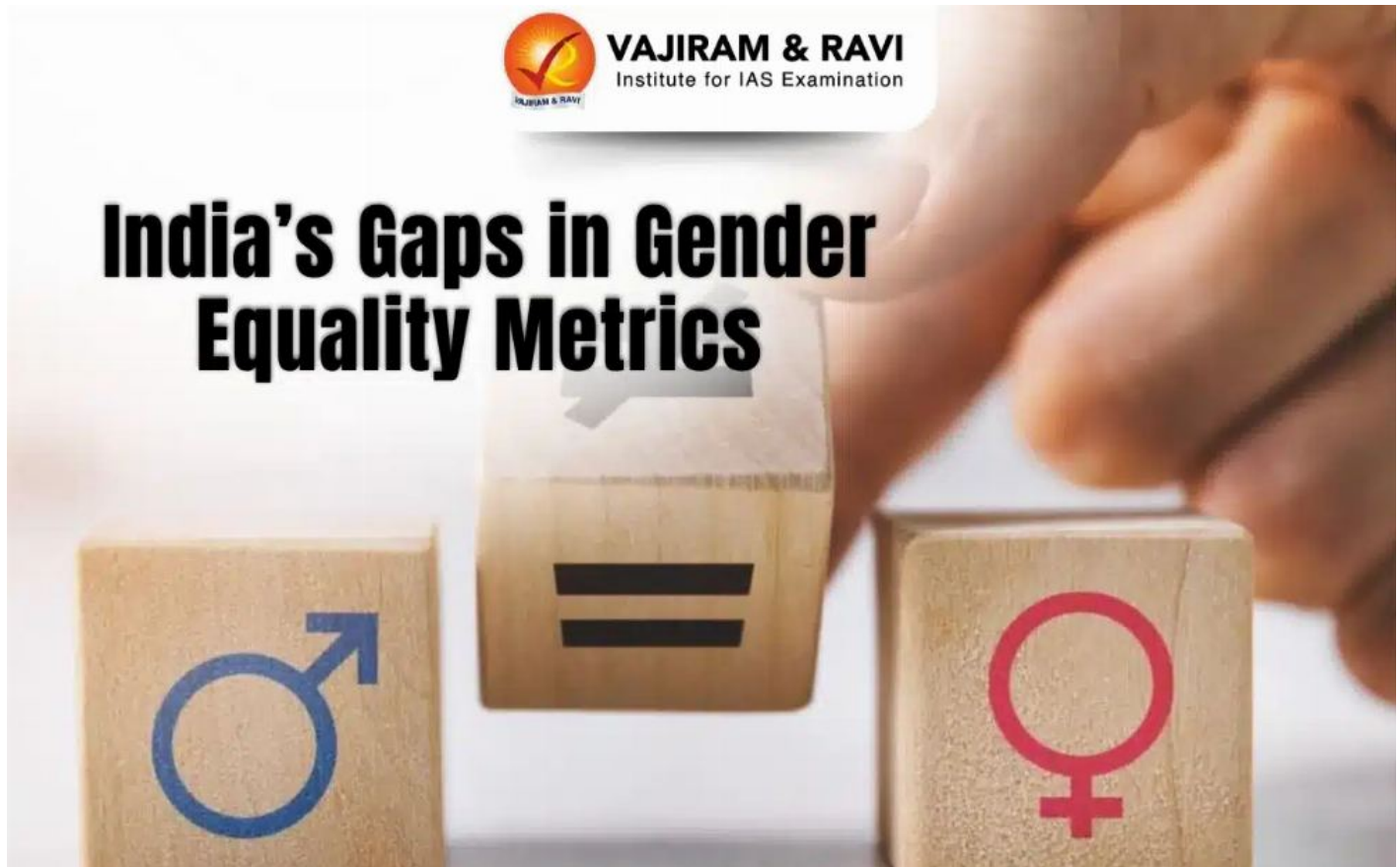


India's Gaps in Gender Equality Metrics Reflected in Global Rankings

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India's gaps in gender equality metrics Latest News

- India has slipped to 131st out of 148 countries in the 2025 Global Gender Gap Index by the World Economic Forum.
- While gaps in economic participation, education, and health have improved or remained stable, political empowerment has worsened. Despite more women voting, their representation in top political positions remains low.
- The upcoming 33% reservation for women in legislatures from 2029 may improve this, but sustained efforts are needed to ensure long-term impact.

Reasons Behind the Fall in the Index

- India's drop in the 2025 Global Gender Gap Index is primarily due to a decline in political empowerment indicators.

- The percentage of women in Parliament fell from 14.4% (78 MPs) in 2024 to 13.6% (74 MPs) in 2025.
- Additionally, the share of women in ministerial roles declined from 6.45% to 5.56%, further impacting India's overall ranking.

Impact of Women's Reservation on Political Representation

- The 33% reservation for women in Lok Sabha and State Assemblies, passed in 2023, will be implemented only after the next Census and delimitation, making 2029 the earliest possible rollout.
- If implemented in 2029, the law would raise women's representation to at least 33%, significantly improving India's political empowerment metrics on global indices.

Current Representation Levels Remain Low

- Women in Lok Sabha have ranged from 3.4% (1977) to 14.4% (2019).
- The 18th Lok Sabha (2024) has 74 women members, constituting approximately **13.6% of the total members**.
- In 2023, women made up only 9% of MLAs across States.
- Chhattisgarh had the highest share (18%), while Himachal Pradesh had just one woman MLA and Mizoram had none.

Limited Timeframe, Uncertain Long-Term Gains

- The reservation law is valid for only 15 years, meaning it will likely apply to just two general elections (2029 and 2034).
- Concerns remain about the sustainability of progress beyond that period.

Gaps in Ministerial and Leadership Pipelines

- Even with more women MPs, ministerial appointments may not rise proportionately. Despite decades of 33–50% reservation at local levels, there's no structured pathway to elevate women from panchayats to higher politics.

From Exclusion to Participation: A Historic Shift

- In 1952, 28 lakh women were excluded from voting rolls due to being listed only as someone's wife or mother. Since then, women's inclusion has drastically improved.

Gender Gap in Voting Narrows

- The voter gender gap has shrunk from 17 percentage points in 1962 to less than 2 points in 2014.
- In the last two general elections, women voters outnumbered men, partly due to male migration for work.

Women as a Key Votebank

- With growing turnout, political parties now actively court women voters, launching targeted welfare schemes like free bicycles for girls and monthly cash allowances for poor women.
- The rise in women voters is reshaping electoral strategies and policy priorities, making women a central force in India's democratic process.

Rising Voters, Stagnant Representation

- Despite the **surge in women voters**, this has **not led to a rise in women candidates** fielded by political parties.

Parties Avoid Giving Women Winnable Seats

- Parties often cite “lack of winnability” to deny women tickets in stronghold constituencies.
- Instead, they field women in reserved SC/ST seats to meet multiple quotas.
- Experts note that women voters don't vote solely for women. Unlike caste-based voting, women prefer performance and policies over identity.

The Need for Systemic Change

- Since 1952, women candidates have had a higher average winning percentage than men.
- The issue lies in low nomination rates, with women making up only 8–9% of candidates from major parties.
- Structural barriers, internal party dynamics, and outdated assumptions continue to block capable women from entering the political arena in larger numbers.

Source: TH | TW | PRS

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/indias-gaps-in-gender-equality-metrics-reflected-in-global-rankings/>

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