

**LONG-TERM IMPACT OF FEMALE POLITICAL REPRESENTATION ON  
CHILD HEALTH: EVIDENCE FROM TN LOCAL ELECTION**

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*A project report submitted  
in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the degree of,*

**MASTERS OF ARTS  
IN  
GENERAL ECONOMICS**



*May 2024*

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## ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the long-term impact of female political reservations on child health outcomes in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. Using data from the 2011 local government elections combined with public service provision data from 2020, the analysis examines how increased women's representation affects the proportion of underweight children under age 6, immunization rates for children under 3, and anaemia prevalence among young children aged 6-59 months. Interquantile range regressions at the block level show that higher female representation leads to increased dispersion in immunization rates but insignificant effects on the other child health measures. However, an individual-level analysis using National Family Health Survey 5 data reveals that in middle-class households, greater female political leadership positively impacts child immunization status, but only when public health services are adequately provided. The results suggest that while raising women's political voice can yield benefits for child health, realizing the full potential requires complementary investments in health infrastructure and service delivery. The paper highlights the importance of an enabling institutional environment to translate increased descriptive representation of women into substantive developmental gains.

**Keywords:** Quotas, Child health, Development, Immunization

**JEL Codes:** H410, I180, P250