

Missing Women in Indian Democracy

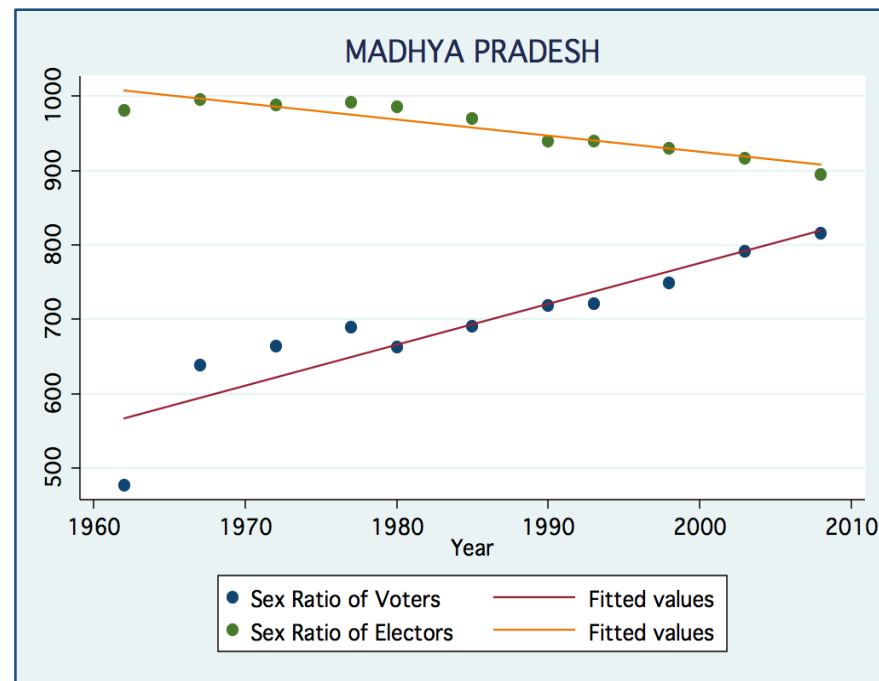
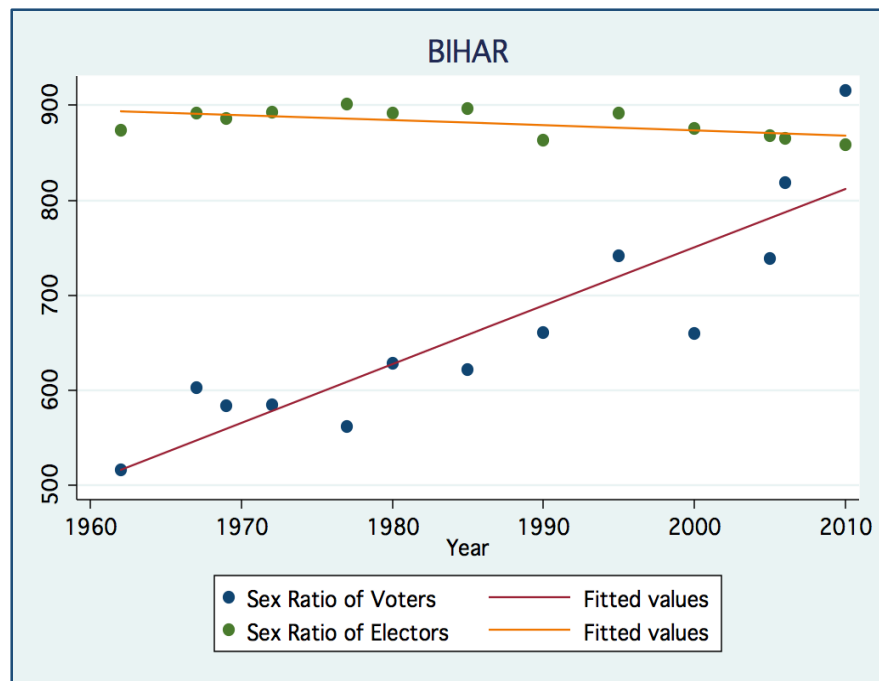
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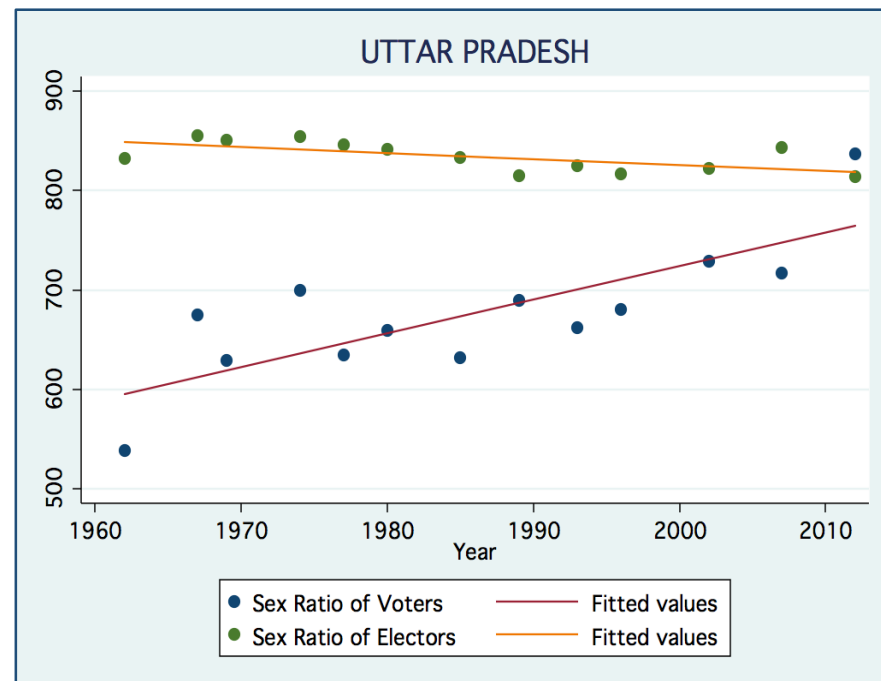
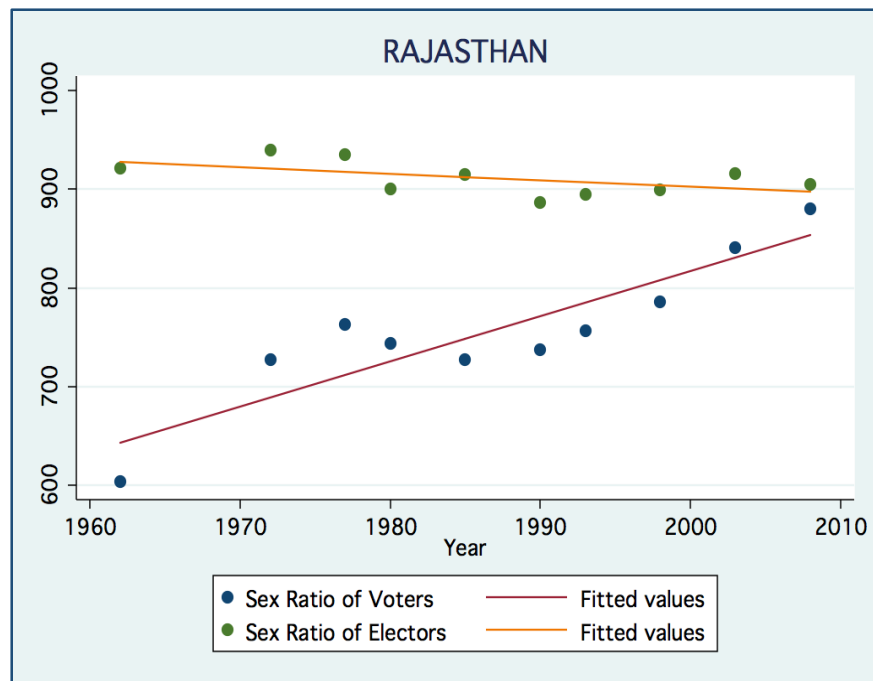
1. First – the silver lining

- Dramatic improvement in turnout of women voters compared to men in all the state elections from 1962 till 2012
 1. There is a steady and a sharp decline in the gender bias in voting over time.
 2. The sex ratio of voters (number of women voters to every 1000 men voters) increased impressively from 715 in the 1960s to 883 in the 2000s.
 3. This phenomenon of declining gender bias in voting is for all the states, including the “BIMARU” states.
 4. Declining gender bias is solely driven by increase in women voter participation, while men voter participation has remained unchanged over time.

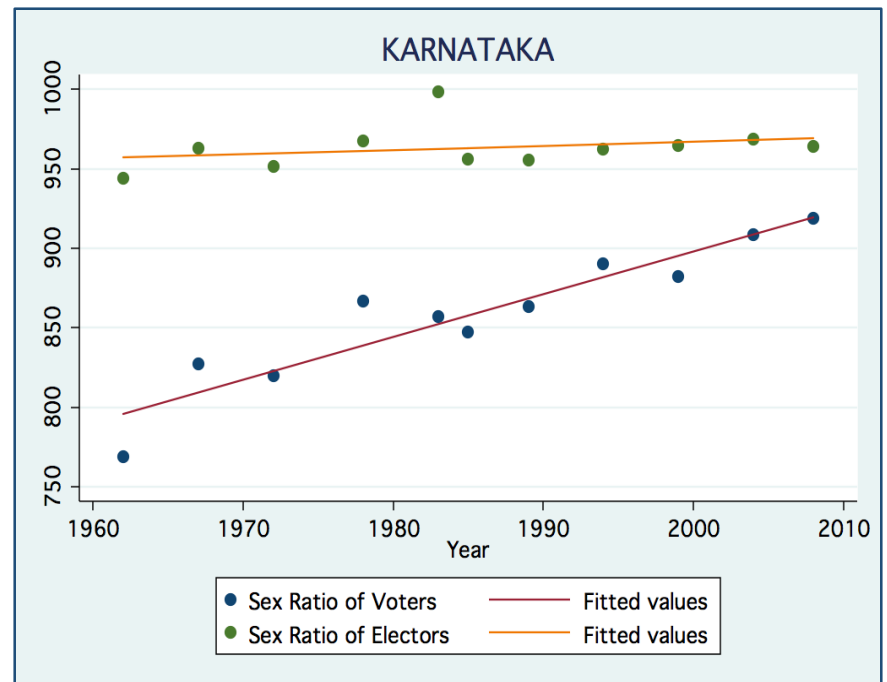
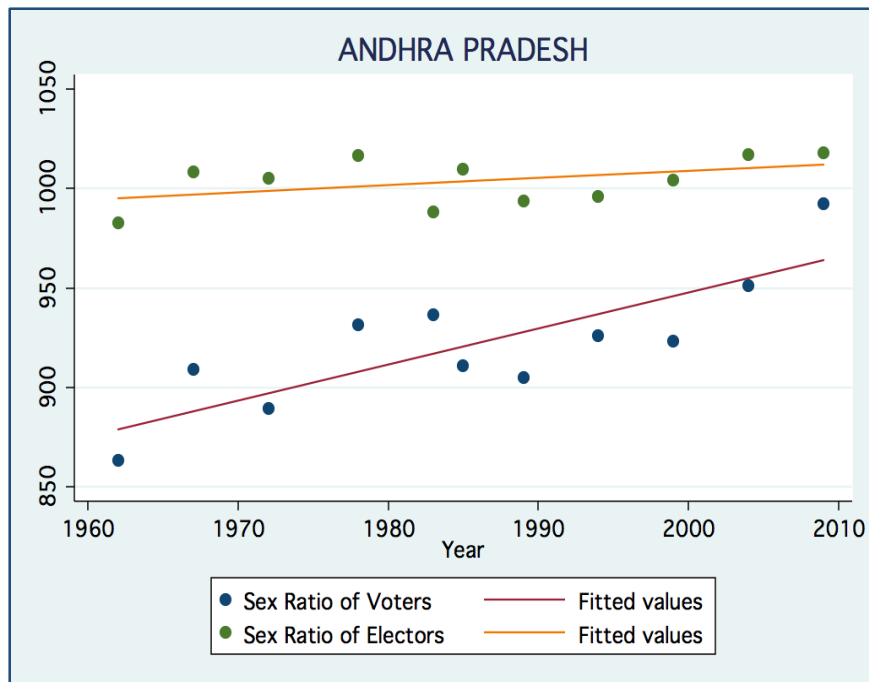
Traditionally Backward States



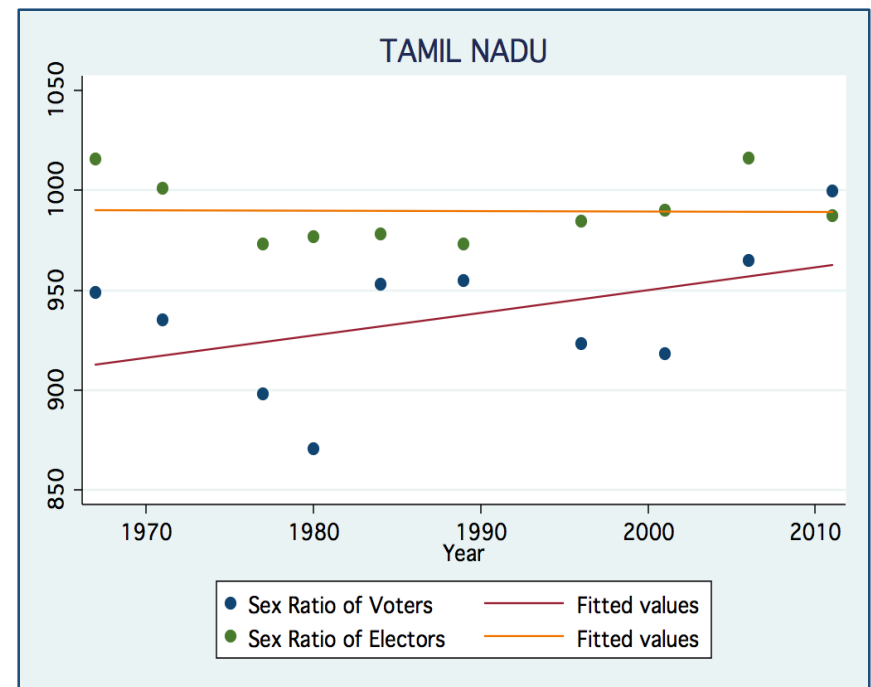
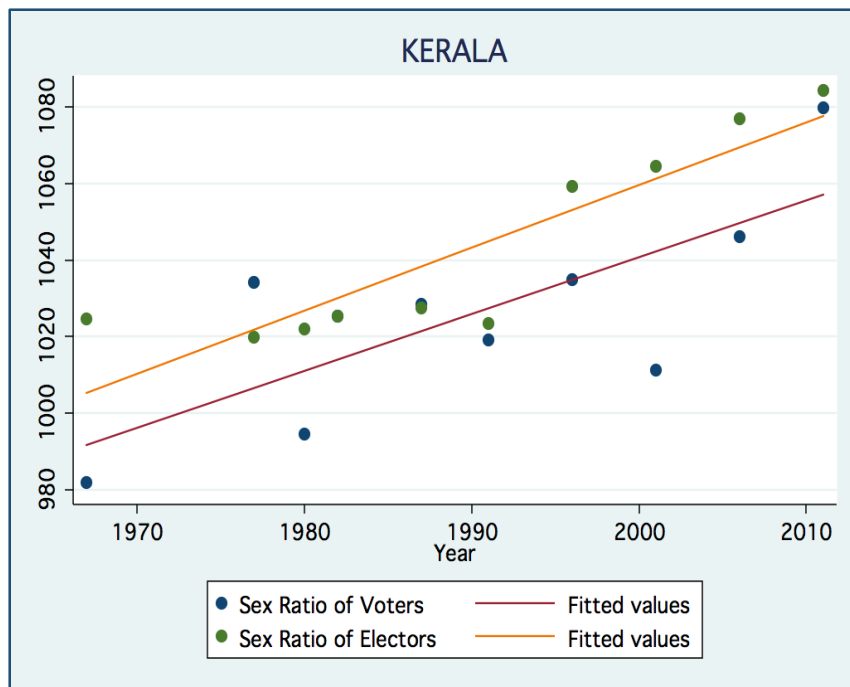
Traditionally Backward States



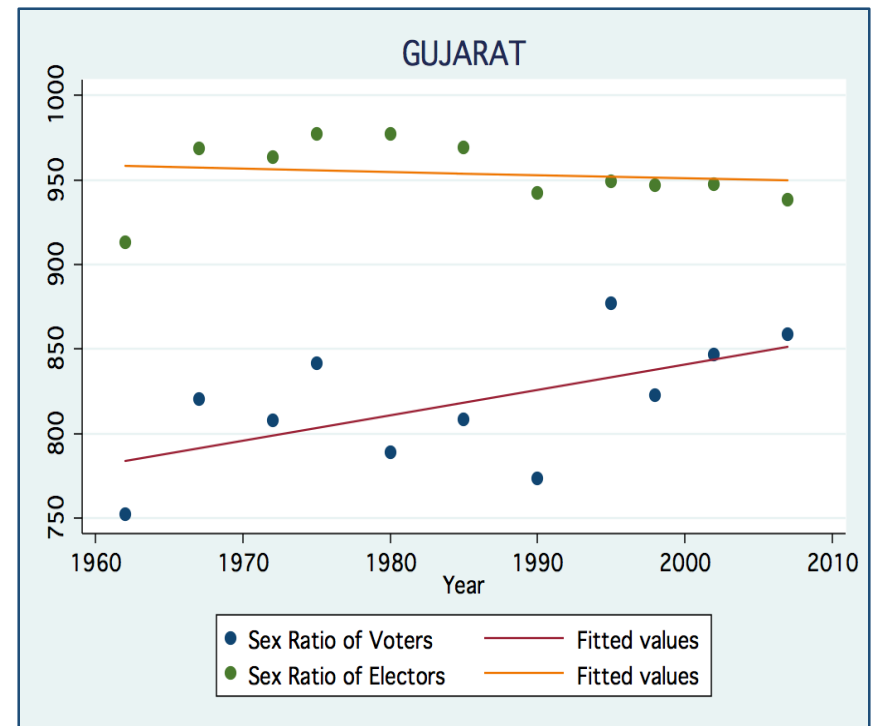
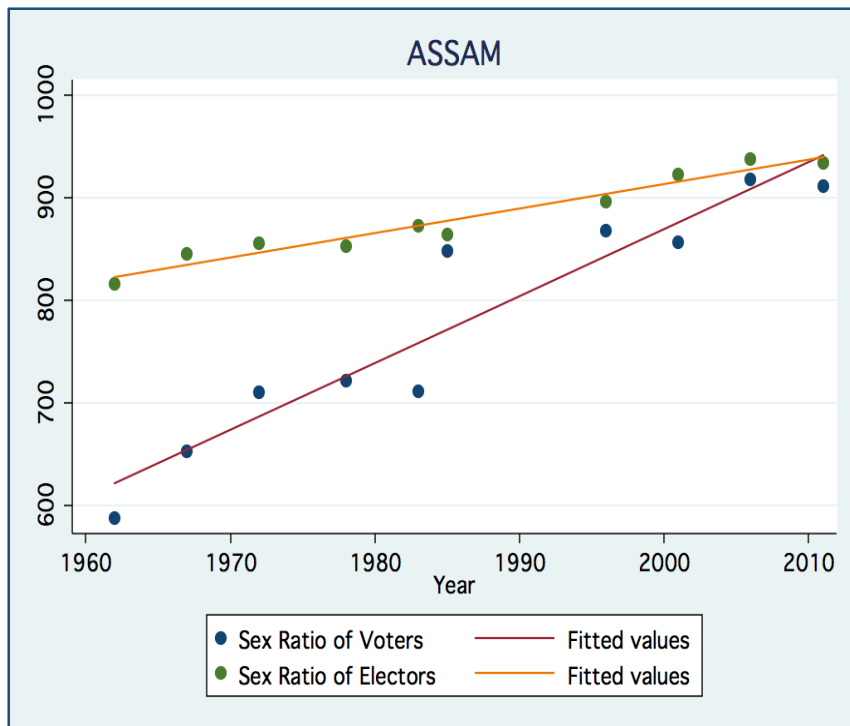
Southern States



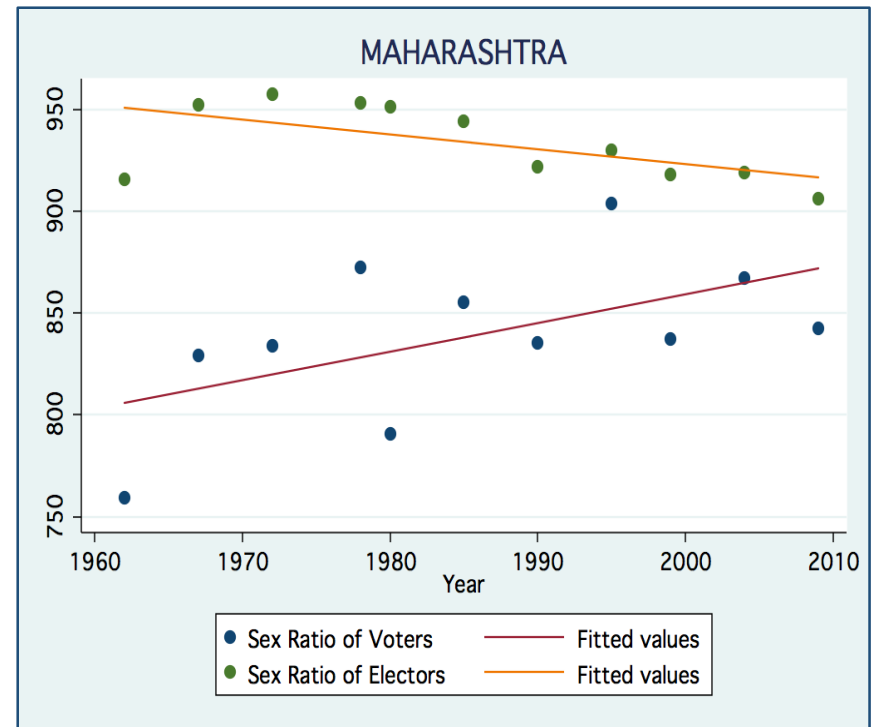
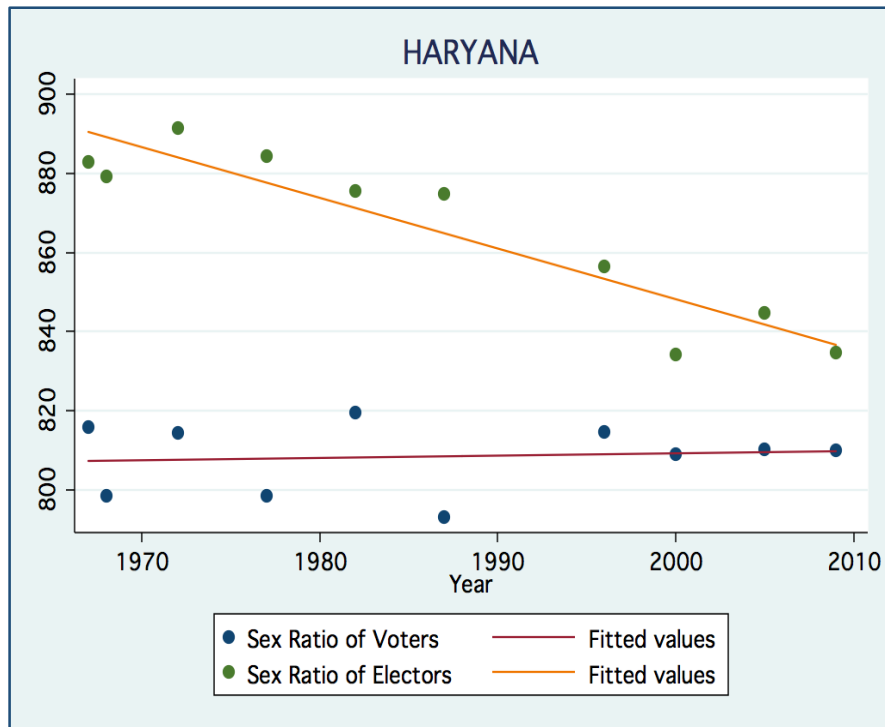
Southern States



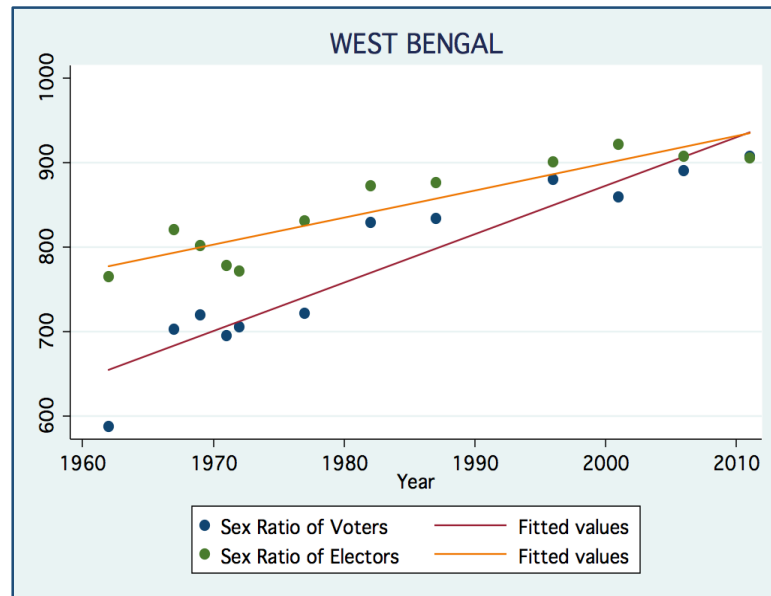
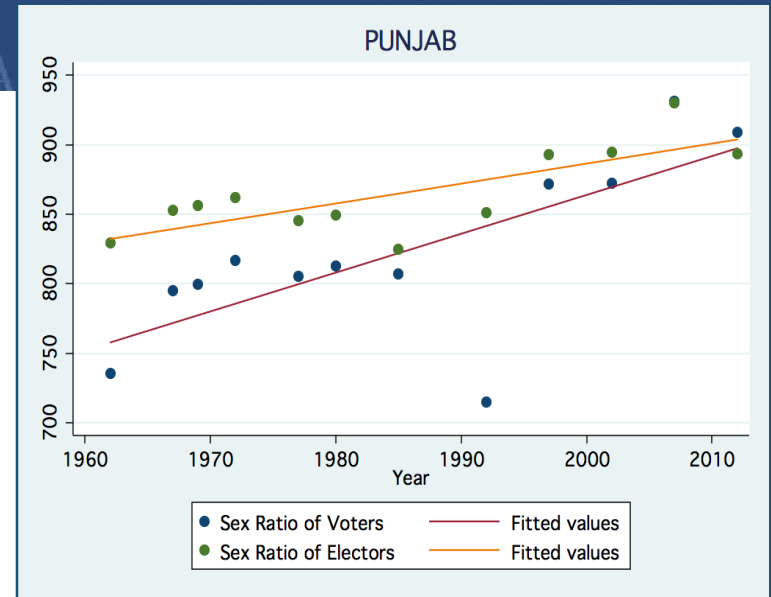
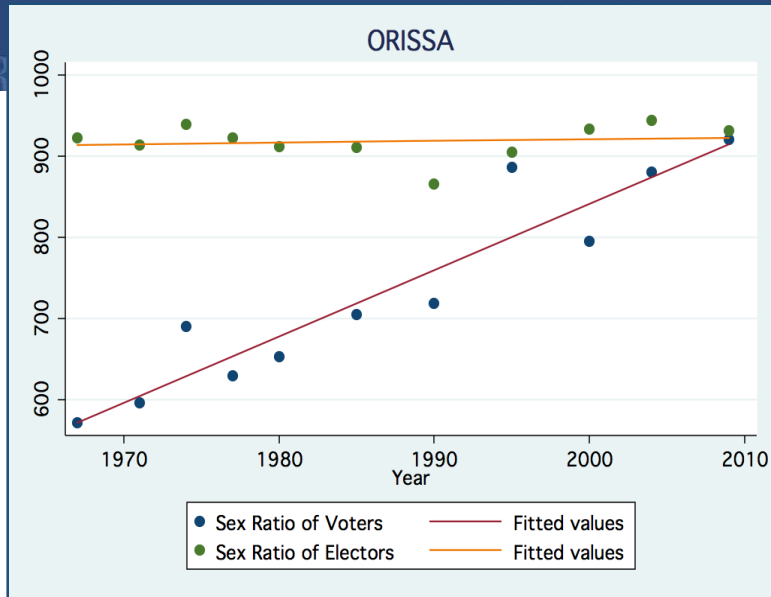
Other Large States



Other Large States

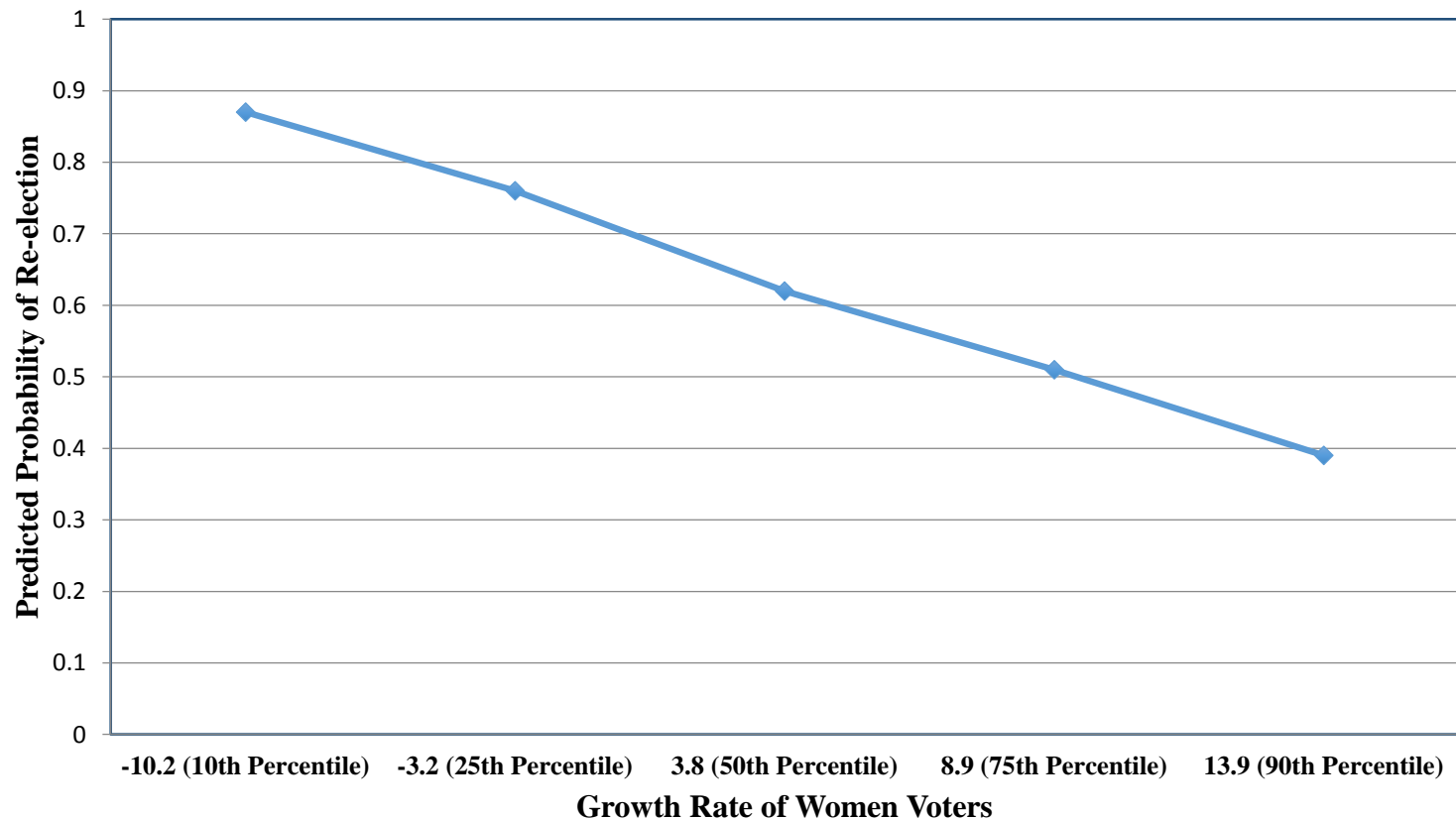


Other Large States



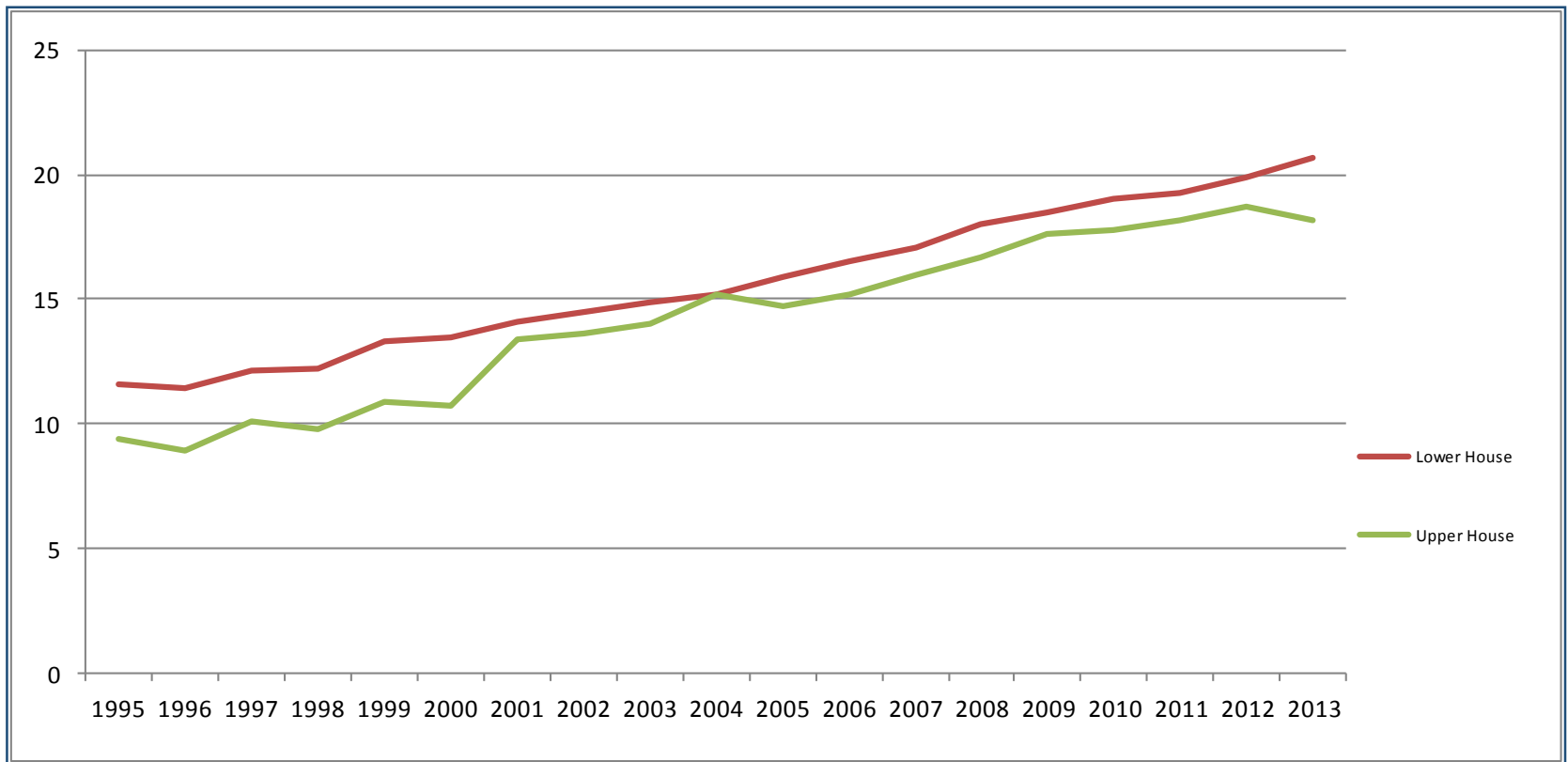
Rising women voter participation: Does it matter?

- You bet!
- Women voters as agents of change: Bihar re-elections 2005



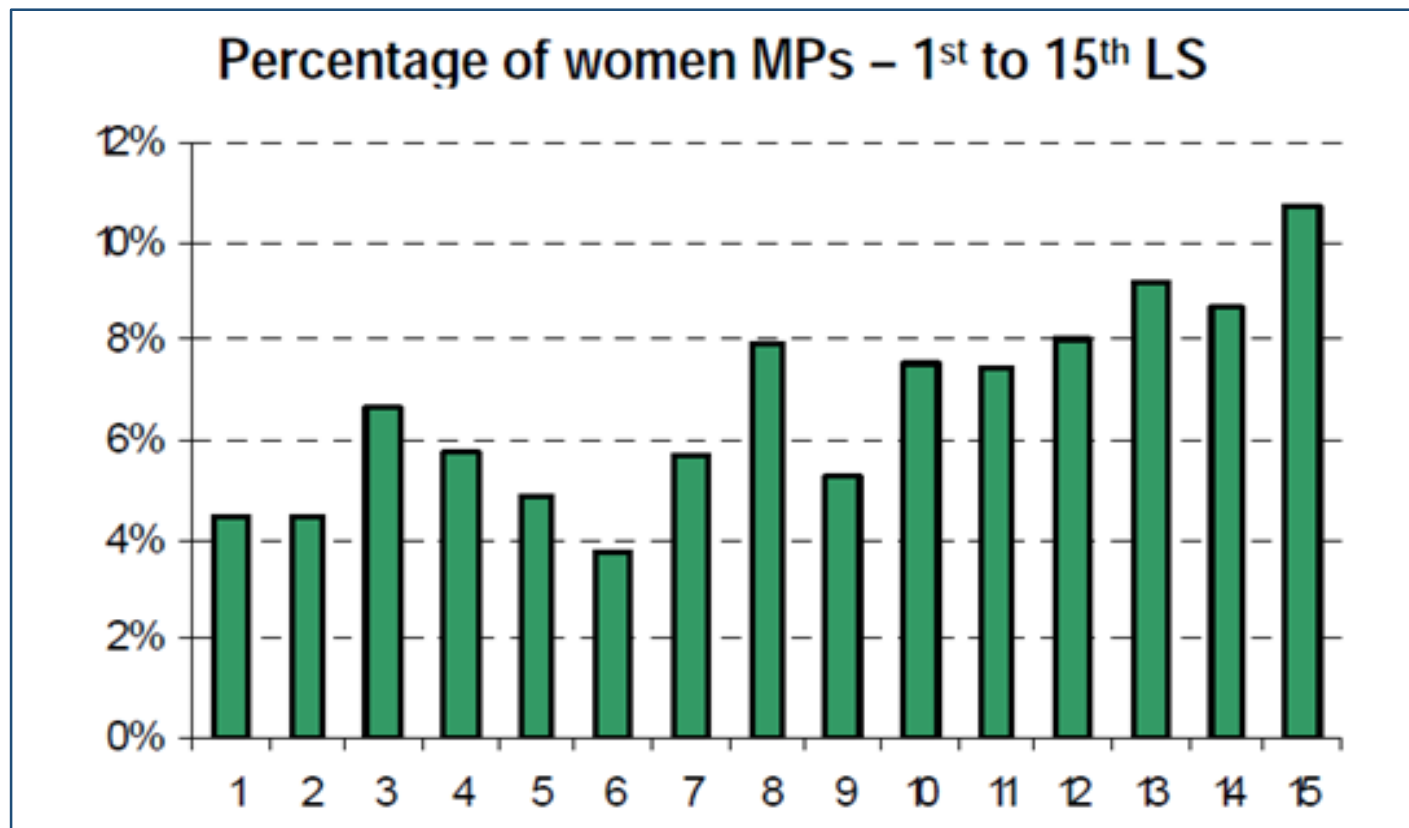
2. But why so few women in politics?

- Global data



2. But why so few women in politics?

- Indian data

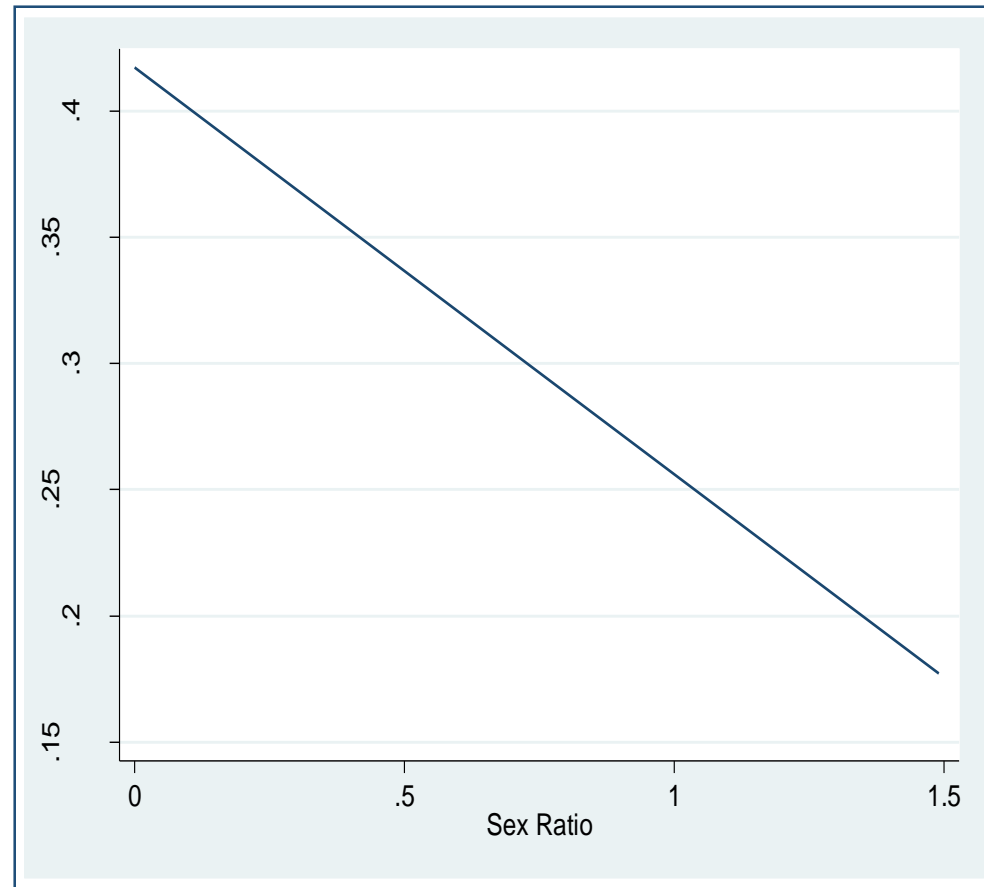


Why so few women in politics?

- Study women candidates in India
- State assembly elections data
- 50 years data (1962-2012)

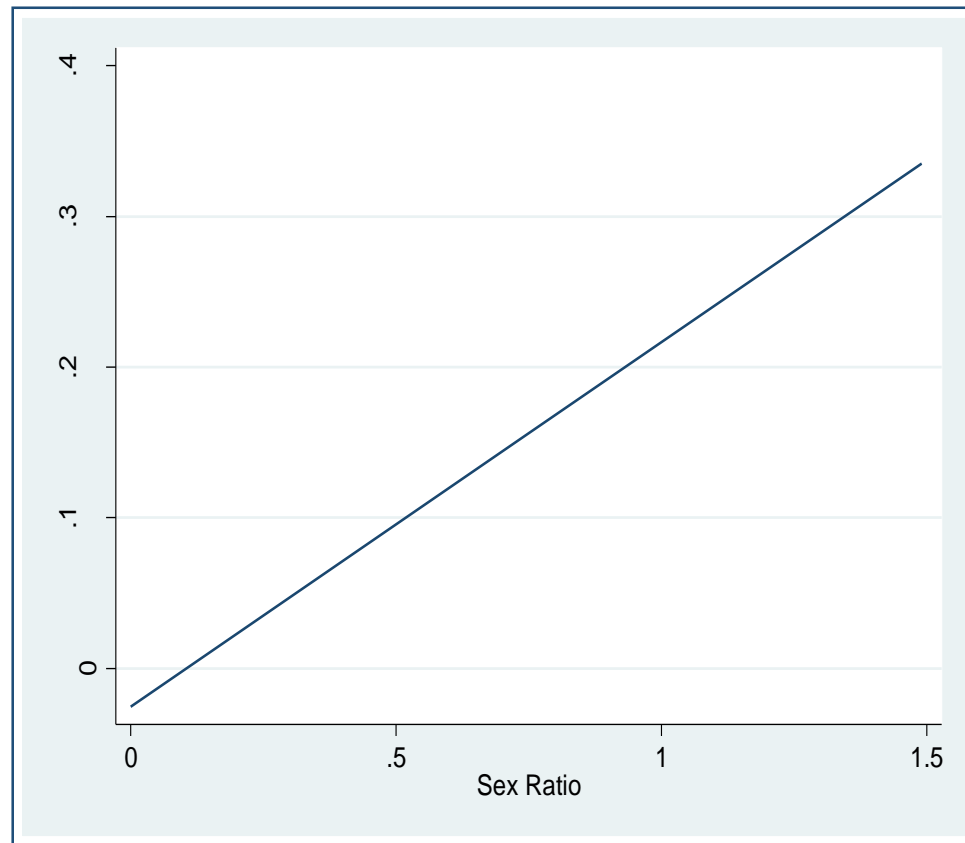
Where are women contesting elections?

- Result 1: women are more likely to contest elections in constituencies where sex ratio of electors is worse
- Probability of women contesting is much higher in backward states like Bihar, UP than in Kerala and TN
- In states with higher sex ratio – women seek representation through voting



Where are women winning elections?

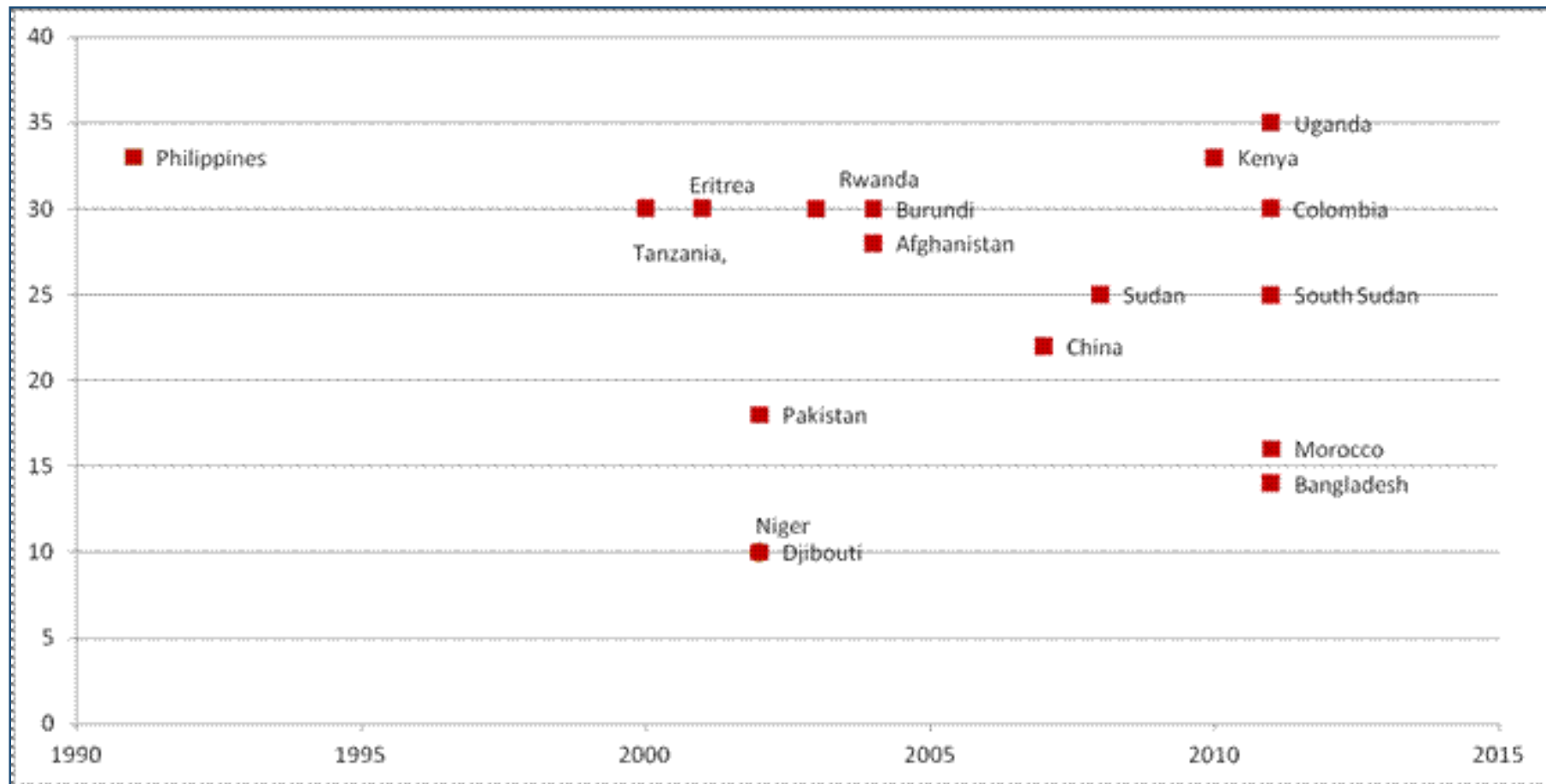
- Result 2: women have lower chances of winning elections in constituencies where sex ratio of electors is worse
- Socially advanced states = women don't contest
- Socially backward states = women contest but don't win
- Together the two results = few women political leaders overall



Women's Reservation in India

- If the logic for reservation is compensatory justice
 1. Then reservation should not be random
 2. It should be targeted in those constituencies where the sex ratios are worst

Women's reservation in Parliaments



3. Will reservations solve women's problems?

- Our estimates show that 20% of female electorate is “missing” in India (65 million)
- Indian elections reveal the will of a population that is artificially skewed against women
- The average Indian elector is a male
- Missing female electorate:
 1. Partly because significant number of women not registered to vote (9.3% in UP and 5.7% in Bihar)
 2. Largely because women are missing from the population – sustained gross neglect of women over all age groups of life cycle

3. Will reservations solve women's problems?

- Women's reservation at Panchayat level – mixed results for women's welfare
- Even with reservations – women candidates will cater to the preferences of the average voter --who is male
- Competitive electoral process even in the presence of women's reservation, will perpetuate gender-biased policies
- This is akin to market failure of democracy

Making Indian democracy inclusive for women

- Possible partly by aggressive registration drive targeting women electors
- But largely dependent on correcting the sex ratio in the population
- Otherwise Indian democracy will fail its women citizens