

Women Representation in Politics of Jhunjhunu District: In the Context of Assembly Elections (1990 to 2023)

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ABSTRACT

In almost every country of the world, the participation of women in politics has increased for some time. Increased female political representation in developing countries has led to better provision of public goods. Especially in the fields of education and health, while high female representation in developed countries has not influenced public policies. Women's participation in Indian politics shows that there has been a significant increase in their voting percentage and election campaigning, but women's representation in legislative bodies remains low in political parties at the national and state levels. Reservation in legislative bodies, women's participation in political parties and decision-making positions in the government, and it will take a long time to overcome the political shortcomings of the country. The present research paper studies the participation of women in politics in the assembly elections of Jhunjhunu district from 1990 to 2023. In which the increase or decrease in women voting in all the assembly constituencies of the district from 1990 to 2023 is to be shown. To tell the participation of women as candidates from 1990 to 2023 and to find out the winning women candidates in the assembly elections of Jhunjhunu district.

Keywords : Assembly elections, Voting percentage, Political parties, Reservation

INTRODUCTION

Over the past century, women have made significant progress in political participation, increasing their presence in decision-making spheres around the world, yet women's political participation remains entrenched gender disparities that perpetuate broader social inequalities and imposed cultural norms. Understanding the complex dynamics of women's participation in politics is important not only to achieve gender equality but also to promote more inclusive and representative governance structures (Basavaraj, 2021). Women's participation in politics involves a variety of activities, ranging from grassroots women's mobilization and community organizing to occupying positions of power within government institutions (Rai, 2011; Jalan and Gurjar, 2002). Women have historically been underrepresented in political spheres. Facing obstacles like discriminatory laws, social

prejudices (Hessami and da Fonseca, 2020).

India, the world's largest democracy, is grappling with the problems of gender inequalities in its political landscape (Amani, 1972; 1973). There has been progress and persistent challenges in the role of women in Indian politics in the decades since independence, while there has been notable progress in breaking down traditional barriers and expanding opportunities for women's political participation, deeply entrenched socio-cultural norms and systemic barriers to governance continue to shape and limit their participation in the processes. The importance of women's participation in Indian politics cannot be denied. With a population of over a billion, India's political dynamics hold significance not only for its citizens but also for global trends in gender equality and inclusive governance.

From the grassroots level to the parliamentary chambers, women in India have played a vital role in

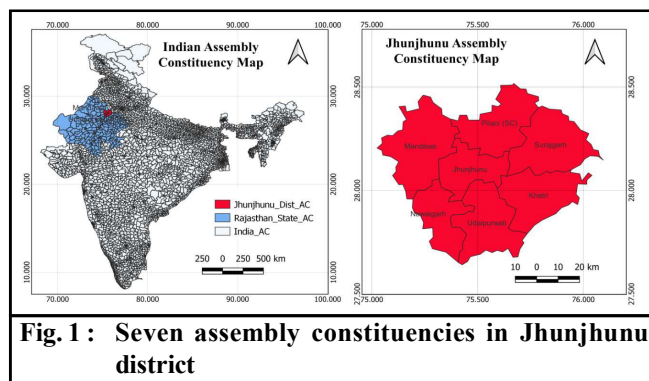
How to cite this Article: Kumar, Rajesh and Roat, Monika (2024). Women Representation in Politics of Jhunjhunu District: In the Context of Assembly Elections (1990 to 2023). *Internat. J. Appl. Soc. Sci.*, **11** (5&6) : 169-175.

driving social change, advocating policy reforms and challenging traditional power structures, yet they continue to face serious challenges including patriarchal attitudes, caste system, economic disparities and social prejudices, facing obstacles (Election and Constituencies, 2015; Gurjar and Singh, 2024; <https://www.eci.gov.in/>).

Research Area :

Jhunjhunu district is an important district of Shekhawati region which was established in 1730 by Jhunjhar Singh Nehra. This district has also been under the domination of Kayamkhanis for about two hundred and fifty years. This area is spread in semi-arid desert climate, due to which there is less rainfall and less agricultural activities. The district is located between 27°38' north latitude and 28°31' north latitude and 75°02' east longitude and 76°06' east longitude. There are 7 assembly constituencies in Jhunjhunu district which are Nawalgarh, Udaipurwati, Khetri, Mandawa, Surajgarh, Piloni and Jhunjhunu.

In the 1990 assembly elections, there were a total of 956030 voters in all the 7 assembly seats of Jhunjhunu district, out of which 441748 were female voters and 514282 were male voters, which increased to a total of 1802106 voters in the 2023 assembly elections, out of which 859857 were female voters and 942237 were male voters.



Objective :

To know the women representation in the politics of Jhunjhunu district.

METHODOLOGY

This study mainly focuses on the assembly elections of Jhunjhunu district 1990-2023. To fulfill the appropriate objective, all the data has been collected from reports,

magazines, Election Commission of India, Chief Electoral Officer Office, research papers, major books, newspapers and articles published by the Central and State Government. Maps, diagrams, tables have been used for their analysis with the help of quantitative and descriptive methods.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

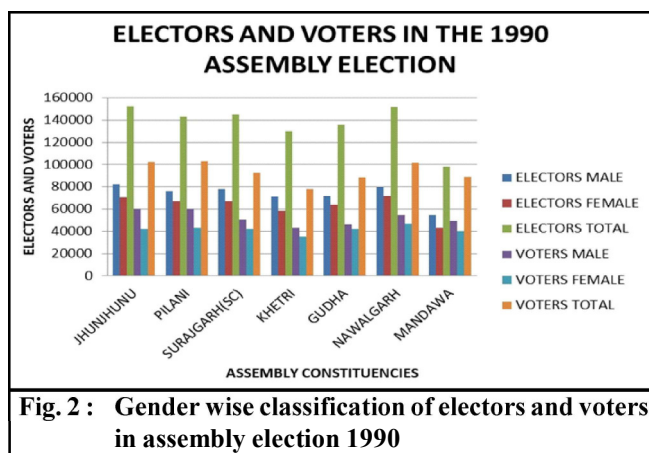
Participation of women in politics: Following data represents electors and voters separately male and female in the assembly elections from 1990 to 2023 of Jhunjhunu district.

Assembly Elections :

In the country, democratic people are formed in the states and union territories through assembly elections. This election is important for the federal system of India. At the state level, citizens have the freedom to choose their seats. The size of the state assembly is determined on the basis of population and other factors, in which the members of the assembly are elected for a period of 5 years, unless the assembly is dissolved sooner. The eligibility to vote in India is to be a citizen of India and at least 18 years of age. Political parties and candidates campaign extensively before elections, presenting policies, promises, and manifestos to voters. After the election, the votes are counted and the results are declared by the Election Commission. The party or coalition with a majority of seats in the Assembly is invited to form the government and the leader of the majority party or coalition becomes the Chief Minister.

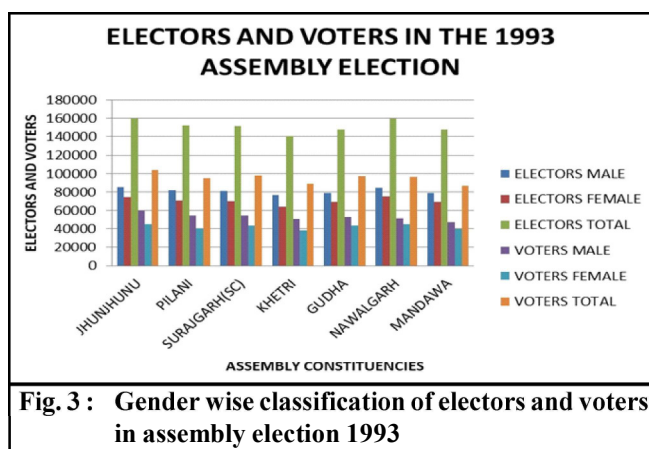
Assembly elections of 1990:

In 1990 assembly elections, there were 956030 voters in total 7 assembly seats of Jhunjhunu district, in which total 68.66% (656475) voting took place. The highest voting was 90.84% in Mandawa assembly seat, while the lowest voting was 60.31% in Khetri assembly seat. The lowest female voting was 60.04% in Jhunjhunu assembly seat, while male voting was 73.50%. The highest female voting was 92.19% and male voting was 89.78% in Mandawa assembly seat. Out of total seven assembly seats of Jhunjhunu district, Surajgarh assembly seat was reserved for scheduled caste. In this constituency 92439 voters *i.e.* (63.78%) took place out of total voters of 144934 (Fig. 2).



Assembly elections of 1993:

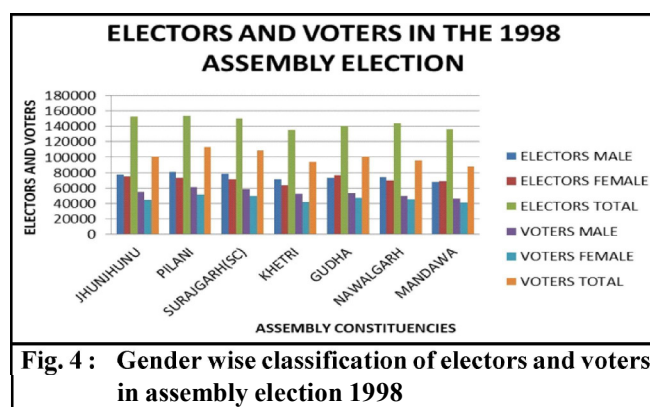
In 1993 assembly elections, there were 1060232 voters in the total 7 assembly seats of Jhunjhunu district, in which a total of 62.87% (666593) votes were cast. The highest voting was 65.63% in Gudha assembly seat, while the lowest voting was 58.71% in Mandawa assembly seat. The lowest female voting was 57.05% in Piloni assembly seat, while the male voting here was 66.92%. The highest female voting was 63.55% in Gudha assembly seat and the male voting here was 67.45%. Out of the total seven assembly seats in Jhunjhunu district, Surajgarh assembly seat was reserved for scheduled castes. In this constituency 97821 voters *i.e.* (64.61 %) took place out of total voters of 151379 (Fig. 3).



Assembly elections of 1998:

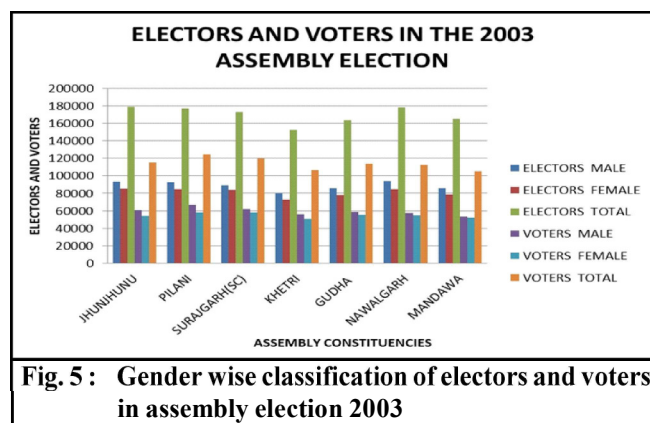
In 1998 Assembly elections, there were 1013862 voters in a total of 7 assembly seats of Jhunjhunu district, in which a total of 68.99% (699503) voted. The highest voting was 73.35% in Piloni Assembly seat, while the lowest voting was 64.12% in Mandawa Assembly seat.

The lowest female voting was 60.11% in Jhunjhunu Assembly seat while the male voting here was 71.13%. The highest female voting was 72.69% in Surajgarh Assembly seat and the male voting here was 74.79%. Out of a total of seven assembly seats in Jhunjhunu district, Surajgarh Assembly seat was reserved for Scheduled Castes. In this constituency 108816 voters *i.e.* (72.46 %) took place out of total voters of 150168 (Fig. 4).



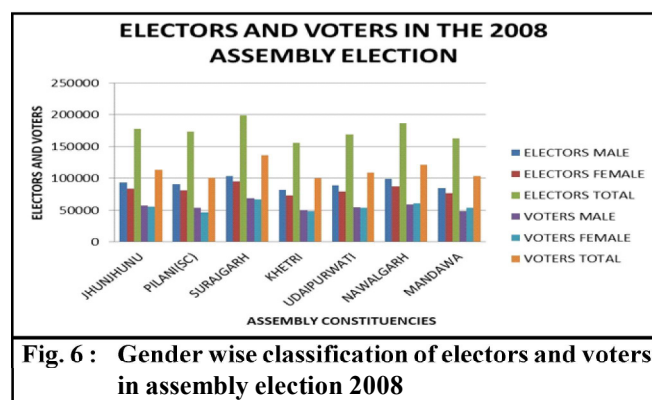
Assembly elections of 2003:

In 2003 assembly elections, there were 1188399 voters in the total 7 assembly seats of Jhunjhunu district, in which a total of 67.14% (797945) votes were cast. The highest voting was 70.26% in Piloni assembly seat, while the lowest voting was 63.09% in Nawalgarh assembly seat. The lowest female voting was 63.65% in Jhunjhunu assembly seat, while the male voting here was 64.98%. The highest female voting was 70.92% in Gudha assembly seat and the male voting here was 68.43%. Out of the total seven assembly seats in Jhunjhunu district, Surajgarh assembly seat was reserved for scheduled castes. In this constituency 120000 voters *i.e.* (69.30 %) took place out of total voters 173156 (Fig. 5).



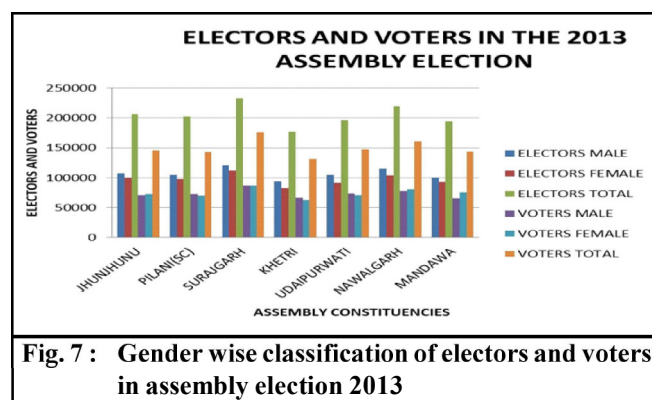
Assembly elections of 2008:

In 2008 assembly elections, there were 1223846 voters in total 7 assembly seats of Jhunjhunu district, in which a total of 64.03% (783691) votes were cast. The highest voting was 68.71% (136641) in Surajgarh assembly seat, while the lowest voting was 58.43% in Pilani assembly seat. The lowest female voting was 57.31% in Pilani assembly seat, while the male voting here was 59.13%. The highest female voting was 71.07% in Surajgarh assembly seat and the male voting here was 66.54%. According to the delimitation order of the year 2006, reserved assembly seat Surajgarh was removed and Pilani was declared for Scheduled caste in Jhunjhunu district. In this constituency 101070 voters *i.e.* (58.43 %) took place out of total voters 172972 (Fig. 6).



Assembly elections of 2013 :

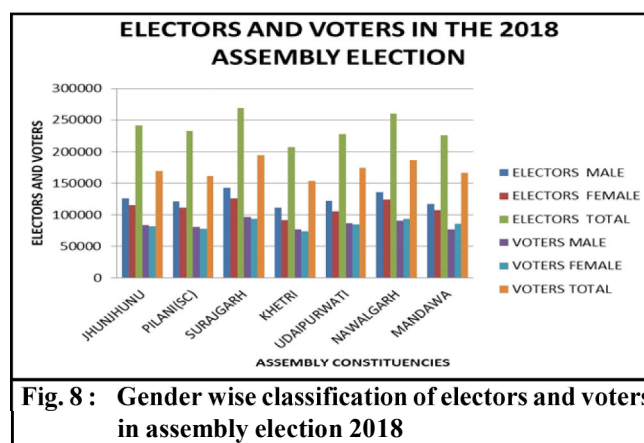
In 2013 assembly elections, there were 1428228 voters in the total 7 assembly seats of Jhunjhunu district, in which a total of 73.30% (1046998) voting took place. The highest voting was 75.47% (175630) in Surajgarh assembly seat, while the lowest voting was 70.63% in Pilani assembly seat. The lowest female voting was 71.85% in Pilani assembly seat, while the male voting here was 69.50%. The highest female voting was 80.53%



in Mandawa assembly seat and the male voting here was 65.67%. Out of the total seven assembly seats in Jhunjhunu district, Pilani assembly seat was reserved for Scheduled Castes. In this constituency 142732 voters *i.e.* (70.63 %) took place out of total voters 202063 (Fig. 7).

Assembly elections of 2018 :

In 2018 Assembly elections, there were 1654661 voters in a total of 7 assembly seats in Jhunjhunu district, in which a total of 72.93% (1206803) voting took place. The highest voting was 76.64% (175573) in the Udaipurwati Assembly seat, while the lowest voting was 69.43% (161872) in the Pilani Assembly seat which is reserved for Scheduled Castes. The lowest female voting was 70.51% in Pilani Assembly seat, while male voting here was 66.57%. The highest female voting was 80.29% in Udaipurwati Assembly seat and male voting was 71.31% (Fig. 8).

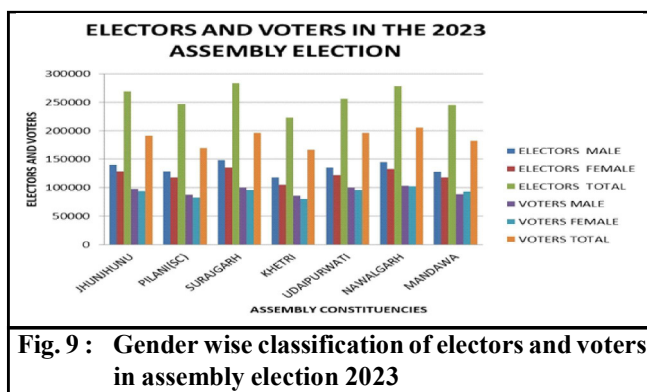


Assembly elections of 2023:

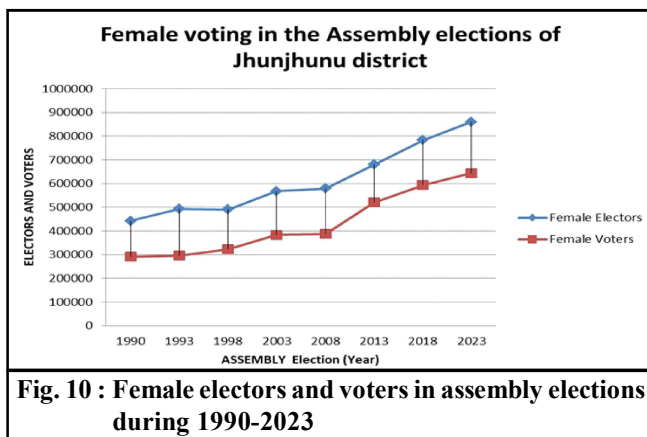
In 2023 assembly elections, there were 1802106 voters in a total of 7 assembly seats in Jhunjhunu district, in which a total of 72.41% (1305070) voting took place. The highest voting was 76.42% (195834) in Udaipurwati assembly seat, while the lowest voting was 68.76% (161872) in Pilani assembly seat, which is reserved for Scheduled Castes. The lowest female voting was 69.58% in Pilani assembly seat, while male voting here was 67.99%. The highest female voting was 79.18% in Mandawa assembly seat and male voting here was 69.14% (Fig. 9).

Women voting in assembly elections of Jhunjhunu district (1990-2023):

In 1990, there were a total of 441778 women voters



in 7 assembly seats in Jhunjhunu district, out of which 290759 women voted. In 1990, the female voting percentage was 65.81% which increased to 59.9% in 1993, while in 1998 the female voting percentage increased to 65.95%. In 2003, female voting increased to 67.50% and in the assembly elections of the year 2008, female voting decreased to 66.91%. In 2013, female voting increased to 76.39% which decreased to 75.80% in 2018. In 2023, female voting decreased further to 74.90% which was less than 2018 and 2013. Thus, fluctuations in women voting are seen in the assembly elections from 1990 to 2023. The highest female voter turnout was 76.39% in the 2013 and the lowest female voter turnout was only 59.9% in 1993 assembly elections (Fig. 10).



Participation as women candidates in the assembly elections of Jhunjhunu district:

In 1990 assembly elections, there were total 138 candidates in the seven assembly seats of Jhunjhunu district, out of which only 5 women participated. Not a single woman participated in Jhunjhunu, Khetri and Surajgarh assembly seats, while the maximum number

of two women candidates participated in Nawalgarh seat, while one woman candidate each participated in Pilani, Udaipurwati and Mandawa assembly seats, in which Smt. Sumitra Singh was the only victorious woman candidate in Pilani assembly seat.

In 1993 assembly elections, there were total 94 candidates in Jhunjhunu district, in which only one-woman candidate participated who was from Pilani assembly seat.

In 1998 assembly elections, there were total 49 candidates for the seven assembly seats of Jhunjhunu district. In which only two women participants took part and Sumitra Singh was the victorious woman candidate from Jhunjhunu assembly seat.

In 2003 assembly elections, there were total 53 candidates in the seven assembly seats of Jhunjhunu district, out of which two female candidates from Jhunjhunu and Nawalgarh assembly seats. Smt. Sumitra Singh and Pratibha Singh was the winning woman candidate from the Jhunjhunu and Nawalgarh assembly seats, respectively.

In 2008 assembly elections, there were total 98 candidates in the seven assembly seats of Jhunjhunu district, out of which one woman each participated in Jhunjhunu, Khetri and Nawalgarh. Two women candidates participated in the elections from Mandawa and three women from Surajgarh, while there was not a single woman candidate in Pilani and Udaipurwati. Rita Chaudhary won from the Mandawa assembly seat.

In 2013 assembly elections, total 77 candidates contested from the seven assembly seats of Jhunjhunu district, including one woman candidate each from Nawalgarh and Pilani and two women candidates each from Surajgarh and Nawalgarh. In these elections Santosh Ahlawat was the only victorious female candidate from the Surajgarh assembly seat.

In 2018 assembly elections, total 91 candidates contested in the seven assembly seats of Jhunjhunu district, in which one woman candidate contested from each Pilani, Surajgarh, Khetri and Mandawa and two women contested each in Udaipurwati and Nawalgarh. At the same time, not a single woman candidate contested from the Jhunjhunu assembly seat. In these elections Rita Choudhary won the by-election held in 2019 from Mandawa assembly seat.

In 2023 assembly elections, there were total 77 candidates in the seven assembly seats of Jhunjhunu district, out of which there was one woman candidate

Table 1 : Participation as women candidates in the assembly elections of Jhunjhunu district								
Election Year →	1990	1993	1998	2003	2008	2013	2018	2023
Constituency ↓								
Jhunjhunu	0/24	0/17	1/8	1/7	1/15	1/11	0/15	1/14
Pilani	1/24	1/20	0/6	0/7	0/17	0/6	1/12	0/8
Surajgarh	0/10	0/8	0/4	0/9	3/13	2/10	1/19	3/11
Khetri	0/17	0/10	0/7	0/6	1/16	0/12	1/11	1/10
Udaipurwati	1/22	0/14	0/8	0/7	0/21	0/19	2/12	2/9
Nawalgarh	2/26	0/19	1/12	1/7	1/10	2/13	2/15	0/13
Mandawa	1/15	0/16	0/4	0/10	2/6	1/6	1/7	1/12

each from Jhunjhunu, Khetri and Mandawa seats, while two women candidates participated in the elections from Udaipurwati and three from Surajgarh. In these elections Rita Chaudhary was only winning female candidate from Mandawa seat.

Women Empowerment through Politics:

The culture, history and language of any nation are reflected in the development, progress and prosperity of its women. Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) 5 aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. It states that equality is not only a fundamental human right but also a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world.

India, with its rich cultural heritage and democratic structure, has made significant progress in various fields. Yet, progress towards gender equality, especially the political participation of women, remains a challenging task.

It becomes imperative to understand the key barriers to women's participation in Indian politics, not only to advance gender equality but also to have a more representative and accountable governance. Gradual progress has been seen in women's representation in Indian politics, but significant disparities still persist. Women are projected to make up approximately 14% of the Lok Sabha (lower house of parliament) and 11% of the Rajya Sabha (upper house) by 2024. While these figures show some improvement, they are far below the global average and indicate substantial gender inequality in political representation.

A notable development in Indian politics is the empowerment of women at the grassroots level through the Panchayati Raj system. The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments enacted in 1992 mandated a minimum of 33% reservation for women in Panchayati

Raj institutions and urban local bodies. This reservation has not only increased women's participation in local governance but has also significantly improved community development and governance outcomes.

Conclusion:

It is imperative to recognise and promote the important role of women in politics. Ensuring women's full and equal participation is essential to the well-being of communities and nations around the world. Empowering women through politics is therefore not just a matter of justice and fairness, it is a strategic imperative for building more inclusive, equitable and prosperous societies.

Between 1990 and 2023, the average voting percentage (from 68.66 to 72.41) has increased by 3.75%. The highest voting percentage of 73.30% was recorded in the 2013 assembly elections, and the lowest voting percentage of 62.87% was recorded in the 1993 assembly elections. From 1990 to 2023, 4 women candidates have been successful in winning the assembly elections eight times. Out of these, Sumitra Singh has represented the region in the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly by winning elections once from Pilani assembly seat and once from Jhunjhunu assembly seat, Pratibha Singh once from Nawalgarh assembly seat, Santosh Ahlawat once from Surajgarh assembly seat and Rita Choudhary thrice from Mandawa assembly seat.

This research paper on women's participation in politics through mediation underlines the important role that political participation plays in advancing gender equality and promoting social progress.

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