

A Socio-Demographic Mapping of the 18th Lok Sabha Term

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ABSTRACT

The Lok Sabha is the lower house of India's Parliament which serves as a core institution where laws are introduced, discussed and enacted. It is known as the 'House of People' and represents the people of India. The members are directly elected by the citizens from constituencies across the country. It plays a critical role shaping legislation and executing democratic processes. It is important to understand the comprehensive profile of Lok Sabha to understand whether it is representing the diverse population. The aim of the present study is to understand the socio-demographic profile of elected Lok Sabha members in the 18th term. It examines the population across five factors: gender, age, educational attainment, constitutional category, and profession. Data was collected manually from the official Lok Sabha website for the 18th Term. The analysis used graphical representation and descriptive statistics to analyse the patterns and trends. It was found there are fifteen percent of the female representatives in the current Lok Sabha. Majority of the members of the house belong to the age category of fifty to seventy years with a handful of them below thirty years. Professionally, agriculture and business are the most followed and graduates form the largest group. Therefore, the results provide a skewed representation of different communities. The study can guide discussions on reforms to make the parliament more inclusive and represent India's population.

Keywords: Lok Sabha, Parliament, Gender, 18th Term and Education

INTRODUCTION

Political institutions can only be meaningfully understood within the socio-cultural environment in which they operate (Manisha.,2017). Constitutional and legal provisions establish the formal framework, and the substantive nature and scope of these institutions are shaped by those who govern them (Manisha.,2017). The evolution of the Indian Parliament exemplifies the broader trajectory of parliamentary democracy in India, reflecting both the deepening of democratic practices and the inherent constraints of this process (Manisha.,2017). In a politically fragmented environment, securing parliamentary majorities requires the development of inclusive electoral strategies to bridge the divisions within the electorate (Verniers & Jaffrelot, 2020).

Elected representatives in India are considered passive backbenchers and are expected to follow their party's directives without questioning them. The Anti-Defection Bill of 1985, introduced by the Rajiv Gandhi government weakened the independence of Members of Parliament and state assemblies by binding them more firmly to party orders (Verniers & Jaffrelot, 2020). These elected representatives are part of the Lok Sabha, which is important and plays a cornerstone in Indian democracy. It is known as the 'House of the People' and embodies sovereignty as well as democracy, acting as a link between citizens and the government. It is crucial to understand the selection of people in Lok Sabha for a fair representation. Hence, there are several reasons to study candidate recruitment and selection in India.

First, descriptive representation is widely believed to dominate the Indian political system. In this view, a parliament that broadly mirrors the social composition of society is

considered a representative (Pitkin, 1967). Thus, the sociological traits of elected representatives remain the primary benchmark for assessing how representative the parliament is. The parliament remains the seat of popular sovereignty, where the strengths of political parties and the communities they represent are tested and displayed. It is also a site of increasing competition, with both the number of parties and candidates steadily rising in successive elections (Verniers, 2019).

Second, the literature on political careers shows that the incentives that shape politicians are deeply influenced by how they are recruited (Siavelis & Morgenstern, 2008). In India, candidate selection is usually based on "winnability," with parties weighing socio-demographic factors, such as caste, religion, gender, wealth, and family background. These criteria push parties to repeatedly draw candidates from similar social groups, thereby producing a relatively homogenous political class. While democratic theory assumes that citizens should choose among candidates with diverse ideologies and backgrounds, the options are restricted by party gatekeeping. In India, party leaders exercise near-complete control over who is selected, thereby shaping the social composition of the political elite.

Third, recruitment has lasting consequences because ministers in India must come from the parliament. This makes the parliament the filter that decides who can eventually become part of the executive, including the Prime Minister (Norris, 1997; Carnes, 2018; Borchert & Zeiss, 2003). Studies show that across the western world, political classes have grown more professional, excluding people from less-privileged or less-educated backgrounds (Allen, 2018). Peter H. Smith's study of Mexico, described how patrimonial elites were replaced by technocrats

(Smith, 1979). In India, a similar shift has occurred, with business-linked candidates increasingly challenging the dominance of the traditional lawyer-farmer class (Verniers, 2018).

The social backgrounds of elected representatives inevitably shape their perspectives, influencing both their normative values and policy priorities (Smith, 1979). For instance, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has significantly broadened its support base, attracting groups of voters who had previously aligned with other parties or remained disengaged, particularly lower castes, rural communities, and women (Kumar & Gupta, 2019). This wider electoral reach has allowed the BJP to project itself as more than the traditional “Brahmin-Bania” party, presenting instead the image of a broad-based organisation that claims to represent all sections of Indian society (Kumar & Gupta, 2019).

The representation in the Lok Sabha can be examined through four analytical lenses: gender, constitutional category, age, and education.

Gender- This perspective focuses on the proportion of male and female Members of Parliament (MPs). The underrepresentation of women in India’s lower house has been a longstanding concern and is frequently debated in academic and policy circles. Central to this discourse is the Women’s Reservation Bill, introduced in the late 1990s, which proposed reserving one-third of seats in the parliament and state assemblies for women—a reform that has faced both strong advocacy and resistance (Parmaar, 2020).

Constitutional Category- The constitutional lens classifies MPs according to reservation status under the Indian Constitution: General (Gen), Scheduled Castes (SC), and Scheduled Tribes (ST). SC and ST seats are allocated in

proportion to their share of a state’s population, as determined by delimitation, most recently updated in 2008 (Election Commission of India, 2008) (Vaishnav and Hinton, 2019). Reapportionment reshapes representation by recalibrating both the state population shares and the number of reserved seats. Historical demands for such provisions reflect the efforts of marginalised groups to secure adequate representation and autonomy in governance (Ambagudia, 2019).

Age- This dimension examines the distribution of MPs across age groups, typically 25–40, 41–55, 56–70, and above or equal to 70 years. The average age of MPs has steadily increased—from 46.5 years in the first Lok Sabha to 57.5 years in the study compared to India’s median age of 27.8 years (Census of India, 2011). This widening gap highlights generational imbalances between citizens and their representatives (Theballot.in 2024).

Education- The education lens categorises MPs by their formal qualifications, ranging from below matriculation to doctoral degrees. The 18th Lok Sabha is notable for having no illiterate members. According to the Association for Democratic Reforms, 19 percent of MPs reported education between classes 5 and 12, while the overwhelming majority declared graduate or postgraduate qualifications. This profile reflects a shift towards higher levels of educational attainment among elected representatives (Dwivedi, 2024).

In the existing literature, there is limited information regarding the composition of the 18th Lok Sabha term which captures gender, age, constitutional category, education and profession. This study attempts to fill this gap by highlighting information from the current Lok Sabha term. The aim is to provide a clear, data-based picture of people’s representation in the parliament.

METHODOLOGY

Research Aim

The aim of the present study is to formulate the profile of the 18th Lok Sabha Term by analysing the members' composition across demographic factors, such as age, gender, constitutional category, education, and profession. This study seeks to provide a true picture of representation and diversity by analysing the current composition of the government. This study analyses secondary data available on the official website of Lok Sabha.

Data Collection and Sample

The data for this study were collected manually from the official Lok Sabha website (National Informatics Centre, 2023), which provides details about all Members of Parliament, such as their name, party, constituency, state, membership status, age, gender, educational qualifications, party affiliation, and the term they belong to. The sample includes all MPs from the current Lok Sabha term, making it large and reliable. Each data entry was compiled carefully to ensure consistent and accurate information. Once the data-set was formulated, a thorough check was performed to ensure that no values were missing. After this, data analysis was carried out using frequency distributions and graphical representations on Google sheets due to its user-friendly interface.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the 18th Lok Sabha election were announced on June 4, 2024 and representatives were chosen from all 543 constituencies. In the 18th Lok Sabha, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) held the most seats, with 240. The Indian National Congress (INC)

comes next with 99 seats, followed by the Samajwadi Party with 37. Overall, candidates from 41 parties were elected compared to 36 parties in 2019. National parties together hold 346 seats (64%), state parties have 179 seats (33%), while unrecognised parties won 11 seats, and independents secured 7. In the 18th Lok Sabha, 62 Members of Parliament (MP) had earlier been Lok Sabha members, and 16 had served in Rajya Sabha. Of these, two MPs had already completed seven terms in Lok Sabha.

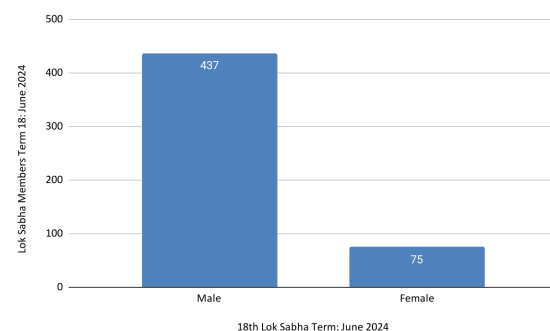


Figure 1: Graphical representation of gender ratio in current Lok Sabha Term.

In figure 1, we can observe that there are far more male than female representatives in the Lok Sabha. Of all members, 85% were male and 15% were female. Even though a Women Reservation Bill has been passed, wherein one-third of the seats will be reserved for females, there is still a vast gap in representation. Ranjan (2025) highlights how women's leadership acts as a catalyst for advocating systematic reforms and inclusive governance. Therefore, there needs to be more representation of women in Lok Sabha.

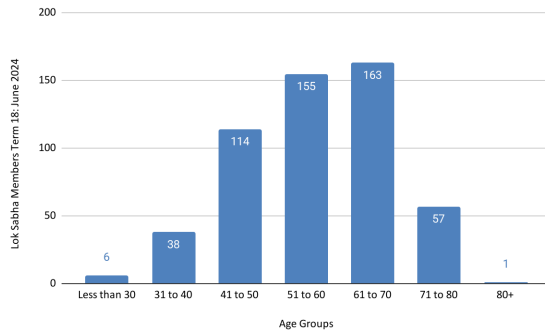


Figure 2: Graphical representation of age distribution in the current Lok Sabha Term.

In figure 2, the majority of the members are in middle to older age brackets. The largest group is 61 to 70 years old with 163 members and comprises around 30%, followed by 155 members aged 51 to 60 approximately 29%. The average age of the current generation is 56 years. Approximately 59% of the members belonged to the age bracket of 51-70 years. It can also be seen that 114 i.e. 21% members were in the age group of 41-50 years. Younger leaders are rare, with only six members under the age of 30 (1%) and 38 (7%) under the age of 40. There was only one member over 80 years old (close to 0%). This shows that the parliament consists of older representations. India has one of the largest young populations; however, older politicians majorly influence legislative decisions. The under-representation of young leaders raises concerns about inclusivity and democratic legitimacy (Patel and Thirupathi, 2025).

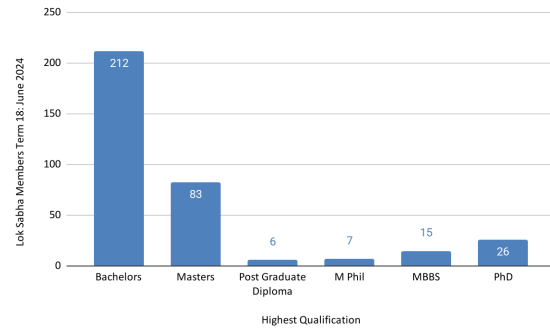


Figure 3: Graphical representation of age distribution in the current Lok Sabha Term.

In figure 3, about 39% (212) of members hold a bachelor's degree and 15% (83) have a master's degree, while higher studies are less common, with only 5% (26) being PhD holders, 3% (15) being doctors, and 1% (7) having MPhil. Most members pursued only graduation, and a small number of representatives pursued higher studies. Jaiswal (2025) investigated whether representatives' higher educational attainment improves constituency outcomes and legislative performance by comparing members with a master's degree and members without a master's degree. The study found that formal education improved development and legislative efforts. Therefore, a well-educated leadership strengthens democratic institutions and improves governance.

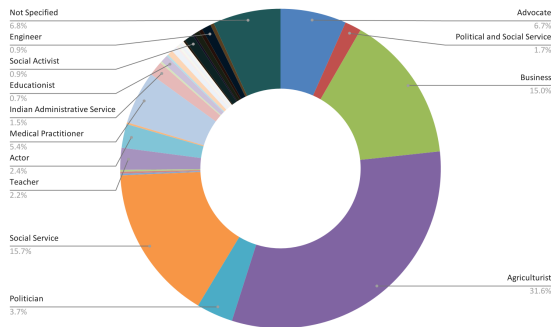


Figure 4: Graphical representation of occupational profile of the current Lok Sabha Term.

Land or agriculture-related occupations were the most common professions, as shown in figure 4. About one in three MPs were agriculturists (32%), whereas social services and business accounted for 15% respectively. The smaller groups from different professions included lawyers (7%), doctors (5%), politicians (4%), and teachers (2%). A small fraction are engineers, activists, or other fields. It is clear that agriculture and service-related roles dominate. The Indian political system continues to draw heavily on social services and agrarian backgrounds. However, there is a change in dynamics with the presence of business-people, doctors, lawyers and teachers.

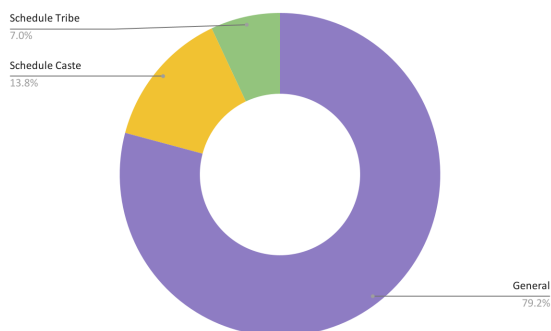


Figure 5: Graphical representation of constitutional category in the current Lok Sabha Term.

Figure 5 represents the constitutional category in the 18th Lok Sabha Term. Approximately 79% of MPs belong to the general category, comprising roughly four out of five seats. Approximately 14% belong to Scheduled Castes (SC), and 7% are Scheduled Tribes (ST). This highlights the under-representation of SC and ST in Lok Sabha even after having reserved seats. This skewed representation raises concerns about the representation of other constitutional categories in the government.

The present study highlights the demographic patterns of the current Lok Sabha Term. Men form the majority in Lok Sabha whereas women remain a minority, indicating an enormous gender gap. Another finding was the over-representation of older MPs and under-representation of younger leaders. In terms of educational attainment, the majority of members are graduates, whereas only a small number have higher degrees, such as PhDs. Agriculture-related are the most common occupation, followed by social service and business. Almost four out of five MPs are from the general category, whereas scheduled castes and scheduled tribes have fewer seats.

This work provides a critical analysis of the composition of the 18th Lok Sabha by analysing trends of representation by education, occupational background, gender, constitutional category, and age. This highlights the inclusivity and expertise of the government. The findings have implications for electoral reform, party-level candidate selection policy, and disputes regarding the extension of political participation and to guide judgments concerning parliamentary capacity. However, there are a few limitations to the study, it is limited to the short term as the data of other terms were not analysed. Hence, it cannot detect long-term changes in the trends. The data were

accumulated manually from the official Lok Sabha website and are based on member-stated data, which may include errors; profession and education were collapsed into too broad categories to discard information, and alternative identities or qualifications could have collapsed in coding. In addition, the study offers descriptive representation—who MPs are, but not substantive representation, what they do; hence, it cannot directly relate member characteristics with legislative behaviour.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study is to understand representation in the Lok Sabha in terms of gender, age, education, constitutional category and occupation. The findings show that males are more in number in comparison to females. The age structure is skewed with most of the members belonging to the age category of 50-70 years old. The majority of the representatives are graduates with a large share of the members practicing agriculture and business as their main occupation. Furthermore, the highest number of seats are held by candidates from the general category. Hence, an imbalance exists in the representation of the people in Lok Sabha. Future studies can explore how these patterns have changed over time by comparing profiles from past Lok Sabha terms. They can also study the role of regional factors and political parties in candidate selection.

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