

# “My political TRP would be known when I fight elections”

AFP PHOTO/RAVEENDRAN

**Editorial Director Prabhu Chawla** speaks to **BJP Mahila Morcha president and Rajya Sabha MP Smriti Irani**, days before her elevation to the Upper House was announced, on ETV's *Sachchi Baat*. *Excerpts from the interview:*

**What all you have done till now as BJP's Mahila Morcha's head?**

I have completed one year at the helm on June 24, organised programmes all over the country and involved 10 lakh women. We fought the case in the Supreme Court regarding permanent commissions for women in the army.

**Morcha means doing dharnas, fighting.**

That also we have done; my wish was to see that our work is not limited to dharnas and morchas, but go a step ahead. Hence, when women in uniform were fighting it out, we thought that we should be a part of the solution.

**Have you done morchas on the road, or is it that you have got used to air-conditioned environment?**

No, we have done *andolans* (protests) on the road and also fought legal battles.

**Talking of morchas, which issues were the ones that you fought it out with the government?**

The government gave us many issues, be they inflation or law and order.

**What have women got to do with your male-dominated party?**

Who told you this?

**Who is the woman general secretary in your party? There is only one.**

The BJP is the first political party in this country who understood women's issues and said that we would not



only stand by the issue of giving 33 per cent reservation to women in parliament, but also change the party's constitution and give them reservation in the party. Even then you say that we don't care about women.

**Many promises have been made, but what after that?**

Let me update you on this issue also. Vasundhara Rajeei has also been the general secretary in the party and now Kiran Maheshwari is the general secretary.

**How many general secretaries do you have?**

Now the slots which are empty...

**You have 32 Pradesh Adyaksh (state presidents). How many of**

**them are women?**

There is no woman state president.

**They are not considered, don't qualify, or because they are not considered fit for the post in your party....**

I feel that that might not be qualifying the qualification parameters set by Prabhu Chawla. But in our states, the presidents are elected in a systematic and democratic way. The basis of which is to elect a good president who is capable, we don't see whether the person is a man or a woman.

**You have enjoyed high TRPs on television, but is your political TRP good?**

I don't know. I had fought elections last in 2004. How much my political TRP is, would be known when I fight elections.

**Why couldn't your party do well in the recent Assembly elections?**

In Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, there is need to develop our organisational strength, and we knew this beforehand. In West Bengal, we had the same challenge and we knew there was a wave in Mamtaji's favour, a desire in the people's minds that they have to anyhow defeat the Left and put them out of power. In spite of that, we gave a tough fight there. As far as Assam is concerned, what we had expected, and hence projected, we did not get that much success. But...

**What are you going to do in reality besides politics?**

When I spoke to you the last time, I had only worked in Hindi, Gujarati theatre and television. Now when I am sitting in front of you, I have done Bengali and Telugu films. But the main focus of my life is politics.