

To,
The Election Commissioner,
Election Commission of India,
Nirvachan Sadan,
1, Ashoka Road
New Delhi

6th October, 2017

Dear Shri A K Joti,

We thank you once again for your patient hearing and sound advice when our delegation representing the National Alliance for the passage of the women's reservation bill met you on September 19th 2017 at your office. As you are aware, the alliance consists of several hundred non-governmental organizations (some with a pan-India presence) and individuals aligned together and committed to working towards the passage of the women's reservation bill in the Lok Sabha in particular and the empowerment of women in general.

Based on our discussions we wish to summarize our request to you.

- 1. We urge you, as the Election Commissioner, to make a strong recommendation to the political parties to keep a spirit of gender equality when framing the internal democracy of the party.** We urge the EC to ensure at least 1/3 rd representation of women in party candidature lists filed for elections at different levels.

We fully appreciate and understand the liberal spirit of allowing parties a large freedom and latitude in their structure. However, since political parties are elected with the aim of carrying forward the democratic ideals of our constitution and are fully aware of the social realities prevalent, it is necessary for them to lead by example. How can a political party hope to represent faithfully the democratic ideals of our nation when it does not implement these while framing its own internal structure?

The Election Commission is internationally respected for the conduct of elections in India and has over the years managed to increase the voter base. It has thoughtfully created an atmosphere where every Indian finds it easy to cast their vote and thus have a voice. **However, it is poignant that though the number of women voters who are actively casting their vote has increased steadily over the years, women are rarely given a chance to garner these votes for themselves as the allocation of tickets to women still remains dismally disproportionate.**

Women are increasingly aspiring to take part in polity and the highest level of decision making. They have thus far been living with policies, bills and laws created from a male perspective. The increased presence of women in leadership roles would facilitate more gender balanced decisions in policy making and framing laws.

2. We request the Election Commission to encourage a gender equitable allocation of tickets. In the absence of a transparent and merit based system of ticket allocation, there is a huge imbalance in ticket allotment and this leads to under representation of women in the legislature. Whereas women form 50% of the population, their representation has never exceeded 12% in the parliament. It is noteworthy that people with a criminal background abound in parliament, so much so that several reforms have been introduced by the Supreme Court on the issue of criminals in polity. **It is a shame that such a large talent pool (women) is kept out of parliament and people with criminal backgrounds occupy chairs in the hallowed portals of parliament.** Moreover, it is unfair that the right of self governance be given only to men.

The commissioners may consider having special pre-election meetings with different parties with a focus on encouraging the presence of women candidates.

3. We solicit the backing of the Commission in voicing their strong support in favour of passage of the women's reservation bill in parliament.

This would go a long way in addressing the concerns above.

We urge the commission to voice a strong opinion on the ideal outcome of elections (with special emphasis on gender equality), over and above the free and fair conduct of them.

Thanking you,

Yours sincerely,

AAI (Action Aid India)

AIDWA (All India Democratic Women's Association)

AIWC (All India Women's Conference)

AIDMAM (All India Dalit Mahila Adhikar Manch)

Angaja Foundation

ANHAD (Act New For Harmony and Democracy)

ANISW (Aapmatyu Nivaran Sahay)

ANANDI

Ambedkar University

CARITAS (Confederation Of (165) Catholic Relief, Development And Social Service Organisations)

CBCI (Catholic Bishops Conference of India)

CSR (Centre for Social Research)

CWDS (Centre for Women's Development Studies)

DUWA (Delhi University Women's Association)

Ekal Nari Shakti Sanghathan

Guild for Service

HAMSAFAR Support Centre for Women, Lucknow

ICWM (Indian Christian Women's Movement)

IGSSS (Indo Global Social Service Society)

JAGORI

Jan Jagran Shakti Sanghathan

Justice Seekers

JWP (Joint Women's Programme)

KKPKP (Kagad Kach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat)

Koshish

Maher, Maharashtra

MKSS (Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan) Rajasthan, Punjab

My Choices Foundation

NAPW (National Association Of Professional Women)

NFIW (National Federation of Indian Women)

OXFAM INDIA (Oxford Committee for Famine Relief)

Pension Parishad

Rajasthan University for Women

Rajasthan University Teachers Association

Right to Food Campaign

Saahas

Samajwadi Samagam

SNDT Women's University (Shreemati Nathibai Domodar Thackersey)

SOD Press

The Alternate Space Women's Collective

The HUNGER Project

TISS (Tata Institute of Social Sciences)

Vikalp

Vishakha

VIVAT Interntional

War Widows

WPC (Women Power Connect)[over a thousand members; some are :

Bhumika in Andhra Pradesh

Haryana Nav Yuvak Kala Sangh in Haryana

Gopal Kiran Shiksha Evam Sanskritik Samiti in Gwalior (MP):

Chetna Vikas in Jharkhand

Grameen Evam Nagar Vikas Parishad in Bihar

Atithi in Bihar

Mahila Chetna Manch in Jharkhand

Tarun Chetna in Uttar Pradesh

Astitwa in Uttar Pradesh]

YWCA (Young women's Christian association) – Delhi

YWCA (Young women's Christian association) - National

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTERS

S.no	Name	Origination
1	P.Chillianmare(Associate Professor)	SNDT Women's University,
2	Meeta Hardikar	MAKAAM
3	Jeevika Shiv	ASAA Gujraat
4	Dipa Sinha	Ambedkar University, Delhi
5	Maujoos Mohan	H.M.S
6	Dr.Sunigam	National Convenor, SAMAJWADI SAMAGAM, NAPM
7	Kavita Skivastava	PULL
8	Ahsha	Right To Food Campaign
9	Akhil Sivedas	CFAR
10	Sohini	Pension Parishad
11	Nancy	Pension Parishad
12	Anuneha	Journalistion
13	Richa Singh	Sangtin Sitapur UP
14	Manob Bose	IMSE W.Bengal
15	Prem	Koshish, TISS Delhi/Bihar/Mahansta
16	Amit	MKSS, Rajasthan
17	Kavita Kam Ayani	SWAMI, JJSS, NAPM, Bihar
18	Disha	Vimla Mahila Pragatimay
19	Nikhil	MKSS Rajasthan
20	Bankita	MKSS Rajasthan
21	Srabhiyan	Rajasthan
22	Harjeet Kaur	Punjab
23	Madhu sharma	Punjab
24	Daljeet Kaur	Punjab
25	Gillaan Seth	Punjab
26	Amit Kumar	AINSW
27	Avani Chokshi	Law Student
28	Norati Devi	Sarpanch, Ajmer Dist.
29	Shabina	SNS

30	Aditi	SNS
31	Jamshed	PP
32	Sanjay Kumar	AAA
33	Janani	PP
34	Neeta Hardikar	Dengadh Mahila Sangathan Gujraat
35	Arundhati Snidhar	ANANDI
36	Surekha Gade	K.K.P.K.P. Pune
37	Ajay Sahni	JAN JAGRAN SHAKTI SANGATHAN Bihar
38	Sudha Devi	JAN JAGRAN SHAKTI SANGATHAN Bihar
39	Brinder Kumar	SAI Jyoti Sewa
40	Rajaram	Sangeetan Kishan Majdoor Sangathan Sitapur
41	Kamla Devi	Sangeetan Kishan Majdoor Sangathan Sitapur
42	Deendayal	Sangeetan Kishan Majdoor Sangathan Sitapur
43	Ramasher Raj	Sangeetan Kishan Majdoor Sangathan Sitapur
44	Sunita	Sangeetan Kishan Majdoor Sangathan Sitapur
45	Kamla	Sangeetan Kishan Majdoor Sangathan Sitapur
46	Parwal	Sangeetan Kishan Majdoor Sangathan Sitapur
47	Kamla	Sangeetan Kishan Majdoor Sangathan Sitapur
48	Shakuntala	Sangeetan Kishan Majdoor Sangathan Sitapur
49	Raghubir	Sangeetan Kishan Majdoor Sangathan Sitapur
50	Zandian arya	MKSS,Rajasthan
51	Sunita Devi	JJSS Bihar
52	Mandwi	JJSS Bihar
53	Anjum Aara	JJSS Bihar

54	Ma Batuni	JJSS Bihar
55	Md.Rangina	JJSS Bihar
56	Md.Arvatari	JJSS Bihar
57	Md. Bidamari	JJSS Bihar
58	Ms. Parvati	JJSS Bihar
59	Rubisha	JJSS Bihar
60	Kendul Devi	JJSS Bihar
61	Naina Devi	JJSS Bihar
62	Katki Angre	Journalist
63	Bhaswati Mukherjee	Indian Foreign Service
64	Lata Krishnan (Manager advocacy)	CARE Foundation

Copy to:

Law ministry

Ministry of Woman and Child Development