

Female Participation in Delhi Assembly Election 2015

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ABSTRACT

The term 'political participation' has a broad inclusive meaning. It is not only related to 'Right to Vote', but simultaneously relates to participation in: decision making process, political activism, political consciousness, etc. Political activism and voting are the strongest areas of women's political participation. Participation in decision-making process is the real tool of women empowerment. Women are going to play a crucial role in selecting their political representative. Politicians can no longer ignore these sections of the society as a large number of youth and women are getting enrolled their names in voters list since 2008 assembly election. As per the electoral rolls (2015), a total of 1.33 crore people are eligible to vote in Delhi of which over 72 lakh are men and around 59 lakh are women. Out of the 673 candidates in fray for Delhi Assembly election 2015, only 66 are women. While there were assurances galore on women's safety in the national capital ahead of the polls, the number of tickets given to women candidates by the three leading political parties was in sharp contrast to the population of women voters in Delhi. In 2015 assembly election female poll percentage was 66.50% which is slightly less than the male poll percentage which was 67.64%. In this election all the Political parties emerged with a women-oriented political agenda to attract women voters. The main objective of this study is to analyze the trends of participation of female voters. For the purpose of study spatial perspective approach and aggregate data analysis methods were applied to understand female voters' behavior and their participation in 70 assembly constituencies of Delhi.

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I. Introduction

The participation of women and their engagement in electoral process is an important marker of the growth, maturity and efficiency of democracy in any country. It can be defined not only in terms of the equality and freedom with which they share political power with men, but also in terms of the liberty and space provided for women in the democratic framework of electoral politics. The Constitution of India promulgated in 1952 promised, "to secure to all its citizens justice, social, economic and political" and "equality of status and of opportunity" (Basu 1998:21). Women related issues always found an important place in Indian politics. During the recently held Delhi Assembly elections, women's safety came out as one of the main issues in the political discourse. It appeared in the political debates and manifestoes of all major contesting political parties including the Aam Aadmi Party, the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Indian National Congress. Gender is very important factor that determine the voting behavior of voters. Sex Ratio in Delhi is 868 i.e. for each 1000 male, which is below national average of 940 as per census 2011. In 2001, the sex ratio of female was 821 per 1000 males in Delhi. This adverse gender ratio is reflected further in registration: under-enrolment of women. In voting, the gap is widened with the lesser percentage of women turning up. It is also cleared from the data of election commission that the turnout percentage of women raised substantially over previous elections in Delhi. In 2013 assembly election there were total 5321572 female electors this figure went up to 5920490 in 2015 assembly election. Involvement of women, especially in political developments

are an essential step towards creating gender equal opportunities. Since women have different needs and perspectives in rural and urban areas on social and political issues, it is important to involve women in political processes to incorporate all of the societal viewpoints for the development of better and effective policies. Women are actively involved in household and community related works and thus well aware of various kinds of real issues faced by common people. This gives them perceptivity and insight which is very important for overall sustainable development of society.

II. Objectives

- ❖ To analyze the trends of political participation of female voters during 2013 to 2015 assembly election in Delhi.
- ❖ To understand the political involvement of female voters in different constituencies.
- ❖ To understand the correlation between percentages of male and female vote share.

III. Study Area

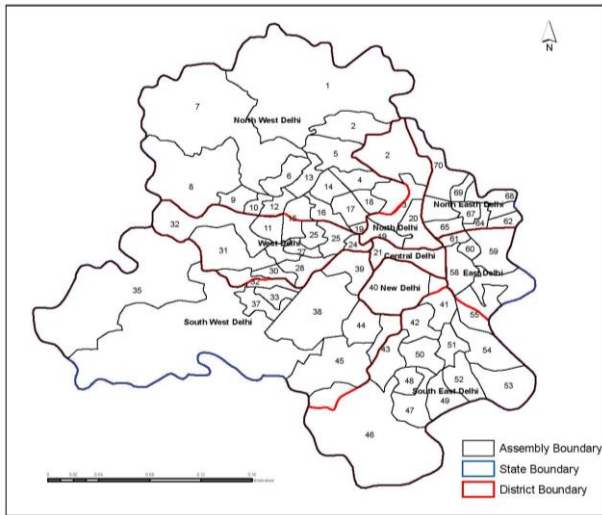
Delhi has 9 districts and 70 assembly Constituencies. The 70 assembly constituencies of Delhi were selected for the purpose of study out of which 12 are reserved constituencies. Delhi is located at 28.38° North and 77.13° East & lies in northern India. Uttar Pradesh is on the east and Haryana is on the west of Delhi. There are three major geographical regions: the Yamuna flood plain, the ridge & the Genetic Plains. The Yamuna flood plains provide fertile soil which is suitable for agriculture. The plain areas of river Yamuna are prone to recurrent floods. The ridge area having an average altitude of

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293m above sea level is another most important topographical feature of this region which arises from Aravalli Hills in the southern part of the city and surrounds its western, northwestern and northeastern parts.



Map 1.1 Delhi Assembly Constituencies.

Source: Chief Electoral Office Delhi.

IV. Methodology

This study is based on the secondary sources of data collected from Election Commission of India, Delhi and Chief Electoral Office, Delhi. For the analysis of voting data and to show the spatial variations of women participation among various constituencies areal structural approach were used. To understand the correlation between percentages of male and female vote share, correlation coefficient calculated by SPSS.

V. Female Turnout in Delhi Assembly Elections

The result of the 2015 assembly election of Delhi strongly reflects the desires of the capital's women who came out to vote not only in large numbers registering an impressive overall poll percentage of 66.49% but also inching ahead of the men in around nine assembly constituencies. In the rest of the constituencies too, the gender gap in terms of poll percentage was a neck-and-neck competition. This time a total of 1,148,309 more electors voted than last time, including 631,774 additional men and 470,440 women.

Table 1. Electors Data Summary who voted.

Years	2013			2015		
Electors	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
	4367527	3466248	7833919	4999301	3936688	8982228
Poll Percentage	66.03	65.14	65.63	67.63	66.49	67.47

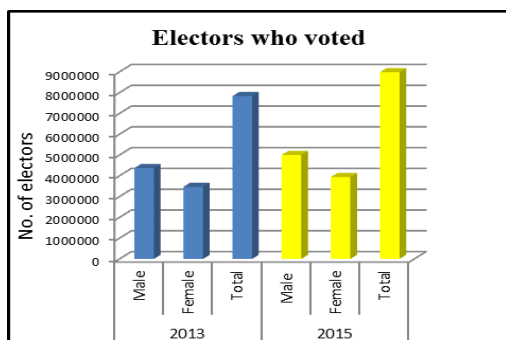


Figure 1.1

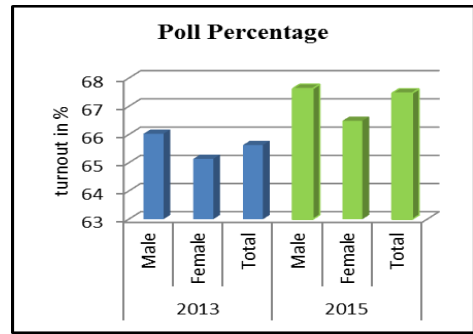
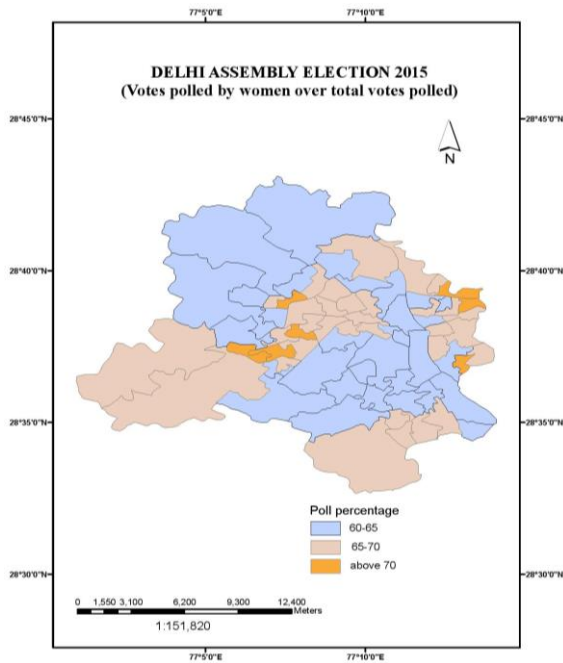


Figure 1.2

Source (table:1 and fig:1.1 & 1.2): Election Commission of India- State Election, 2013 & 2015 to the Legislative Assembly of Delhi.

The total turnout for Delhi stands at a record 67.47% with 89,82,228 voters casting their ballot. Men accounted for 49,99,301 voters (67.63%) and women made up 39,36,688 (66.49%). The 2013 total turnout was 78,33,919 (65.63%) with male voters making up 43,67,527 (65.03%) and women 34,66,248 (65.14%). Data also shows that women registered a 70% plus voting turnout on seven seats this time compared to three in 2013. Trilokpuri, a reserved constituency in East Delhi, saw 70.93% women come out to vote. The men here polled a little over 72% votes. This constituency, comprising unauthorized colonies and low-income settlements. Similarly, women in Seemapuri constituency of North East Delhi district registered a turnout of 72.29%. In Gokalpur, which recorded the highest overall turnout of 73.46%, women can be credited for performing phenomenally in this constituency of North East Delhi by registering a turnout of 72.53%. The turnout for men here was 74.20%. Beside that in Uttam Nagar Constituency of south West Delhi women recorded 70.58 % turnout. Janakpuri and Rajouri Garden and Mangolpuri constituencies of West Delhi district also witnessed more than 70 % female turnout. In Janakpuri 70.42% , Rajouri Garden 71% and Mangolpuri recorded 70.82% female turnout which shows the aspirations of women voters towards electoral process in Delhi. There are around fourteen constituencies where women inched ahead of men in terms of voter turnout, including Burari constituency in North Delhi district, Badli, Bawana, Kirari in North West Delhi district, Vikaspuri constituency from West Delhi district, Dwarka, Matiala, Najafgarh and Delhi Cantt. In South West Delhi district, R.K.Puram and Okhla constituency in New Delhi district, Chhatarpur, Sangam Vihar, Tuglakabad constituencies of South Delhi district recorded women poll percentage just little high then male poll percentage. Beside that Karawal Nagar Constituency of North East Delhi also witnessed women's inched ahead performance in poll percentage as compared to men's poll percentage. Interestingly, all these areas are dominated by significant pockets of low-income settlements. On the whole, 7 seats recorded a turnout of over 70%. There are about 31 constituencies falling within the bracket of 60-65% voter turnout. The remaining 32 seats fall in the 65-70% bracket. This clearly reflects an evenly high turnout of women voters. Total poll percentage of women in 2015 was recorded 66.49% and in 2013 it was recorded 65.14%. The vote then was for change and spelt the end of Congress rule in the city delivering a hung assembly in 2013 with AAP emerging as the formidable factor. AAP again in 2015 assembly election came out with big majority of votes.



Map 1.2

Source: Chief Electoral Office, New Delhi.

Table 2. Candidate data summary.

Contested Candidates	2013	2015
Male	739	606
Female	71	66
Others	00	01
Total	810	673

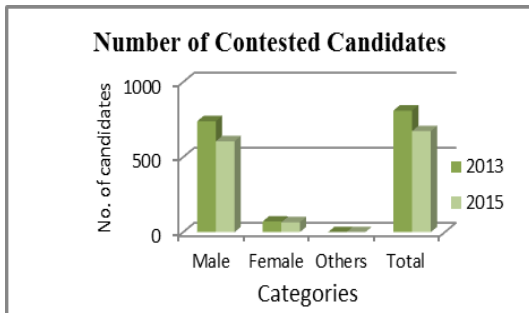


Figure 2.1

Source (table: 2 & fig: 2.1): Election Commission of India-State Election, 2013 & 2015 to the Legislative Assembly of Delhi.

Table no.1 shows candidate data summary in which total 810 contestant were fray in 2013 out of which 739 are male candidates and 71 are female contestant. In 2015 the numbers of total candidates are less as compared to 2013, total 673 contestant were fray in 2015 out of which 606 are male and only 66 are female contestants. It is clear from the above description that female contestant is comparatively less than the male contestant.

Table 3. List of successful female contestant.

S.No.	Constituency	Name of contestant	Party	Votes Secured %
1.	Mangolpuri(sc)	Rakhi Birla	AAP	46.94
2.	Shalimar Bagh	Bandana Kumari	AAP	52.14
3.	Chandni Chowk	Alka Lamba	AAP	49.35
4.	Palam	Bhavna Gaur	AAP	55.96
5.	R.K.Puram	Parmila Tokas	AAP	56.77
6.	Rohtas Nagar	Sarita Singh	AAP	45.96

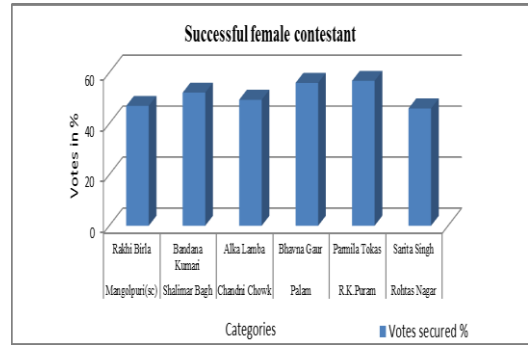


Figure 3.1

Source (table:3 & fig:3.1): Election Commission of India-State Election, 2015 to the Legislative Assembly of Delhi.

It is clear from the table no. 3 that only six women candidates won seats in Delhi election, all of them belong to Arvind Kejriwal's party. That seems like low representation for a 70-member assembly but it is actually twice the number of women MLAs from last time. Incidentally, the three women candidates who won in 2013 were also from AAP. In 2015 Assembly Election in Delhi total 66 women contestant are in fray out of which INC, BJP and AAP together fielded 19 women candidates, just 9% of the total candidates from these parties. BJP fielded eight, AAP named six and INC had five. If we look at the spatial variation among women candidates performance, Alka Lamba won election from Chandni Chowk constituency. She beat the INC's candidate Parlad Singh Sawhney, as well as BJP's Suman Kumar Gupta, to win this key central Delhi seat. AAP leader Rakhi Birla became the youngest cabinet minister in Delhi when she beat INC's Raj Kumar Chauhan from the Mangol Puri constituency in North West Delhi in 2013. She defeated Chauhan again in 2015 with a landslide margin of 22,699 votes. Bhawna Gaur beat BJP incumbent Dharam Dev Solanki, who has held the Palam seat of South West Delhi for more than 10 years, with a staggering margin. She won more than 30,000 votes against the old BJP hand, despite losing to him in 2013 with a margin of 6.5 percent. Sarita Singh defeated BJP's leader Jitender Mahajan from BJP, winning by 7,874 votes from Rohtas Nagar constituency of North East Delhi. Parmila Tokas defeated BJP's Anil Kumar Sharma in RK Puram constituency of New Delhi district with a margin of 19,068 votes. In the 2013 election, Sharma had contested from the same constituency against Shazia Ilmi (who was then with AAP), and won by a narrow margin. Bandana Kumari won from Shalimar Bagh seat from North Delhi, defeating BJP's Rekha Gupta by a margin of 10,978 votes. Shalimar Bagh has been long considered a BJP stronghold, which the party has held on to since 1993.

Table 4. Correlation Coefficient among male and female voter turnout.

Spearman's rho	Male	Correlation Coefficient	Male	Female
			1.000	.827**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	70	70
	Female	Correlation Coefficient	.827**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	70	70

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Women Voting has increased through a time due to various causes. The correlation coefficient shows high positive correlation in voting pattern in Delhi 2015 (table no.4)

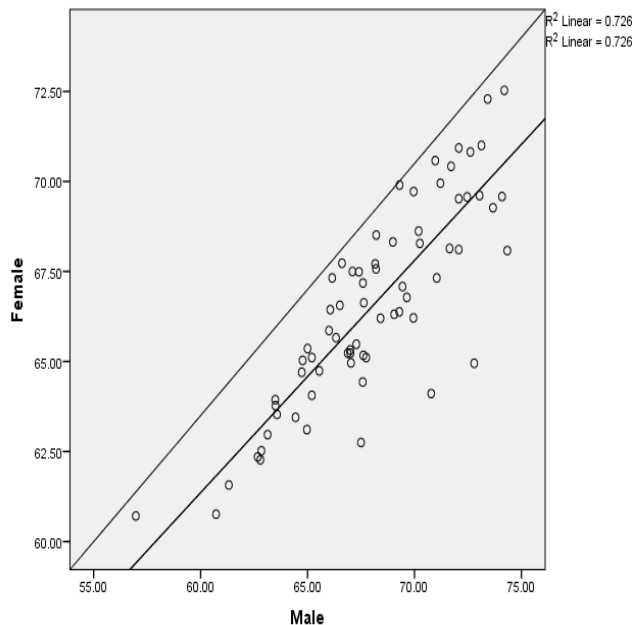


Figure 4.1

The above graph shows the pattern of male female voting in Delhi 2015 where voting patterns among the male female defers constituency wise but overall having high degree positive correlation. Voting among the constituency shows close high positive correlation in few constituencies female voting are very close to the male voting beside that in some of the constituencies female voters inched ahead to the male voters (Figure 4.1). Here in the above figure the R^2 shows the coefficient of determination which denotes the strength of the linear association between x (male) and y (female) voters. In figure 4.1 R^2 represents the percent of the data that is the closest to the line of best fit. In present example, r is 0.827 and the value of r^2 is 0.726, it shows that 72% of the total variation in y (female voters) can be represented by the linear relationship between x and y (as explained by the regression equation). Beside that around 28% of the total variation in y remains unexplained. In other words the r^2 value presents a positive strength of linear association between two components male and female voters in voting participation.

VI. Causes of Female Voting

Women voters turned out in sizeable numbers in most of the constituencies to exercise their franchise. From women in ghunghat (veils) to career women and from college-going girls to elderly women, all were enthusiastic about 'voting for change'. In 2013 and 2015 assembly election in Delhi maximum people particularly women came out to vote for AAP because they were facing many problems. Many factors together played an important role in influencing voter's choice like- (a) Anti-incumbency: people were unhappy with the performance of earlier Government, due to various issues related to corruption, irregular water and electricity supply, lack of women security, unemployment and inflation etc.

(b) Reasons of high voting by women for AAP: The kind of scenario we have in Delhi, nothing can change overnight, but this election proved how much women voters are now concerned about their voting rights and empowerment. All parties have been making various promises about women's safety and other things. Women's safety was one of the prime issues of election; in his agenda Aam Aadmi Party has also listed women's safety as a core issue. The party promised to raise women's commando force

and installation of CCTVs on public places to deal with the issues of women's safety. Voters want to give full majority to Aam Aadmi Party so that they can form Government without any alliance to full fill their promises. Earlier in his 49 day rule Aam Aadmi Party focused on supplying free or subsidized water, they decided to supply 20,000 liters of free water per month to every household. This time, before the election the party has promised to make drinking water "a right" by making necessary amendments in the law if it comes to power. These are the few important issues and promises which attracted women voters towards Aam Aadmi Party.

Secondary data clearly indicates that around 60 percent women voters chooses Aam Adami Party, they gave importance to party candidate this time and keep in their mind several issues such as problem of inflation, corruption, women security, transportation and regular electricity and supply of drinking water, except that all the promises made by Aam Adami Party in his manifesto like facility of free Wi-Fi, reducing pollution and governance on mobile phone etc , also played an important role to attract voters towards Aam Adami Party. Voters also voted on the basis of his performance of 49 days government in 2013 that time Arvind kejriwal gave water and electricity at very low coast bills as he provided fifty percent subsidy on electricity bills for those households which consumed up to 400 units of power in a month. As we know in 2013 assembly election AAP won 28 seats and formed government with alliance of Indian National Congress but on the issue of passing Janlokpall Bill to eliminate corruption, after his 49 days rule Arvind Kejriwal resigned on this logical issue related to corruption that's why voters gave him another chance to prove himself.

After the 2015 assembly election many surveys conducted by many sources to find out the causes of high voting percentage among women electors who voted. In a survey which is conducted by BBC Hindi asked women across Delhi to name the important issues that could sway their vote in the election? Some important points which came out from this survey are-

(i) *Employment*: it was the major issue for many young women voters they said- 'If you have job in hand, you can afford so many things in life. Employment is the basic need'. (ii) *Access to water*: lots of women voters identified access to water as the single most important issue for the city. (iii) *Corruption*: voters also want Delhi to be corruption-free. (iv) *Law and order*: this was also first concern for many women voters. (v) *Transportation*: many women respondents said that the poor condition of roads and traffic in Delhi was their biggest worry. (vi) *Inflation*: problem of inflation was another crucial factor for women's to run their households properly, which they can't because of the rise in prices of common commodities like vegetables, pulses and other day to day home items and no rise in income to match inflation.' (vii) Beside that *cleanliness and permanent houses* instead of jhuggi jhopri and legalization of unauthorized colonies were also listed as some another important issues.

(c) *Campaign methods*: effective election campaign was also responsible for high voter turnout. Various political parties opt modern means of communication with door to door campaign methods to reach maximum electors such as Campaign through advertising in media (newspapers, radio, television, etc.) campaign on social media like on whatsapp messenger, on face book and on twitter to connect and attract more voters' especially young voters.

VII. Women Participation: Challenges and Barriers.

In Indian society women's participation faces many challenges and barriers in the form of violence like domestic and sexual violence, discrimination and illiteracy etc. To overcome from this kind of problems women empowerment is very important for the development of women and their political representation and participation in society. For women empowerment family support is very important because better condition within the household provides self confidence among women to walk shoulder to shoulder with man. Poor socio-economic conditions, such as poverty, gender discrimination and lack of awareness about their rights, orthodox attitude towards women on the name of traditions sometimes forbid the entrance of women into decision making process and to run various kinds of jobs at home or outside the home. Male dominance in a society is another important barrier which influenced the voting preference of women. There are many reasons of low women voting in Delhi like- lack of political awareness and low standard of education among women electors in rural areas, negative public opinion regarding women's leadership quality and capacity. Therefore it is very important in country like India that Government should make necessary arrangements and provisions for women empowerment. The reservation policy for women in Panchayat Raj system is the best example of government efforts towards women empowerment. The Constitution (One Hundred and Tenth Amendment) Bill, 2009 provides 50% reservation for women in Panchayat Raj.

VIII. Conclusion and suggestions

To conclude, there have been significant increases in voter turnout in elections among women in Delhi and their participation as a contestant in election process. It is clear from the above descriptions that in 2015 assembly election in Delhi women came out in large number and recorded high poll percentage, in some constituencies they were inched ahead than male voters. There are many reasons of high women voting in Delhi- like voter's awareness campaign and door to door campaign by different political parties to motivate electors towards voting. Women can play an important role in formulating policies and strategies on women based issues for the upliftment of women's in society. Though it is also true that in Indian political system women participation in electoral process is comparatively low than man. Gender inequality is one of the important indicators of imbalanced gender ratio in women political participation in India. Due to male dominance in society many times female participation came out as a proxy because their voting choices are totally influenced by the man family member of their family.

Suggestions — to increase and improve the socio-economic status, political strength and to ensure equal -right to women in society and to make women more confident and aware about their rights, women empowerment is necessary. Empowerment of Indian women can occur through:-

- Better education system, awareness programmes, family support and gender equality.

- Special training and refresher courses should be conduct time-to-time.
- Grass root level of implementations is required of various developmental schemes and policies.
- Create jobs for women and give spaces in various sectors of economy to improve social status.

The Government of India has developed many programmes for women under the scheme of 'National Mission of Empowerment of Women' (NMEW). The mission of NMEW are to "enhance economic empowerment of girls and women through skill development, micro credit, vocational training and entrepreneurship." Beside that Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have also tried to empower women, focusing on issues of education, violence, and leadership.

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- **Abbreviations**
AAP - Aam Aadmi Party
INC- Indian National Congress
BJP- Bhartiya Janta Party.
NMEW- National Mission of Empowerment of Women