

Women's Reservation Bill

Joint Statement

We, the women from several organizations working for women's rights in India, demand that the 33% Women's Reservation Bill be passed in the Lok Sabha in the very next session of Parliament. The passage of the Bill in the Rajya Sabha was a significant step but it's more than 11 years since it is waiting to be tabled in Lok Sabha. It cannot become law unless it is passed in the Lok Sabha and is endorsed by at least 15 state assemblies.

Mandatory reservations for women in Panchayats and Local Bodies facilitated the entry of lakhs of women in villages, small towns and cities, into the political arena. As a result, a large number of women had the opportunity for the first time to enter the public sphere from which they had been absent. Today, women are actively carrying out their responsibilities as Sarpanchs, Panchayat members, BDC members, ZP Chairpersons and members, Town Area Chairpersons, Mayors and Councillors in the States of India. They have faced tremendous odds to enter the electoral fray and many of them are role models for all women. This has brought many important women's issues on the agenda of Panchayats and local bodies. This positive experience needs to be strengthened and extended further.

Successive Governments have stalled the Bill for the last 25 years on some pretext or the other. The Modi government has promised not-only-33%-we-shall-give-50%, but this also turned out to be a mere *jumla*. Their pretext is an alibi of "lack of consensus". Why, may we ask, do they single out a Bill pertaining to women's rights in decision making bodies? Why did they pass many an anti-people bills undemocratically, such as the labour code and the 3 agri laws?

We call upon all political parties in parliament to come together and ensure the smooth passage of the 33% women's reservation bill in the Lok Sabha without delay. We appeal to all forces opposing the bill to shed their fears and support the cause of women's rights and equality in our country. And we demand of this government to table the Bill in Lok Sabha and put it to vote – we'd then be able to separate the wheat from the chaff and see who stands for women's rights.

	AIDMAM
	AIDWA
	AIPWA
	ANHAD
	DWC
	MWF
	NFIW
	Pehchan
	YWCA