

Gender Manifesto 2024



FEMME FIRST FOUNDATION

Preamble

Femme First Foundation, in partnership with SheThePeopleTV, is proud to present #GenderManifesto 2024. This is India's first gender manifesto, drafted with inputs received from the general public and consultation with subject-matter experts.

India currently ranks 127th out of 146 countries on gender parity, according to the Global Gender Gap Report 2023. We are far from achieving equity, though strides, some small and some massive, are being made. 2023 was a momentous year for women in India. After more than three decades of activism, the women's reservation bill was passed. It signifies that historic push towards gender equity can be made, if there is a serious will of the government.

We acknowledge this background and also understand the ground reality that it would take more than a century to make India a gender-equal nation. The #GenderManifesto 2024 is an immediate agenda of crucial, far-sighted, and attainable interventions for the next government within its tenure.

Political Rights

- **Implement 33% Reservation Now:** The Women's Reservation Act, 2023 must be implemented at the earliest and not be subject to the conduct of the next census
 - Representation is an ideal that must be reflected in both the Lower and Upper Houses. **Women's reservation should be extended to the Rajya Sabha and Legislative Councils**, with a focus on women from marginalised communities
 - **Election Fund:** The government must earmark a fund for financial support to women candidates in Legislative Assemblies and Lok Sabha
 - **ICC in Political Parties:** Mandatory implementation of Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) as per The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013 in all political parties
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Personal Rights

- **Repeal exception to marital rape:** The exception to marital rape must be repealed and any violence against women must not be exempt from prosecution
 - Recognize every person's fundamental **right to marry**
 - There should be **zero tolerance** towards gender-based violence in any form
 - Address the growing cyber crimes targeting women and girls. Police authorities must have **rapid response units** to swiftly address the growing deepfake menace
 - **Right to property:** It has been observed that despite the amendments to Hindu Succession Act, women do not receive their fair share in ancestral property. It must be mandatory that any devolution of ancestral property must grant the rightful legal share to female heirs
 - **Restructure National Commission for Women as a constitutional body:** The National Commission for Women (NCW) must be restructured as a constitutional body. The revamped NCW must be the nodal agency for policymaking and research on gender-centric issues
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Right to Health

- **Ensuring safe and hygienic menstruation:** Provide free menstrual hygiene products at all PHCs. Awareness and sensitization workshops/camps to be conducted at regular intervals
 - **Cervical & Breast Cancer:** Provide free cervical cancer and breast cancer screening for women, and free HPV vaccination for girls between the age of 9-14
 - **Address the malnutrition challenge** amongst children and women in the mission mode. Increase the financial support to pregnant women and lactating mothers under the National Food Security Act 2013 to account for the rise in inflation
 - Promote research on issues impacting women's health. Government surveys and reports on women's health should have a participatory approach and should be intersectional in nature
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Economic Prosperity and Entrepreneurship

- Implement **33% reservation for women in government jobs**. Fill all government vacancies at the earliest
- Ensure reservation benefits are passed on to women even in **contractual employment**
- Create a roadmap to address the unemployment crisis amongst young women, especially in urban areas
- Create a **start-up fund of Rs. 1000 crores** administered by women entrepreneurs to fund organisations led by women
- **Grant tax rebate** to organisations that employ more than 20% women in their workforce, at all levels
- Enact the Women Farmers' Entitlements Bill, 2011
- Work in coordination with gig platforms and enact worker-centric guidelines to ensure social security and welfare for **gig workers**

Social Inclusion & Welfare

- Review and reframing of **NCERT textbooks** from an intersectional lens in the Indian context. Sensitization workshops to be integrated into school curriculum
- **Paid paternity leave** should be made mandatory in all formal organizations
- Set up **creches in all government offices** to enable more working parents, irrespective of gender, to participate equally in childcare
- Provide at least 50% discount in fares of Indian railways for women passengers
- Mandatory **5% reservation in the police force** for people from the LGBTQ+ community. Sensitization of all police personnel with special focus on the marginalised communities
- Around 90% people from NT-DNT communities do not possess official identification documents. National government should form a committee to address the same, with special focus on women and LGBTIQ persons of these communities

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- Double the widow pension and index it to inflation
 - Free public library membership for women and girls
 - In the existing infrastructure in government institutions, add gender-neutral washrooms
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Women in Conflict-areas

- A **complete rehabilitation package** for every household delivered in the name of the woman head of the family. It should include provisions for housing worth Rs. 10 lakhs and an additional Rs. 5 lakh for education, employment, and sustenance
 - Register **FIRs for all sexual and violent crimes** and ensure speedy trial
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The aforementioned suggestions **reflect the dreams and aspirations** of today's women and other genders in this country. **Femme First Foundation** calls upon all political parties to include them as a part of their agenda for 2024 general elections.