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Indian General Election 2009 – The Women to Watch

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Preface

India will hold its 15th general elections from 16 April to 13 May 2009. The elections will take place in challenging circumstances. A variety of cross-cutting political, security, economic and socio-cultural issues will influence the elections. The exercise will be impacted by multiple parties, personalities and positions from India's vast political spectrum.

As India moves into the election mode, the Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS) is bringing out a series of papers analysing different aspects of the forthcoming elections. These will include, among others, the key national and regional parties, and their strategies, key political personalities, and the issues that are likely to have an impact on the elections.

ISAS had earlier prepared five papers, providing an overview of India's political parties; the role of the youth in India's elections; the economic backdrop to the general elections; the major domestic issues that are likely to dominate the elections;² and India's key foreign policy concerns and their likely impact on the forthcoming elections. This paper, the sixth in the series, examines the participation of women in India's politics and elections. It also studies some of the important women politicians who are likely to influence the forthcoming elections.

Introduction

This paper examines the role of select women politicians from national and regional parties in the forthcoming Indian elections. It focuses particularly on the significant impact that three key women politicians are likely to have on the elections and the post-electoral government formation. These three politicians are Mayawati Kumari (Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh and leader of the Bahujan Samaj Party [BSP]), J. Jayalalitha (former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and the General Secretary of the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam [AIADMK]) and Mamata Banerjee (Former Union Minister and main leader of the

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² In the third paper in this series (ISAS Insight No 53: "Indian General Elections 2009 – Key Issues That Could Influence Voting Behaviour", one out of two Indians live on less than US\$1 a day, as mentioned in the fifth sentence on page 5, should be read as "one out of four Indians live on less than US\$1 a day". The error is regretted.

Trinamool Congress [TC]). Before providing a detailed analysis of the significance of the three leaders, the paper will set the context by highlighting the role of women in South Asia's politics, women voters and the representation of women in India's Parliament, and an overview of women leaders in India's politics.

Women in South Asian Politics

It has been very aptly stated that, "however much the compilers of South Asian statistics on maternal mortality, female foeticide and 'gender bias' in South Asia might protest, the fact is that Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh are all remarkable for having had elected women heads of state. This fact evokes surprise even in the United States, where Hillary Clinton's lead in the Democratic nomination race may not translate into a clear chance at the White House."³

South Asia has had several prominent women politicians. Some of the illustrious personalities that have held the highest political offices include the late Indira Gandhi (former Prime Minister of India and leader of the Congress Party), the late Benazir Bhutto (former Prime Minister of Pakistan and leader of Pakistan People's Party), Kumara Bandaranaike (first woman President of Sri Lanka), Chandrika Kumaratunga (former President of Sri Lanka), Sheikh Hasina (Prime Minister of Bangladesh) and Khaleda Zia (former Prime Minister of Bangladesh).

In addition to these distinguished ladies, in the present political scenario in India, Sonia Gandhi (Chairman of the United Progressive Alliance [UPA]), leader of the Congress Party and widow of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi) is one of the most influential politicians. From a constitutional perspective, India's incumbent and first woman president, Pratibha Devisingh Patil, who has had a long political career, is likely to play a significant role in the post-election period.

Women Voters and Women Representatives in Parliament

In 2004, there were about 671 million registered voters in India, of whom approximately 322 million were female. The statistics for the 2004 general elections indicate that the turnout of women voters was nearly 54 percent while the turnout for men was 62 percent.⁴ These percentages are marginally less than the corresponding shares in the 1999 elections, where the turnout of women was 55.6 percent and that of men was 63.9 percent.⁵

In the last general elections in 2004, 174 women contested from recognised political parties, out of whom 45 won.⁶ With 45 elected representatives, the current strength of women parliamentarians is less than 10 percent of the total strength of the Lower House which is 543. On a party-wise basis, out of the 45 women candidates from the Congress Party, 12 were successful. The BJP put up 30 women candidates, out of whom 10 were successful and the

³ The Financial Express, "Women politicians in India", Seema Chishti, 8 August 2007. Mrs Clinton was eventually defeated by Mr Barack Obama as the Democrat nominee for the position of the President of the United States. Mr Obama then defeated Mr John McCain in the United States' Presidential elections.

⁴ Statistical Report on General Elections 2004 to the 14th Lok Sabha, Volume 1 (National and State Abstracts and Detailed Results), Election Commission of India. Source: Election Commission website, Link accessed: http://www.eci.gov.in/SR_KeyHighLights/LS_2004/Vol_I_LS_2004.pdf. Accessed on 25 February 2009.

⁵ See M. S. Rana. "India Votes Lok Sabha and Vidhan Elections 2001-2005", p. 31, New Delhi: Sarup and sons, 2006.

⁶ The Outlook, "Women to get career counselling in Politics", 5 February 2009.

Communist Party of India (Marxist) [CPI-M] put up five women candidates, out of whom two were elected. The Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) had five women candidates and two were successful.⁷ On an aggregate basis, the number of women elected in 2004 was less than the 49 women elected in 1999.⁸ Uttar Pradesh elected seven women members of parliament in 2004, which was the highest for any state, followed by Maharashtra, which elected five.⁹

A discussion of women in Indian politics and legislature would be incomplete without reference to the issue of reservation of seats for women in Parliament. The much talked-about Bill intending to reserve 33 percent of seats for women has not taken off and can become a reality only after the next elections. The Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), one of the main political allies of the ruling UPA, and the Samajwadi Party have been the main stumbling blocks to the Bill. Both parties have made it clear that they would only support the Bill if it is modified to reserve part of the women's quota for backward castes and minorities.¹⁰

However, the lack of progress on the legislation should not be attributed only to the regional parties. Indeed, national parties such as the Congress Party, the BJP and the Left have also been dragging their feet on the Bill. Had the three parties been unequivocally committed to the Bill, then it would have seen the light of the day as between the three of them, the parties have the requisite strength to pass the Bill.¹¹

Prominent Women Leaders in National Parties

Other than Sonia Gandhi, one of the most visible and influential women leaders, politicians such as Ambika Soni and Renuka Chowdhury (Congress Party), Sushma Swaraj (BJP) and Brinda Karat (CPI-M) have also cast their indelible impressions on national politics.

Ambika has been the Minister for Tourism and Culture since January 2006. While it was only in 2006 that she was included in the Cabinet, she has been an important part of the organisational set-up of the Congress Party, especially since 1999, when she was appointed General-Secretary of the All India Congress Committee and was attached to Sonia Gandhi.¹² Ambika is a member of the Rajya Sabha (the Upper House of Parliament) from the state of Punjab and has, in the past, been in charge of overseeing the Congress Party's strategies and policies for several state assembly elections.

Renuka has been the Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Women and Child Development since January 2006. Earlier, she was the Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare from 1997 to 1998 during the prime ministership of H. D. Deve Gowda. Renuka

⁷ Statistical Report on General Elections 2004 to the 14th Lok Sabha, Volume 1 (National and State Abstracts and Detailed Results), Election Commission of India. Source: Election Commission website; Weblink: http://www.eci.gov.in/SR_KeyHighLights/LS_2004/Vol_I_LS_2004.pdf. Accessed on 25 February 2009.

⁸ Figures obtained from Table "Women's presence in the Lok Sabha from 1952-2004". Source: National Resource Centre for women website; Weblink: <http://nrcw.nic.in/statistics/percent20tables/loksabha.html>. Accessed on 21 February 2009.

⁹ See Statistical Report on General Elections 2004 to the 14th Lok Sabha, Volume 1 (National and State Abstracts and Detailed Results), Election Commission of India. Source: Election Commission website; Weblink: http://www.eci.gov.in/SR_KeyHighLights/LS_2004/Vol_I_LS_2004.pdf. Accessed on 25 February 2009.

¹⁰ The Mint. "Politics of women power". 7 May 2008.

¹¹ The Indian Express. "The Women's Bill charade again", Santwana Bhattacharya, 23 November 2006.

¹² The Hindu, "Five old-new faces in the Union Cabinet", Harish Khare, 30 January 2006. Also see The Times of India, "Sonia's right hand", 18 March 2001.

began her political career in the regional Telugu Desam Party and joined the Congress Party in 1998. With her vocal views on various issues, she has turned her relatively low-profile ministerial portfolio into a high profile one.¹³

Sushma is one of the most prominent women politicians from the BJP. She is the chairperson of the party's 19-member campaign committee for the 2009 General Elections. Sushma, considered close to the BJP's prime-ministerial candidate L. K. Advani, has also been entrusted with the responsibility of overseeing three states, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh.¹⁴ She is considered part of the 'gen-next' of the BJP.¹⁵ Sushma had earlier been the Chief Minister of Delhi and had held cabinet berths during the NDA rule.

Brinda is the first women politburo member of the CPI-M.¹⁶ She has been a Rajya Sabha member from West Bengal since August 2005. An articulate and visible face of the Left, Brinda has been a vocal critic of the India-United States civil nuclear deal, accusing the UPA government of having lied about the exact nature of the deal.¹⁷

Women Leaders of Regional Parties

In the larger context of women leaders in India's politics, it is important to look at leaders from regional parties. Apart from stalwarts such as Mayawati and Jayalalitha who are discussed in detail later, the others include younger leaders such as Supriya Sule (daughter of Agriculture Minister and NCP supremo, Sharad Pawar), Kanimozhi (daughter of Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam [DMK] Chief and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, M. Karunanidhi) and Mehbooba Mufti (President of the Peoples Democratic Party of Kashmir and daughter of Mufti Mohammed Sayeed, former Chief Minister of Kashmir).

The rise of most of India's leading women politicians from regional parties can be traced either to their political lineages or their male mentors who have been key figures in national politics. Subsequently, however, these ladies have carved out their own niches. Mayawati and Jayalalitha were initiated into politics by their mentors, the late Kanshi Ram and M. G. Ramachandran respectively. It has been aptly stated that a generally more-liberal view taken by the Indian electorate has also seen the emergence of women who may have been initially 'picked' by their respective mentors but who are leaders now in their own right, Jayalalitha and Mamata, for example. Mayawati symbolises this very aptly. Nobody doubts that she thinks for herself.¹⁸ Thus, it would not be incorrect to say that none of these women have risen through 'the familiar South Asian paradigm of dynastic advantage'.¹⁹

In so far as Mayawati, Jayalalitha and Mamata, the three leading women politicians from India's regional parties, are concerned, they share certain similarities. All of them are spinsters and run virtually 'one-woman' regional parties. All three have allied with both the Congress Party and BJP in the past. In fact, Mamata actually began her political career with the Congress Party. While Mamata, till now, has not been accused of corruption, both Jayalalitha and Mayawati have faced such charges. Mayawati was implicated in the Taj

¹³ The Hindustan Times, "Mistress of Spices", Chetan Chauhan, 21 July 2007.

¹⁴ The India Today, "The party loses the plot", Bhavna-Vij Arora, 13 February 2009.

¹⁵ The Times of India, "Jaitley, Sushma top BJP Gen-next", 12 June 2005.

¹⁶ The Telegraph, "60 and still going strong", 31 December 2006.

¹⁷ The Hindustan Times, "UPA govt selling lies on Indo-US Nuclear deal: Brinda Karat", 3 September 2008.

¹⁸ The Financial Express, "Women politicians in India", Seema Chishti, 8 August 2007.

¹⁹ The Frontline, "Women in Indian Politics", Jayati Ghosh, 25 September-8 October 1999.

Corridor case, a project for building a shopping mall close to the Taj Mahal, during her earlier tenure as Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. The Supreme Court had earlier pushed the Central Bureau of Investigation into registering a criminal case against Mayawati for financial bungling in the project and examining its impact on the environment. In October 2007, however, the Court gave Mayawati a major reprieve and refused to interfere with the state Governor's refusal to prosecute her on charges of corruption.²⁰ Jayalalitha too has been convicted of taking over a government property in 2001 and, as a result of being convicted, she had to resign from the Chief Minister's post in 2001 until she was acquitted.²¹

Mayawati Kumari

A graduate from the Delhi University, Mayawati, aged 53 years, as mentioned earlier, was initiated into politics by the Late Kanshi Ram, founder of the BSP, which claims to be the main representative of the Dalits in India. The Dalits are the lower rung of India's caste hierarchy and form Mayawati's core vote bank. Before her current stint as the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, following the assembly elections of 2007, Mayawati was the Chief Minister of the state for brief periods during 1995, 1997 and 2002-2003. In the 2007 elections, however, Mayawati stunned most pundits when the BSP secured an absolute majority in the state assembly by winning 206 seats in a House of 402. For the first time, the BSP, during the 2007 election, made a deliberate effort to shed its casteist image by fielding candidates from different castes using the model of 'social engineering'.

The second occasion in the recent past when Mayawati captured the headlines was during the vote on a 'no-confidence' motion against the UPA government in July 2008 on the contentious issue of the India-United States civil nuclear deal. Mayawati withdrew her support to the UPA government. In the event of the UPA losing the motion, a group of parties, including the Left, projected her as an alternative prime-ministerial candidate.

At present, the BSP holds 19 out of a total of 80 Lok Sabha (Lower House of Parliament) seats from Uttar Pradesh. Many commentators argue that the BSP may even win up to 35 seats in the forthcoming elections, which will enable Mayawati to play a crucial role in the formation of the next government in Delhi, where every seat counts.²² It must also be noted that while winning 19 seats in 2004, the vote share of the BSP increased to 5.3 percent from 4.2 percent in 1999.²³

Several analysts opine that the possibility of Mayawati emerging as a strong contender for the post of Prime Minister following the 2009 elections cannot be ruled out. Interestingly, many are of the view that Mayawati's biggest advantage is that she has no firm ideological commitment, apart from the social uplifting of the Dalits. This is an agenda acceptable to all political parties. The lack of an ideology was also evident in the 2004 manifesto of the BSP, which gave no insight whatsoever to the party's programmes and ideology.²⁴ Indeed, her ideological 'accommodation' is clear from the fact while she supported the Left against the

²⁰ The Times of India, "Mayawati gets major reprieve in Taj Corridor case", 10 October 2007.

²¹ The Hindu Business Line, "Elections and ethics: The Jayalalitha case", V. K. Srinivasan, 23 May 2001, Volume 18 – Issue 13, 23 June-6 July 2001.

²² The Times of India report, "TOI Estimate: UPA ahead, but only just", 6 March 2009, gives Mayawati 35 seats, while a piece in The Mint "Mayawati gives jitters to Congress leadership", by G. V. L. Narasimha Rao, 13 January 2008, gives Mayawati 50 seats.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ The Hindu, "Can Mayawati do a Barack Obama", K.V. Prasad, 4 November 2008.

Congress-led UPA government during the trust vote of July 2008, she had campaigned for Narendra Modi, the BJP Chief Minister of Gujarat and a staunch critic of the Left, a few years ago.

According to Swaminathan Aiyar, a noted columnist for leading Indian newspaper *The Times of India*, this lack of ideology will stand her in good stead and, as a result, Mayawati has a 45-percent chance of becoming the Prime Minister, way ahead of Dr Manmohan Singh (25-30 percent) and Advani (10-15 percent).²⁵ One of the reasons advanced by Aiyar is that the 'Third Front' today regards both the BJP and the Congress Party as untouchable. So, the BSP's support may be essential for all the three combinations, the UPA, the BJP and the 'Third Front', to garner a majority. Mayawati's price for such support will be the prime ministership. She may win no more than 50-65 seats but those could be crucial.²⁶

To fulfill her ambitions of becoming the Prime Minister and building a pan-India image, the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister has been trying to expand her base in other states. In Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh, the BSP secured 2.6 percent and seven percent of the popular vote respectively in the 2007 assembly elections. In the December 2008 elections in Rajasthan, the BSP won six seats, as compared to two in 2003. The vote share of the party went up to eight percent from 3.9 percent. In the Delhi assembly elections of 2008, the party won two seats as compared to none in 2003; while the BSP's vote share went up to 12 percent from the 5.7 percent in 2003. In the latest Madhya Pradesh assembly elections, the party won seven seats, whereas it won only two in 2003. The vote share of the party increased to 11 percent from 7.2 percent in 2003.²⁷

Mayawati is an important constituent of the 'Third Front' that is projecting itself as a viable alternative to the Congress-led UPA and the BJP-led NDA. Along with the Left and other important regional leaders like Jayalalitha and Chandrababu Naidu, Mayawati is making efforts to make the 'Third Front' a credible alternative. While it remains to be seen whether she indeed emerges as a key prime-ministerial candidate post-elections, she has already entered the club of 100 most powerful women of the Forbes magazine 'from her perch as Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state'.

J. Jayalalitha

Jayalalitha, aged 61 years and former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and general secretary of the AIADMK, as mentioned earlier, was initiated into politics by her mentor and former Chief Minister M. G. Ramachandran.²⁸ A former celluloid star, she joined the AIADMK in 1981. She was the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu from 1991 to 1996. A few months after becoming Chief Minister again in 2001, a five-judge bench of the Supreme Court ruled that any individual convicted of a criminal offence and arrested for a period of not less than two years cannot occupy the Chief Minister's chair. This was in connection to Jayalalitha's conviction for illegally taking over government property.²⁹ Jayalalitha appointed one of her

²⁵ The Times of India, "Next PM: Mayawati has the best chance", Swaminathan S. Anklesaria Aiyar, 1 February 2009.

²⁶ The Hindu, "Mayawati to be next Indian PM: pollster", 23 February 2009.

²⁷ The Hindustan Times, "The elephant will have to wait", Nagendar Sharma and Sunita Aron, 8 December 2008, and The Deccan Herald, "I am 101 percent satisfied", 9 December 2008.

²⁸ The Indian Express, "The making of a goddess", Preminda Jacob, 20 May 1998.

²⁹ The Hindu Business Line, "Elections and ethics: The Jayalalitha case", V. K. Srinivasan, 23 May 2001, Volume 18 – Issue 13, 23 June-6 July 2001.

trusted lieutenants, O. Pannerselvam, as an interim arrangement. She took over the reins of chief ministership once she was acquitted in 2003.

During her political career, Jayalalitha has allied with both the Congress Party and the BJP. While she was an ally of the Congress Party during the prime ministership of Rajiv Gandhi (1984-1989) as well as P. V. Narasimha Rao (1991-1996), she gravitated towards the BJP-led NDA government in 1998.³⁰ Her withdrawal of support to the NDA in 1999 created a major crisis for the government, eventually leading to its downfall by one vote.³¹ In the 2004 Lok Sabha elections, however, the AIADMK performed poorly in Tamil Nadu. This poor run was extended to the 2006 assembly elections as well, as Jayalalitha and her party came up against strong anti-incumbency.

The outlook for Jayalalitha and the AIADMK in the forthcoming elections is considerably bright. This is not only due to anti-incumbency against the ruling DMK, but also because of the corruptive perceptions about the current government.³² Jayalalitha has played her cards well in the run-up to the elections by keeping the national parties guessing about her alliance partners. While in January 2008, her meeting with Modi sparked speculations about an alliance with the BJP,³³ in December 2008, she announced that she had tied up with the Left for the 2009 Lok Sabha elections.³⁴

Most recently, Jayalalitha made clear overtures to the Congress Party, saying that it should end its alliance with the ruling DMK government in Tamil Nadu. For the time being, the Congress Party has rejected Jayalalitha's offer but anything is possible in coalition politics.³⁵ However, the emerging 'Third Front' also has Jayalalitha in its fold. Not only will she be an important constituent of the 'Third Front', given the crucial importance of Tamil Nadu as a key state, she will also not hesitate to play up issues such as the Tamil problem in Sri Lanka to garner popular support.

Mamata Banerjee

Mamata is the leader of the West Bengal-based TC which took birth as a breakaway faction of the state Congress Party in 1998. Aged 54, she entered politics by joining the Congress Party in 1984 under the encouragement of Rajiv Gandhi. When she was elected to parliament in 1984, she was amongst India's youngest parliamentarians ever. In 1991, she was appointed Union Minister of State for Human Resources Development, Youth Affairs and Sports, and Women and Child Development in the Rao-led government from where she resigned in 1993.

Growing frictions with the Congress Party over the ineffectiveness of the latter in fighting the CPI-M in West Bengal resulted in Mamata leaving the Congress Party and forming the TC. She entered the BJP-led NDA alliance. From 1999 to 2001, she was the Railway Minister in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee-led NDA government, from which she walked after a major sting

³⁰ The India Today, "Amma-mia", Vaasanthi, 12 April 1999.

³¹ The Frontline, "Strong Leader", T. S. Subramaniam, 23 June-6 July 2001.

³² The Hindu, "Jayalalitha asks Congress to snap ties with DMK", B. Kolappan, 20 February 2009.

³³ The Hindu, "Modi meets Jayalalitha", 15 January 2008, The Indian Express, "Amma hosts Modi, sets table for a new course", Jaya Menon, 15 January 2008.

³⁴ The Indian Express, "Jayalalitha joins hands with CPI-M for Lok Sabha Polls", 5 December 2008. The Telegraph, "Karat's W-power grows: Jaya joins CPI-M alliance, robbing the BJP combine of another woman leader", 6 December 2008.

³⁵ The Indian Express, "Congress rejects Jaya's olive branch on alliance", 19 February 2009.

operation carried out by the newspaper 'Tehelka' exposed the corrupt dealings of some key NDA functionaries.

Mamata's main political objective has been to displace the Left from West Bengal. In order to achieve the objective, she has tried various combinations. In the 2001 assembly elections in West Bengal, she had an electoral understanding with the Congress Party and both parties managed to get 90 seats in an assembly of 294.³⁶ She rejoined the alliance just before the Parliamentary elections in early 2004. However, her party's performance was disappointing as the TC only won one seat.³⁷

In November 2008, Mamata formally called off the possibility of allying with BJP-led NDA in the forthcoming elections as she is keen on making inroads into the Muslim vote, which may drift away from the CPI-M in the aftermath of the Singur episode.³⁸ Indeed the outlook for the Left in West Bengal in the current elections is not too bright as Mamata has reached a seat-sharing arrangement with the Congress Party. This will result in a 'one-on-one' fight with the Left and could damage the latter's prospects. West Bengal is one of the key states with 42 seats. A good performance by Mamata will make her a major post-electoral entity as far as government formation is concerned. However, like Mayawati and Jayalalitha, she is also not the easiest of coalition partners to deal with. Thus, many in the Congress Party are averse to having alliance with Mamata.³⁹

Conclusion

In India, till now, women have been outnumbered by men in terms of representation in Parliament and other political parties. However, the parties set up by Indian women politicians have acquired considerable authority and influence in an era dominated by fading glory of nationalist parties. It would not, therefore, be incorrect to say that "...barring striking exceptions where dynastic charisma is seen to matter more than anything else, most women politicians have found it difficult to rise within party hierarchies, and have managed to achieve clear leadership only when they have effectively broken out and set up parties on their own... Yet, once these women become established as leaders, another peculiarly Indian characteristic seems to dominate, that is, the unquestioning acceptance by the (largely male) party rank and file of the leaders' decisions."⁴⁰

While it is true that national parties such as the Congress Party have produced prominent women personalities, in a way, coalition politics, with its emphasis on regional parties, has been a blessing for showcasing the power of women leading regional parties. Again it could be argued that it is the constraints of coalition politics which are acting as a major impediment to the enactment of the women's reservations Bill.

While there is a long way to go before women's representation in Indian politics can actually be called satisfactory in numerical terms, it would not be out of place to say that there is

³⁶ The Indian Express, "Mamata and the Congress: the partnership dance", Bidyut Roy, 16 February 2009.

³⁷ The Economic Times, "WB: Congress open to alliance with TC", Tamal Sengupta, 7 February 2009.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ The Telegraph, "Congress wary of Mamata alliance – By poll nomination ruffles feathers", Barun Ghosh, 28 January 2009.

⁴⁰ The Frontline, "Women in Indian Politics", Jayati Ghosh, Volume 16 - Issue 20, 25 September- 8 October 1999.

definitely a qualitative change as far as the representation of women in politics is concerned. In the post-election scenario, Mayawati, Jayalalitha and Mamata will play vital roles. Their significance will unfold irrespective of the combination that forms the government since each of them, individually, can make a major difference to the shape of the Indian government.

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