parties' nomination of women in the Indian General Election of 2009, it focuses on the particular nomination patterns of India's two largest parties, the incumbent Indian National Congress party (hereafter Congress, or INC), and the largest party of opposition, the right-wing Hindu nationalist party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (hereafter BJP). These two parties are selected on the basis that as the two parties returning the largest number of women candidates to the Lok Sabha - two thirds of all women MPs in 2009 - they play an important role in determining the total number of women members in parliament. Key questions include: i) are parties consistent in their nomination of women across India's states?; ii) is there a relationship between a party's anticipated likelihood of success and the nomination of women in a particular state?; and iii) can one observe consistent differences in the nomination strategies

of the two parties across states, or similarities between parties in particular states? In other words, does the political culture, history of women's nomination, and party competition present in any one state have a bearing on the nomination and election of women to the Lok Sabha from that state? The analysis draws on official quantitative data on the 2009 election and previous general elections and state Assembly elections in India, which is publicly available from the Election Commission of India, as well as qualitative data on the profile of women politicians as candidates and elected MPs, available from parliamentary and party profile pages, and to a limited extent, press reports.

### **India's electoral system and the 2009 general election**

The Lok Sabha, or lower house of the national parliament of India, is currently made up of 543 parliamentary constituencies, as well as 2 seats for members from the Anglo-Indian community, the latter being nominated by the President of India. The lower house is elected by simple plurality vote with single member constituencies. Parliamentary terms run for a maximum of five years and there is no limit on how many terms MPs can be re-elected. In accordance with Article 330 of the Constitution of India, a number of constituencies are reserved for members of Scheduled Caste (currently 84 seats) and Scheduled Tribe (currently 47 seats) communities in constituencies where these communities are relatively numerous, and only candidates from these communities can contest these seats. Thus, affirmative action in the shape of reservations either in electoral politics or in state employment and educational institutions, is a familiar and established mechanism for ensuring the representation of (some but not all) marginalised communities in India (Randall, 2004).<sup>3</sup>

Prior to the 2009 general election, the incumbent government was headed by Congress along with a number of parties in coalition. In the last two decades, coalitions between political parties have become an important feature of electoral politics in India. Despite a long period of single party dominance by the Indian National Congress party after Independence, India's party system has become increasingly fragmented since the 1980s with a number of regional and identity-based parties competing or collaborating with national parties, making electoral politics in India increasingly competitive and complex. The two most powerful coalitions in recent years have been the United Progressive Alliance (UPA), headed by the Congress and in government from 2004, and the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), headed by the BJP and in government from 1999-2004. Smaller parties, some of

which are electorally dominant at the sub-national level, have become important coalition partners at the national level and play a significant role in deciding electoral strategies, in the post-election distribution of ministerial portfolios, and in maintaining coalition stability and legislative support for, or opposition to, government policy throughout the parliamentary term. Coalition politics have also been an enduring factor in the opposition to increasing legal quotas for women in the national parliament, with the anti-quota stance of some smaller state-based parties preventing the passage of national legislation.

The Indian general election of 2009 took place in five phases across the country, in which more than 8000 candidates contested, representing 368 parties in 543 constituencies, with more than 700 million Indian citizens eligible to vote, and more than 400 million votes recorded (ECI, n.d.).<sup>4</sup> In three states, assembly elections were also held alongside the general election. Key alliances included the incumbent Congress-led UPA (with some changes as a result of shifting relations between the government and their allies towards the end of the last parliament). The NDA, led by the BJP, also continued their alliance, albeit it in a slightly modified form. The final phase of voting ended on May 13 and having won a comfortable majority, the Congress Party and its allies formed the new government.

Fifty-eight women were elected in 2009, making up nearly 11% of all MPs in the lower house. Consistent with overall results, the highest number of women elected was from the Congress Party, with 23 women elected in total, making up 11% of all Congress MPs, and 40% of all women MPs. Among the female Congress MPs elected were party chairperson Sonia Gandhi and a number of former ministers from the previous government. The proportion of women elected from the BJP party was the same (11%), but totalled only 13, although this did include a few high profile politicians such as Sushma Swaraj, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, and Sumitra Mahajan, elected for her seventh term in the Lok Sabha. Together, women MPs from the BJP and the INC made up nearly two thirds of all female MPs in the new parliament. Notably, female members were proportionally more numerous in seats reserved for Scheduled Caste communities (12 out of 84 seats or more than 14%, compared to 11% overall), whereas women's election to constituencies reserved for Scheduled Tribe communities was more reflective of their strength in the house overall (five out of 47 seats or 11%). According to the constitutional provision for ensuring the representation of the minority Anglo-Indian community in parliament, the President nominated 2 MPs, one of whom was a woman, bringing the total number of women to 59 out of 545 MPs.



### ***Party nominations and women's electoral success in 2009***

Despite the celebratory mood surrounding the highest ever proportion of women MPs elected to parliament, and the reasonably high profile of a few women in parliament, the proportion of women candidates in the 2009 general election *did not substantially increase* from the previous general election in 2004. This runs contrary to the rhetorical commitment to increasing opportunities for women's political participation from a significant number of parties. Female candidates constituted only 6.9% of all candidates, or 556 women out of a total of 8070 candidates. Compared to the general election in 2004, this represented a *large increase in numbers* (57% increase from 355 women contesting in 2004), but actually a *very small decline in the proportion* of women candidates relative to the total number of candidates (from 7.0% to 6.9%). In other words, while more women contested in 2009 compared to 2004, the total number of candidates was also larger, meaning *the proportion of women candidates stayed relatively the same*. Furthermore, the proportion of women running as independent candidates also increased in 2009 to 37% of all women candidates, compared to 33% in 2004. Therefore, the *proportion of women candidates who were nominated by political parties in 2009 actually declined* from 67% in 2004 to 63% in 2009 (the importance of party nominations is discussed further below).

[Table 1 about here]

For the national parties, the nomination of women candidates did not exceed much beyond 10% (see Table 1). The BJP nominated 44 women, making up 10.2% of all BJP candidates. Similarly the Congress party nominated 43 women, a slightly lower proportion of all Congress party candidates at 9.8%. Parties of the Left did not achieve the same level – for the Communist Party of India (CPI) and Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPM), women made up 7.1 and 7.3% of their parties' total candidates respectively. This is consistent with the unimpressive record of the Left parties in India on issues relating to women's inclusion in electoral politics, despite having a high profile feminist advocate such as Brinda Karat of the CPM among the senior party leadership and a prominent party affiliated women's organisation, All-India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA) (Randall, 2004). The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), a party that champions the cause of India's most oppressed group in the caste hierarchy, the Dalits or Scheduled Castes, and is headed by a woman, Kumari Mayawati, nominated a lower proportion of women, 5% of total candidates or 23 women. Both the performance of the Left parties and the BSP is significant as it contests the notion that parties which are built upon claims to social justice and equality will be more

likely to nominate women candidates (Caul, 1999). It also raises interesting questions regarding inter-sectional identities and multi-layered processes of marginalisation, resulting in complex dynamics of political inclusion and exclusion. Compared with the previous general election in 2004, there was no clear pattern of improvement or decline across the national parties. The BJP and the CPI both put forward a slightly higher proportion of women candidates in 2009 (compared to 8% and 6% respectively in 2004), whereas the Congress Party, the CPM and the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), a UPA constituent, fielded proportionally fewer women candidates this time (11%, 12% and 16% in 2004). The BSP showed very little movement in its nomination of women candidates from 2004, which was also 5%.

Most regional parties nominated a lower proportion of women than the two major national parties of the BJP and Congress, though this was not true for all parties, and varied across states. Even where the relative proportion of women candidates was higher, the small total number of candidates of many of these parties meant that the number of women nominated was even smaller, for example, the Rashtriya Lok Dal, the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena, the Punjab-based Shiromani Akali Dal, and the Trinamul Congress in West Bengal. Some smaller parties had similar levels of support for women candidates despite different positions on women's reservation. Some parties nominated no women candidates, including the Biju Janata Dal in Orissa, and the Janata Dal (Secular). In contrast, a fledgling party called the United Women's Front nominated 4 female candidates and 2 male candidates in Delhi, Haryana, Bihar and Andhra Pradesh. Suman Krishan Kant, the wife of the former Vice President of India, has established the party in 2007 with the aim of increasing the space for women in the political process (The Hindu, 2007).

Evidently, levels of party political nomination of women varied significantly among parties. Yet, women were more likely to run as party-nominated candidates than as independents compared to men, often due to financial and other resource-based obstacles to effective campaigning. While more than a third (37%) of female candidates ran as independents in 2009, nearly half of all male candidates ran as independents (48%). Very few independents are ever elected to parliament and more often than not they are forced to forfeit their security deposits due to the low number of votes they attain. As was the case in 2004, none of the 207 women independent candidates were elected in 2009 and only nine of the 3623 men independents were elected compared to 5 in 2004 (although in terms of seats the latter represented nine out of 543 or about 1.6%). All women independent candidates and 99.3% of men independent candidates forfeited their deposit in the 2004 Lok Sabha election.<sup>5</sup>

The non-existent success rate among female independents (and low success rate among male independents) serves to re-emphasise the importance of party nomination for electoral success in the Indian context, and typically more so for women than men.

### **Party nominations of women candidates: across states and within parties**

So far, data on women candidate nomination has been presented at the aggregate all-India level, and has focused on variations *across* parties but not *within* parties. However, a party's national average of nomination of women may be unrepresentative of substantial variations across states. For example, a national party nomination average of 10 percent for the Congress party obscures the fact that in the states of Orissa or Jharkhand the Congress party did not nominate any women at all, yet in another state, Rajasthan, women made up 20% of Congress Party candidates. Here, I test the proposition that parties see women as high-risk candidates and, because parties are risk-averse towards their strongholds, parties will only nominate women to contest in unwinnable seats. This is explored at state and parliamentary constituency levels to determine the relationship between women candidate nominations and (i) the party's chance of success in a particular state (based on previous election success, notwithstanding an anti-incumbency effect); and (ii) the party's chance of success in particular constituencies (marginal seats, incumbency, strongholds).

With regards to the first proposition, the party as a gatekeeper is a strong determining factor as to the number of women nominated to contest elections (discussed earlier). Parties are risk averse when it comes to distributing nominations and see (most) women candidates as high risk. They will therefore be reluctant to nominate women, where political contests are tight or where they do not have a strong electoral presence.<sup>6</sup> This implies that 'winnability' has a specifically gendered component – women, by virtue of their sex, are seen as less likely to win elections, and as a result they are less likely to be nominated. Thus, parties will select women only where the party is popular and where they expect to do well, and at the same time, where they are contesting a large number of seats and so have a larger number of nominations to distribute.

With regards to the second proposition, either internal party pressure from the national leadership, internal advocacy for including more women, or external public pressure to nominate more women candidates might compel parties to nominate a larger proportion of women candidates. If women are deemed less likely to win, parties will not risk winnable seats by nominating women candidates, and so parties are inclined to nominate women only in hard-to-win or unwinnable constituencies. Any seats women do win will be a bonus to the

party but will not jeopardise the party's success in more winnable seats. Unless attention is paid to *where* women are nominated, focusing just on levels of women's nomination may be misleading in terms of the probability of electoral success. Furthermore, election data shows that often women represent a larger proportion of elected MPs than their proportion as candidates, demonstrating that their success rate is higher than that of male candidates. This statistic has been employed to argue that not only can women win elections, but that they often do better than male candidates. While there is some validity in this argument, it understates the extent to which risk-averse parties may only nominate the *strongest or most experienced* female candidates, and that they take more risks in nominating male candidates. This may explain why the smaller number of strong women candidates tends to do better than the larger pool of male candidates who are more varied in the likelihood of their success. Therefore it is inaccurate – and potentially damaging to arguments advocating for increasing women's participation in electoral politics - to suggest that women are typically more capable than men at contesting elections. It should be anticipated that if parties took the same risks with female candidates that they do with male candidates, that success rates would even out between men and women (assuming the absence of voter discrimination against male or female candidates).

### ***Candidate nomination in two national parties: the Congress and the BJP***

The analysis focuses on the two largest national parties, the Congress party (the largest party of the UPA and incumbent government prior to 2009) and the BJP (largest party of opposition and of the previously ruling NDA from 1999-2004). While this presents its own limitations in terms of representativeness across all parties, the advantage of comparing these two national parties is that they contest elections in a larger range of constituencies: all (Congress) or nearly all (BJP) of India's 35 states and Union Territories. Another significant advantage is that, as by far the largest two parties in parliament, one may reasonably assume that their nomination of women candidates will have an important bearing on the total number of women elected to parliament.

Another reason to focus on these two parties is to test claims regarding their self-declared support for increasing women's political participation in electoral politics. The 2009 election manifestoes of the Congress and the BJP were both explicit in their pledges towards female voters. The Congress Party's manifesto pledged that if elected they would pass legislation reserving a third of seats in the national parliament and state assemblies during the next parliament effective for the following general election (INC, 2009: 7, 14).<sup>7</sup> The BJP's 2009

election manifesto similarly promised to implement a 33% reservation for women. Both manifestoes contained an array of special incentives and programmes targeted at women and girls' health, education, employment and training, and more effective implementation of existing legislation. Commitment to the women's reservation bill from the leadership of both parties was evidenced by its passage in the Rajya Sabha in March 2010, yet the Congress and BJP have different histories with regards to nominating women for election. In the last 30 years, the proportion of women nominated by the Congress for Lok Sabha elections has fluctuated between 6% and 11%, peaking in 1999 (see Figure 1). In contrast, the BJP started low in the early 1980s and has risen fairly steadily to match Congress in the 2009 election.

Both parties have made efforts to increase the presence of women in internal organisational structures. Historically, in the 1950s and 1960s the Congress party operated a 15% party quota for nominating women candidates in elections, although as research shows, this quota was never achieved due to internal party resistance and subsequently, at the level of party strategy (Kochanek, 1967; Roy, 1966; Palmer, 1972, Katzenstein, 1978). As Wendy Singer argues (2007: 22), 'the growing realisation that women did not necessarily vote for women contributed to the cessation of that Congress policy'. However, the Congress Party leadership's nomination and election of the first female President in 2007, their nomination and election of the first female Speaker in 2009, and their apparent efforts to pass the Reservation Bill demonstrate that Congress are again consciously seeking to demonstrate their commitment to women's political empowerment, even if only symbolically in the cases of these two high profile posts.

[Figure 1 about here]

Similar efforts have been made by the BJP to increase the presence of women within party structures. The National Election Study in 2004 showed that on average fewer women than men vote for the BJP (Deshpande, 2004). In June 2007, the BJP president Rajnath Singh announced that 33% of party positions at all levels of the party would be allocated to women (The Hindu, 2007). Reportedly, this was to signal their commitment to women's political empowerment and to counter competitive pressures from the Congress in attracting women voters. Rajnath Singh was also reported to have said that the BJP was specifically trying to recruit women as new members into the party (ibid).

Pressure has also come from BJP female party members to increase the nomination of women candidates for elections. With the approaching assembly elections in the southern

state of Karnataka in 2008, the president of the Karnataka branch of the BJP Mahila Morcha (women's wing), insisted that the party leadership allocate to women candidates at least one 'winnable' constituency in each district (The Hindu, 2008a). It was also reported that the party's women's wing president in each state would sit on the State Election Committee which selects candidates for the elections. While the BJP have professed support for the women's reservation bill, they have also expressed support for party quotas as an alternative to mandated legal quotas (The Hindu, 2008b). This would allow the party leadership to determine in which constituencies to nominate women, similar to the current system, except that, if consistent with similar party quota models outside India, parties would be penalised if they fail to achieve a mandated proportion of female candidates to total candidates. This format ostensibly provides increased opportunities but does not guarantee their election.

### ***Nominating women: the Congress and BJP state-wise in 2009***

Have efforts to increase women's presence in party structures had an effect on the nomination of women for contesting elections? Both parties fluctuated in their nomination of female candidates across states in 2009.<sup>8</sup> This section draws on election data prior to 2009 to assess whether nomination levels in 2009 are related to previous electoral success of the two parties across India's states in both national and sub-national level elections. It employs data from the 2004 General Election and the most recent Assembly election held in each state prior to the 2009 General Election.

#### ***Indian National Congress Party***

The Congress party contested the 2009 election in every State and Union Territory of India, but nominated women in only 17 of 35 States and UTs (see Table 2). The Congress party average for nominating women in 2009 was 10%, but varied across major states, reaching 21.4% in West Bengal (3 out of 14 candidates) and 20% each in Haryana (2 out of 10 candidates) and Rajasthan (5 out of 25 candidates). In most of the 18 states and UTs where Congress did not field any women, numbers of male Congress candidates were also small, but Congress also fielded no women candidates in the eastern states of Jharkhand and Orissa, where they put forward 9 and 21 male candidates respectively.

Above average party nomination of women by Congress was recorded in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan and West Bengal. Women candidates contesting in the four large states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh made up half of all women Congress candidates. While women's candidacy was

rarer in small states and UTs, where there is often only one or two seats available to contest, in the two-seat state of Meghalaya, the daughter of a former Speaker of the Lok Sabha and incumbent MP Agatha Sangma was one of two Congress candidates in the state. A female Congress candidate was also nominated in one of Delhi's seven constituencies.

No clear trend can be observed when comparing Congress' nominations of women in 2009 based on their performance in the previous Lok Sabha election of 2004 and in the most recent Assembly election in each state (including both seats won and vote share). It appears that *Congress mostly nominated higher percentages of women in states where they were more likely to do well*, based on recent electoral performance, but there are some notable exceptions. The party's higher than average nomination of women in the major states of Andhra Pradesh (12%), Haryana (20%), and Rajasthan (20%) was where the Congress party won the most recent Assembly elections in these states. Congress also recorded higher than average nomination of women in Chhattisgarh (18%) and Punjab (15%) where they did not win the last Assembly elections, even though they achieved a respectable 39% and 41% of vote share in Chhattisgarh and Punjab respectively, coming a close second to the BJP in the former and the SAD-BJP alliance in the latter. The Congress Party also recorded a lower than average nomination in the western state of Gujarat where the BJP is electorally dominant, the latter winning nearly two thirds of all seats in the last Assembly election in 2007 and achieving a 10% vote share margin over the Congress. Similarly, the Congress Party's nomination of women was lower in Madhya Pradesh, another stronghold of the BJP where the latter had won twice as many seats as Congress in the 2008 Assembly election. Finally, Congress nominated a lower than average proportion of women in the large northern state of Uttar Pradesh, where in 2007 it won only 22 of 393 seats contested and registered only 9% vote share in the state, coming fourth in the state behind the BSP, the BJP, and the SP.

Contradictory to the more general picture was the party's higher than average nomination of women in Bihar (16%) and West Bengal (21%) where Congress had low vote shares in 2004 and where other political parties have been dominant in state-level government at least in recent years. Congress also recorded lower than average nomination of women in Assam, where the party won the last Assembly election in 2006 and was elected in nine out of 14 Lok Sabha seats in 2004. The Congress also chose not to nominate any women in the state of Orissa, despite having gained a 40% vote share in 2004.

It is not clear whether electoral alliances at the state level impact negatively on the proportion of women nominated by reducing the number of seats available to contest. The Congress registered lower than average nomination in Maharashtra (4%) and Tamil Nadu

(7%) where state-based alliances were in operation with Congress as the minority partner. It is also not clear whether a conventionally lower presence of female candidates in any given state creates less of an obligation across all parties to nominate women. In the southern state of Kerala, numbers of women in state politics and representing the state in the national parliament have remained low (only 5% of State Legislators elected in 2006 were women), despite the state's reputation as having some of the highest levels of female achievement in literacy and health-related indicators in the country, which suggests forms of institutional exclusion specific to electoral politics. Yet Congress did badly in the 2004 Lok Sabha election, winning no seats despite achieving a 32% share of the vote, and won only 24 of 140 seats in the 2006 Assembly election. This might also explain Congress reluctance to field women candidates - only 6% in 2009.

[Insert Table 2 about here]

#### *The Bharatiya Janata Party*

The national party average for the BJP in terms of nominating women was around 10%. While the BJP contested in 32 of 35 states and UTs, it chose to nominate female candidates in around half of these (see Table 3). There was no contest for BJP women in 16 states and UTs, including mostly small states and UTs but, like Congress, in Jharkhand where the BJP fielded 12 male candidates. Percentages of female candidates also varied significantly across major states reaching from 27.3% in Chhattisgarh (3 out of 11 candidates) and 23.8% in Orissa (5 out of 21 candidates).

As with the Congress party, trends across states in terms of women's nomination and recent electoral performance also suggests that the BJP *mostly nominated higher number of women in states where they were likely to do well* but again there is contradictory evidence which prevents generalisation. The BJP recorded higher than average nomination of women in Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Orissa where BJP won last Assembly elections (including some with coalition allies such as in Orissa) and had high vote shares in 2004. Also, there was a higher than average nomination of female candidates in Delhi, where they recorded a high vote share in 2004, even though they only won one seat, and in Rajasthan where the party had won 21 out of 25 seats contested with 49% of the votes, even though Congress won the subsequent Assembly election in 2008. The BJP registered a lower than average nomination in Andhra Pradesh where the Congress Party is dominant (and the



main rival is a regional party), in Maharashtra where Congress and an allied party are dominant, and in West Bengal which is a Left stronghold.

However, again the results are contradictory given that the BJP also registered a higher than average nomination of women in the southern state of Tamil Nadu, where the party typically has a low presence; in Assam, where, as noted above, the Congress are strong; and in Kerala where the party's presence is low. The BJP also nominated few women in Karnataka despite winning the last Assembly election in 2008, although the proportion of women nominated in Karnataka was low across most of the major parties. In sum, the analysis suggests there is no clear evidence of a relationship between party nomination of women candidates in 2009 and previous electoral success in any given state. This is not to rule out previous electoral success as a factor which influences parties' decisions around nomination, but to suggest instead that there are a number of complex factors which may also play a part and which need further investigation.

[Insert Table 3 about here]

### ***Marginal and safe seats: where women candidates are nominated***

While the state level analysis showed no clear relationship between the proportion of women candidates nominated by either the BJP or Congress and the likelihood of success in any given state, a clearer picture is revealed at the constituency level as to whether parties nominate women in winnable or unwinnable seats. Studies of gender and political recruitment suggest that it is not sufficient for the party to nominate higher numbers of women to contest elections if the constituencies for which they are nominated are unwinnable. Two measures – (i) the margin of victory during the previous general election in 2004, and (ii) the candidate's relative standing in the constituency – are used to test whether the Congress and BJP nominate women in winnable seats. A marginal seat is defined here as one where in the previous election, the margin of victory was 5% of votes or less. Due to the relatively larger victory margin, a non-marginal seat may either be a safe seat if the sitting MP is from the same party or an unwinnable seat if the incumbent is from a rival party. In the latter case, challengers may be less likely to win the seat. The combination of marginality and incumbency and its effect on the 'winnability' of the seats is represented in Figure 2.

[Insert Figures 2 and 3 about here]

Due to the frequently large number of parties in electoral contests, as well as the large number of marginal constituencies<sup>9</sup>, another measure of analysis is employed– the relative standing of both the individual candidate and the party in a particular constituency. Candidates are divided into three categories: A, B, and C, and are defined as follows: whether the same individual candidate contesting in 2009 (category A) or the party via another candidate (category B) either won or placed second in the constituency in either of the last two general elections in 1999 and 2004.<sup>10</sup> If neither the candidate nor the party won or came second in 1999 or 2004, this was classified as category C. Candidates in categories A and B are deemed to have a higher chance of success because they are a known quantity with established links in the constituency.<sup>11</sup> Candidates and parties classified in category C are determined as relative outsiders for the purpose of comparison and assumed to be less likely to win (see Table 4). While total numbers are small, it is possible to make some tentative observations as to party nomination trends for the two parties (see Table 5).

For the Congress Party around half (21 of 39) of female candidates were nominated to contest potentially winnable seats (marginal seats of rival incumbents and non-marginal seats of own party incumbents). A further four candidates were nominated to contest potentially vulnerable seats in which their own party was incumbent. In terms of constituency familiarity (categories A to C), in 34 out of 39 seats the Congress party nominated women in seats where either the party or the individual candidate had achieved electoral success or had come second in the last two elections. Only five women were nominated in seats where the candidate or party was a relative outsider. This is equivalent to nearly 90% of seats where Congress nominated women in 2009. Findings were confirmed in the election of 23 out of 43 women candidates, or 53%, including successes in 7 out of the 12 marginal (swing) seats and 5 of the 14 safer seats held by non-Congress incumbents. One candidate in Uttar Pradesh also won in a Category C seat, defeating both of the main party contenders, the BSP and the SP, as well as the BJP who had polled third in the constituency in 2004 and 1999. These findings suggest that Congress nominated more women in seats which were potentially winnable than unwinnable. However, due to the low numbers of women overall, it also suggests that Congress took fewer chances on nominating women in a greater number of contests including those that were higher risk in terms of marginality.

For the BJP the proportion of women nominated to potentially winnable seats was lower but not considerably so. Again around half (19 out of 39) of all nominated female candidates were contesting in potentially winnable seats. Eleven out of 39 seats were classified as marginal but most of these were occupied by non-BJP incumbents and therefore were potentially winnable. Another eight seats were non-marginal and occupied by BJP incumbents. Yet, nearly half of the 39 constituencies (compared to one third of seats for Congress) were non-marginal seats occupied by non-BJP incumbents, meaning that candidates were outsiders or challengers. Nearly two thirds of seats (64%) were classified as category A or B, compared to 90% for Congress, with one third positioning the candidate as a relative outsider (category C). In other words, the BJP fielded fewer women candidates than Congress in seats where they had a reasonable chance of winning the election contest.

[Table 5 about here]

### ***Women candidates and political experience***

The finding that, in the 2009 General Election, the Congress Party and the BJP nominated women in winnable seats contradicts observations that political parties in India mostly nominate women in unwinnable seats. However, this should not be understood as confirmation that these two parties have made significant efforts to increase the probability of election for their women candidates. The fact still remains that the proportion of women candidates to total candidates in either party does not extend much beyond 10%. Furthermore, if we examine the individual profiles of these candidates, we see that the majority of women have significant political experience. For example, of the 43 women candidates nominated by the Congress Party, nearly half (20) had already served at least one term in the Lok Sabha, and a further six had served at least one term at the state level in the state assemblies. Of the remaining 17, several had previously contested (unsuccessfully) either Lok Sabha or State Assembly elections (as in the cases of Killi Krupa Rani, Vinita Vijay, Sudha Rai), had political experience at the sub-state level (e.g. as city mayors, as in the cases of Sarubala R. Thondaiman (Trichy) and Rita Bahuguna Joshi (Allahabad)), or had occupied party organisational posts (such as State or District Congress Committee President, or national general secretary of the Mahila Congress, as in the case of Shahida Kamal in Kerala).

Data for the BJP shows similar results. Of the 44 women candidates nominated, around a third (13) had served a term in the Lok Sabha and a further six had served at least

one term in the state assemblies. Of the remaining 25 candidates, several had contested previous Lok Sabha or state assembly elections (e.g. Radhrani Panda in Orissa, and Tamilsai Soundararajan and Lalitha Kumaramangalam in Tamil Nadu), had political experience at the sub-state level (e.g. Saroj Pandey as former Mayor of Durg, Meera Kanwaria as former Mayor of Delhi, and M Bindu Teacher as a municipal councillor in Kerala), and/or had held important party posts (e.g. as BJP State Mahila Morcha Presidents, such as Rema Raghunandan in Kerala and Yadlapati Swarupa Rani in Andhra Pradesh).

This evidence of women candidates' political experience suggests that *while these two parties have nominated women in mostly winnable seats, they have nominated mostly women who are strong candidates based on previous political experience*. This explains why the success rate of female candidates is generally higher than that of male candidates; it is reasonable to expect that the disparity in success rate between male and female candidates would diminish as the proportion of male and female candidates equalises. But it also suggests that these two parties are highly risk averse when selecting female candidates. This prevents the extension of opportunities to contest elections to women with a wider range of political experience and restricts the potential pool of women as elected representatives, especially given that these two national parties have a substantial impact on the total number of women elected to parliament.

## **Conclusions**

Women candidates are often nominated to contest elections for a variety of reasons unrelated to concerns of gender inclusivity. However, women's participation in electoral politics *as women* at the national and state level continues to be low. Trends in the nomination of women candidates in the 2009 general election in India were not consistent with rhetorical party support for increasing the political participation of women in electoral politics. Overall, the nomination of women candidates had not increased from the previous general election in 2004. The small increase in the proportion of women elected to the Lok Sabha cannot be attributed to an increase in the nomination of women by political parties. As such, election nomination data continues to strongly contest the 'incremental track' assumption that women's political participation will gradually increase with each election over time. It is clear that, in the absence of legislative quotas, women's participation in electoral politics will only increase if parties make efforts to nominate a higher proportion of women candidates.

However, to understand the dynamics of the low nomination of women, a more disaggregated analysis is needed. The analysis presented here showed significant variation in nomination levels across parties and across states which warrants further explanation. For example, the BJP in 2009 nominated its highest ever proportion of women candidates, but this varied widely across states. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the complexity of different intervening factors, no clear relationship could be determined between the proportion of women nominated as candidates and the likelihood of success for two main national parties, the BJP and the Congress, in any given state. Thus a more state-focused analysis or party-focused analysis, or both, may be able to better explain why the nomination of women candidates within parties is much lower (or non-existent) in some states compared to others. Potential directions for future research include analyses of party political practices of recruitment and selection, such as party norms, criteria, and decision-making structures influencing the nomination of women candidates. Salient questions might include, but are not limited to, the following:

- What are the internal party debates, if any, over increasing the proportion of women candidates nominated in elections?
- What are the obstacles to increased levels of recruitment and nomination of women candidates within parties and within states?
- To what extent do party attitudes to nominating women vary across state units of a particular party?
- How is the nomination of women candidates related to women's political participation and accumulation of experience within party organisational structures?

From the analysis presented here, we can conclude that in 2009 the two main national parties took few risks on women candidates, nominating mostly strong female candidates and mostly in winnable seats (including in constituencies the candidates have themselves cultivated). While this varied slightly between the two major national parties studied, this general risk-averseness towards women candidates limits the total number of women nominated to contest elections. Of course, even if numbers of women candidates increase, this does not necessarily mean their chances of winning elections will rise simultaneously. Expanding the pool of strong female candidates requires parties to enable opportunities for women to build political experience in party organisational structures and to show leadership in nomination processes which matches their rhetorical commitment to women's political empowerment (and to

subsequently support less experienced women candidates particularly when they face hostility from rival aspirants within their own party). Further investigation into the low levels of women's nomination and election, particularly in states such as Kerala and Karnataka which have relatively better profiles in terms of women's empowerment than states which recorded a higher proportion of women's nomination such as Rajasthan, would also yield insights into the gender-inflected exclusionary practices operating in the specific institutional context of electoral politics as opposed to wider society.

Finally, given that legislation for the Women's Reservation Bill is currently pending in the Lok Sabha at the time of writing, it would be politically expedient for political parties to pay greater attention to supporting women's inclusion in electoral politics. With substantial variations between states in the participation of women in electoral politics, addressing the exclusion of women from electoral politics may take on more urgency in some states compared to others. Yet, rather than continuously deferring to the introduction of gender quotas, which may or may not materialise, as a time when political parties will make efforts to include women in electoral politics, a more *immediate* research enquiry into party-based and state-based obstacles to women's inclusion in electoral politics is required, as part of a broader concern with making institutions of representative democracy in India more inclusive at all levels.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> At nearly 11%, the proportion of women in India's lower house is below Asia's regional average of 19.1% and the world average of 21.7%, although exceeds Japan (8.1%), Malaysia (10.4%) and Sri Lanka (5.8%) (IPU, 2013). These figures represent the situation as at 1 September 2013 from the Inter-Parliamentary Union database on women in national parliaments (IPU, 2013) and include countries without and with quotas for women in the **lower** houses of parliaments.

<sup>2</sup> This lack of attention to gender and political recruitment contrasts with a more substantial literature on women's reservation in panchayats (local councils) since 1996 (see for example Jayal, 2006; Kudva, 2003; Hust, 2004), debates and disagreements over the various incarnations of the women's reservation bill (Rai, 1999; Randall, 2006; Narasimhan, 2002; Kishwar, 1996, 2006; Sharma, 1998; Singer, 2007; Dhanda, 2008), as well as excellent micro-level studies of intra-party activism and male-dominated intra-party social networks (Sarkar and Butalia, 1995; Sen, 2007; Bedi, 2007; Rogers, 2009; Govinda, 2008; Ciotti, 2006). Others focus on senior female politicians in India and analyse gendered narratives of political leadership, including and beyond dynastic paths to political office (Banerjee, 2004; Spary, 2007; Sunder Rajan, 1993). However, focusing on the participation of a few elite women provides only partial explanations for the low level of women's participation in electoral politics generally (Fleschenberg, 2008; Goetz, 2007).

<sup>3</sup> The 2009 general election was significant as it involved the first delimitation exercise in 30 years. The total number of seats in the lower house remained fixed (to be revisited after 2026), but the number and location of reserved seats for SCs and STs were updated to reflect the 2001 census figures. Some constituencies were converted to reserved status and some lost their reserved status. This affected the (re)nomination of party

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candidates and party electoral strategies. It also made the constituency-wise results of the 2009 election less directly comparable to previous elections.

<sup>4</sup> At the time of writing, the Election Commission of India had yet to release their official report on the election results.

<sup>5</sup> Data on forfeiture of deposits in the 2009 election was not yet publicly available from the Election Commission of India at the time of writing.

<sup>6</sup> Many nominated women candidates have strong bases of support for a variety of reasons – their political experience, their seniority and proximity to the party leadership, historical links with their constituency, community affiliations and family links. But the majority of *aspiring* women candidates may have limited support in the absence of such resources and links.

<sup>7</sup> The Congress 2009 election manifesto included, as achievements of their previous term, the passage of domestic violence legislation in 2005, equal rights for women to inherit property, and large scale training of women to deliver primary health care in villages (INC, 2009: 7). They proposed to reserve a third of all central government jobs for women and expand the enrolment of rural women in self-help group schemes, promote business development schemes for women, and ensure ‘comprehensive social security’ to single-woman headed households (INC, 2009: 11, 14). They proposed measures to improve education for, and reduce discrimination against, girl children, particularly in areas with an adverse sex ratio (INC, 2009: 15). The BJP’s pledges included income tax exemptions for women, emphasis on girls’ education at secondary level including financial incentives, bicycles for girls from poor families to facilitate school attendance, improvements in women’s participation in local governance institutions, elimination of gender disparities in pay and legal property rights, special investment in training schemes for conflict-affected regions, pro-enterprise policies for women-run businesses or those employing large numbers of women, strict implementation of anti-violence legislation for women, increasing wages of female government workers in child care schemes, and a non-coercive and gender sensitive approach to ‘population stabilization’, among other policies (BJP, 2009).

<sup>8</sup> Disaggregating nomination data across India’s states is important as party strength, party competition, coalition alliances, outcomes of sub-national elections, the salience of regional or caste identity for example, varies significantly across states. Electoral strategies are often calculated on a state by state basis with the central party leadership of national parties drawing upon party representatives from internal state units to recommend prospective candidates, though some state units of large national parties may have considerable autonomy from the national level leadership, as Guichard (2013) discusses in the case of the BJP in Gujarat. A party’s likelihood of success will vary by state, impacting on the extent to which parties take ‘risks’ in nominating female candidates.

<sup>9</sup> The average vote margin in 2004 was 12.2 percentage points. This ranged from 0.06 (lowest) to 61.41 (highest) percentage points. Yet, more than a quarter of contests (28% or 152 constituencies out of 543) registered less than 5 percentage points vote margin in 2004 (figures calculated from ECI, n.d.). The 2009 election was an even closer contest overall than 2004, with a mean vote margin of 9.71 percentage points, a median vote margin of 7.01 percentage points, with more than a third of contests (36.3% or 197 constituencies) recording a vote margin of under 5 percentage points (figures calculated from ECI 2009 election data).

<sup>10</sup> Data from both 1999 and 2004 were used to avoid undue bias towards Congress party nominations as the incumbent government prior to the 2009 election, and because the BJP were in government from 1999. Both winners and those placing second in 1999 and 2004 are included for similar reasons. Due to the delimitation exercise that altered some constituency boundaries prior to the 2009 election, a small number of constituencies are excluded from the analysis due to incomparability with the 2004 and 1999 results.

<sup>11</sup> This could prove to work against them if voters are displeased with their performance, but this is also true of category B in terms of an anti-incumbency effect.

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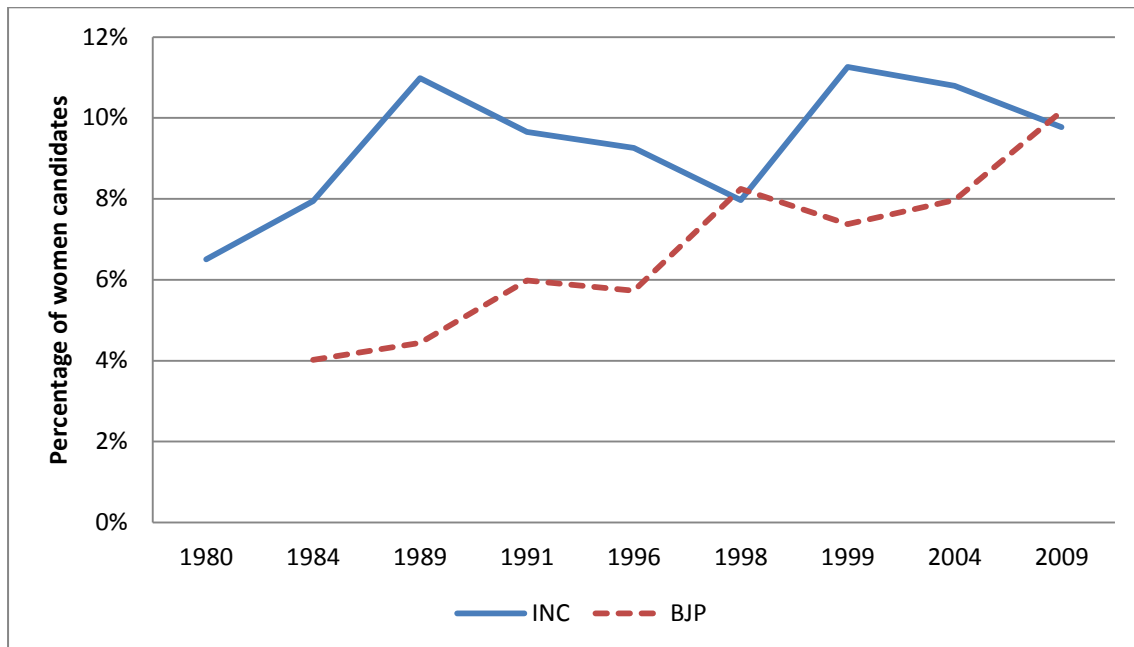
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**Figure 1: Women candidates in Lok Sabha elections as a percentage of total candidates, by party, 1980-2009**



Source: Data compiled by the author from various election reports of the Election Commission of India, available at [www.eci.nic.in](http://www.eci.nic.in).

**Table 1 – Women as Lok Sabha candidates and Lok Sabha MPs state-wise in 2009**

State/UT	Seats	No. of women candidates	Women as % of candidates in state	No. of women elected	% women MPs
<i>States</i>					
Andhra Pradesh	42	39	6.9	5	12
Arunachal Pradesh	2	0	0.0	0	0
Assam	14	11	7.0	2	14
Bihar	40	46	6.8	4	10
Chhattisgarh	11	15	8.4	2	18
Goa	2	2	11.1	0	0
Gujarat	26	26	7.2	4	15
Haryana	10	14	6.7	2	20
Himachal Pradesh	4	1	3.2	0	0
J&K	6	6	7.4	0	0
Jharkhand	14	14	5.6	0	0
Karnataka	28	19	4.4	1	4
Kerala	20	15	6.9	0	0
Madhya Pradesh	29	29	6.8	6	21
Maharashtra	48	55	6.7	3	6
Manipur	2	3	18.8	0	0
Meghalaya	2	3	27.3	1	50
Mizoram	1	0	0.0	0	0
Nagaland	1	0	0.0	0	0
Orissa	21	9	5.7	0	0
Punjab	13	13	6.0	4	31
Rajasthan	25	31	9.0	3	12
Sikkim	1	0	0.0	0	0
Tamil Nadu	39	48	5.8	1	3
Tripura	2	1	5.3	0	0
Uttar Pradesh	80	100	7.3	12	15
Uttarakhand	5	7	9.2	0	0
West Bengal	42	29	7.9	7	17
<i>UTs</i>					
A&NI	1	1	9.1	0	0
Chandigarh	1	1	7.1	0	0
D&D	1	0	0.0	0	0
D&NH	1	0	0.0	0	0
Lakshadweep	1	0	0.0	0	0
NCT Delhi	7	18	11.3	1	14
Puducherry	1	0	0.0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>543</b>	<b>556</b>	<b>6.9</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>10.7</b>

Source: Compiled by the author from data on Election Commission of India website (ECI, n.d.).

**Table 2 Nomination of women candidates in 2009 by INC, across states and UTs**

State/UT <sup>a</sup>	No. of seats available	Seats contested by INC	Women (no.)	Men (no.)	Women as % of total candidates	2004, women candidates (%)	1999, women candidates (%)
Andhra Pradesh	42	42	5	37	11.9	14.7	9.5
Assam	14	13	1	12	7.7	7.1	7.1
Bihar	40	37	6	31	16.2	50.0 (2/4)	12.5
Chhattisgarh	11	11	2	9	18.2	9.1	n/a
Gujarat	26	26	2	24	7.7	4.0	7.7
Haryana	10	10	2	8	20.0	10.0	-
Karnataka	28	28	2	26	7.1	7.1	10.7
Kerala	20	17	1	16	5.9	17.6	5.9
Madhya Pradesh	29	28	2	26	7.1	13.8	10.0
Maharashtra	48	25	1	24	4.0	7.7	4.8
Meghalaya	2	2	1	1	50.0	-	-
Punjab	13	13	2	11	15.4	36.4	27.3
Rajasthan	25	25	5	20	20.0	4.0	16.0
Tamil Nadu	39	15	1	14	6.7	10.0	9.1
Uttar Pradesh	80	69	6	63	8.7	8.2	18.4
West Bengal	42	14	3	11	21.4	10.8	12.2
NCT of Delhi	7	7	1	6	14.3	14.3	14.3
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>476</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>11.3</b>	-	-
Other States/UTs where no female candidates nominated by INC	67	58 <sup>a</sup>	0	58	0.0	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>543</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>9.8</b>	<b>10.8</b>	<b>11.3</b>

Source: Compiled by the author from data on *Election Commission of India* website (ECI, n.d.).

Notes: <sup>a</sup>The INC did not nominate any women in the following states and UTs (no. of men nominated by INC/no. of seats available): Arunachal Pradesh (2/2), Goa (1/2), Himachal Pradesh (4/4), Jammu & Kashmir (3/6); Jharkhand (9/14), Manipur (2/2), Mizoram (1/1), Nagaland (1/1), Orissa (21/21), Sikkim (1/1), Tripura (2/2), Uttarakhand (5/5), Andaman & Nicobar Islands (1/1), Chandigarh (1/1), Dadra & Nagar Haveli (1/1), Daman & Diu (1/1), Lakshadweep (1/1), Puducherry (1/1).

**Table 3 Nomination of women candidates in 2009 by BJP, across states and UTs**

State/UT <sup>a</sup>	No. of seats	Seats contested by BJP	Women (no.)	Men (no.)	Women as % of total candidates	2004, women candidates (%)	1999, women candidate (%)s
Andhra Pradesh	42	41	2	39	4.9	-	-
Assam	14	7	1	6	14.3	8.3	8.3
Bihar	40	15	1	14	6.7	-	6.9
Chhattisgarh	11	11	3	8	27.3	9.1	n/a
Gujarat	26	26	3	23	11.5	15.4	11.5
Haryana	10	5	1	4	20.0	10.0	20.0
Karnataka	28	28	1	27	3.6	4.2	10.5
Kerala	20	19	2	17	10.5	5.3	7.1
Madhya Pradesh	29	29	4	25	13.8	10.3	7.5
Maharashtra	48	25	1	24	4.0	7.7	7.7
Orissa	21	21	5	16	23.8	11.1	11.1
Rajasthan	25	25	3	22	12.0	16.0	8.3
Tamil Nadu	39	18	3	15	16.7	-	-
Uttar Pradesh	80	71	10	61	14.1	6.5	6.5
West Bengal	42	42	3	39	7.1	-	7.7
NCT of Delhi	7	7	1	6	14.3	28.6	14.3
<b>Sub-totals</b>	<b>452</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>11.6</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
Other States/UTs where no female candidates nominated by BJP	91	53 <sup>b</sup>	0	43	0.0	-	-
<b>Totals</b>	<b>543</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>8.0</b>	<b>7.4</b>

Source: Compiled by the author from data on *Election Commission of India* website (ECI, n.d.).

Notes: <sup>b</sup> The BJP did not nominate any women in the following states and UTs (no. of men nominated by BJP/ no. of seats available): Arunachal Pradesh (2/2), Goa (2/2), Himachal Pradesh (4/4), Jammu & Kashmir (4/6); Jharkhand (12/14), Manipur (2/2), Punjab (3/13), Sikkim (1/1), Tripura (2/2), Uttarakhand (5/5), Andaman & Nicobar Islands (1/1), Chandigarh (1/1), Dadra & Nagar Haveli (1/1), Daman & Diu (1/1), Lakshadweep (1/1), Puducherry (1/1).

**Table 4 – Summary of state nomination of women candidates relative to party’s overall proportion of women candidates nominated**

		States and UTs		
Party		Higher than average	Average (approx.)	Lower than average <sup>a</sup>
INC	States	Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Meghalaya, Punjab, Rajasthan, West Bengal, NCT Delhi	Uttar Pradesh	<b>Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Goa, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu &amp; Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Orissa, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttarakhand</b>
	UTs			<b>Andaman &amp; Nicobar Islands, Chandigarh, Dadra &amp; Nagar Haveli, Daman &amp; Diu, Lakshadweep, Puducherry</b>
BJP	States	Assam, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, NCT Delhi	Kerala	Andhra Pradesh, <b>Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu &amp; Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Manipur, Punjab, Sikkim, Tripura, Uttarakhand, West Bengal</b>
	UTs			<b>Andaman &amp; Nicobar Islands, Chandigarh, Dadra &amp; Nagar Haveli, Daman &amp; Diu</b>

Source: Compiled by the author from Tables 2 and 3 and ECI data (ECI, n.d.).

Note: <sup>a</sup>States/UTs listed in bold indicates no women candidates nominated.

**Figure 2 – ‘Winnability’ of seats relative to previous margins of victory and status of incumbency of candidates and parties**

	Incumbent	
	Same party	Rival party
Marginal	Potentially winnable	Potentially winnable
Non-marginal	Winnable	Unwinnable

**Figure 3 – Categories of 2009 candidates based on relative standing of candidates and parties in any given constituency**

Category	Status of 2009 candidate relative to first place and second place candidates in 2004
A	Same candidate
B	Different candidate but same party
C	Different individual and different party

**Table 5 - Marginal seats, candidate familiarity and party nomination of female candidates**

	Party	
	INC	BJP
Total no. of women nominated	43	44
No. of constituencies included <sup>a</sup>	39	39
<i>Marginal seats</i>		
Party incumbents	4	1
Rival incumbents	12	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>11</b>
<i>Non-marginal seats</i>		
Party incumbents	9	9
Rival incumbents	14	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>28</b>
<i>Relative familiarity</i>		
A	14	4
B	20	21
C	4	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>39</b>

Source: Calculated from 2004 and 2009 General Election data compiled from the Election Commission of India's website (ECI, n.d.).

Notes: <sup>a</sup> Some constituencies were excluded from the analysis due to the lack of comparable data as a result of delimitation of constituencies since 2004 (see endnote 3).