

# Gender Perspective in Indian Elections

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**Abstract:** *Free and fair elections are fundamental essentials of democracy. Gender-based inclusion is a key indicator of free, fair and inclusive elections. In India, Part XV of the Constitution and related legislation provide the overall framework for the Election Commission of India (ECI) to conduct elections. Articles 325 and 326 enshrine universal adult suffrage free from discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste or sex — constituting the foundation of gender equality in Indian polity. In the absence of gender-based reservation for legislative seats until the 106th Constitutional Amendment (2023), the ECI developed sustained policies, strategies and action plans for enhancing gender participation. The number of women electors increased from 78 million in 1951–52 to 476.3 million in 2024, with the electorate Gender Ratio improving from 821 to 946. The women voter turnout rate rose from 38.8% in 1957 to 65.8% in 2024, closing — and reversing — the gender gap by GE 2019. In GE 2024, 800 women contested the Lok Sabha election, of whom 74 won. Rajya Sabha women membership stands at 42 (approximately 17%) as of 2025. The Constitution (106th Amendment) Act, 2023 provides 33% reservation for women in Parliament and State Legislatures, to be implemented after delimitation following the 2026 census is a landmark legislation to enhance women's representation. The Third Gender has also received formal electoral recognition.*

**Keywords:** *Inclusion, gender-based, parity, participation, women electorate, Election Commission of India, universal adult suffrage.*