

Economy

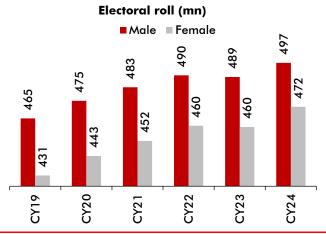
The quiet rise of women power

A dramatic change in India's electoral behavior is the surge in women voter turnout which was higher than males in the CY19 general elections. Recent election results suggest BJP is the preferred party for women voters. BJP's success lies in efficient execution of its promise to 'improve quality of life of rural women' by providing toilets, cleaner cooking fuel and tap water. These schemes not only provided poorer women with basic human rights but also a sense of dignity and pride. The question naturally arises – what next? While government will focus on reducing crimes against women and empower anganwadis to achieve better health/nutritional outcomes, its utmost priority would be to increase India's abysmal female labour-force participation. Crosscountry evidence suggests India needs to shift its female labour-force to the manufacturing sector for better economic outcomes. In southern states, higher women participation in industries has led to better discretionary consumption.

Women are voting in large numbers

According to the election commission, ~969mn Indians registered to vote in the CY24 general elections. 73mn people would be new voters, of which 56% are women. The electorate gender ratio increased from 928 female voters per 1,000 men in CY19 to 948 in CY24. In 1962, the difference between male and female voter turnouts was as high as 17 percentage points in favour of men. As highlighted in our note 'Five unnoticed structural changes' in CY19, this gap reversed as voter turnout for women was marginally higher. More importantly, women voter turnout steeply increased in the last decade while male voter turnout moderated. This means in the next few years women voters could exceed male voters (see exhibits below).

Exhibit 1: More than 40mn women have been added in the electoral roll for CY19 elections



Source: Election Commission, Ambit Capital research

Quick Insight

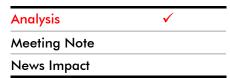
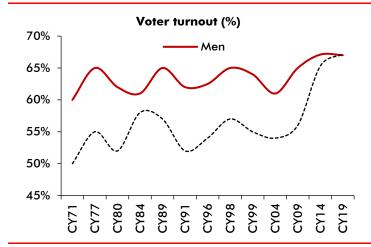


Exhibit 2: Female voter turnout exceeded male voter turnout in the CY19 general elections



Source: Election Commission, Media Articles, Ambit Capital research

The one party that has benefitted the most from rise of female voters is the party in power – Bharatiya Janata Party. Since CY09, the share of women voting for BJP has doubled. Making it the most popular party among women. In the recently conducted states elections, 40-50% of women voted for the BJP, driving the party to victory in 3 key states (see exhibits below).

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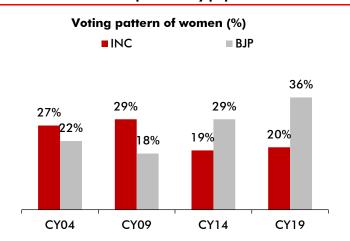
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Ambit Capital Pvt. Ltd. March 19, 2024

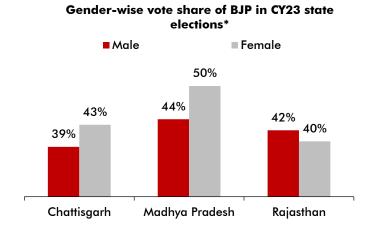


Exhibit 3: BJP has been particularly popular...



Source: CSDS NES, Ambit Capital research

Exhibit 4: ...among the female voters



Source: India Today- Axis My India Exit Poll, Ambit Capital research. Note-For analysis purposes, only states where BJP won the elections have been shown above.

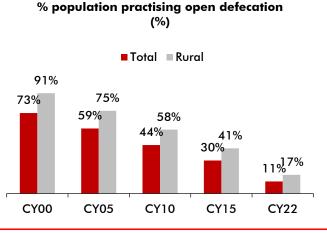
Execution of women-centric schemes explains the political gains

Before coming to power, the BJP in its CY14 election manifesto, laid out 23 pointers on how it would go about empowering women. The most important point, as highlighted in the manifesto was, "We will transform the quality of life of women in Rural India by providing electricity, piped water, cleaner fuel and toilets in every home." Once in power, the BJP immediately got to work to achieve the above targets.

Swacch Bharat Mission: Made toilets more accessible for women

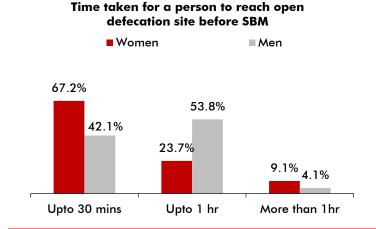
When the BJP assumed power in CY14, ~568mn people were found to be practicing open defecation in fields, forests, water bodies or other public spaces. The site for defecation tends to be far off for households as 1/10th of the women had to travel for more than an hour due to societal norms. To tackle this issue, the government launched its Swacch Bharat mission in CY14 with the aim to achieve universal sanitation coverage in India. In just 5 years, the government built >100mn toilets in rural India as accessibility of toilets was made possible for more than 450mn people in those 5 years. Currently, less than 150mn people practice open defecation (see exhibits below).

Exhibit 5: People practising open defecation has reduced significantly



Source: World Bank, United Nations, Ambit Capital research

Exhibit 6: Toilets were much more inaccessible to people before Swacch Bharat Abhiyan



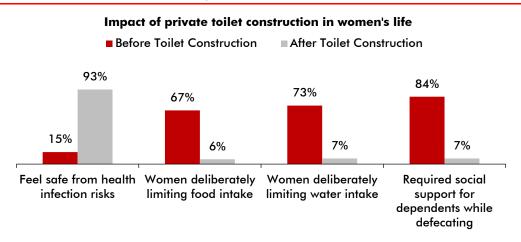
Source: Sambodhi Research, Ambit Capital research. Note – SBM:: Swacch Bharat Mission

Construction of toilets had major physical impacts – firstly, poor sanitation associated with open defecation is linked to transmission of diseases such as cholera, dysentery, hepatitis A, typhoid and polio. This diseases are also linked with maternal mortality and adverse pregnancy outcomes. Secondly, women now could use toilets anytime of the day. Earlier, only 11% women (with no toilets) could go to defecate in the open



whenever they wanted, most others had to think carefully about the time they could go. After construction of toilets, almost 50% of women have stated that they can use toilets whenever they want. More importantly, inability to go to defecate at convenient times led to $\sim 2/3$ rds of women controlling their food and water intake, which is not the case anymore (see exhibit below).

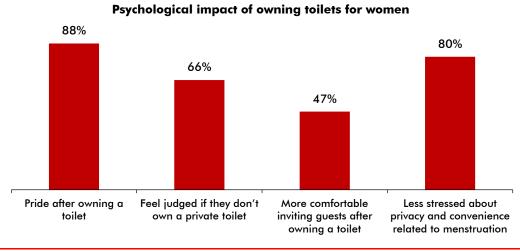
Exhibit 7: Toilet construction has improved health outcomes of women



Source: Sambodhi Research, Ambit Capital research

Open defecation is considered highly undignified. This is especially true for menstruating women who would have to go to open defecation sites for their sanitation needs. It was seen that construction of private toilets increased a sense of pride & dignity among women as they feel they are no longer being judged for not owning toilets and are more comfortable calling guests at home as well! Most importantly, it provided women with much required privacy (see exhibit below).

Exhibit 8: Owning toilets improved self-respect amongst women



Source: Sambodhi Research, Ambit Capital research

PM Ujjwala scheme: Cleaner cooking fuel reducing premature deaths

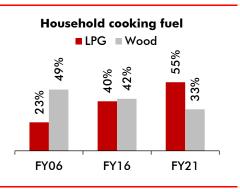
A leading medical journal, Lancet mentions that about half a million Indians died in CY15 due to a single pollutant called PM2.5, which is caused due to burning of solid cooking fuels such as wood, grass, charcoal etc. In most households in India, women cook food hence their exposure is greater to this pollutant. In CY19, ~0.3mn women died prematurely from diseases attributable to PM2.5 pollutant. Hence there was an urgent requirement to switch to cleaner cooking fuels such as LPG. In order to increase the penetration of LPG, the government came up with PM Ujiwala scheme wherein government provides LPG connection free of cost while cylinder refills come at a highly subsidized rate for the socially and economically vulnerable population. In just 5 years, the penetration of LPG gas increased from 25% households to over half the households using gas for cooking (see exhibits below).

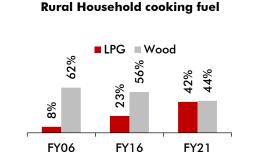


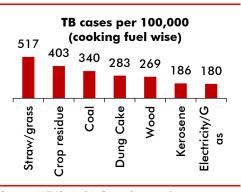
Exhibit 9: PMUY scheme has seen...

Exhibit 10: ...increase in usage of LPG

Exhibit 11: Traditional cooking fuels are known to be bad for health







Source: NFHS, Ambit Capital research

Source: NFHS, Ambit Capital research

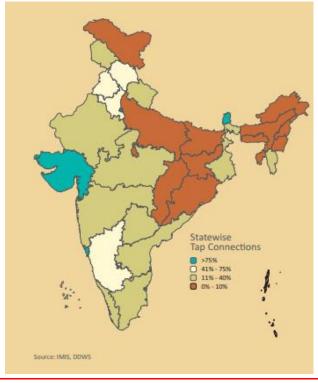
Source: NFHS, Ambit Capital research

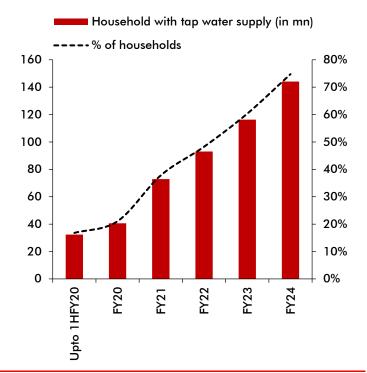
Jal Jeevan: Supply of water directly to households

Only 16.7% Indian households had access to tap water by CY19. This meant that more than 150mn households had to step out of their houses to collect water. This task is often considered as the responsibility of women, who had to stand in queues to wait for their turn to fill water for household needs. To tackle the situation, Jal Jeevan Mission was introduced in CY19. The aim of the scheme was to provide safe drinking water to every household in rural areas via tap connections. Based on government data, ~75% rural households now have access to tap water (see exhibit below).

Exhibit 12: Majority of the households did not have tap water supply before the inception of Jal Jeevan Mission in CY19

Exhibit 13: In FY24, most households have access to tap water supply





Source: Jal Jeevan Mission, Ambit Capital research

Source: Jal Jeevan Mission, Ambit Capital research

33% reservation in parliament: A step towards political gender equality

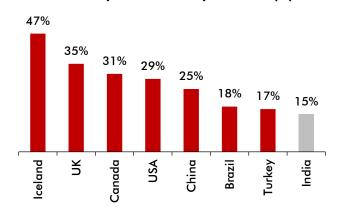
Indian parliament has one of the worst representations of female lawmakers. Despite women accounting for almost half of India's population, they represent only $\sim 15\%$ of parliamentarians. Between FY70 to FY20, only 13% of IAS (civil administrators) were women while only 9% of legislators at the state level were women. It is not that there has been no improvement at all as the share of female MPs in the Lok Sabha increased from 5% during independence to 15% in the current Lok Sabha (see exhibit below).



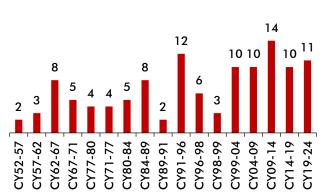
Exhibit 14: Share of women in India's parliament is among the lowest in the world...

Exhibit 15: as very few are in a position to make laws





Number of female ministers in council of ministers

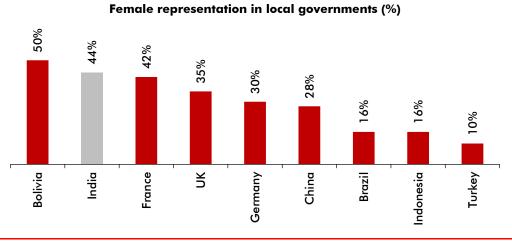


Source: Media Articles, Ambit Capital research

Source: World Economic Forum, Ambit Capital research

The parliament passed a legislation in Dec'23 which will ensure that 33% of parliament seats would be reserved for women. While implementation of the law can only take place after a delimitation exercise (redrawing the electoral constituent maps), the reservation could elevate the position of women in national politics. A major success story is reservation in panchayat elections. In 1992, the government created a 3 tiered Panchayati Raj system (local rural government body). At least 1/3rd of the seats were reserved for women. Today, >44% of local government representatives are women (see exhibit below).

Exhibit 16: India has one of the highest female representations in local government bodies



Source: World Economic Forum, Ambit Capital research

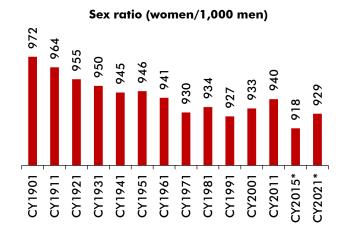
Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme: Socio-economic outcomes have improved

The significantly wide sex ratio in India (903 women/1000 men) in CY14 led to the government announcing Beti Bachao (save the daughter campaign). The campaign involved a massive community outreach programme via sensitization campaigns to prevent female feticides. The campaign has started bearing fruits as the sex-ratio is normalizing. Similar campaigns were used to improve female literacy outcomes (see exhibits below)



Exhibit 17: The female sex ratio has improved in the past 8 years

Exhibit 18: Female literacy rates have improved significantly in the last 10 years



Female literacy rate (%)

69%

59%

51%

26%

CY81 CY91 CY01 CY06 CY11 CY22

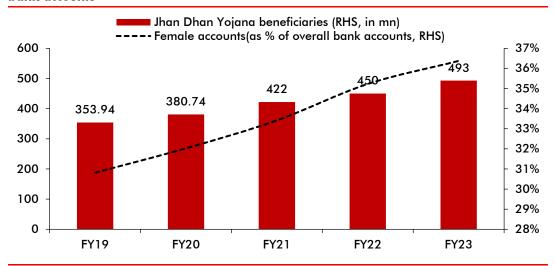
Source- Lok Sabha Secretariat, Census, NFHS, Ambit Capital research. Note-CY15 & CY21 data are from NFHS survey whereas others are from Census.

Source: World Bank, Ambit Capital research

Jan Dhan Yojana: Women enter the formal financial institutional gambit

According to World Bank data, only 35% of Indian adults owned an account with a formal financial institution. In order to 'bank the unbanked', the government came up with Jan Dhan Yojana, wherein anyone can open a no frills bank account with zero minimum balance. Government data suggests that more than half of the 519mn bank accounts that were opened were by women. With the number of schemes involving cash distribution of sorts to women on the rise, rising participation of women in formal financial institutions will reduce leakages as the government can directly transfer subsidies to their bank accounts (see exhibit below).

Exhibit 19: Government's Jan Dhan Yojana scheme has led to $\sim\!80\%$ adult women owning bank accounts



Source: Jan Dhan Yojana, RBI, Ambit Capital research

The BJP's outreach to women has not been restricted to just the national level, BJP-led state governments have also come up with their own women-centric schemes. In fact, very often success of a state-level scheme has driven the Centre to adopt a similar scheme (see exhibit below).



Exhibit 20: Women-centred schemes have provided BJP with significant political dividends

State	Scheme	Description	
Madhya Pradesh	Ladli Behna Yojana	A massive cash distribution scheme wherein women between the age of 21-60 with family income below Rs0.25mn/pa would receive Rs1,250 per month. This amount is set to increase to Rs3,000 gradually (increments of Rs250 periodically). The scheme was announced in Mar'23 and played a major role in ensuring BJP's victory in Madhya Pradesh.	
Rajasthan	Several promises in its manifesto from Nov'23	Firstly, LPG cylinder under Ujjwala scheme would be provided at Rs450, which was 25% lower than prices notified earlier. Secondly, a new scheme was mentioned - Lado Protsahan Yojana - wherein the government will provide households with a savings bond of Rs0.2mn on the birth of a female child. Some other announcements include free education to girls belonging to poor households and distribution of scooters to meritorious girl students.	
Uttar Pradesh	Free LPG refill	UP government announced 2 free refills of LPG cylinder in FY24. One refill was made in Nov'23 during Diwali and the second refill would be in Mar'23, just before Holi. Nearly 17.5mn people benefitted from this announcement.	
Gujarat	Gender Budget	In Gujarat's FY24 budget, the state government announced Rs1trn for the scheme specifically for women.	
Maharashtra	Manjhi Kanya Bhagyashree Scheme	Under this scheme, Rs50,000 is given to the parents within a year after the birth of a girl child. If there a girl children, then Rs25,000 would be provided to each child.	

Source: Media Articles, Ambit Capital research

Opposition parties have also taken note of BJP's success as several opposition governed states have announced women-centric schemes.

Exhibit 21: Women centred schemes are on the rise even among states governed by non-BJP parties

State	Scheme	Description	
Karnataka	Gruh Lakshmi and Free bus ride	Under Gruh Lakshmi, Rs2,000 would be provided to the head woman of every family from poor households. Women are also eligible for free public bus rides.	
Tamil Nadu	Amma Two-Wheeler Scheme:	Tamil Nadu government will provide subsidies to women to purchase two-wheelers. There is a 50% subsidy capped at ₹25,000 offered to working women who want to purchase a two-wheeler as per the scheme.	
Delhi	Mukhyamantri Mahila Samman Yojana	Every woman above age of 18 would be given Rs1,000 every month if she is a resident of Delhi.	
West Bengal	Lakshmi Bhandar Scheme	The scheme ensures monthly basic income support to women heads of 16mn households in the state. Under the project, the government provides Rs500 per month to families from the general category and Rs1,000 to women belonging to scheduled caste and tribe families.	

Source: Media Articles, Ambit Capital research

So what to expect in a 3rd term?

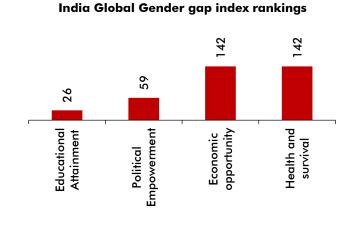
If the BJP returns for a third term, we believe they will double down on their womencentric schemes/policies and announcements. Despite the scheme achieving significant success in the last 10 years, India continues to lag peers on gender equality. The two major areas where India lags is equality in economic opportunity and health & survival (see exhibits below).

Exhibit 22: India is one of the worst ranked countries on gender inequality

Global Gender gap index rankings South Africa Mexico Colombia Viet Nam Thailand Indonesia Brazil Bangladesh

Source: World Economic Forum, Ambit Capital research

Exhibit 23: Economic opportunity and health have seen stark gender inequality in India



Source: World Economic Forum, Ambit Capital research



Reduce the occurrence of crimes against women

One of the key promises of BJP's 2014 manifesto is reduction in crime against women, especially heinous crimes. On the contrary crimes against women have been on the rise, from 537 cases per million women in CY13 to 649 cases in CY22. In the recent year, cases of rape and murder were 27% higher than in CY14. Addressing crimes against women will be essential if female LFPR is to rise as insecurities related to safety are a major reason for women not joining the work force.

Possible measures by the government: Increase policing in public areas by filling up vacant positions. In states governed by BJP such as Uttar Pradesh, the government has actively sought to target criminal gangs, which to an extent has improved confidence amongst people regarding public safety. Such actions could be seen more frequently in the coming years (see exhibits below).

Exhibit 24: Crime rates surged, especially after Covid

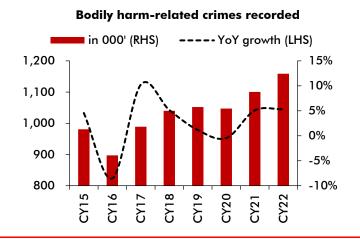
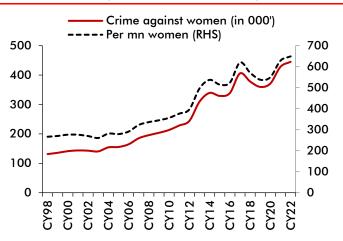


Exhibit 25: Crimes against women remain high



Source: NCRB, Ambit Capital research

Source: NCRB, Ambit Capital research

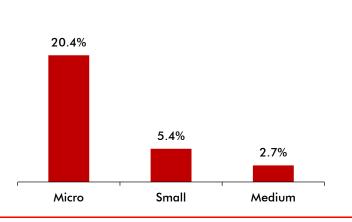
Increase procurement from female-dominated and female-led MSMEs

The BJP mentioned in its CY19 manifesto that 10% of the government's procurement of goods would be from MSMEs that have at least 50% women in their workforce. Currently, only 24% of MSME workers are female. While no data is available on such procurement in the last 5 years or number of MSMEs with 50% female work force, the government could extend this scheme to female-owned MSMEs as well in order to improve female ownership (see exhibits below).

Exhibit 26: ~18% of MSMEs in India are owned by women

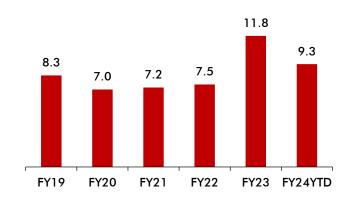
Share of women owned MSMEs

Exhibit 27: Government has a huge procurement requirement every year



Source: MSME ministry, Ambit Capital research

Government's annual procurement (Rs trn)



Source: Central Public Procurement Portal, Ambit Capital research

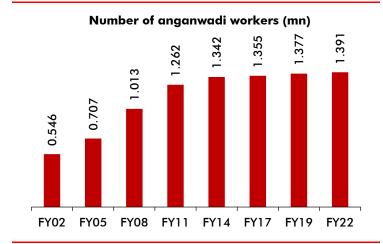


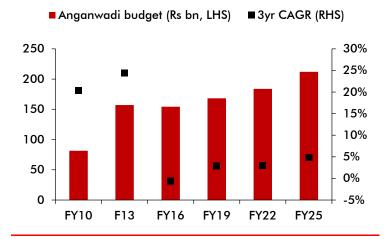
Greater support to anganwadi workers to reduce health and nutrition-related gender discrimination:

In the latest NFHS survey (FY21), ~60% women reported facing some kind of trouble accessing health care. There are surveys which suggest men are more likely to visit healthcare facilities than women mainly due to societal norms. This has created a significant gender inequality in health and wellbeing. One solution could be to elevate the role of anganwadis. The Indian government initiated the anganwadi program to ensure child and maternal care. While they cater primarily to children, women between the ages of 15-45 years can visit these places for nutrition and health reasons. Women can also access pre-natal care in these places. More importantly, anganwadi workers tend to be from the community hence more accessible to the people in the village.

Exhibit 28: India has more than a million anganwadi workers

Exhibit 29: Anganwadi budget saw very little growth in recent years





Source: Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ambit Capital research

Source: Union Budget Documents, Ambit Capital research

Improve India's female labour-force participation rate

India's case of continued low labour force participation is surprising given that in the last decade poverty has reduced, women's educational attainment has improved, health conditions have improved and governments have come up with female friendly laws (see exhibits below).

Exhibit 30: Less than a third of working age women are part of India's labour-force

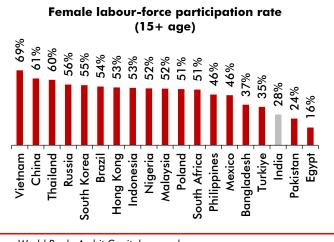
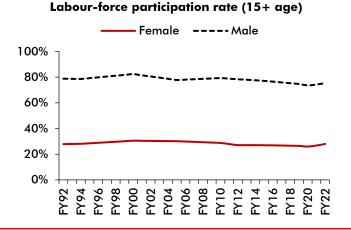


Exhibit 31: The gap between male and female labour-force participation remains wide



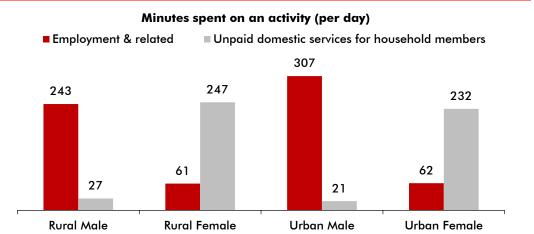
Source: World Bank, Ambit Capital research

Source: World Bank, Ambit Capital research

While conservative societal norms have often been attributed to lower participation rate, very often lack of time available due to domestic chores is a reason for women not entering the labour-force. Since CY18, female LFPR has increased by 350bps. Time saved due to schemes like Swacch Bharat Mission, Jal Jeevan scheme and Ujjwala is believed to have helped a considerable rural female population to join the work-force (see exhibit below).



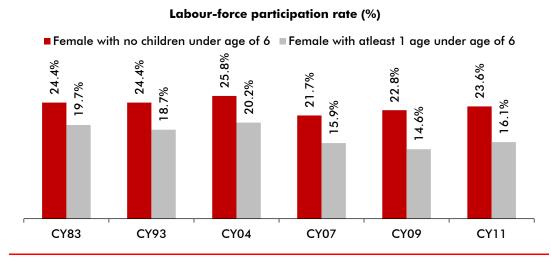
Exhibit 32: Women, on average, spend most of their time in domestic chores



Source: Time Use Survey, Ambit Capital research

A good number of women leave the workforce after the birth of their child. While the government has implemented laws that require businesses with more than 50 employees to have in-house crèches, it is not followed extensively. More importantly, most enterprises in India are informal, hence do not need to follow this regulation.

Exhibit 33: Labour-force participation among women tends to take a dip after the birth of a child



Source: World Bank research paper, Ambit Capital research

Can the government implement some kind of reservation?

While reservation, especially in the private sector, is often frowned upon, it will not be unprecedented. In CY13, the government brought in a law which mandated corporates to have at least 1 woman on the board of directors. This significantly increased women's representation on boards as women account for 21.4% of the non-executive board position and 7.2% of the executive board position (see exhibits below).

20%

CY22



Exhibit 34: While India still has a lot to do when it comes to increasing women's share in corporate labour-force...

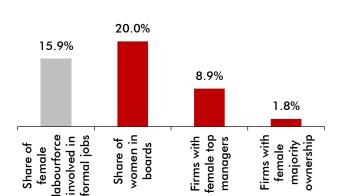
Women in corporate India

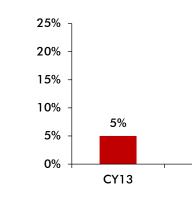
Exhibit 35: ...representation-related laws have been successful in swiftly increasing female representation

Average women representation on boards in India (%)

13%

CY17





Source: PLFS, World Economic Forum, Ambit Capital research

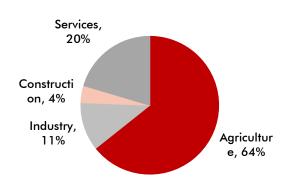
Source: Media Articles, Prime Database, Ambit Capital research

Majority of women who are part of the workforce go through disguised unemployment; i.e. too many workers involved in redundant work. While male employment in agriculture declined in the past 5 years, female employment significantly increased (from 57% share to 64% in agriculture). More than a third of the female work-force are not paid as they simply work in family farms or as workers in household businesses, e.g. as helpers in shops (see exhibits below).

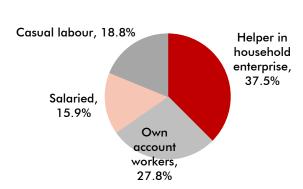
Exhibit 36: Most female workers are involved in the less remunerative agriculture sector

Distribution of female labour-force

Exhibit 37: Most women work as unpaid workers in household enterprises



Distribution of female labour-force (employment status)



Source: PLFS, Ambit Capital research

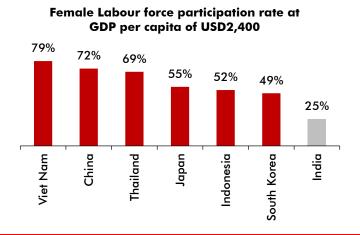
Source: PLFS, Ambit Capital research

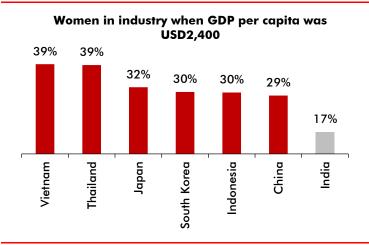
Agriculture continuing to account for 66% of the women work-force is a matter of concern as India has crossed USD2000 GDP per capita. To make India's situation more comparable, we have looked at LFPR of South East Asian countries when their GDP per capita was USD2400. Not only was the LFPR significantly higher, the representation of women in manufacturing too was much greater (see exhibits below).



Exhibit 38: South East Asian peers had much higher female LFPR and female manufacturing labour-force...

Exhibit 39: ...when their GDP per capita was similar to India's current levels





Source: World Bank, Ambit Capital research

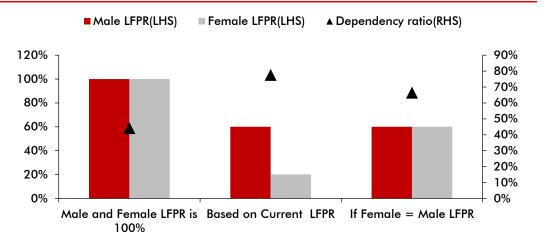
Source: Our World in Data, Ambit Capital research

India may look to make its current manufacturing policies such as PLI more gender inclusive. It may do so by either providing further incentives or keep female labour-force proportion as one of the thresholds.

Higher female LFPR will drive discretionary consumption

In general dependency ratio is the population that does not come between the ages of 15-64. But this assumes that LFPR is 100%. If we consider actual LFPR levels, India's dependency ratio rises further, i.e. more mouths to feed while less hands are working. Thus non-participation of women in the work-force leads to lower spending power for households (see exhibit below).

Exhibit 40: Increasing female LFPR can significantly reduce dependency ratio



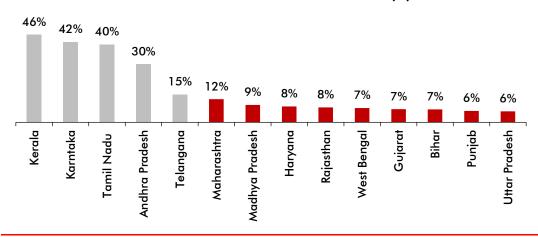
Source: PLFS, Economic Survey, Ambit Capital research. Note- 1) Population numbers are government's estimates. 2) First scenario is being called ideal as LFPR is assumed to be 100% 3) Current LFPR is PLFS's estimations

To look at dividends that increasing participation of women in manufacturing can provide, we simply need to look at South India, a region where the share of women in industries in particularly high (see exhibit below).



Exhibit 41: Women representation in industries in South India is significantly higher than other regions

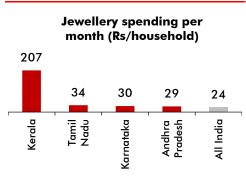




Source: Annual survey of Industries, Ambit Capital research

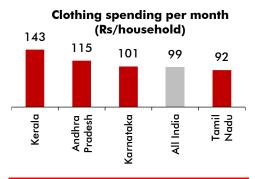
Higher paying non-agro jobs has led to consumption in the south leaning towards discretionary items compared to the India average. Unsurprisingly, the southern states tend to spend more on items such as clothing, jewellery and cosmetics (see exhibits below).

Exhibit 42: Households in southern states tend to...



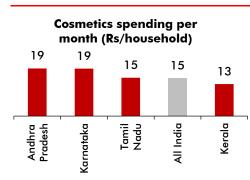
Source: Household Consumption Survey (FY12), Ambit Capital research

Exhibit 43: ...spend more on items like...



Source: Household Consumption Survey (FY12), Ambit Capital research

Exhibit 44: ...clothing, jewellery and cosmetics



Source: Household Consumption Survey (FY12), Ambit Capital research. Note Cosmetics include powder, snow, cream, perfume, shampoo, hair oil and hair cream

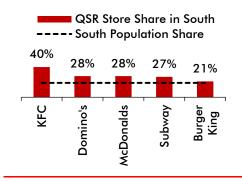
Transition to better discretionary consumption tends to benefit organized brands that cater to low to mid-ticket demand (see exhibits below).

Exhibit 45: Organized retailers...



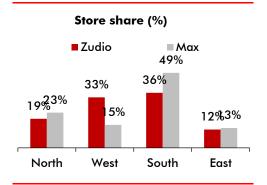
Source: Ambit Capital research

Exhibit 46: ...have done well...



Source: Burger King DRHP, Ambit Capital research

Exhibit 47: ... in the south



Source: Company, Ambit Capital research



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UNDER REVIEW	NDER REVIEW We have coverage on the stock but we have suspended our estimates, TP and recommendation for the time being N	
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