

BREAKING SILENCE, BUILDING POWER

A history of women's activism and the institutionalisation of rights in post-independence India.

From the Rolling Pin protests of Mumbai to the halls of Parliament: Tracking the Ripple Effect of Grassroots Activism.

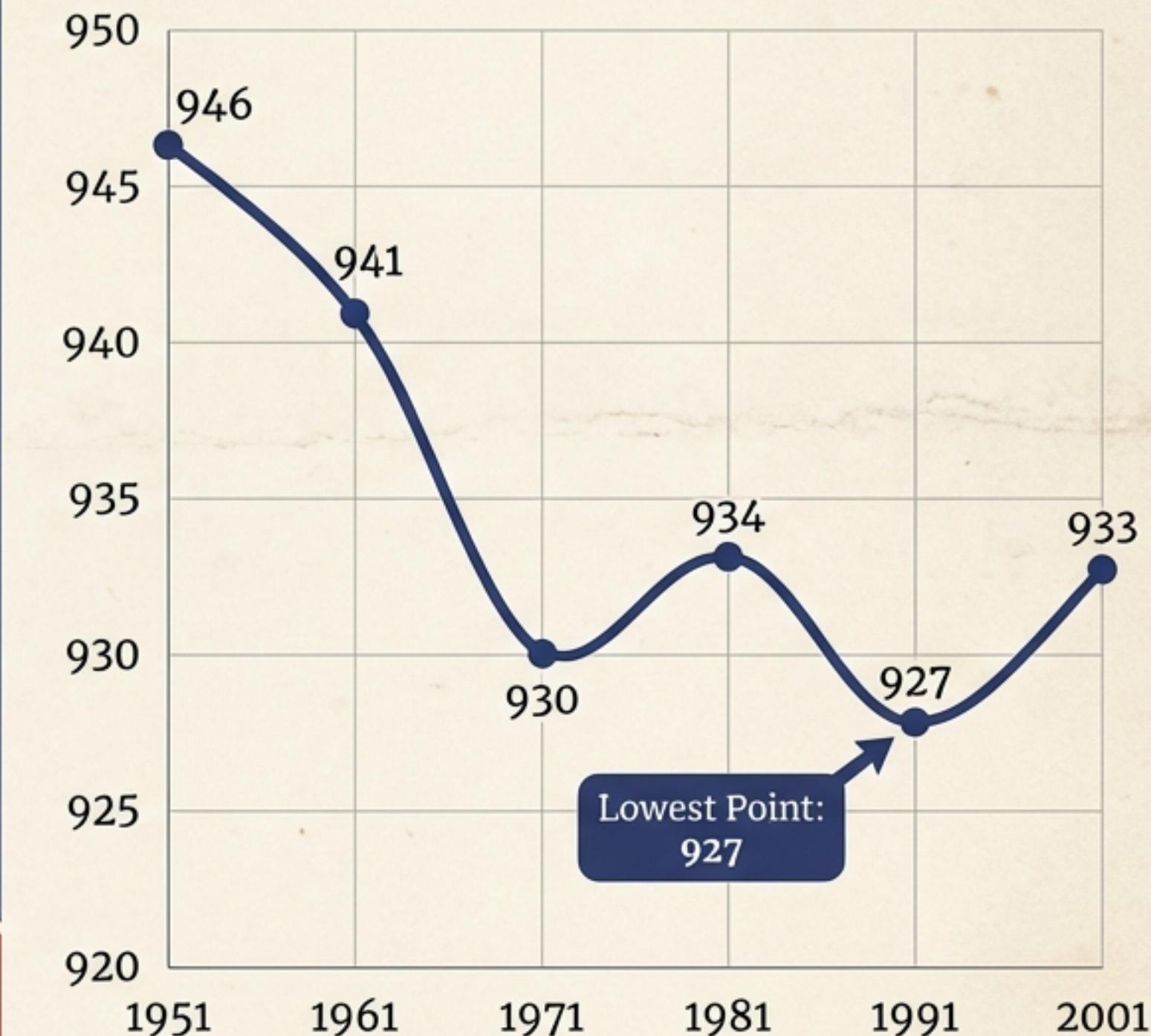


THE SILENT CRISIS OF THE MISSING WOMEN

Even as women participated extensively in the freedom struggle, the post-independence demographic reality revealed a deepening crisis rooted in a persistent male-centred mentality.



Sex Ratio (Women per 1,000 Men):
1951–2001



THE ROLLING PIN REBELLION (1972)

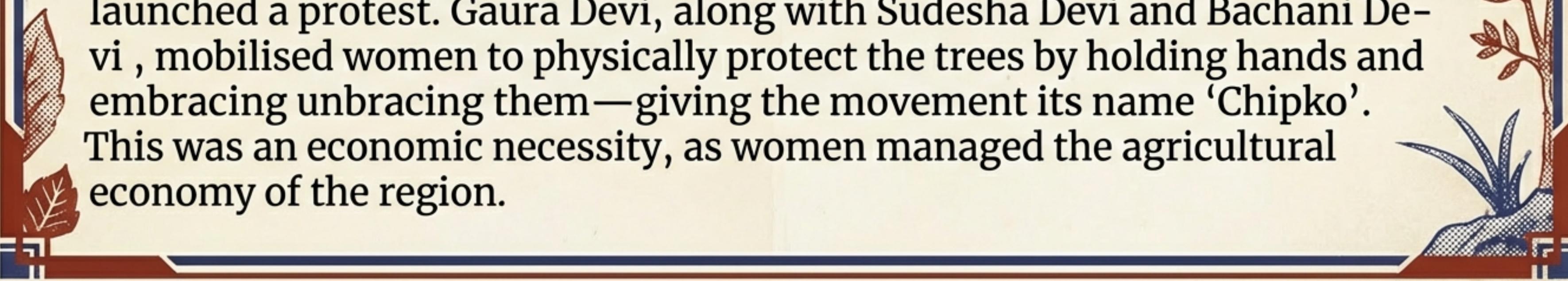
In 1972, facing a scarcity of Diwali supplies (oil, ghee, rava, maida) and expensive kerosene, women in Mumbai united under socialist leader Mrinal Gore.

The Demonstration: The Laatne Morcha. Women came together brandishing their rolling pins... The movement met with success and the public got a glimpse of the united power of women.



ENCIRCLING THE FOREST: THE CHIPKO MOVEMENT

In 1973, to stop trees in the Himalayan foothills from being cut for commercial use, activists Chandiprasad Bhat and Sunderlal Bahuguna launched a protest. Gaura Devi, along with Sudesha Devi and Bachani Devi, mobilised women to physically protect the trees by holding hands and embracing them—giving the movement its name 'Chipko'. This was an economic necessity, as women managed the agricultural economy of the region.



FROM LITERACY TO PROHIBITION (1992)



Literacy Programme:

Women read 'Sitama Katha' (Sita's Story) about a woman banning alcohol.

The Spark:

Three youths in Dubuganta village (Andhra Pradesh) drown while inebriated.

The Action:

Inspired by the story and the tragedy, women

the closure of arrack shops.

The Result: The movement spreads statewide, forcing the government to adopt a strict anti-alcohol policy.

1975: THE YEAR THE WORLD WATCHED



**UN International
Women's Year:
Peace,
Development, Equality.**



Committee on the Status of Women:
Chaired by Dr Phulrenu Guha, this committee conducted the first **comprehensive survey on wages, mortality, and the social position of women.**

Cultural Awakening:
'Mulgi Jhaali Ho' (Street Play) and 'Streemuktichi Lalkari' (Songs).

A NETWORK OF SOLIDARITY



1980: The **Akhil Bharatiya Janavadi Mahila Sanghatana** is established to fight dowry and domestic abuse nationwide.

REFRAMING FAMILY AND MARRIAGE LAW

THE 1952 ACTS



Recognised rights to alimony, 'Streedhan' (property), and divorce. Polygamy made illegal.

FAMILY COURTS (1984)



Established for quick resolution of domestic issues. Prioritised 'mutual understanding over witnesses' and 'counsellors over lawyers'.

THE SHAH BANO CASE (1985)



Supreme Court ruled in favour of alimony for Shah Bano Begum. Following backlash, Parliament passed the 'Muslim Women's Act' regarding rights on divorce.

CONFRONTING CRUELTY: DOWRY AND SATI

THE REALITY GAP

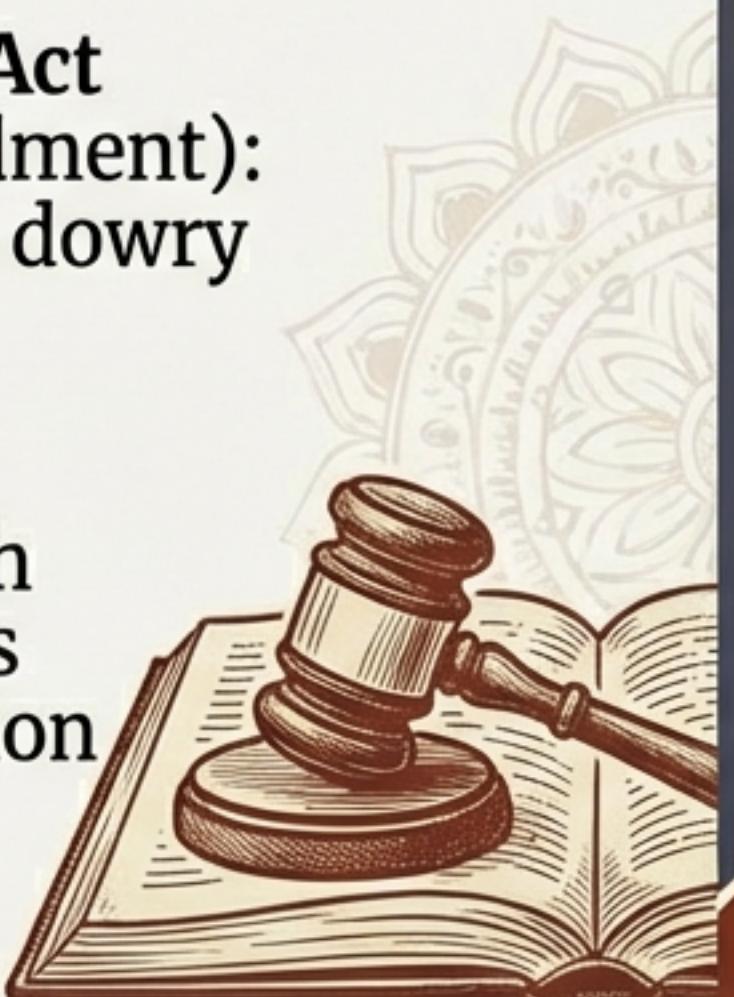
Dowry Deaths:
2,209 (1988) ->
5,377 (1993).

Common causes:
'Sari pallu catches
fire' or 'touches
fire' or 'Slips into
well'.

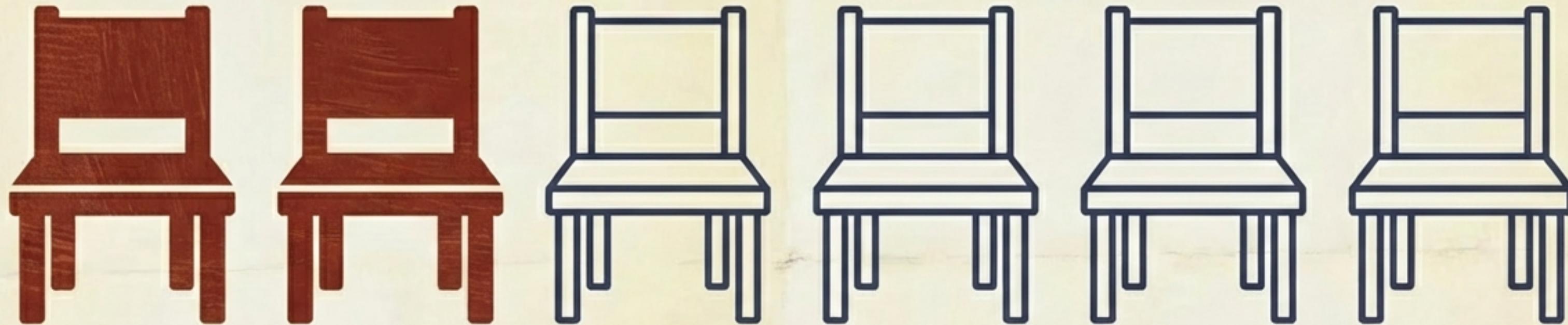


THE LEGISLATIVE RESPONSE

- **Dowry Prohibition Act** (1961 & 1984 Amendment): Made giving/taking dowry a criminal offence.
- **Sati Prevention Act** (1988): Enacted with stringent provisions following the coercion of Roop Kanwar into committing Sati in 1987.



THE EMPTY CHAIR NO MORE



73rd & 74th Constitutional Amendments

- Reservation of 33% of seats for women in Gram Panchayats, Zilla Parishads, and Municipalities.
- Includes leadership roles like Sarpanch, Chairman, and Mayor.
- Note: Maharashtra and 15 other states have raised this reservation to 50%.

LEADING THE STATE: WOMEN CHIEF MINISTERS

SUCHETA KRIPALANI (UP)	NANDINI SATPATHY (Odisha)	
JAYALALITHA (TN)	MAYAWATI	VASAWADI (UP)
KAUR RAJE (Rajasthan)	MAMATA BANERJEE (WB)	
RABRI DEVI (Bihar)	ANANDIBEN PATEL (Gujarat)	
SHEILA DIKSHIT (Delhi)	SUSHMA SWARAJ (Delhi)	
MEHBOOBA MUFTI SAYEED (Kashmir)	UMA BHARATI (MP)	
RAJENDRA KAUR BHATTAL (Punjab)	SHASHIKALA KAKODKAR (Goa)	
SAYEEDA ANWAR TAIMUR (Assam)	JANAKI RAMACHANDRAN (TN)	

ERADICATING UNTOUCHABILITY: SCHEDULED CASTES

CMVA:

- Freedom.
- Equality.
- Fraternity.
- Social Justice.



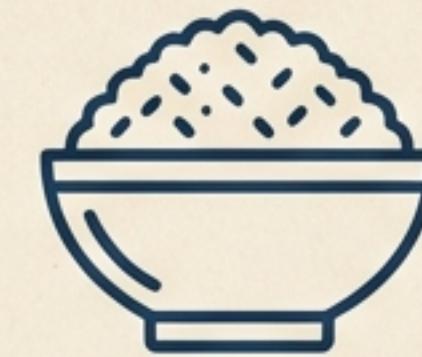
ARTICLE 17: BANNED THE PRACTICE OF UNTOUCHABILITY.

Action: Reservations granted in education and jobs to facilitate development and redress social backwardness.

THE STRUGGLE OF THE REMOTE: SCHEDULED TRIBES



Geography & Economy:
Remote living, dependent
on forest produce, fields
on infertile hillsides.



Health: Malnutrition due
to poor diet and lack of
medical attention.



Action: Enumerated as
'Scheduled Tribes'
receiving representation
in law boards, education,
and government service.

FROM 'CRIMINAL' TO DE-NOTIFIED



The Transformation:

1. Curbs on movement lifted.
2. Reclassified as 'De-notified Tribes'.
3. Special government efforts for representation in education and the government sector.

A MOSAIC OF CULTURES

   **Minorities:** Groups defined by religion, language, or race.

    **Rights:** The Constitution grants rights to set up educational institutions to preserve unique language and culture.

Through the Human Rights Protection Act (1993) and the National Human Rights Commission, the circle of justice continues to widen, securing dignity for all.