

**NATIONAL CONVENTION  
ON  
THE WOMEN REPRESENTATION  
BILL**

**ORGANISED BY**

**THE ALL INDIA MILLI COUNCIL, THE IDIAN ASSOCIATION OF MUSLIM SOCIAL  
SCIENTISTS, THE MUSLIM WOMEN'S WELFARE ORGANISATION, THE INSAN  
DOST COMMITTEE, THE PEOPLES' MOVEMENT OF INDIA, THE DR B.R.  
AMBEDKAR SEWA DAL AND THE SAMAJIC NIYAY MORCHA HELD AT THE  
GHALIB ACADEMY, NEW DELHI ON 27.6.2009**

**RESOLUTIONS**

1. While the House welcomes the reservation for women in the Parliament and State Assemblies, it disapproves its passage in the present form as it is likely to mar the prospects of a participative, distributive and inclusive justice and equality for all the women folk of India including the women belonging to the dalit, minorities specially the Muslim women and the most backward of the backward women like nomads.
  
2. This House feels strongly that the Bill, if passed into an Act in its present form, will further strengthen and empower the already educated and economically empowered ladies and upper caste/class Hindu ladies and those who come, with some exceptions, from political families as daughters, wives etc of male

political leaders. It is genuinely feared that the proposed Act will utterly fail in bringing the dalit, minority and OBC women into the Parliament, unless there is separate reservation for including the excluded, neglected and deprived classes, caste, regions and communities. As a constitutional imperative the 'equals' and the 'unequals' ought to be treated as two separate groups and ought not to be mingled together qua reservation in the Parliament and the State Assemblies.

3. The House strongly feels and recommends to the Central Government that there must be a provision for sub-quota within quota for the dalit women, minority women and other most backward women. This is necessary to make the constitutional mandate of the equality principle enshrined under Article 14, 15 and 16 of the Constitution of India a living reality.
4. The House again strongly feels that the Muslims have been persistently under-represented from the first to the fifteenth Lok Sabha to the extent of about 50 per cent, with periodic and regional variations. In State Assemblies their level of deprivation has been above 50 per cent, again with regional and periodic variations. This has happened in spite of the solemn assurance given to minorities, especially Muslims in the Constituent Assembly by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in May 1949, while scrapping the Draft Articles 242 and 244, which provided for population-based reservation of seats for minorities

under joint electorate, that even without such Constitutional safeguards, minorities would be ensured due share in legislature. Pandit Nehru called this promise “an act of faith above all for the majority community because they will have to show after this that they can behave to others in a generous, fair and just way. Let us live upto that faith”. This promise, however, remained unfulfilled, largely owing to a) under-nomination of Muslims by all political parties; b) first-past-the-post system and c) territorial distribution of Muslims. It is a pity that no review of Muslim under-representation was ever undertaken by any Committee on electoral reforms. The same reasons that justify reservation for women, i.e., recourse to special measures for under-represented segments of society to make democracy inclusive, justify special measures for underrepresented minority communities, dalits and OBCs. It follows from this that Muslim women, whose community representation is already less than 50% of their due share must get a proper quota as per their share in populace to reduce community under-representation. Likewise, other minority women and dalit and OBC women must also get their due share as per their numerical strength.