

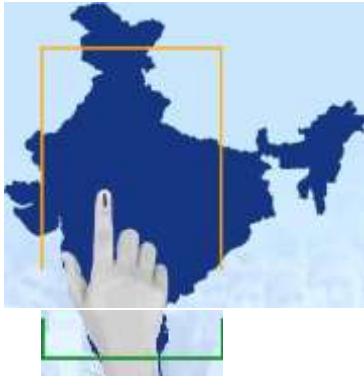
## THE SOCIAL SCIENCE PERSPECTIVE

Volume 2, Issue 4, 2022

### **Panel Discussion: (Man)ifesto?- Gender in India's Electoral Dynamics**

Event 3- 12 August (Friday)

Echoing the ethos of upholding a vigorously functioning democracy, in January 2022, the Centre for Research in Social Sciences and Education (CeRSSE) jointly with the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (SHSS), JAIN (Deemed-to-be University) organised a panel discussion on the theme *(Man)ifesto?- Gender in India's Electoral Dynamics* on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2022 at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Auditorium, JAIN Knowledge Campus, JAIN (Deemed-to-be University), Jayanagar, Bengaluru. Closer to the 75 years of celebrating Indian freedom, the discussion echoed the spirit of *Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav*. It was the third-panel discussion of the event series titled as- *Electoral Reforms in Indian Democracy- Vestiges of Past, Volatility Now, and Vision Ahead*. The event series was crafted based on the honourable Speaker of the Karnataka Legislative Assembly Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri's observations on the pressing need for electoral reforms in the country in January 2022. As he envisioned establishing a healthy democratic space for discussion on this matter seeking insights from the stakeholders and engagement with the students, CeRSSE, JAIN (Deemed-to-be University) became one of the vanguards of nurturing the young minds in a well-informed manner.



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### Chair



Melanie I?  
Kumar  
Independent Writer  
and Literary Critic

### Panellists



Dr. Sindhuja Iyengar  
Political Scientist and Strategist



Ananth  
Shreyas  
Journalist  
at  
The  
Quint  
Karnataka



Dr. Ruth Manorama  
Political and Social Activist Recipient of Right  
Livelihood Award 2006

### Patrons

Dr. Chenraj  
Roychand  
Chancellor  
JAIN (Deemed-to-be University)

Dr. Easwaran Iyer  
Pro Vice Chancellor  
JAIN (Deemed-to-be University)

Professor (Dr.) Raj Singh Vice  
Chancellor  
JAIN (Deemed-to-be University)

Prof. X. R. Sridhara Murthy Director -  
Academics and Planning JAIN (Deemed-to-be  
University)

Registration shall take place at the venue between 03:00 pm and 03:30  
pm E-certificates shall be issued for all the attendees

Coordinator

Dr. Debanjana  
Chatterjee Assistant  
Professor  
JAIN (Deemed-to-be University)  
Centre for Research in Social  
Sciences Education (CeRSSE) Email: c.debanjana@jainuniversity.ac.in

As we collectively embarked on the journey along an evolving democratic pathway, on the occasion marking *Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav*, the attempt was to address issues of democracy about almost half the country's population. The Gender Gap Index of 2022 suggests that India did comparatively well in terms of Political Empowerment with a rank of 48, despite faring not so well otherwise with an overall ranking of 135<sup>th</sup>. As per the latest Election Commission of India (ECI) data, women represent 10.5% of the total members of the Parliament. Women make up 14.44 % of members of the Lok Sabha, according to figures compiled by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, of which India is a member, with a record high of 78 in the 17th Lok Sabha.

Melanie P. Kumar, independent writer and literary critic, who chaired and moderated the session, steered the discussion along the lines of the global-Indian interplay, drawing from the history of the women's Suffragette Movement in the West. Dr. Sindhujaa Iyengar, independent strategy consultant and political scientist, threw light not only on the androcentric nature of the election manifestoes in the country but also discussed extensively on Women's Reservation Bill. As she noted the flip sides of an otherwise 'women-friendly', she highlighted how a blanket reservation of 33 per cent of seats for women at the Indian Parliament inadvertently means restricting women's representation merely to it and is exclusionary in nature as it ensures no reservation for the marginalised castes and tribes within the fold of this reservation.

Dr. Ruth Manorama, political and social activist, and the recipient of the Right Livelihood Award 2006, shared her experiences from the ground as she spoke of implementing women's manifestoes. While upholding the grim reality of the gender dynamics of India's electoral democracy, she also made the students understand the worth of responsible voting. Ananth Shreyas, a journalist at The Quint, Karnataka, substantiated his arguments with robust statistical references with a focused analysis of the Karnataka Legislative Assembly. As the current scenario stands in Karnataka, there are only nine women among 225 legislators in the Karnataka Assembly, forming a negligible 4% of the elected representatives. There is currently only one woman in the state cabinet, with no woman among the eight inducted as ministers during the expansion in December 2018. In fact, while up to 50 per cent of the seats are reserved for women at the Karnataka local bodies, they are often treated as dummy candidates in place of the male members of the family. Prof. Jeevan Kumar, a superannuated professor of Political Science from Bangalore University not only joined the panel discussion as a discussant summing up the discussion but also made a small presentation on behalf of Ms. Kathyayini Chamaraj, an executive trustee at CIVIC, Bangalore. The key takeaway of the presentation has been the issue of proportional representation which underlines a necessary discussion around the country's Electoral Reforms.

As the jubilation of *Azadi* called for a critical exploration of the matter, through the discussion, enlightened visionaries and experts engaged with the participants to share their most valued vision, wisdom and insights on the matter.



Audience during the panel discussion



Resource Persons with the Organising Team

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