

- Consensus Campaign for Women's Reservation Bill
- Don't Reduce Women's Quota Promised in the Bill
- Don't Break the Promise of 33% Women's Reservation.
- Pass the Bill without Reducing Women's Reservation

Government's commitment to initiate early steps to pass the Women's Reservation Bill is a welcome sign. But any attempts to reduce the proposed women's quota should be opposed vehemently. Instead of compromising with the quantum of woman's quota, government should increase Lok Sabha seats to make the Bill more acceptable even to its opponents.

Bharatiya Stree Shakti, an all India women's organization has launched a Campaign for strengthening this Bill. Dr. Medha Nanivadekar, President of the organization and Convener of the Consensus Campaign for Woman's Reservation Bill launched the Campaign today in Mumbai. She said, "we support the Bill and do not want it to be stalled any further. Bill should be passed at the earliest. The provision of rotational reservation in the Bill is the real reason behind the failure to pass it even after 13 years. If passed, it would make male MPs lose their seat at least once in three successive elections. It is unrealistic to expect that male MPs would pass a Bill intending to throw them out of Parliament. Our formula to get the Bill passed offers a win-win solution to the controversy over Women's Reservation Bill. It increases women's seats in Lok Sabha without reducing existing seats of male MPs.

Converting all existing constituencies of Lok Sabha and Assemblies into dual-member constituencies would double the seats. There would be 543 men and 543 women in Lok Sabha. Existing 130 SC/ST constituencies would elect one man and one woman from respective categories. This would not change the number or boundaries of existing constituencies."

Dr. Nanivadekar claimed that this also offers a solution to the controversy over quota for OBC and Minority women. Even if the existing Bill was to provide for such quotas within women's quota, OBC and Minorities women would not get more than 50 seats and seats available to men would reduce even further. With dual-member constituencies, excluding SC/ST seats, there would be 413 seats open for men and

women each. Political parties would be able to nominate as many OBC and minority women candidates as they want. This would provide greater OBC and Minority representation than what they would have got even if their existing demands were met.

Doubling the Lok Sabha seats is justifiable in view of 3 ¹/₂ times increase in the population since 1951. Dr. Medha Nanivadekar appealed to women's organizations, elected representatives and other supporters of this proposal to join the National Coordination Committee of the Campaign.

As of now, in addition to Bhartiya Stree Shakti and Centre for Women's Studies in Shivaji University, Stree Chetana (Kerala), Bharatiya Stree Shakti Jagran (Pune), Saad-Sanvad (Kolhapur), Jagruti Mahila Mandal (Latur) have declared their support to the Campaign, told Nayna Sahasrabudhe, General Secretary of Bhartiya Stree Shakti. Nirmala Apte, organizing Secretary of Bhartiya Stree Shakti, Sneha Pandit, President of Mumbai Branch and Varsha Tawade, Secretary of Mumbai Branch also attended the Press Conference.