

## CASE STUDY COMPETITION

**The following article was published by the LIVEMINT on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2018 titled, “The cost of the missing women in Indian politics”.** “Socio-economic disadvantages and poor female political participation create a vicious cycle that needs to be broken. Earlier this month, Spain’s King Felipe VI swore in the country’s new government led by Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez. It was a moment of some significance: Out of 17 ministers in Sánchez’s cabinet, 11 were women. This is, by far, the most in the country’s history. It is, in fact, the most female cabinet in Europe. This is not an incidental fact or mere symbolism. B.R. Ambedkar once said that “political power is the key to all social progress”. What, then, to make of the fact that India—a country where women suffer substantially greater socio-economic disadvantages than Western democracies like Spain—has a cabinet that is only 22% female and a Lok Sabha that has a meagre 12% female representation?

The 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> amendments to the Constitution in 1993 made it mandatory to earmark 33% of all positions in panchayati raj institutions for women. The Ambedkarite logic underlying this is based on sound economic reasoning. As Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson have argued, concentration of political power tends to lead to extractive economic institutions. Inclusive economic institutions and growth—both necessary for and dependent on social empowerment—require inclusive political institutions.

Indeed, Prachi Mishra, L. Iyer, Anandi Mani and Petia Topalova, in their 2012 paper *The Power Of Political Voice: Women’s Political Representation And Crime In India*, have identified two effects that political representation of disadvantaged groups may have on social outcomes. Observing a member of their own group in charge of a public office changes attitudes and infuses confidence in the minority group. This may be referred to as the reporting channel. For example, a public opinion survey done by the authors in Rajasthan revealed that women in villages with a head council position reserved are more likely to be willing to report crimes to the police.

The second effect is an increase in the responsiveness of the official towards the pleas of disadvantaged groups—termed the recording effect. For example, the paper presents evidence of greater police responsiveness towards crimes against women. Similarly, economist Esther Duflo has shown that the gender of the village council president affects the extent of investment in public goods. Data collected in 2002 revealed that in Rajasthan and West Bengal, for instance, increased female political representation led to more investment in drinking water and roads in response to complaints by local women.

The knock-on economic effects are apparent as well. In a 2014 National Bureau of Economic Research paper, *Political Reservations And Women’s Entrepreneurship In India*, Ejaz Ghani, William Kerr and Stephen O’Connell found a strong connection between implementation of political reservations and small-scale entrepreneurship among women. They noted “a growth in new women-owned establishments and associated employment of approximately 40% after political reservations were implemented” for the 1994-2005 period.

Given all this, the fact that the proportion of women in the Lok Sabha has seen only a paltry increase since independence—from 4.5% in the first Lok Sabha to the current 12% in the 16th Lok Sabha—is dispiriting. The debate on the women’s reservation Bill is one aspect of the issue—but it’s not the only one.

First, political parties in India tend not to follow provisions in their constitutions reserving seats for women in different committees. In several instances, when women are offered party tickets, it’s a case of the Lalu Prasad syndrome—the woman being a de facto stand-in for a male relative rather than exercising power in her own right.

The second barrier is the lack of education and leadership training. K. Gajwani and X. Zhang surveyed 144 villages across Tamil Nadu and found female panchayat heads to be less acquainted with the functioning of the panchayati system than their male counterparts. Similar research focusing on Andhra Pradesh revealed that hamlets with women leaders are underprepared for efficient implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. Additionally, since women are not integrated in any local political process initially, and, unlike men, are not part of the relevant social and power networks, women leaders are prone to inefficiencies. Given these concerns, there is a pressing need for education and leadership training to familiarize them with the local government functioning and instil in them a sense of agency.

These two problems create a vicious cycle where socio-economic disadvantages lead to reduced opportunities for women to participate in the political process, leading to weakened representation—which, in turn, retards the process of addressing those socio-economic disadvantages. It’s a cycle that has been perpetuated for seven decades. It must be broken.”

Mrs Gauri Radhe Krishnan intends to break this cycle.

**CASE STUDY QUESTIONS.** Mrs Gauri Radhe Krishnan ( a name chosen for this case study) coming from a middle class Indian family and working as a teacher from a K12 School intends to set up a new political party and has only one agenda on her political goal for the 2019 general elections: To secure 33 % representation for women in the LOK SABHA if her political party called “ ANNAPOORNA KAMADHENU STRI SHAKTI ( AKS) PARTY ( a name chosen for this case study) wins. She has to garner public support for people to join her party and start this new political party. You are hired as a consultant to devise a strategic plan that needs to be implemented in the next 4 months for her to acquire funds to run the political party, attract supporters to join the political party as members and volunteers and start a political marketing integrated communication campaign to win support from the general public in order to win in the Lok Sabha 2019 elections. She faces fierce challenges from the existing political parties. Devise a cohesive strategic integrated plan to achieve these objectives. Be as realistic as possible when designing the strategic plan and also take into consideration the possible counter strategies that may be adopted by the existing competitors and make your plan as infallible as possible.