WOMEN'S POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT AND LEADERSHIP: PEDAGOGICAL CHALLENGES

Content

ABSTRACT

The political empowerment of women for leadership roles is premised on the fundamental principles of equality between women and men; right to full development of potentials; and right to self-representation and self-determination. The issues critical in effectively addressing the question of women's political empowerment and leadership are: a) gendered identities and practices that constrict their participation in political leadership roles; and b) persistent institutional inadequacies that deter women's access to power. The effective participation of women leaders depend on a number of factors, viz., access to resources of and opportunities for development, strong capabilities built through education, information, skills and the freedom to exercise choice and action. The pedagogy for empowering women politically for leadership roles aims to enhance the capacity of women leaders to understand, organise and act upon their needs, priorities, and makes demands upon the system for better service delivery. The paper discusses the issues in engendering governance leadership and the ways the capacity building of women leaders could enhance their agency. It also examines pedagogical challenges while arranging continuing education for political empowerment and leadership.

Introduction

The discourse on governance is intricately woven around the role of citizens in influencing the forces that govern their lives. Agency, engagement and participation make governance inclusive. Inclusive governance entails equal participation of both women and men in political decision-making processes. Do women participate equally with men in policy and decision-making bodies? Do they actually exercise their leadership?

This paper, by focusing on representation and participation of women leaders (the elected representatives) in local bodies, seeks to present: a) the issues in engendering governance leadership; and b) the ways capacity building of women leaders could enhance their agency. It also examines pedagogical challenges therein while arranging continuing education for political empowerment and leadership.

The paper has five sections. Section II looks at the issues in decentralisation and engendering of governance leadership. Section III highlights the nature of women leadership across the three terms of panchayats and municipalities. Section IV reflects on the factors that exclude women from exercising their leadership efficiently. Section V briefly shares the project on 'Women's Political Empowerment and Leadership' (WPEL) of PRIA. While Section VI explores the pedagogical

challenges for building engendered governance leadership, Section VII concludes the discussion

Decentralisation and Engendering Governance Leadership

Decentralised governance enlarges the space for people's representation in matters of governance and helps moving decisions closer to people. In India, several initiatives have been taken, since the 1950s and 1960s, to promote democratic decentralisation. The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts (CAAs) have marked a watershed in the history of governance in the country. The CAAs introduced Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) as a distinct third tier of government. They envisaged PRIs and ULBs as being responsive to the needs and aspirations of the local community, where informed and inclusive participation of all citizens, across caste, class and gender in the planning and administration would ensure its accountability to the local community.

Gender is a salient factor in participation and representation in democratic decentralized governance. The CAAs enabled 33 per cent representation of women in panchayats. While the Article 243G and 243W of the Constitution empowered the state legislatures to endow panchayats/municipalities with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as institutions of self-government, the provision of reservation for Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and women (Article 243D and 243T) gave an opportunity to them to hold formal positions of power and, in turn, participate in the decision-making process. The political restructuring and affirmative action aimed to build a critical mass of women leadership in the decision-making, which in turn would make a meaningful difference to the outcomes of governance.

Engendered governance implies explicit acknowledgement of equality goals. It promotes inclusive governance through redistribution of power, resources and opportunities in favour of women; gender equitable and gender-sensitive governance structures in terms of numerical presence in decision-making bodies; roles in decision-making and assertion of authority and power in decision-making processes. Implicit in women's increased political participation is the idea of leadership. Engendered governance leadership implies that women leaders are in a position to influence others and provide cohesive and coherent direction to accomplish particular mission and tasks. They articulate the needs and priorities related to rights, entitlements and basic services' provision of their constituency; participate in social planning and policy development and act upon them. But do women elected representatives (WERs) actually participate equally with men in local self-governance institutions?

Women in Leadership Positions

The nature of political participation of women in PRIs and ULBs across the three terms of elections reveals a distinct difference. In the first term, the community was suddenly exposed to conflicting sets of expectations. Large numbers of women got elected to the political seats for the first time ever with no precedence or role models. 'Governance' was new to them. As elected representatives, women lacked knowledge, skills and capacities to govern. The family members, especially the male members, took over and provided guidance on governance-related matters. As a result, women stepped back and behaved as mere token representatives (dummies) not finding the space or opportunity to make their voices and opinions heard (PRIA 1999).

In the second term, the community by and large had accepted the fact of women in leadership roles. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the government were more prepared with training programmes for WERs on the functioning of the PRIs from day one. Women were redefining the very essence of leadership in terms of openness about the available resources, decision-making and implementation of schemes in their own constituencies/wards. In many instances, they used their elected authority to address several critical issues such as children's education, drinking water facilities, family planning facilities, hygiene and health, quality of healthcare and village development such as pucca roads and electricity in their panchayat areas. They also brought alcohol abuse and domestic violence on to the agenda of political campaigns (Nambiar and Bandyopadhyay 2004). At the same time, there have been evidences of backlash against them. WERs have often faced serious problems in performing their duties. There are stories of the violations of their rights, exploitation, violence and harassment too.

The third term of women's participation in PRIs and ULBs has witnessed increased visibility of women leadership. Women leaders are now exposed to processes and mystic of governance. Yet they lack effective participation base. Contrary to the presupposition that decentralisation would critically increase women's participation in governance, the opportunity for leadership and participation in public forum has not provided women a base to participate effectively. The crucial questions that emerge in this context are: Can women exercise leadership? How do they see themselves as leaders? What processes strengthen or inhibit?

Agency of Women Leaders: Factors that Exclude

The political participation of women is yet to be seen and realised by the society in general. Quota, therefore, doesn't appear to be the panacea of women's under-representation in politics. The experiences of the last three decades of PRIs and

ULBs have repeatedly shown that numbers did not necessarily meant inclusion. Women were deliberately excluded from the political process either through overt forces or through covert strategies. The critical barriers affecting women's political empowerment and leadership have been: a) gendered identities and practices, which constrict their participation in political leadership roles; and b) institutional inadequacies, which deters them to exercise their agency.

1. Gendered Identities and Practices

(a) Domestication and seclusion ethics

A noteworthy factor affecting women's non-agency in the political processes is *unequal gender relations*. Gender relations and power distributions between the sexes in both the private (personal) and public spheres create gender inequalities. Unequal gender relations, reproduced across the range of inter-related institutions such as household, community, market and state, mediate the construction of gender identities and synergistically determine the capacities to exercise independent agency. Such relationships determine and influence the ways resources, roles and responsibilities are allocated; values are assigned and power is mobilised. Without any sense of power whatsoever, their participation in decision-making is generally minimal not only in political sphere, but also at home and within the community.

The private - public divide associated with women and men have always hindered women to negotiate in the public domain. The private domain associated with household, reproductive work and femininity, whereas the public domain is associated with political authority, public decision-making, productive work and masculinity. Women are either being criticised for their inadequacies or patronised by men.

Autonomy of women in family/household also influences their status and ability to participate in governance. Development policies often conceptualise altruist, conflict-free, harmonious households where production, income and consumption are equally shared. Empirical studies, on the contrary, have shown that far from being a unit where all resources and benefits are pooled and shared equitably, the use of resources and labour, distribution and output have to be constantly negotiated within the households. Intra-household relations are often conflictive. The bargaining power is derived from the options available to household members, the perceptions of contributions by members to the household prosperity and the degree to which members identify their self-interests within their personal well-being. Although the private domain of household is typically associated with women, men are held responsible for the welfare and safety of all members. Women's bargaining power at the household is restricted typically due to the lack of access and control over

resources, no autonomy in decision making, low self-esteem, low skills and education, restricted physical mobility and eventually less power as compared to men.

Mobility is an essential factor for participating effectively in governance. Elected representatives need to interact with the agents of the administration or state institutions, all of which are located outside the private spaces of their home. The capacity for mobility plays a key role in determining women's location in politics because it determines their access to resources and opportunities and the actual ability to engage in mobilisation. For women, the meanings and valences assigned to mobility are linked with the perimeters of domestication (Tambiah 2003).

With no formal educational qualifications, being deficient in information, skills and inexperience, they are dependent on men both within household and the institutions of local self-governance in matters relating to governance. Men exploit their naivety to their advantage. The social image of women as housewives renders the work of many women leaders invisible.

The lack of awareness and low education/illiteracy leads to low self-image. Internalised low self-esteem further makes women passive, dependent on men in matters relating to governance.

(b) Masculinity of political processes

Within the family, the patriarchal mindset refuses to allow women to be active in the political realm. Hence, women act as dummy candidates and are often overpowered by the male members. They are made to believe that allowing their husbands to take over the political reins from them is only natural and it is in their own and the interest of the community that they allow the male members of their family take decisions on their behalf. Women face constraints of physical mobility as they have to visit panchayat samiti offices at block headquarters; men 'offer' to do their job, instead of creating the possibility of safe mobility.

In the public realm, processes of governance are heavily skewed in favour of men. Within the community and political parties as well, there have been instances of direct backlash for women candidates who are vocal, extrovert and exercise their independent decision making powers. They meet resistance, particularly from upper-caste males, and are often subjected to violence, threats, attempts of bribery, charges of incompetence, no-confidence motions, and false rumours (Nussbaum et al. 2003; Sisodia 2005; Kalpagam and Arunachalam 2006). When women make an effort to assert themselves, local government functionaries (like panchayat secretary) prefer to deal with the men folk, instead of the WERs. Thus, not only do men in the feudal and patriarchal society undermine women's capacity to function in public offices, the patriarchal nature of local administration reinforces a sense of worthlessness among these women. In connivance with other men and

functionaries, women sarpanches face proportionately higher incidence of no-confidence motions and are forcibly removed from elected offices. The ambivalence about their public role as elected representatives and dependency on male family members render their participation in governance meaningless. They function as 'add on', who came to politics only because of policy imperatives.

Indifference, vested interests, abusive language and non-cooperation of many male elected representatives constrained the ability of many women leaders to perform better. Consequently, they deliberately do not attend the meetings. These constraints have led to their being less informed on the issues related to governance.

More often than not women's agency is suppressed, either overtly or covertly by the interlocking of private and public patriarchy. The realm of power politics and gender insensitive political and bureaucratic cultures and trends make it difficult for women to exercise their political rights. While reported cases of violence against women in politics might be few, there are covert threats and structural impediments that dissuade or stop women from realising their full capabilities, prevent her from availing of her legal rights and exerting her leadership. It also inhibits women from mobilizing constituents and critically deliberating on policy choices from an engendered perspective.

One common expression of 'significant others' in the study has been *women are unfit for public life because it is essentially male in character*. Deeply ingrained gender relations construct women as those whose voice is unreliable. Mostly cast as wives, daughters and sisters under the care of men, they are not taken seriously as political agents.

(c) **Other intersecting hierarchies**

Other intersecting hierarchies such as class, caste, ethnicity, religion and rural/urban locations further complicate gender inequality in governance. In India, for example, women face hurdles posed by patriarchy, caste and class when they enter political domain. These factors play an influential role in determining the authority, power, resources, time and spaces of women. Women leaders often face constraints of patriarchal traditions and customs; consequently they are unable to take independent initiatives. Women from low caste groups, despite reservations, seldom wielded any real political power due to the strongly entrenched notions of caste and gender hierarchy (Anandhi 2002). Studies have also shown that WERs with no economic entitlements were often under the control of those who owned and controlled resources (usually males). Consequently, dependency curbed their independent decision-making powers (Niranjana 2002).

2. Institutional Inadequacies

(a) Instrumentalist organisational structure

Women's representation in local government structures does not automatically result in their informed and effective participation in them. Organisational resources steered towards quantitative targets, i.e., assuring numerical presence of women leaders in political deliberations. The local self-governance structures have by and large been 'add women' structure, without questioning the basic assumptions, strategic objectives or ways of working with women leaders. They are distantly related to institutional change for gender equality and broader social issues of rights.

The simplistic appeals for increased participation of women generally overlook the institutional inadequacies such as the timings of meetings, problems of quorum and procedures adopted for finalising development plans and projects, articulations of their priorities and issues in the meetings, the quality of deliberations and manipulation of discussions by dominant groups, rules for filing nominations and travel allowances, insensitivity to the constraints of physical mobility, violence and sexual harassment issues of WERs, etc. Consequently, women including the elected representatives rarely attend local body meetings and hardly ever articulate their priorities.

(b) Deterring policy imperatives

Policy imperatives are also deterrent factors. For instance, Rotation Policy demotivates women to participate in political processes. Women by and large contest only from reserved seats. They are not sure whether they would get a second chance to implement the lessons learnt from the general unreserved seats.

The policy on honorarium constricts their participation. Honorarium, for instance, is an important issue for elected representatives as they are putting in a major amount of time in the activities of panchayats/municipalities. As women leaders are mostly poor and are engaged in household subsistence activities, either in the field or in some income-generating work; attending meetings, visiting block-level officials or taking training implies loss of a day's wage.

The *policy of two-child* norm violates their right to participate as elected representatives. Several states have passed a provision prohibiting contestants to PRIs, if they have more than two children. Women bore the brunt of it. Many women (20 - 40 age group) were barred from contesting. There is an urgent need to seek a review of judgments of High Courts/Supreme Court in this regard. Now some state governments are thinking of requiring basic literacy as minimum qualification for contesting elections to PRIs; besides being unconstitutional, such provisions will further discriminate against women.

Higher proportion of women in rural India remains functionally illiterate today despite tall official claims to the contrary. As a result, a large proportion of elected women in PRIs have been illiterate. Men and government functionaries have used this as another pretext to usurp the authority of WERs. As a result, women are still largely marginalised and suppressed by the males in the political scenario.

(c) Deficit perspective in the capacity building training programmes

The needs of women leaders (elected representatives) are different from male elected representatives. Women leaders, compared to male leaders, are by and large first-generation leaders. Their capability building is, therefore, crucial. In keeping with the mandate of the Constitution, i.e., securing women's participation in local governance institutions, more attention must be paid to the training of women leaders. Women need to be politically enlightened not only about their rights and duties, but also about the nature of constitution, concept and relevance of local body administration and government policies and schemes. Training should enable them to act their agency. This implies that training interventions, in addition to imparting requisite functional skills, must also empower them to function in public space with determination. Institutionalised gender-based inequalities and pressures dis-empower them. Training interventions, besides orienting them to governance procedures and programmes and imparting requisite functional skills, should also need to underscore the importance of gender sensitisation. A gender transformative capacity building approach would contribute towards building gender-sensitive institutions where both women and men elected representatives, despite their different needs, priorities and aspirations contribute to development process.

Training for building capacities has a *deficit* perspective. Elected representatives lack the skills to govern, therefore need training. The underlying assumption is that once people acquire the skills, they will automatically use those skills. The training interventions with mere emphasis on orientation to procedures and programmes and imparting requisite functional skills are unlikely to change qualitatively the participation of women leaders. Gender component in training is missing. The emphasis by and large has been on giving training in technicalities of governance. Training has not addressed issues of unequal gendered power relations that generally constrain women's participation politically. Training focuses on professional development, to emphasise skill development; avoids behaviour, attitudes and personal empowerment issues. The change agents are actually not motivated to change the status quo.

Women's Political Empowerment and Leadership (WPEL)

PRIA initiated a project in 2008 on Women's Political Empowerment and Leadership (WPEL) to address the gaps in the education and training of women leaders for political roles in the institutions of local self-governance, both at urban and rural levels. It was premised on following three fundamental principles: a) equality between women and men; b) right to full development of potentials; and c) right to self-representation and self-determination.

The project assumed that women leaders are an effective interface for poor women to constructively deal with the panchayats and municipalities. They can provide a basis for collective action on gender needs in panchayats and municipalities and lobby for inclusion of women's interests in local bodies. While WERs have a political mandate of leadership as people's representatives, non-WERs from informal associations, self-help groups (SHGs) and community based organisations (CBOs) assume de facto leadership roles. The poor women in villages and urban slums find them more articulate and trust that they would speak on their behalf in the meetings at public forums. Women leaders from both the categories, when organised as collective, can contribute to greater agency of women in articulating and claiming rights. Organised as women network, they can provide a basis for collective action around both community and gender issues in panchayats and municipalities; and provide a basis for a wider level of advocacy and lobbying in defense of women's interests in local bodies.

Political empowerment was seen as providing women leaders the capabilities to articulate their needs and priorities clearly as well as negotiate from a position of strength and participate effectively in the working of panchayats and municipalities.

1. Underlying Principles

Amartya Sen urges to look at women as agents of change (Sen 2000). Agency is the ability to define and articulate needs and priorities and to act upon them. Female agency in political forum such as local self-governance institutions would mean women's political participation in decision-making to articulate their rights, entitlements and basic services provision. The project envisioned women leaders as members of the public who are proactive and effective participants in economic, social and political action. It also envisioned them as exercising agency to define and articulate the needs and priorities of their constituency for better service delivery; act, organise and make demands upon local bodies to respond to the concerns and priorities for improved services; take collective action around both wider community and gender needs; lobby for inclusion of women's interests in local bodies and change and/or influence policies and practices.

2. Scope

Women leaders in the WPEL project included current WERs, Ex-WERs, Non-WERs, who could be citizen leaders; members of CBOs such as women collectives, SHGs, etc. The project was implemented in Jehanabad district in the state of Bihar; Mahendragarh, Sonepat, Fatehabad and Sirsa districts in Haryana; Jaipur and Jhunjhunu districts in Rajasthan; and Ahmedabad and Sabarkantha districts in Gujarat. Women leaders in these states are severely constrained by the lack of access to critical resources such as information, education, skills; and the denial of opportunities and choices due to gendered roles and responsibilities.

The criteria for the identification of potential women leaders from elected representatives and women collectives (SHGs) and citizen leaders were set as below:

- Proactiveness in taking up community issues

- Working with community groups/larger political groups

- Willingness to contest elections

- Ability to articulate.

3. Pedagogy for Political Empowerment and Leadership

Clearly multilevel pedagogical strategies were required for building a holistic curriculum, capacities, perspectives, knowledge, practical skills and self-development, gender awareness, network, and agency of women leaders. The objective was to help women leaders initially become functional in their respective panchayats/municipalities and to facilitate their leadership for better public decisions, which reflect local priorities and greater accountability to the constituencies they represent.

The pedagogical strategies adopted, recognising the prior experience, knowledge and practical learning strengths of women leaders, had non-formal education approach to strengthen their leadership. The aim was to strengthen women's political leadership at local self-governance institutional level by providing opportunities for systematic learning and facilitating such learning; supporting on-going and sustained capacity enhancement to bring sensitivity of processes and systems to gender concerns. Accordingly, the measures adopted were:

a) **Curriculum development**: Based on an understanding of knowledge, skills, attitudes, which women leaders need, to enable them to carry out specific tasks and behave in certain ways.

b)   **Capacity building**: (e.g., perspective building in understanding issues of governance, gender and leadership and their inter-relationships, skill-building in networking, interfacing, communication—public speaking, campaign and advocacy etc.).

c)   **Mobilisation**: Mobilising women leaders to networking on a common issue, interest or concern and articulating their common concerns and priorities in the meetings to influence district-level planning and implementation.

d)   **Gender awareness**: Demystification of the social construction of gender would initiate the processes of change by enabling women leaders to make informed choices and exercise power.

e)   **Building agency of women leaders**: i.e., they participate and articulate their concerns and priorities in the meetings of gram sabha, gram panchayat, panchayat samiti, zilla parishad and municipality; they ensure that women's issues are reflected in the manifesto/agenda of contesting candidates in the forthcoming panchayat and municipal elections and they motivate and support potential women candidates to contest elections and groom them in finer details of political dynamics.

Training and education for political empowerment and leadership were a three-step process. They were:

a)   Local-level half a day or one day workshop in district for initial orientation on roles and responsibilities of women leaders in governance and identification and selection of women leaders for advanced level of education for political empowerment at state level.

b)   Three days' state-level residential workshop for potential leaders identified at the local level one-day workshop. The state-level workshop aimed to provide capacity building initiatives on the issues identified through training need assessment. The workshop also aimed to identify and select leaders for further advanced level of education for political empowerment of women leaders at national level.

c)   Five days' national level workshop (National School) for political empowerment. The core group of potential leaders (approx. 100) would emerge from this school.

Pedagogical Challenges

Capability building strategies for engendering leadership need to address the history of exclusion, marginalisation and invisibility of women voices, which prevent the actual exercise of power. It is clear from the discussion on women in leadership roles in the preceding sections that the gap between the formal recognition of right to participate and its actualisation remains large. Gender transformative training is required to bring about gender informed changes to societal, institutional and at the personal level. PRIA's project was a step towards addressing the educational needs of women; bringing gender-informed changes at the personal level. Pedagogical challenges encountered during the project are briefly delineated below.

1. **Designing a simple and graded intensive curriculum that interests the learners and not alienate them in structured learning situations**.

   Since the women are not familiar with structured learning opportunities, it was difficult to retain the concentration of learners for more than an hour at a stretch. The challenge lies in devising ways to retain their interest.

2. **Multicultural identities and fostering a shared identity and involvement.**

   Women leaders were from the specific contexts as cultural, religious, ethnic, linguistic, etc. The challenge was to understand and respect the visible diversities at the same time and to forge a shared identity and involvement in the programme as women leaders.

3. **Local language vs. common language — Hindi**

   Although local language was used till the state-level workshops, Hindi was used as a common language in the National School. This created some problems because though women from Gujarat knew Hindi, they found it difficult to interact in Hindi and hence could not participate effectively.

4. **Skills and knowledge base of peer educators**

   Peer educators (animators) had a key role in this project. They were expected to play varied roles. Their tasks included teaching, organising, counselling, evaluating, facilitating, coaching and mobilising women leaders. They also had administrative responsibilities such as fixing up meetings with the community, community based organisations, local elected bodies, and line departments to assess the progress in the

implementation of the project and identify the gaps. As the education for political empowerment meant awareness raising of women leaders (the adult learners) about the political processes and on political issues and developing competencies to exercise their leadership effectively, they needed to understand the new issues and trends on political processes within the perspective of adult education and lifelong learning, so that they could take up programmes that are action oriented, practical and relevant to the needs of women leaders directly.

The instrumentalist approach of peer educators to meet quantitatively the programme target than addressing the broader social issues of empowerment and rights presented conceptual and practical problems of educating the peer educators in the field.

5. Logistics of training programmes and exclusion of potential learners

Given the residential nature of the training programmes many of the potential candidates could not attend, because of household burdens and small children. As a result, the selection criteria had to be narrowed down to include those women leaders who were relatively free from familial responsibilities and were willing to attend the training, away from home. The question that arises in this context is that should more concentrated efforts be made at the community level so as to effectively minimise the mobility constraints of women.

Conclusions

Gendered inequalities in the distribution of access, resources and benefits reduces the capacity of women leaders and makes them dependent on significant others for their survival.

Getting women to govern implies that they have the necessary skills and capacities to access information, mobilise and manage resources and interact with multiple actors. Education for political roles would also empower them because then they would learn to articulate their needs and priorities clearly, as well as negotiate the unequal structures of power from a position of strength. As they are less educated, they require educational support for enhancing their knowledge and skills for playing efficiently the mandated political roles.

Women need to be politically enlightened not only about their rights and duties, but also about the nature of constitution, concept and relevance of local body administration and government policies and schemes. Education should enable WERs to act their agency. This implies that educational interventions, in addition to imparting requisite functional skills, must also empower them to function in public space with determination.

It is in this context that adult education as a tool for information dissemination, awareness raising, capacity building and translation of skills into practice, assumes significance to strengthen their public leadership roles. The scope moves beyond training in specific knowledge and skills to empowerment so that women gain self-confidence, self-esteem and become aware of their innate and acquired capacities and capabilities.

There is a need for long-term planning and strategising capacity building initiatives for their effective participation in grassroots politics. The capabilities of WERs can be fostered through education (Knowledge and training) and supportive social relationships. Women leaders need skills, knowledge, experience and supportive networks to be able to function efficiently.

Understanding the issue of women leadership through an adult education lens will have global relevance to women's greater social and political inclusion, sense of agency, place as citizens and leaders, as well as democracy and development.

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About PRIA

Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) is a global participatory research and training centre. PRIA's professional expertise and practical insights are utilised by other civil society groups, NGOs, governments, donors, trade unions, private business and academic institutions around the world.

Since its inception in 1982, PRIA has embarked on a set of initiatives focusing on empowerment of the poor and excluded. PRIA has consistently worked on issues of citizens' access to rights and entitlements, such as basic services in health, education and water in rural and urban areas; women's literacy and livelihood; forest rights of tribals; prevention of land alienation and displacement; and workers' occupational health and safety. In all its interventions, PRIA emphasises gender mainstreaming institutionally and programmatically. Its perspectives on participatory research generate innovative participatory methodologies.

The intensive field programmes of PRIA are currently located in the states of Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Rajasthan. In addition, through its network of partners, these interventions extend throughout India. PRIA is also involved in programmes in countries like Afghanistan, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Laos, Nepal, Philippines and Sri Lanka.