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THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN THE JUDICIARY

AUTHORED BY - PROF (DR.) MONICA CHAWLA

ABSTRACT

Diversity is an inherent feature of democratic nations. However, in many democracies such as India, the judiciary does not reflect the rich diversity of the country. Most judges in the Supreme Court and High Courts in India are cis-gender, upper-caste men. This homogenises the perspective on law and justice. Women judges and lawyers are faced with structural barriers such as gender stereotypes, discrimination, harassment, and insufficient institutional and infrastructural support. Additionally, caste, class, sexuality, and religious identity are some factors that create multiple axes of oppression to contend with. Through a critical examination of various feminist lenses, we highlight the systemic and implicit biases that lead to disproportionately low numbers of women judges. We then recommend institutional reforms that could facilitate the creation of a more diverse higher judiciary in India

I INTRODUCTION

At a time when violent conflict, economic displacement, and climate change are contributing to growing levels of uncertainty and fear around the world, authoritarian and non-democratic forces are increasingly presenting themselves as solutions to these crises. However, the true antidote lies in the rule of law—a powerful, stabilizing, and moderating force. As judges, we must ensure that we carry out our duties to the highest standards and, in doing so, earn the trust of the public, whose support is essential to upholding the rule of law.¹

The judiciary cannot be trusted if it is perceived as a bastion of entrenched elitism, exclusivity, and privilege—detached from societal changes and indifferent to the needs of the most vulnerable. Citizens are unlikely to accept the judiciary as a guarantor of law and human rights if judges themselves are perceived to act in a discriminatory manner. This is precisely why the presence of women in the judiciary is vital to its legitimacy.²

Achieving gender equality in judicial representation at all levels—including policy-making judicial councils—must be our goal. Not only because it is just for women, but because it is essential for realizing a fair and effective rule of law. Women judges strengthen the judiciary and play a crucial role in earning public trust in the justice system.

¹ Women in the Indian Judiciary, Justice Hima Kohli' available at: "<https://sowlindia.com/upload/SpeechJusticeHimaKohli.pdf/html>" (last visited on 12 June, 2025).

² Melissa Crouch, "Women and the Judiciary in the Asia-Pacific by Melissa Crouch"335 (Cambridge University Press, edn.,2023).

The inclusion of women in judicial roles from which they have historically been excluded is a significant step toward creating a judiciary that is more transparent, inclusive, and reflective of the society it serves. Their presence alone enhances the legitimacy of the courts, signalling that these institutions are accessible to all who seek justice. However, women judges contribute more than just symbolic representation. They play a vital role in improving the quality of judicial decision-making and, as a result, the quality of justice itself.

In contemporary society, the participation of women in the legal system stands as a critical benchmark for societal progress and equity. The legal framework, designed to uphold justice and protect individual rights, is inherently strengthened by diverse representation reflective of the population it serves. Yet, throughout history, women have encountered formidable barriers to entry and advancement within legal professions, resulting in systemic underrepresentation and persistent challenges. This research endeavours to navigate the multifaceted landscape of women's participation in the legal system, addressing both historical precedents and current realities. By delving into the intricate interplay of societal norms, institutional biases, and individual experiences, this study aims to illuminate the complexities that shape women's engagement with the legal framework. Against the backdrop of historical underrepresentation and entrenched gender biases, this research underscores the pressing need to examine the systemic impediments that continue to inhibit women's full participation in legal professions. By delineating these challenges and assessing their far-reaching implications, this study seeks to galvanize discourse and action towards fostering a more inclusive and equitable legal system.³

Through a comprehensive analysis of existing initiatives, policies, and best practices, this research endeavours to identify pathways for advancing women's rights and representation within legal professions and the justice system. By highlighting successful interventions and emerging opportunities, this study aims to offer actionable insights aimed at dismantling barriers and promoting gender equality within the legal sphere.⁴

II THE EVOLUTION OF WOMEN IN THE INDIAN JUDICIARY: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The participation of women in the Indian judiciary has unfolded through a multifaceted historical journey influenced by cultural traditions, social attitudes, and legal structures.

³ Ulrike Schultz, Gisela Shaw, "Women in the Judiciary" 223 (Ulrike Schultz & Gisela Shaw, 1st edn., 2012).

⁴ Erika Rackley "Women, Judging and the Judiciary: From Difference to Diversity" 234 (Routledge Cavendish 2nd edn., 2013).

a) Exclusion During the Pre-Independence Period:

In colonial India, women were largely barred from entering the legal profession. Deep-rooted societal norms and patriarchal values prevented women from holding judicial positions. The British colonial legal system reinforced these discriminatory practices, further sidelining women from the justice sector. Like, Nur Jahan played a significant role in the Mughal administration during Jahangir's reign. She was given significant power and authority, co-signing imperial orders and issuing fireman. Her influence was so substantial that she effectively ruled the empire in Jahangir's later years when his health was declining.

b) Post-Independence Developments:

Following India's independence in 1947, gradual progress began to emerge. A landmark moment came in 1959 with the appointment of Anna Chandy as the first woman judge in India. This event, while significant, represented only the beginning of a slow move toward greater gender representation in the judiciary.

c) Legal Progress and Gender-Sensitive Reforms:

In the decades that followed, reforms in law and policy began to reflect a growing awareness of gender equality. The introduction of the *Vishakha* guidelines in 1997 to combat sexual harassment at the workplace and the Supreme Court's 2004 ruling in *Sakshi v. Union of India*⁵ which expanded protections for women in legal proceedings highlighted efforts to make the legal system more responsive to gender concerns.

III KEY MILESTONES AND CURRENT STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE INDIAN JUDICIARY

a) Trailblazing Appointments:

The appointment of Justice Fathima Bevi as the first woman Judge of the Supreme Court in 1989 marked a historic breakthrough, setting a precedent for future female appointments to top judicial positions.⁶

b) Ongoing Challenges:

Although progress has been made, women in the judiciary still face significant challenges, including gender bias, stereotypes, and limited representation at senior levels. Continued initiatives to eliminate structural barriers and ensure gender parity remain essential.

⁵ *Sakshi v. Union of India* 73 SCR, 2004.

⁶ Menon, R. "Women in the Legal Profession in India: Chandy, 1293 *Journal of the Indian Law Institute*,45 (2003).

c) Recent Positive Shifts:

Recent years have seen encouraging developments. Justice *Indu Malhotra's*⁷ direct appointment to the Supreme Court in 2018 was unprecedented. In 2021, the Supreme Court witnessed a record with the simultaneous appointment of three women Justices *Hima Kohli*, *BV Nagarathna*, and *Bela Trivedi* raising the total number of women on the bench to four, the highest ever.

d) Representation in the Supreme Court:

Since Justice Beevi's appointment, only 11 women have served on the Supreme Court out of a total of 268 judges, making up a mere 4.1%. Justice BV Nagarathna is slated to become India's first female Chief Justice in 2027, though her tenure will be brief—just 36 days.

e) Women in the High Courts:

India has 25 High Courts with a sanctioned strength of 1,114 judges. As of now, only 782 positions are filled, and just 107 of these are held by women approximately 13%. Gujarat High Court is the only one currently led by a woman Chief Justice, Justice Sunita Agarwal.

f) Reservation and Representation:

Responding to queries in Parliament, the Union Law Minister clarified that the Constitution does not mandate reservations for specific castes or classes in judicial appointments under Articles 124, 217, and 224. This continues to impact the representation of women and other marginalized groups in higher courts.⁸

g) Is the situation any better in High Courts?

India has 25 High Courts with a sanctioned strength of 1,114 judges, but only 782 positions are currently filled. Of these, just 107 judges about 13% are women. At present, only the Gujarat High Court has a woman Chief Justice, Justice Sunita Agarwal, appointed in July. The rest of the High Courts are led by men.⁹

In response to questions in Parliament, the Union Law Minister stated that appointments to the higher judiciary are governed by Articles 124, 217, and 224 of the Constitution, which do not provide reservations for any caste or class.¹⁰ Nevertheless, the Centre has urged High Court

⁷ Justice Indu Malhotra takes oath as Supreme Court judge." *available at*: The Times of India. Retrieved from <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/justice-indu-malhotra-takes-oath-as-supreme-court-judge/articleshow/63979925.cms> (last visited on 19 June,2025).

⁸ Ballakrishnen, Swethaa, 'Why Is Gender a Form of Diversity: Rising Advantages for Women in Global Indian Law Firms' 4 *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies*, 20 (2013).

⁹ Agnes, Flavia, "*Law and Gender Inequality: The Politics of Women's Rights in India*" 126 (New Delhi, Oxford University Press 1999).

¹⁰ Abhinav Chandrachud, "*An Independent, Colonial Judiciary: A History of the Bombay High Court During the British Raj*" 343 (New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2015).

Chief Justices to consider diversity including women, minorities, and marginalized groups when recommending judicial appointments. As of January 31, 2023, women made up only 9.5% of the total sanctioned strength and 13.6% of the currently serving judges in High Courts. In contrast, women's representation is relatively higher in the subordinate judiciary. A 2018 study by the Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy reported that women made up about 27% of the lower judiciary, although their numbers significantly decline at the level of district judges and further in High Court appointments suggesting the existence of a 'glass ceiling' in judicial promotions.¹¹

(h) State-Wise Disparities and Reservation Policies in The Judiciary

A study revealed that only the small states of Goa, Meghalaya, and Sikkim—collectively accounting for just 103 judges had more than 60% women judges. In contrast, most other states, except Telangana and Puducherry, had less than 40% female representation in the judiciary, regardless of geographical or cultural differences.

While there is no formal reservation for women in higher judiciary posts, several states have implemented quotas for women in the lower judiciary. These include Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, and Uttarakhand, which have reserved 30–35% of positions filled through direct recruitment for women.

According to the India Justice Report (IJR) 2022, only 13% of High Court judges and 35% of Subordinate Court judges in India are women. At the district court level, Goa led with 70% female judges, followed by Meghalaya (62.7%), Telangana (52.8%), and Sikkim (52.4%).¹²

h) Justice Dy Chandrachud Highlights Gender Imbalance In Legal Profession

Supreme Court Justice DY Chandrachud recently emphasized the significant underrepresentation of women in the legal field. Speaking at a convocation ceremony, he cited government data indicating that women make up only 15% of practicing lawyers in India. He further remarked that existing laws meant to empower women are often inadequate and limited in scope. Chief Justice of India (CJI) Chandrachud also acknowledged a positive shift in the district judiciary. While addressing a group of 75 newly appointed civil judges from Maharashtra, he noted that 42 of them are women a clear indication of progress. Additionally,

¹¹ Chanda, Sangita. *Women and Legal Profession: In Reference to Indian Context*. 221 (Satyam Law International, New Delhi, 2014).

¹² Linda Hirshman, "Sisters in Law" 232 (Harper Collins, United States, 2015).

among five newly appointed district judges through direct recruitment, two are women, marking another step forward in improving gender balance within the judiciary.¹³

i) Rising Female Representation in District Judiciary Signals Positive Change

Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud recently remarked that the increasing number of women entering the district judiciary is a reflection of changing times. He noted that nearly 40% of new judges at the district level are now women, with some courts even seeing female judges make up over 50% of the bench. This shift, he said, is a nationwide trend and a promising sign for gender diversity in the judiciary. Senior advocate Dushyant Dave, who was present in court, welcomed this progress and expressed hope that similar representation will be seen in the higher judiciary, including constitutional courts. However, despite these advancements at the lower levels, gender disparity remains stark in the higher judiciary. According to data submitted by the Union government in August, women make up only about 13% of High Court judges and just three out of 34 judges in the Supreme Court. In contrast, women constitute over 36% of judges in the district and subordinate courts 7,199 out of a total working strength of 19,858. Responding to a parliamentary query on the issue, Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal acknowledged the low percentage of women in the higher judiciary. The 2022 India Justice Report also highlighted this gap, noting that across the entire justice system, only 1 in 10 judges is a woman. Among the states, Goa had the highest representation of women in the district judiciary (70%), followed by Telangana (52.8%) among larger states, and Meghalaya (62.7%) among smaller states.¹⁴

j) Gender Inclusion in the Judiciary: A Shift Toward Representation and Equality

Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud has described the legal profession as historically feudal, patriarchal, and exclusionary, particularly towards women. He stressed the urgent need to make the system more inclusive and merit-based, especially to accommodate women and other marginalized groups.

While more women now choose the legal profession than in the past, their presence especially in the higher judiciary remains limited. This imbalance must be addressed. The judiciary plays a critical role not just in interpreting laws, but in shaping society by influencing social structures and addressing systemic inequality. A judiciary that includes both men and

¹³ Dr. K. V. Sreenivasan "*Judicial Training & Empowerment of Women in Judiciary*"125 (Notion Press 2018).

¹⁴ available at: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/justice-indu-malhotra-takes-oath-as-supreme-court-judge/articleshow/63979925.cms> (last visited on 22 June, 2025).

women allows for a broader and more balanced perspective in decision-making. Women judges contribute unique viewpoints shaped by lived experience, which are essential not only in gender-related cases but across all areas of law. Their inclusion ensures that the legal system reflects the diversity of society and fosters greater fairness in judicial outcomes. Ultimately, the inclusion of women is about more than representation it is about integrating gender perspectives into the judicial process and giving women equal visibility and voice in the development of legal thought and societal change.¹⁵

k) The Value of Gender Perspective in Judicial Decision-Making

Judges, regardless of gender, strive to uphold the rule of law when interpreting legislation and resolving cases. However, their reasoning often reflects their individual life experiences and backgrounds. Even when judges arrive at the same conclusions, their focus on particular facts and interpretations may differ. This is where the gender perspective becomes essential women judges bring unique insights shaped by their personal experiences, contributing to more nuanced and inclusive reasoning.¹⁶ A diverse bench composed of individuals from different genders and back grounds strengthens public trust in the judiciary. It ensures that the legal system mirrors the society it serves, recognizing and incorporating varied social contexts and lived realities. Representation enhances inclusivity and enriches the quality of justice delivered. Language also plays a crucial role in fostering inclusivity. The adoption of gender-neutral language helps build a more respectful and balanced narrative, correcting historical imbalances and promoting greater sensitivity within legal discourse. Ultimately, a judiciary that values diverse voices and perspectives is better positioned to deliver equitable and just outcomes.

(IV) CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN IN THE JUDICIARY

Women in the judiciary have long fought for visibility, equal representation, and the inclusion of their perspectives in legal decision-making. However, systemic and social barriers continue to hinder their progress.

a) Stereotypes and Infrastructural Deficiencies:

Former Chief Justice N.V. Ramana identified key obstacles to women's entry and advancement in law, including ingrained gender stereotypes, traditional social expectations,

¹⁵ Tasmiya Naaz, "Women's Role in Indian Judiciary, *Indian Journal of Legal Review* 4 (2) 2024,

¹⁶ Missing Gender Diversity in the Indian Judiciary - Factly' available at '<https://factly.in/missing-gender-diversity-indian-judiciary/>' (last visited on 23 June ,2025).

and inadequate infrastructure. Issues such as overcrowded courtrooms, lack of security, and the absence of basic facilities like restrooms for women, still missing in about 22% of 6,000 trial courts discourage many from pursuing legal careers.¹⁷

b) Gender Bias and Discrimination:

Women often encounter implicit and explicit biases from clients, peers, and superiors. Such prejudices can lead to women being underestimated, limiting their opportunities for growth and professional recognition.

c) Work-Life Imbalance:

The demanding nature of judicial work, with long hours and high stress, poses additional challenges for women, particularly in managing family and domestic responsibilities. This strain can impact career advancement and lead to burnout.

d) Male-Dominated Judicial Appointments:

Despite the presence of many competent women in the legal field, the collegium system dominated by men remains a barrier to their elevation as judges, especially in higher courts.¹⁸

e) Hostile Court Environments:

The legal profession, particularly at senior levels, is often marked by a hostile and male-centric culture. Female lawyers and judges frequently report facing sexism and unwelcoming court environments, which limit their ability to rise through the ranks.

f) Domestic Responsibilities:

Many women, including those active in rights advocacy, have declined judicial positions due to the pressure of domestic obligations, reflecting the continued influence of traditional gender roles on professional choices. Women continue to face several obstacles in the judicial system, particularly at higher levels. A significant issue is underrepresentation, which limits opportunities for mentorship and reduces the visibility of women as leaders or role models in the field. This lack of visibility often makes it more difficult for

¹⁷ Amit Anand Choudhary, “women among 192 new High Judges” *available at*: https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/17-5-women-among-192-new-hc-judges/articleshow/120946245.cms?utm_source=chatgpt.com (last visited on 22 June, 2025).

¹⁸ Women account for less than 28% of total judges in country’ *available at*: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/women-account-for./html> (last visited on 24 June,2025).

women to be considered for senior positions. The "glass ceiling" effect persists, where even highly qualified women find their career progression halted due to systemic biases and limited representation. Another serious concern is harassment, with many women facing unsafe or hostile work environments, which further deters participation and growth in the judiciary.

Despite these challenges, the growing number of women entering the legal profession and actively advocating for change signals a gradual but positive shift toward a more inclusive and equitable judiciary.¹⁹

(V) THE IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN THE JUDICIARY

The presence of women in the judiciary is vital for several reasons:

- a) **Promoting Equality:** Women's inclusion on the bench is essential to uphold gender equality. It ensures that women's voices are reflected in legal reasoning and that the judiciary serves the entire population equitably.
- b) **Empowerment and Inspiration:** When women serve as judges, they become role models for future generations. Their presence can encourage more women and girls to pursue legal careers, contributing to a more balanced and representative legal system.²⁰
- c) **Inclusive Decision-Making:** Women judges bring unique perspectives shaped by their experiences, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand, especially those affecting women and marginalized communities. In essence, increasing women's representation in the judiciary is not only a matter of fairness but a critical step toward a more just, responsive, and inclusive legal system. Increasing the number of women in the judiciary is crucial for building a more inclusive, balanced, and effective legal system. Women judges not only bring diversity in identity but also in thought, interpretation, and experience.
- d) **Diversity and Inclusion:** Greater representation of women contributes to a more diverse judiciary that better reflects the society it serves. This diversity enhances decision-making and fosters a more inclusive legal system.
- e) **Perspective:** Women bring distinct life experiences and viewpoints, often absent in traditionally male-dominated judicial spaces. Their inclusion ensures that a broader range

¹⁹ R. S. Kelkar, "Women and Law in India: An Omnibus comprising Law Relating to Women" 135 (Eastern Book Company, 2008).

²⁰ D. Halder, "Judicial Role in Combating Gender Based Violence in India" 177 (Springer, 2019).

of perspectives, especially on issues affecting women and marginalized groups, are considered in judicial decisions.

- f) **Justice and Equality:** A judiciary that includes women is better equipped to address gender-based discrimination and protect women's rights. It strengthens the capacity of the legal system to deliver fair and equitable justice.
- g) **Empowerment and Role Modeling:** Women judges serve as role models and inspire the next generation of women to pursue legal careers. This has a ripple effect, helping to increase female participation across all levels of the judiciary.
- h) **Legitimacy and Public Confidence:** When the judiciary reflects the composition of society-including gender balance-it gains greater legitimacy and public trust. Representation signals fairness, openness, and accountability.
- i) **Challenging Stereotypes:** Women's visibility in powerful legal roles helps dismantle gender stereotypes and challenges societal assumptions about leadership, authority, and competence in law.²¹

In sum, women's representation in the judiciary is not just a matter of numbers-it is essential for justice, equality, and institutional legitimacy.

(VI) INTERNATIONAL PROSPECTIVE OF WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN THE JUDICIARY

Internationally, both gender and diversity are recognized as essential components of a fair and effective justice system. Across global institutions particularly within the UN, Council of Europe, OSCE, and others a comprehensive legal framework mandates equality and non-discrimination at every level of society, including the judiciary.²²

Key International Frameworks

a) United Nations

- **CEDAW (1979):** The landmark Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women obliges states to eliminate gender discrimination across legislative, judicial, and institutional frameworks. It addresses stereotypes, political rights, education, healthcare, and equal protection before the law
- **Convention on Political Rights of Women (1953):** Grants women equal rights to vote, stand for election, and hold public office critical for judicial representation

²¹ B. Mathew, "Gender and the Judiciary: An Overview of Women Judges in India" *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*, 386(2024).

²² Kosana Beker, "Gender and Diversity in the Judiciary" 32 (OSCE Mission to Skopje,)2022.

- **UN High-Level Rule of Law Declarations & WPS resolutions:** Affirm that equal access to justice is fundamental; UN bodies like UN Women and Special Rapporteurs support gender-sensitive laws and policies.²³

b) Council of Europe

- **Istanbul Convention (2011):** The first binding regional treaty against violence toward women/domestic violence; builds environments where judicial actors are trained to recognize and respond to gender-based issues
- **Gender Equality Commission & Strategy 2024–2029:** Centered on mainstreaming gender across policy areas, including judiciary recruitment, training, and combating sexism/harassment.
- **CEPEJ Guidelines (2022):** Offer practical steps for judiciary bodies e.g., collecting gender data, bias awareness training, enforcing complaint mechanisms to foster equality in recruitment and workplace culture.²⁴

c) OSCE / ODIHR

- **1999 Charter & 2004 Gender Action Plan:** Commit to integrating gender equality across law enforcement, judicature, and electoral practices.
- **2019 OSCE ODIHR Study and Recommendations:** Highlights the importance of diverse recruitment, equitable workplace policies, and public trust in justice systems
- **Programmers & Toolkits:** Include training modules for judges, prosecutors, police, and legislative bodies aimed at preventing gender-based violence and discrimination.

d) Intersectionality & Diversity

- **Multiple-identity focus:** Institutions like the Council of Europe emphasize that gender intersects with ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, etc. This intersectionality is key to designing inclusive policies such as addressing Roma women's access to justice. International law through instruments like CEDAW, the Istanbul Convention, and OSCE/CoE strategies sets a solid foundation for embedding gender and diversity in the justice system. These frameworks demand:

²³ M. Dhanda, Women and Law: A Handbook of Indian Laws and Issues of Concern to Women" *Economic and Political Weekly*," 37(40), (2002).

²⁴ Domestic Violence and Dowry Deaths: Legal Interpretation in India, 3" *Journal of Gender and Law*"12, (2005).

- Gender-balanced recruitment and retention policies
- Comprehensive staff training on bias and intersectionality
- Structural accountability via data collection and oversight

All these efforts create more equitable, legitimate, and effective judicial systems. If you'd like, I can dive deeper into any region's progress or specific initiatives—just let me know.

The global representation of women in the judiciary has increased over the past few decades, yet disparities persist—especially in senior judicial positions and international courts.²⁵ On average, women constitute between 27% and 40% of judges globally, with variations across regions. For instance, Europe has achieved near gender parity with women accounting for approximately 51% of the judiciary, whereas in Africa the average stands at around 40%, though this is mostly concentrated in lower courts.²⁶

In Africa, a 2023 joint report by UN Women and UNDP highlighted that while women's representation has improved, significant barriers remain in terms of career advancement to higher courts. Women judges in the region contribute to reduced levels of corruption, increased public trust, and often serve as mentors for younger professionals. However, the same report noted that structural impediments such as opaque promotion processes and gender bias continue to hinder their progression. A 2024 follow-up report found that only a handful of African countries—such as Ethiopia, Lesotho, and Zambia have appointed women as Chief Justices, reflecting ongoing underrepresentation at leadership levels.²⁷

In Europe, data from the Council of Europe and GRECO (Group of States Against Corruption) in 2015 showed that women comprised approximately 51% of national-level judges. However, the proportion dropped significantly at higher judicial levels, with only about 36% of court president positions occupied by women.²⁸ In France, women made up 57% of magistrates between 2010 and 2014, and female representation among new entrants to the National School for the Judiciary (École nationale de la magistrature) reached 73%. Notably, some specialized courts, such as family courts, had up to 98% female representation.

Among Commonwealth Countries, progress has been similarly uneven. As of late 2021, women accounted for 61% of judges on the Supreme Court of the Bahamas, and Kenya

²⁵ available at: <https://www.womenentrepreneursreview.com/viewpoint/experts-column/republic-day-6-iconic-women-judges-who-delivered-landmark-verdicts-nwid-4617.html/> (last visited on 24 June, 2024).

²⁶ UNDP & UN Women, "Women in Justice in Africa" (2023).

²⁷ UNDP & UN Women, "Women in Justice Comparative Report" (2024).

²⁸ Council of Europe & GRECO, "Gender Representation in European Judiciaries" (2015).

appointed its first female Chief Justice in the same year. In Asia, representation varies significantly. Mongolia and Israel report high female participation in the judiciary approximately 66% and 52% respectively-whereas countries such as Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) report female representation of less than 1%.

The underrepresentation of women extends to International Judicial Bodies. As of 2021, only around 20% of judges serving in courts such as the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the International Criminal Court (ICC) were women. Furthermore, of the 48 women elected to international courts historically, only five were from Asia, underscoring regional disparities in international judicial appointments.²⁹

Empirical studies highlight the benefits of gender diversity in the judiciary. A 2024 study conducted in Brazil demonstrated that domestic violence cases presided over by female judges resulted in a 31% higher conviction rate compared to cases overseen by male judges. This was attributed not to a more punitive stance, but to a greater sensitivity to context and evidence. Similarly, the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) found that women judges improve access to justice for female litigants, particularly in post-conflict societies and marginalized communities.

Despite these benefits, numerous barriers continue to hinder the advancement of women in the judiciary. These include socio-cultural norms, entrenched gender biases, opaque promotion mechanisms, and work-life balance challenges. In many Arab and Asian countries, women are still legally or culturally excluded from judicial roles altogether. Lack of family-friendly workplace policies, such as flexible hours, maternity leave, and childcare support, also disproportionately affects women's ability to progress to senior judicial roles.³⁰

To address these challenges, a combination of institutional and policy-level interventions has been recommended. These include implementing gender quotas, establishing transparent and merit-based judicial appointment processes, introducing gender-sensitization training for all judicial staff, and providing mentorship programs for women in law. Countries that have adopted such measures have seen tangible improvements in both the number and status of women within their judicial systems.

The International Day of Women Judges is a globally recognized observance held annually on March 10 established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2021, the day celebrates

²⁹ Opinion Juris, "Global Representation of Women Judges" 125 (2021).

³⁰ UN Women. (2011). 2011-2012 Progress of the world's women: In pursuit of justice. UN Women. available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2011/ProgressOfTheWorldsWomen-2011-en.pdf> (last visited on 24 June, 2025).

the accomplishments of women in the judiciary and promotes gender equality within judicial systems worldwide. This observance is not merely symbolic-it represents a broader commitment to inclusive governance, the rule of law, and the elimination of gender-based discrimination in legal institutions.

As female judges, we have a unique place in the judiciary. We are called to be so many things to so many people, wife, partner, mother, counsellor, chef, sister and much more and to balance this with our roles as arbiters in the court room. The theme for the International Day of Women Judges on 10th March 2025 is “Women in Justice, Women for Justice.” It is a call to promote the full and equal participation of women at all levels of the judiciary, to celebrate the progress achieved, and to raise awareness of the challenges that remain. As we are reminded by the United Nations, Women’s representation in the judiciary is key to ensuring that courts represent their citizens, address their concerns and hand down sound judgments. By their mere presence, women judges enhance the legitimacy of courts, sending a powerful signal that they are open and accessible to those who seek recourse to justice.³¹

Global initiatives On this day, international organizations, governments, and judicial bodies around the world organize conferences, panel discussions, and educational campaigns. For instance, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and UN Women often collaborate on global events showcasing stories of women judges and highlighting the need for inclusive justice.

In many countries, bar associations and judicial academies host seminars to reflect on the role of women in shaping jurisprudence, tackling gender-based violence, and addressing social justice issues.

(VII) THE CONTRIBUTION OF WOMEN ON JUDICIAL DECISION- MAKING IN THE INDIAN JUDICIARY

Justice Anna Chandy and Justice Fathima Beevi pioneering female jurists whose careers mark significant milestones in the Indian judiciary’s gender inclusion after independence.³² Anna Chandy: India’s First Female Judge & Trailblazer for Women. District Court (Munsif)³³ in 1937, Anna Chandy became the first female judge in India, appointed as a munsif in Travancore. High Court Justice On 9 February 1959, she made history again as the first woman

³¹ United Nations, *International Day of Women Judges 2025: Women in Justice, Women for Justice*, (2025) available at: <https://www.un.org/en/observances/women-judges-day> (last visited on 18 June, 2025).

³² Shylashri Shankar, *Gender and Legal Reform in India* 78(Oxford University Press, 2008).

³³ K Parameshwar & Medha Damojipurapu, *The Pioneer from Travancore- Justice Anna Chandy*, 42 the Indian advocate: j. Bar ass’n of India-women and l. 212–222 (2018).

High Court judge in India (Kerala High Court), serving until April 1967.³⁴ Feminist & Reformer Before her judicial roles, she was the first woman in Kerala to earn a law degree (1926), founded the feminist Malayalam magazine *Shrimati*, and served in the Travancore assembly (1932–34), advocating fiercely for women’s rights and legal reforms. Legacy her career paved the way for women in legal professions, marking gradual acceptance of gender-neutral judiciary roles under India’s constitutional promise of equality (Articles 14 & 15).³⁵ Fathima Beevi first woman supreme court justice (1989–1992).

Early Career enrolled as a lawyer in 1950 (gold medalist), became Munsif in 1958, and served as District Judge before being elevated to the Kerala High Court in 1983. Supreme Court Justice Appointed on 6 October 1989, she became India’s and Asia’s first female Supreme Court judge, serving until her 1992 retirement. Trailblazer for diversity a Muslim woman from Kerala, she broke both gender and religious barriers, inspiring many to pursue the legal profession. Post-Judiciary Served on the National Human Rights Commission and became Governor of Tamil Nadu (1997–2001). Constitutional Foundation (1950) Articles 14 (equality before law) and 15 (no discrimination on sex grounds) established the promise of gender-neutral justice but it took decades for women to enter judicial ranks actively. Pre-Independence to High Court Anna Chandy’s role from the 1930s onwards illustrates early progress, showing societal shifts that allowed women into legal professions even before independence and constitutional enactments. Supreme Court Representation despite constitutional guarantees, the first woman SC judge came only in 1989 over 40 years after the Constitution came into force highlighting slow institutional change.³⁶

Number of Women Judges since Justice Beevi’s appointment, 11 women have served on the Supreme Court, with one currently sitting Justice (B. V. Nagarathna) and the first female Chief Justice set in 2027.³⁷ In 1950 Anna Chandy broke ground in 1937 as the first woman judge in India, serving in district courts. In 1959, she became a High Court judge, making her a pioneer not only nationally but across Anglo-Saxon jurisdictions.³⁸ 1970–1980 Gradual yet noticeable progress in appointing women, though predominantly at lower court levels. In 1989

³⁴ Former Judges, Kerala HC, <http://highcourtofkerala.nic.in/frmrjudges.html> (last visited on 23 June, 2025)

³⁵ V. K. Ahuja, “*Landmark Judgments of the Indian Supreme Court*” 102 (Vikas Publishing House, 2003).

³⁶ Arvind Verma, “*The Evolution of Indian Judiciary*” 134 (Harper Collins, 2012).

³⁷ Apoorva Mandhani, available at: <https://www.livelaw.in/indias-first-female-supreme-court-judge-justice-fathimabeeviturns-90/> (last visited on 25 June, 2025).

³⁸ Rupsha Bhadra & Debroop Basu, Manu and the ‘Muse’, available at: <https://www.telegraphindia.com/entertainment/manu-and-the-39-muse-39/cid/1421377> (last visited on 24 June, 2025).

a momentous year M. Fathima Beevi became the first woman Supreme Court Justice of India, and the first female Supreme Court Justice in any Asian country, marking a major break through Here are some of the most transformative women jurists in Indian history true guardians of the Constitution whose landmark rulings have shaped gender equality, social justice, and constitutional rights:

a) Justice Anna Chandy

First woman judges in British India 1937 elevated to the Kerala High Court in 1959. As a pioneer, she shattered early glass ceilings, inspiring generations of women barristers.

b) Justice M. Fathima Beevi (SC, 1989–1992)

India's first female Supreme Court judge in *Mohammed Ahmed Khan v. Shah Bano Begum*, she upheld Muslim women's entitlement to maintenance beyond the 'Iddat' period. Also defended natural justice and rule of law in other key rulings.

c) Justice Sujata Manohar (SC, 1994–1999)

Second woman Supreme Court judge; instrumental in the *Vishaka* case, establishing workplace sexual harassment guidelines. Also contributed to environmental jurisprudence and gender-justice in divorce and domestic violence. "Justice is not a mere word..."

d) Justice Ruma Pal (SC, 2000–2006)

Known for fierce advocacy on judicial accountability co-authored Vishaka Guidelines and voiced concerns over the collegium system.

e) Justice Gyan Sudha Misra (SC, 2010–2014)

Bench companion of Ranjana Desai, delivered woman-sensitive judgments in cases of dowry, domestic violence, and employment right.

f) Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai (SC, 2011–2014)

Part of the death penalty bench in Ajmal Kasab's 26/11 case co-constituted India's first all-woman bench in 2013, handling multiple key cases.

g) Justice R. Banumathi (SC, 2014–2020)

Authored a landmark judgment on the Nirbhaya gang-rape case, affirming the "rarest of rare" death penalty category.

h) Justice Indu Malhotra (SC, 2018–2022)

First woman elevated directly from the Bar to the Supreme Court. Authored dissent in *Sabarimala* case emphasizing religious freedom; co-judged *Joseph Shine* on adultery decriminalization.

i) Justice Indira Banerjee (SC, 2018–2022)

Eighth female Supreme Court justice, previously Chief Justice of Madras HC.

j) Justice Hima Kohli (SC, 2021–2024)

Pensional first woman CJ of Telangana HC; served on key bench during COVID-19 inquiry. Bench in *Ashwini Upadhyay v. UOI* referred freebies vs state fund rule; also championed juveniles' rights & disability access.

k) Justice Bela M. Trivedi (SC, 2021)

Elevated from Gujarat HC; delivered rare-of-rare death penalty in child rape/murder case and upheld animal cruelty penalties.

l) Justice B.V. Nagarathna (SC, 2021)

Daughter of former CJI, her judgments addressed media regulation and charitable benefits for temples. First woman in line for CJI by seniority (projected CJI in 2027).

a) *Vishakha v. State of Rajasthan*³⁹

In this seminal case, Justice Sujata V. Manohar and the bench laid down the *Vishakha Guidelines*, establishing workplace norms to prevent sexual harassment in the absence of dedicated legislation. Grounded in Articles 14, 15, 19(1)(g), and 21 of the Constitution, the judgment filled a critical legal void until the enactment of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act in 2013. It affirmed women's rights to dignity and safe working conditions.

b) *Shayara Bano v. Union of India*⁴⁰

In a landmark decision, the Supreme Court (led by a 3 to 2 majority including Justice Kurian *Joseph*) declared instant triple talaq unconstitutional, ruling it violative of Muslim

³⁹ *Vishakha v. State of Rajasthan*, AIR 1997 SC 3011.

⁴⁰ *Shayara Bano v. Union of India*, AIR, 2017, 9 SCC 1.

women's fundamental rights under Articles 14 and 21. Though Justice Indu Malhotra dissented warning against judicial overreach into religious matters her opinion emphasized a nuanced balance between personal law and constitutional guarantees, reinforcing that harmful practices within religion are subject to constitutional scrutiny.

c) ***Mohd. Ahmed Khan v. Shah Bano Begum***⁴¹

In this watershed judgment, Justice Jeevan Reddy upheld the right of Muslim women to long-term maintenance after divorce, strengthening economic justice under Section 125 of the Criminal Procedure Code. The ruling spotlighted the tension between religion and gender equity, prompting the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986 a legislative move that curtailed the judiciary's progressive mandate.

d) ***Common Cause v. Union of India***⁴²

A five-judge Constitution Bench (with Justice D. Y. Chandrachud delivering a notable concurring opinion) affirmed that the right to die with dignity, including passive euthanasia and the use of "living wills," is constitutionally protected under Article 21. Justice Chandrachud's clear explanation distinguished passive from active euthanasia, emphasizing patient autonomy and ethical medical practice. Expanding rights through the Bench, these rulings collectively have broadened personal liberties covering workplace dignity, religious equality, economic security, and end-of-life autonomy. Judicial Intervention Ahead of Legislature courts acted proactively whether it was crafting workplace norms (*Vishakha*), striking down entrenched gender biases in personal law (*Shah Bano*) or pioneering bioethical rights in the absence of statutes (*Common Cause*).

Balancing Personal Law & Constitutional Morality, the Shayara Bano and Shah Bano cases exemplify how the court applies constitutional morality to mediate between religious customs and individual rights. Shaping legal frameworks these judgments not only offered immediate relief but also triggered legislative changes driving India forward in gender justice and personal autonomy, Here's a refined overview highlighting.

⁴¹ *Mohd. Ahmad Khan v. Shah Bano Begum* AIR,1985 SCR (3) 844.

⁴² *Common Cause v. Union of India* AIR, 2018, 5 SCC 1.

IX WOMEN JUDGES' GENDER-SENSITIVE JURISPRUDENCE ACROSS KEY AREAS:

a) Gender & Political Rights Justice, M. Fathima Beevi

As Governor in 2001, Justice Fathima Beevi administered the oath to J. Jayalalithaa amid her TANSI conviction. The Supreme Court later held that a convicted individual cannot serve as CM, prompting Beevi's resignation underscoring constitutional limits on political eligibility.

b) Domestic Violence & Dowry, Justice Gyan Sudha Mishra

Justice Gyan Sudha Mishra has been pivotal in refining judicial processes in gendered domestic violence cases. In *Geeta Mehrotra v. State of U.P.*⁴³, she held that mere naming of family members in FIRs without specific allegations is an abuse of process and quashed such charges. In *Nand & Jeth*, her bench cautioned courts against mechanical filing under 498A emphasizing precision in evidence.

c) Mental Cruelty in Marriage, Justice Leila Seth

A trailblazer in gender-sensitive matrimonial law, *Shakuntala Kumari v. Om Parkash Ghai*,⁴⁴ She held that threatening suicide can constitute mental cruelty in marriage. In *NG Dastane v. S Dastane*⁴⁵ reaffirmed this reasoning. Instrumental in amending the Hindu Succession Act to grant equal inheritance rights to daughters. Contributed to the Justice Verma Committee (post-2012 Delhi rape), strengthening anti-rape laws.

d) Sexual Violence & Dowry Deaths, Justice R. Banumathi

Justice Banumathi has emphasized swift, victim-centered justice in marital rape and dowry-death cases, shaping gender-sensitive frameworks for legal redress.

e) Socio-economic Justices Ruma Pal and Justices Sujata Manohar

Both judges have foregrounded the intersection of gender and poverty, ensuring that legal outcomes account for socio-economic vulnerabilities of women.

f) Affirmative Social Justice, Justice Indu Malhotra

Recognized for her concise and thorough judgments, she championed equality through *Rajnish v. Neha*,⁴⁶ affirming LGBTQ+ rights, and other key rulings on personal liberty,

⁴³ *Geeta Mehrotra v. State of U.P.* AIR, 2012 (10) SCC.

⁴⁴ *Shakuntala Kumari v. Om Parkash Ghai*, AIR 1981 DELHI 53

⁴⁵ *NG Dastane v. S Dastane* AIR 1534, 1975 SCR (3) 967.

⁴⁶ *Rajnish v. Neha* AIR,(2021) 2 SCC 32

gender nondiscrimination, religion, and arbitral processes. Women judges in India have fundamentally shaped legal interpretations on gender, infusing empathy, fairness, and socio-legal awareness into jurisprudence. Their work spans domestic abuse, marital cruelty, political equality, property rights, and sexual violence demonstrating that diverse judicial perspectives enrich constitutional justice. Here's a polished, citation-rich summary of Justice Indu Malhotra's key judgments and the broader significance of women in the judiciary.

g) Liberty & Criminal Law: Upholding Personal Freedoms

*Jarnail Singh v. Lachhmi Narain Gupta*⁴⁷ A five-judge constitutional bench including Justice Malhotra revisited the *Nagaraj* formula on reservation in promotions (Article 16(4)). While primarily about administrative law, it underscored rule-of-law principles by balancing equal opportunity and procedural fairness. *Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India*⁴⁸ & *Joseph Shine v. Union of India*⁴⁹ Justice Malhotra was part of benches that struck down criminal laws infringing on liberty de-criminalising consensual same-sex relations and adultery affirming personal choices and dignity under Article 21.

h) Balancing Rights: Religion, Equality & Gender

*Indian Young Lawyers' Association v. State of Kerala (Sabarimala)*⁵⁰ Justice Malhotra dissented, opposing the majority's overruling of age-based temple entry restrictions. Her dissent highlighted concerns about judicial overreach into religious practices, urging restraint and respect for faith traditions. *Andhra Kesari College v. AP*⁵¹ Though older, this case reinforced Malhotra's commitment to equality and non-discrimination, reflecting her broader jurisprudence on minority rights.

i) Arbitral Awards: Pro-Enforcement & Legal Certainty

Justice Malhotra authored major arbitration judgments, shaping dispute resolution by clarifying limitation periods and advocating efficiency. *Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd v. Nortel Networks India*⁵² She held that the time limit to seek tribunals under Section 11 starts when the appointment fails, applying Article 137 of the Limitation Act (3 years) and urging

⁴⁷ *Jarnail Singh v. Lachhmi Narain Gupta* AIR, 2018 (10) SCC 396.

⁴⁸ *Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India* AIR, 2018 SC (CRI) 1169.

⁴⁹ *Joseph Shine v. Union of India* AIR, 2019 (3) SCC 39.

⁵⁰ *Indian Young Lawyers' Association v. State of Kerala (Sabarimala)* AIR, 2018 SC 243.

⁵¹ *Andhra Kesari College v. AP* AIR, 2019 SCC 4667.

⁵² *Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd v. Nortel Networks India* AIR, 2021 SC 279

Parliament to legislate for tighter deadlines. *Government of India v. Vedanta Ltd.*⁵³ She favored a *pro-enforcement* stance foreign award enforcement must only be defeated by “fundamental offence to justice and morality” while noting Parliament may shorten the 12-year limitation.

j) Recognition and Continuing Influence

Legacy & Praise colleagues, including Justice Chandrachud, have hailed her as an 'icon' for her precision, intellect, and principled approach. Groundbreaking Elevation Her direct appointment from the Bar in 2018 was historic. After retirement, she's become a sought-after international arbitrator and a vocal advocate for reform through academia, committee work, and institutional contribution.

X CONCLUSION

Persistent underrepresentation only 14% of High Court judges are women (around 109–110 out of 764). Recent appointments show just 17.5% of 192 newly appointed HC judges are women. In the Supreme Court, women make up only 3% one sitting judge, Justice B.V. Nagarathna, with others retiring or not replaced. Systemic barriers remain nine High Courts have only one woman judge some states have none, the collegium process is opaque, male-dominated, and often lacks structured gender considerations. Requirements like “continuous practice” favor uninterrupted careers, disadvantaging women who take breaks for family responsibilities. Leaky pipeline effect while women are nearly 36% of lower judiciary, their representation plummets in higher courts. The Bar reflects similar trends only 15% of advocates are women, limiting the pool for higher judicial elevation. Mandate gender balance in appointments institutionalize policies ensuring at least one-third of HC and SC benches comprise women. Ensure transparent and structured recruitment collegium should publish data on vacancies, candidate pools, gender ratios, and reasons for rejecting recommendations.

Adapt eligibility criteria relax “continuous practice” norms and other rigid requirements to accommodate career breaks for caregiving. Invest in mentorship and advocacy launch mentorship programs for senior women lawyers and judges encourage Bar associations to support and nominate women leaders. Strengthen infrastructure and workplace support

⁵³

Government of India v. Vedanta Ltd AIR, 2020 SCC 4550,

provide crèches, women's restrooms, and lactation rooms; include women in committees overseeing court infrastructure. Promote All India Judicial Service (AIJS) Centralize and standardize judicial entry via AIJS to improve merit and diversity. Regular monitoring and reporting courts should publish dashboards tracking gender representation and benchmark against targets—encouraging accountability and healthy competition. Women remain dramatically underrepresented in India's higher judiciary despite strong presence in lower courts. Achieving truly inclusive justice demands concrete measures: proactive appointments, transparent selection, structural reforms, career support, and consistent monitoring.⁵⁴

Such reforms won't just balance numbers they'll enrich the judiciary's perspectives, strengthen public trust, and ensure legal outcomes better reflect India's diverse society. Despite progress, significant challenges remain. Women judges often face gender bias, lack of mentorship, and unequal opportunities for promotion. In some regions, cultural and institutional barriers continue to prevent women from accessing the judiciary altogether. Security concerns, especially in fragile and conflict-affected states, can also disproportionately affect female judges, limiting their participation and effectiveness. The presence of women on the bench enhances the legitimacy and inclusivity of judicial systems. Studies have shown that women judges bring unique perspectives to legal interpretation, especially in cases involving family law, gender-based violence, and human rights. Their participation also serves as a powerful symbol to young girls and aspiring female professionals that they too can hold positions of authority and leadership. Moreover, diverse judicial systems are better equipped to understand and address the needs of varied populations. Women judges contribute to a more empathetic, balanced, and comprehensive approach to justice.

The International Day of Women Judges is a crucial moment each year to recognize achievements, reflect on challenges, and reaffirm global commitment to gender equality in the judiciary. It is a reminder that a just, fair, and representative legal system cannot exist without the full and equal participation of women. As more women ascend to judicial

⁵⁴ Tannvi, T., & Narayana, S. (2022). The challenge of gender stereotyping in Indian courts. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 8(1) available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2022.211681>(last visited on 25 June, 2025).

leadership, the global justice system becomes not only more inclusive but also more effective in serving the needs of all people.

The role of women in the Indian judiciary has evolved significantly over the years, marking a crucial stride towards inclusivity and equality. This transformation is not merely symbolic but holds profound implications for justice, social progress, and the overall fabric of the legal system. Historically, women faced barriers accessing legal education and entering the legal profession in India. However, the landscape has shifted, with an increasing number of women pursuing legal careers.

The presence of women in the judiciary is essential to reflect the diversity of society and ensure a more comprehensive understanding of legal issues. One of the primary significances of women representation in the Indian judiciary lies in the promotion of gender-sensitive justice. Moreover, the presence of women in the judiciary serves as a powerful symbol, inspiring aspiring female lawyers and breaking down gender stereotypes. Female judges act as role models, challenging traditional norms and encouraging a more inclusive legal profession. This, in turn, fosters a supportive environment for women within the legal community, promoting a virtuous cycle of empowerment and representation. However, despite the progress made, challenges persist. Women in the judiciary often face stereotypes, biases, and unequal opportunities. The need for gender-sensitive policies, mentorship programs, and a conducive work environment is paramount to address these challenges. Additionally, there is a pressing need for more systematic efforts to ensure equitable representation at all levels of the judiciary, including the higher echelons. In conclusion, the role of women in the Indian judiciary is multifaceted and of paramount importance. Beyond the pursuit of gender equality, women in the judiciary contribute to a more nuanced and comprehensive legal system.⁵⁵

Their presence on the bench symbolizes progress towards a more inclusive and representative judiciary, fostering public trust and confidence. While significant strides have been made, concerted efforts are necessary to overcome persisting challenges and ensure that the judiciary reflects the diversity and complexity of Indian society. Only

⁵⁵ Smith, F. O. (2005). Gendered justice: Do male and female judges rule differently on questions of gay rights? *Stanford Law Review*, 57(6), 2087–2134. *available at:* <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40040241> (last visited on 25 June, 2025).

through sustained commitment to gender equality can the Indian judiciary truly fulfill its role as a beacon of Justice for all. Supreme Court as of May 2025, only 11 women have ever served as judges in the Supreme Court since its inception in 1950. High Courts, women constitute approximately 14% of sitting judges across High Courts in India. Notably, eight High Courts have only one-woman judge, and some, like Meghalaya and Tripura, have none. Subordinate Courts, At the district and subordinate court levels, women make up about 36.3% of judges, indicating better representation at the grassroots level. Underrepresentation in Leadership women are significantly underrepresented in leadership roles within the judiciary. For instance, as of early 2025, only one High Court had a woman Chief Justice.

