



Women in Local Governance

UN milestones in support of women

● **Between 70s and 80s**

- **UN Conference at Mexico in 1975**
- **UN decade for women (1976-85)**
- **UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) adopted in 1979**
- **UN Conference in Copenhagen in 1980**
- **UN Conference in Nairobi in 1985**

UN milestones in support of women

- **Between 90s and 2001**

- **UN Conference on Environment and Development in 1992**
- **UN Conference in Beijing in 1995**
- **UN General Assembly in 2000**
- **Millennium Peace Prize for Women in 2001**

Women's inclusion in the National Agenda

- **National Commission for Women in 1992**
- **Ratification of UN CEDAW in 1993**
- **National Policy for the Empowerment of Women in 1995**

Women's inclusion in the National Agenda

Schemes for Women

- **Support to Training and Employment Programme for women (STEP)**
- **Trade-Related Entrepreneurship Assistance and Development (TREAD)**
- **National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)**
- **Rural Women's Development and Empowerment Project**
- ***Indira Mahila Yojana* for holistic empowerment of women**

Women's Participation at Local Levels

- **Education**
 - **Village Education Committee** for primary education
 - ***Mahila Samakhya*** for women's literacy
- **Water and sanitation**
 - **WATSAN Committee**
- **Micro credit & Livelihood**
 - ***Mahila Sanghams***
- **Health**
 - **Saathin – Women Development Programme**
 - **Auxillary Nurse Midwife (ANM)**

Women on the NGO Agenda

- **Livelihood and entrepreneurship**
- **Literacy and non- formal education**
- **Sexual and Reproductive Health**
- **Maternal and Infant Mortality**
- **Sustainable Environment**
- **Financial Management**
- **Technical skill development**
- **Awareness of Women's Rights**

73rd & 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts

- **73rd Constitutional Amendment Act**
 - **Direct participation in rural local elected bodies: three tier *Panchayati Raj* institutions**
 - **Village, block and district level**
- **74th Constitutional Amendment Act**
 - **Direct participation in urban local elected bodies: municipalities**
 - **Municipal Towns, Municipal Councils and Municipal Corporations**

73rd & 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts

- **Acts envisioned**

- **A vibrant local body responsive to the needs and aspirations of the local community**
- **Informed and inclusive participation of all citizen, across caste, class and gender in the planning and administration**
- **Transparent & responsive governance accountable to the local community**

Opportunities for Political Empowerment

- **One-third of all seats reserved for women in all tiers of *panchayats* & municipalities**
 - **Bihar (50%); Tamil Nadu: 2 consecutive terms**
- **Supportive legislations**
 - **Mandatory Participation of women in the *Gram Sabha* quorum of 1/10th women's representation**
 - **Mandatory representation of women in the *panchayats* and municipal sub-Committees: education, health, social justice, infrastructure, works and management, finance and budget**

Women's Leadership in Local Governance (Study)

- **Objectives**

- **Collating experiences of women elected representatives**
- **Analysing these experiences from a gender perspectives**
- **Documenting actual practices of gender inequalities in Governance**

- **Domain**

- **Andhra Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttaranchal**

Study Findings (1)

● **Individual Profiles**

- **Majority above 35 years and married**
- **High levels of illiteracy**
- **Predominantly from agricultural backgrounds : land owners or agricultural labourers**
- **Majority contested for the first time primarily to fulfil family and community pressure**
- **Majority contested from the reserved seats**

Study Findings (2)

- **Women's Participation in local body meetings**
 - **Low attendance**
 - **Low participation**
 - **Token representation**
 - **Overwhelming male dominance**
 - **Women's issues not on agenda: priority concerns related to infrastructure**

Study Findings (3)

● **Constraints**

- **Internalized low self image and lack of leadership**
- **Inter locking of private and public patriarchy**
- **Household responsibilities**
- **Limited support structures**
- **Mobility restrictions**

Study Findings (3)

- **Constraints**

- **Lack of**
 - **access to resources and opportunities**
 - **institutional infrastructure**
 - **training and orientation**
- **Negative attitude of male elected representative and government functionaries**
- **Policy constraints: rotation of seats, no confidence motion, two child norm, honorarium**

Study Findings (4)

● **Strengths**

- **Political background of family**
- **Class and caste of elected representative**
- **Family infrastructure**
- **Supportive male colleagues and Government functionaries**
- **Mandatory participation**
- **Pro-active support from CBOs**

Study Findings (4)

● **Strengths**

- **Self confidence**
- **Ability to speak out in public**
- **Educational levels**
- **Organising skills**
- **Personal behaviour**
- **Independent identity**

Civil Society: Working Towards Efficient Leadership

- **Membership to community based organisations**
- **Easy entry into politics through caste associations and other groups**
- **Membership to political parties**
- **Gender mainstreaming strategies in governance mechanisms and institutions**

Civil Society: Working Towards Efficient Leadership

- **Raising issues of concern and priorities in *gram sabha* meetings**
- **Simplification and dissemination of information**
- **Assistance in implementation of schemes**
- **Systematic capacity building interventions**

Lessons for Future

- **Family support**
- **Gender sensitisation and awareness**
- **Capacity building**
- **Access to information**
- **Enhance literacy levels**
- **Local networking**
- **Sustained civil society engagement**