

DISCUSSION PAPER SERIES ON WOMEN'S POLITICAL LEADERSHIP



Concept Paper

Gender Responsive Governance

Research in Government of India-UN Women Programme, 'Promoting Women's Political Leadership and Governance in India and South Asia'

In 2009, the Royal Norwegian Embassy, India signed an agreement with Unifem, now UN Women, South Asia Regional Office to initiate a three-year programme entitled 'Promoting Women's Political Leadership and Governance in India and South Asia'. The programme aims to empower elected women representatives in local governance to make public policy and resource allocation patterns responsive to women's human rights. The programme covers 5 countries of South Asia (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, and Pakistan). In India, the programme is co-owned by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India.

The Programme has been designed with the spirit to capture the specific issues and challenges with regard to women's political empowerment that each country experiences. This is a demand driven programme that seeks to understand and address issues of women's participation in local governance from the grassroots perspective. Generation of a body of knowledge on women's political leadership and governance in India and South Asia is one of the key outcomes of the programme.

There are two main purposes of the research component of the programme –

- (a) To build a body of knowledge on women's political leadership and governance in India and South Asia – this is especially significant since no on-going programme on women's political empowerment in the South Asia region is working at the grassroots level – down at the level of the village councils. This being the value addition of the programme in the region, and there being very little existing policy literature which analyses governance at its fundamental grassroots institution; this programme provides an opportunity to develop innovative and unique literature based on experiences from the programme on strengthening village councils – the structure of local governance closest to ordinary citizens – to enable women as equal and fair participants and decision makers at the local level.
- (b) As we build this body of knowledge, the data gathered from field experiences will in turn help to inform programme implementation and fine tune the intervention strategies as the programme progresses. Such a large and complex programme is, by nature, dynamic, and hence useful feedback in terms of baseline data, focused studies such as barriers and promoters of women's political leadership and governance in India and South Asia throughout the course of the programme will be useful for the programme interventions.

UN Women

UN Women is the United Nations organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their rights worldwide.

UN Women supports United Nations Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the United Nations system's work in advancing gender equality.

Disclaimer:

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of UN Women, the United Nations or any of its affiliated organizations.

International Centre for Research on Women

The International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW) is a global research institute with headquarters in Washington D.C., and regional offices in Nairobi, Kenya, and New Delhi, India. We also have project office in Mumbai. ICRW is comprised of social scientists, economists, public health specialists and demographers, all of whom are experts in gender relations. We are thought leaders driven by passion to alleviate poverty and rectify injustice in the world. And we believe that women and girls – in collaboration with men and boys – are essential to the solutions. We know that when their quality of life improves, families are healthier and economies are stronger. ICRW's mission is to empower women, advance gender equality and fight poverty in the developing world. To accomplish this, ICRW works with partners to conduct empirical research, build capacity and advocate for evidence-based, practical ways to change policies and programs.

Discussion Paper Series on Women's Political Leadership

CONCEPT PAPER
Gender Responsive Governance

ICRW – UN Women Joint Publication





United Nations Entity for Gender Equality
and the Empowerment of Women

Message

India has witnessed the world's largest experiment in grassroots local democracy, triggered by the 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Indian Constitution, which created a third tier of governance – Panchayati Raj Institutions (Village Councils) and urban local bodies. These are elected bodies and cannot be dissolved by administrative order. Since 1995, three rounds of elections have been held; and as one-third of seats (proposed to be increased to 50 per cent) are reserved for women, more than 1.5 million women have been elected to office in each round. It is evident therefore that first generation issues of framing the 'rules of the game' and creating an understanding about them have been addressed.

The UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) aims to address second generation issues of democratic governance under its programme 'Promoting Women's Political Leadership and Governance in South Asia' with focus on Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Pakistan. The programme works with women – both elected and aspiring at the local level – to achieve three main outcomes: (1) Strengthened legal frameworks and policies for women's political participation in local governance in India and South Asia by 2015; (2) Elected women and men representatives in local governments have the knowledge and capacity to transform and implement policies, programmes and resource allocations for gender sensitive governance in five states in India by 2015; and (3) Key capacity development and media institutions and structures in India and South Asia are strengthened to mainstream gender into their policies and programmes by 2015.

Research for evidence based advocacy is an integral part of this programme. It plays a very important role in capturing the ground level situation in India and South Asia and informs programme implementation. Research supported under the programme is contributing to the body of knowledge on what enables and/or prevents women's political leadership and governance in India and in South Asia.

The research thus far is presented in a set of four publications. The research conducted by ICRW has provided the programme with a conceptual clarity on 'gender responsive governance'; the effects of economic disempowerment and violence against women on women's political participation; the status of women's political participation and leadership in South Asia; and finally, the determinants of women's political leadership and participation in three districts – Alwar (Rajasthan), Gajapati (Odisha), and Mysore (Karnataka) in India.

I congratulate the ICRW team and the many women and men, elected as well as aspiring representatives who have contributed to further the understanding of issues pertaining to women's political leadership and governance in India and in South Asia.

I hope you find the report useful and insightful for understanding and promoting women's political leadership.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Anne F. Stenhammer".

Anne F. Stenhammer

Regional Programme Director

UN Women South Asia Sub-Regional Office

New Delhi



Message

It is with great excitement that we launch this important publication, “Concept Paper: Gender Responsive Governance.”

As the world’s largest democracy, and one that has taken important steps to open opportunities for marginalised groups, including women, to lead, India is an important case study for global policy dialogues around good governance. This research not only contributes to our understanding of how quotas mandating women’s representation on local governing bodies—the *Panchayati Raj* Institutions (PRIs)—are playing out for the individuals who comprise them and for the policymaking process in the three states studied, but it also shines important light on a matter of increasing international interest: how to achieve gender responsive governance and advance the cause of gender equality and representative democracy?

In this exciting collaboration with UN Women, we have uncovered important lessons. We reaffirm the power of gender roles and social norms to shape behaviour. We find that female elected representatives desire to re-contest but are more likely to do so if they have a supportive husband who is helping with chores at home. Among women who do not re-contest, we see the number one reason for withdrawing from public life being the time burden of home and child care. We see powerful and challenging attitudes among women and men as to what role women can and should play in leadership, and we find that PRIs are not considered to be spaces where gender issues, such as domestic violence, can be raised.

These findings inform key conclusions. We confirm the value of gender quotas as an important tool for moving us toward our goal of gender responsive governance, insofar as the mere presence of women can transform patriarchal frameworks. Yet we find that the simple adage of “add women and stir” is insufficient on its own—women cannot be solely expected to carry the burden of transforming the governing process into a gender responsive ideal. Additional work needs to be done—at the policy and at the individual level—to transform these spaces into truly democratic and gender-equitable realms.

This report makes an important contribution to the discourse on gender responsive governance, and it comes at a critical time. This is the kind of evidence we need to inform our strategies to achieve true equality and democracy and a future where girls will not need a quota system to achieve parity in their local, state and national governing bodies. It is a future well within our reach. Let’s make it happen!



Sarah Degnan Kambou

President, International Center for Research on Women

Acknowledgements

This research has benefitted immensely from the constructive advice of Dr. Devaki Jain, Dr. Vibhuti Patel, Ms. J. Devika, Ms. Meenakshi Kathel, Ms. Rita Sarin, Ms. Veda Bharadwaja and Ms. Madhu Bala Nath in their role as Technical Advisors. Dr. Ratna Sudarshan and Ms. Nirmala Buch reviewed preliminary drafts and provided useful suggestions to improve them. Dr. A. K. Shiv Kumar and Mr. Subhash Mendhapurkar took out invaluable time from their busy schedules to go through the initial results and worked with us to add insights into the analysis and interpretations.

We thank our field research partners and team members in each of the three districts, Sansristi, Odisha; Sigma, Karnataka and Prof. Sanjay Lodha and his research team in Rajasthan for the efficient implementation of the field study and data management. We specifically thank Dr. Amrita Patel for her contribution during the data collection and preliminary analysis phase of the project in Odisha.

We received unflinching and cheerful support from Prakash Mishra, our colleague within ICRW towards data analysis. Prasenjit Banerjee provided unfailing and efficient support to manage the finances of the grant. Ellen Weiss, our Technical Editor kept us on our toes through her meticulous editing and eye for detail. Several colleagues within ICRW have supported us at different stages of the project – we specially thank Pranita Achyut and Kavya Bopanna. We also received support from Ms. Swati Chakraborty and Ms. Mukta Banerjee for specific aspects of the research study.

We acknowledge with sincere thanks the support we received from the Governance Unit of UN Women, South Asia Sub Regional Office, New Delhi and for according significance to the issue of gender responsiveness within local governance and envisioning the need for evidence on this critical issue. Thanks are due to the UN Women team, Suraj Kumar (Head, Governance Unit), Renu Wadehra (Senior Advisor, Royal Norwegian Embassy, India) and Diya Dutta (Research Analyst) for their support and inputs during the course of this project; and to Ms. Anne F. Stenhammer, Regional Programme Director for her passion and vision on this issue. We also thank Dr. Hrusikesh Panda, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India for his suggestions and advice during the initial phase of conceptualising this research project. We wish to thank government officials in the states of Karnataka, Rajasthan and Odisha for their support and cooperation during data collection. We also thank Sangeeta Gandotra and Minaram Patnaik (District Project Officers, UN Women) for their support during the implementation of the study. We also thank the Royal Norwegian Embassy in India who has sponsored the UN Women programme on, 'Promoting Women's Political Leadership and Governance in India and South Asia'.

Finally, and most importantly, we acknowledge the respondents of our study for sparing their time and sharing their experiences with us, and trusting that their individual contribution will enable the realisation of a gender responsive governance system that has social justice and gender equality as its core principles.

Nandita Bhatla
Sunayana Walia
Tina Khanna
Ravi Verma



English equivalents of some commonly used terms

Gram Sabha	Village Council meetings
Zilla Parishad	Local Government Body at the District Level
Gram Panchayat	Local Self Government
Nyaya Panchayat	System of dispute resolution at the village level
Gram Kachari	Local Judicial Council
Sarpanch	Elected Head of a village level statutory constitution of local self-government, the gram panchayat (village government)
Panchayat Samiti	Local government body at the <i>tehsil or taluka or mandal</i> (administrative division at the village level)

CONTENTS

I ntrouduetion	1
T he Evolving Notion of Governance: Definitions and Concepts	2
E xperiencing Governance: Perceptions of Communities in South Asia	3
F ramework for Gendered Governance: Additional Concepts for Consideration	5
A ccounting for Dynamism in Governance: Additional Insights on the Participation of Women and Their Engagement with Gender Issues in India	10
T he Settling-in Phase	11
G aps and Challenges to be Addressed	12
A New Proposed Framework for Gender Responsive Governance	14
R eferences	16



Introduction

The study of politics has been characterized by a divide between the many who study the state and the few who study social movements. By contrast, the field of women's studies has been divided between the many who study popular culture, civil society and cultural politics, and the few who study the state..... The chasm between scholarship on the state and on social movements has prevented scholars from adequately exploring the vital effects of movements on institutions and of institutions on movements. In the process the contributions of activists to institutional change and the embeddedness of the state in civil society activism have been ignored.

(Basu, 2003).

The above statement calls attention to the challenges involved in the study of gender within governance. The study of governance concentrates primarily on its technical dimensions, that is, the manner in which structures are organised to enable the state to utilise resources for development. Social movements and their scholars, on the other hand, have raised gender concerns in governance and emphasised on forging collective identities, raising consciousness and creating conditions for women to gain entry and effectively participate in political institutions at local and national levels. In India, interest in women in local governance, and concepts of gender and social justice was spurred with the enactment of the Constitution (73rd and 74th Amendment) in 1992. This path-breaking policy initiative enabled the participation of more than a million women in local governance through reservation of a minimum of one-third of seats for women (both as members and as chairpersons) within all of India's locally elected governance bodies commonly referred to as Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). The Amendment also gave recognition to these bodies as institutions of self-

governance, indicating that people's participation is *sine qua non* for realising the goal of self-governance, and entrusted them with the responsibility of furthering the agenda of economic development and social justice.

Several research studies and programmatic interventions have been focused on understanding the processes, outcomes and challenges of the democratization and engendering of local governance spaces for women. The effective participation of women, both as elected representatives, and as citizens, has been recognized as key area of focus within the paradigm of governance. Concepts of good governance and gender equality have been at the cutting edge of development debates over the last decade; however the relationship between the two is not always obvious, not organic. The conceptual foundations and frameworks of governance must be re-examined and challenged to assess whether they build upon and further the principles of gender equality and social justice, such that both lie at the core of development. Such an analysis will also be important in the identification of barriers, both

The conceptual foundations and frameworks of governance must be re-examined and challenged to assess whether they build upon and further the principles of gender equality and social justice





Good governance ... stresses on participation, decentralisation, accountability and governmental responsiveness as important dimensions along with social equity and justice

institutional and social, to inclusive and gender responsive governance. This will necessitate the involvement of policy makers, governance institutions and civil society. At global, national and local levels, all governance institutions will have to contribute towards the creation of revised ideas about governance at the level of public consciousness, including local communities, by demonstrating good practices and by effectively communicating to them the transformatory potential of governance processes. This message then can challenge existing perception of governance as the domain of privileged males, and enable women everywhere to identify and claim their place in governance institutions and processes that are designed and implemented with, their inclusion (Broody, 2009).

Thus emerging as an important area of study, this paper examines the manner in which governance processes can be understood through a gendered framework. It discusses the evolving and expanding notion of governance, laying out definitions that encompass the meaning of good governance, and place gender responsiveness within them. A review of this literature on women's experiences within governance structures provides insights into the gaps and challenges of 'gendered governance' by examining the link between the participation of women – as a *process* – and gender equality – as an *outcome*. It suggests additional elements to be considered within the concept of Gender Responsive Governance (GRG), proposing a definition and a framework for its operationalization. It focuses on the dynamism of governance with emphasis on state–women interface, through addressing specific

gender concerns that respond to the women and their communities at different levels of governance and across various governance functions.

The Evolving Notion of Governance: Definitions and Concepts

A study of governance implies a constitutionally mandated body referring to a particular group of people, the administrative bureaucracy, who control a state at a given time, and the manner in which their governing organisations are structured. So governments are a means through which state power is employed. The study of governance historically focused on a definition of 'sound development management, the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development'. However, this made no allowance for citizens to determine the governance agenda through a democratic process (Joyal, 2003).

Thus, such a definition was limited in its approach, and overlooked many aspects of the concept of 'good governance'. The concept of good governance has in recent times gained momentum as it emphasises substantive aspects, such as quality and multiplicity of actors involved in the *process* of governance. Good governance is no longer simply equated with civil service reform, but stresses on participation, decentralisation, accountability and governmental responsiveness as important dimensions along with social equity and justice.

This expansive definition introduces concepts of decentralisation and

participation, both of which enhance responsiveness and inclusiveness in governance. Responsiveness assumes that the interests of all citizens are well protected and the citizens take part in the process of governance (self-rule). Citizens are empowered to take part in formulating policy decisions and implementation, such as in a few countries in Asia. India is a democratic state which envisions and essentially requires the effective participation of all sections of society in governance, and assumes that such participation will lead to overall social and economic development, towards social justice. It defines certain structural and procedural mechanisms towards this. The decentralisation of structures and powers through the setting up of PRIs at three tiers of local governance is a way of ensuring that institutions of good and responsive governance are put in place. Development through community participation is a process through which village communities are empowered to discuss local issues and take decisions to address these issues and transform them into policy outcomes. However, in reality, effective participation of all groups, and specifically women within them, requires specific accompanying efforts and measures to ensure that traditional barriers that have excluded these groups are overcome. In this context, it becomes important to understand how these concepts are perceived and experienced by communities, specifically women, in real operational terms. The next section presents a brief review of studies on this. Though the focus remains on India, the South Asia context is also briefly described, given the similarities referred to in literature on women and governance in this region.

Experiencing Governance: Perceptions of Communities in South Asia

In several countries in South Asia, and in India, evidence on comprehending the notion of governance reveals that men and women perceive the state and its governance processes, and the outcomes as being presently ineffective.

In Bangladesh, a study examining the notion of governance (Tambiah, 2003) found that this included ideas such as *'the legitimacy of government, which is linked with participatory processes and the consent of those who are governed; the accountability of government officials for their actions and the existence of mechanisms by which individuals and institutions can be held accountable; the competence of a government to formulate appropriate policies, make timely decisions, implement them effectively and deliver services; and the respect for human rights and the rule of law to guarantee individual and group rights and security to provide a framework for political, economic and social activity'*. In Sri Lanka, men and women responding to a survey report that the notion of governance implied a sense of entitlement as citizens of the state, regardless of the government in power, whereas a particular government often represented the interests of select persons or communities rather than all members of the community. Women in general were clear that the state did not do enough to improve their lives as citizens. Most women envisioned a democratic, participatory, accountable, and gender-sensitive state that was transparent in all its dealings. Other studies and reports resonate the themes reported

The decentralisation of structures and powers through the setting up of PRIs at three tiers of local governance is a way of ensuring that institutions of good and responsive governance are put in place



Despite India having more elected women representatives (EWRs) than all other countries put together, their participation is still limited

in this review, emphasizing that despite viewing the state as a provider of law, order and peace, they perceive that it did not fulfilling this role adequately or translate the principle of inclusiveness and equity in reality. Women report being often subjected to violence of all types. In addition, women desired a state in which religious or ethnic differences would not be used for political gains. People from the minority community emphasised safety, physical and economic security, and maintenance of the rule of law, including respect for fundamental rights (Ain O Salish Kendra, 2002). Thus they emphasised that the state needs to be a provider of resources and employment and the owner and maintainer of essential services. In essence, it found that women in general felt that the state did not adequately provide a better life for its citizens. A decentralised form of governance could more easily address these local concerns (Ekatra, 2002). In this context, involvement of people at several levels in formal institutions of the state such as legislative, legal and administrative, as also involvement of citizens in informal groups, movements and other institutions of civil society became relevant. This emphasis on decentralisation, that is, the transfer of power, responsibility and resources from central to regional and local governments, is expected to translate into better performance as it brings the decision-making process closer to the people affected by these decisions, and prioritises them for maximum impact (Mukhopadhyay, 2005), which has the potential to enable social transformation (Broody, 2009). Inbuilt into this is the idea of subsidiarity that implies independence at the lowest level of government to function

efficiently, without interference from upper levels.

In India, the Constitution (73rd and 74th Amendments) towards affirmative action for decentralised governance and the participation of women resulted in sweeping changes in the rural landscape which were visible as women from all communities competed to become members of executive and governance bodies of the Panchayats. Despite India having more elected women representatives (EWRs) than all other countries put together, their participation is still limited because of discrimination, lack of access to information, illiteracy, the double burden faced by women at work and at home, deeply etched inequalities, social stigmas, political barriers and limited efforts to equip EWRs with requisite skills (UNDP, 2009). Despite being in power, EWRs cannot truly engender governance and fully represent the issues of women without knowledge of the *Gram Panchayat* (GP) planning process and resources available. The planning process itself is technical in nature, requiring in-depth comprehension of Gram Panchayat activities, conducting situational analyses, prioritising needs, creating a vision document for the panchayat, understanding the resource envelope to conduct resource mapping for GP plans, converting the wish list in the *Gram Sabha* into actual projects with budgets and sources of funds, and finally creating panchayat plans. All this requires capacity building, networking, exposure and diverse strategies and support systems in place for effective participation. A gender analysis of governance will show the need for a close relationship between representation, participation, and responsiveness (UNESCAP, 2006), and some of these findings provide for such

an analysis. According to a recent study on the participation of EWRs (Ministry of Panchayat Raj, 2008), *'The most stringent test of any exercise in democratic decentralization is, of course, the actual powers and functions that are devolved to democratic institutions at the local level (p. 12).....we see that it is only in a handful of states – such as Kerala, Karnataka and West Bengal – that significant or complete devolution has been achieved (p. 13).... and suggests that if women are adequately empowered through a political process, they would have enhanced capabilities for decision making, which, in turn, would be reflected in the quality of participation, impacting performance as well as her personal development (p. 160)*. So it seems that the process has begun, but that these changes are significantly visible only in some states whereas others are still working towards making this shift. Thus, quota reservation can be said to be an effective step for including unrepresented groups (women) in local-level governance (engendering local democracy) and a move towards putting structures of good governance in place.

Further, a concerted policy-level intervention is required to ensure the flexibility (devolution) of functions, functionaries and finances, such that EWRs are able to function effectively (Mohanty, 2010). The role of the state in securing a critical mass of women in governance through quotas is guaranteed; however, it is important to examine what other state-initiated measures need to be deployed to ensure that political parties and the electorate engage with women candidates. In essence, if the state has envisioned the reservation policy to be the vehicle

for GRG as its long-term goal, it would imply not only a change in functions and funds but also the perception and responsiveness of the functionaries that can be monitored and reported accordingly, and strengthening state agencies towards such an end (Ramchander, 2010).

It is important to investigate how influences such as those of laws, movements, groups and social institutions encourage women to take advantage of opportunities of political participation, impact their understanding of participation in a wide range of governance-related activities, and define the outcomes of this participation. The gaps and challenges identified in the analysis presented in empirical studies are useful in exploring this experience.

Framework for Gendered Governance: Additional Concepts for Consideration

A review of literature on human settlements, governance, women, and gender equality and equity has revealed a scarcity of resources to build the capacities of locally elected officials, administrators and staff in the areas of women's rights and gender equality (UN Habitat, 2008). Efforts to develop a means of understanding gendered governance have to take into account not only the formal institutional, political and administrative structures, but also recognize how frameworks of gender norms and rights impact processes and outcomes of governance. In this, the engagement of civil society, or efforts to place women on higher echelons

Quota reservation can be said to be an effective step for including unrepresented groups (women) in local-level governance (engendering local democracy) and a move towards putting structures of good governance in place





A rights-based approach has the advantage of not only providing a formal agenda in its understanding but also of creating enabling conditions for women to be able to overcome long histories of exclusion, marginalisation and invisibility

of governance are important but not enough to automatically and necessarily result in enhanced effective participation or engendering governance. Scholars have pointed to the need for negotiating governance through the language of rights (Jayal, 2003), and the also to, women holding administrative, managerial, professional and technical positions that are part of governance in a broader sense (Jayal and Nussbaum). A rights-based approach has the advantage of not only providing a formal agenda in its understanding but also of creating enabling conditions for women to be able to overcome long histories of exclusion, marginalisation and invisibility. The language of rights provides a number of advantages for women to fulfill their goals of recognition as productive members in society and governance, and to be able to articulate their demands and be heard. The advantages include a rights-based or entitlements based approach, placing obligations upon government and society to protect and promote the realisation of the rights of citizens. Such an approach mandates governments to provide enabling conditions within which existing rights may be claimed, articulated and advanced (thus, for instance literacy and access to information may be viewed as enabling conditions for the meaningful exercise of political rights); it encourages the identification of obstacles which prevent the realisation of rights, as a prelude to addressing and redressing these, by first identifying the social, economic and cultural factors that prevent the realisation of rights, and finally, a rights-based approach engages with both processes and outcomes. This thus provides spaces for arguments to engender both processes and

outcomes, and for demand to include issues of strategic gender interests, such as gender based discrimination, subordination and exclusion. All these aspects are necessary components to conceptualize gender responsiveness in governance wherein women's voice and participation is increased, and gender equality recognized as an outcome.

The UNESCAP (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, 2006) considers the special challenges for gender equity in terms of development and peace, and the commitment needed from governments and NGO initiatives. The Commission has developed a regional framework that converges with their GRG initiative. Building on the United Nations Charter, this framework mandates the UNESCAP programme to be a convener for regional follow-up of global issues through research, policy-related support, technical assistance and policy dialogues that are relevant to the needs and priorities of the region. This document (especially referring to post-conflict reconstruction policies), states that a joint commitment by men and women to both expand and deepen gender mainstreaming strategies (which take into consideration the diverse needs and interests of whole communities and countries) is necessary for social cohesion and to guarantee the stability needed. According to UNESCAP, a gender mainstreaming perspective must be adhered to in order to ensure a balanced representation, remove barriers to the participation of women and guarantee the integration of gender issues in decision-making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all governance initiatives.

The relationship between gender and governance has various dimensions, and some gender related concepts need to be examined more closely for their implication on women's participation and engendering governance. These include the segregation of public and private spheres, expected behaviours stemming from accepted gender roles, masculine and feminine attributes, the division of labour and so on. The impacts of these concepts then needs to be linked with the extent and nature of women's participation in local and national politics, the programmatic strategies developed for enabling participation, prioritization of issues for discussion within PRIs and the policy related action needed to promote gender responsiveness.

In India, and in many countries across South Asia, social norms dictate the presence and voice of women in public life. The participation of women in governance thus, must be viewed in the context of how they are socialised in gendered terms, wherein ascribed masculine roles are associated with the public, outside spaces whereas femininity is associated with the private, domestic realm. Though masculinity-femininity exists along a continuum, it often translates into accepted and rigid norms for men and women, that both struggle to maintain, and resist changing, even though there are encouraging instances of boundaries being transgressed. For women then, such norms imply that exposing oneself outside the domestic space is to risk one's role and reputation as one may be faced with violence or sexual assault. Thus, women may resist any activity or attempts to gain skills or knowledge of issue perceived as outside their sphere, including

public roles and politics. Perceptions of women being inept, inadequate or less capable as elected representatives is a complex intertwining of such attitudes, conscious and sub-conscious resistance to overcome these. Men also use these norms to discourage the infiltration of women in public spaces, and justify their actions in preventing women from engaging in various public or social actions. These cultural norms have often curtailed women from performing effectively in public spaces (in electoral politics) and demanding their rights. Some have argued that the political parties who approved the Constitution (73rd Amendment) when it was announced wanted to strengthen the position of the poor and weaker sections in rural India (Singh, 1994). But some political parties supported quotas for women because they did not imagine the participation of women to be empowering, as they assumed that women would take on a passive, subdued role in the formal political sector, thereby enabling parties to easily dominate the representative and forward their own agendas through them (Jain, 1998).

Structural barriers that result in exclusion of women are related to cultural patterns that show high levels of female deprivation and inequality between caste, class, ethnicity and gender. The state has largely been unable to change these norms or gender equations, leaving access to justice and equal citizenship unattainable for a majority. In addition, historic inequities that women in India face, such as high levels of social and economic dependence, along with poor literacy levels and strict mobility norms, continue to maintain inequality in all ways. Thus the dilemma

Structural barriers that result in exclusion of women are related to cultural patterns that show high levels of female deprivation and inequality between caste, class, ethnicity and gender



Engendering governance is often visualised in terms of a critical mass of women in positions of decision-making in political institutions such as national legislatures, in the executive bodies of political parties, and the number of women ministers and heads of government

of women, who come into the public domain as mothers, sisters, and daughters must stand for the family, kinship and customs, while attempting to claim and fight for women's presence and rights in the public. In this scenario, a well-known non-government organisation has conducted several women's leadership workshops in many states of the country to help women become strong leaders in their respective villages and communities (The Hunger Project, 2008). Research studies in India focusing on the performance of women in local governance spans the last two decades since the Constitution (73rd Amendment) came into being, and have examined specific dimensions. Though available data does not investigate the larger picture of governance in all its manifestations, it delineates the diversity of performance of women entering the domain of local politics and governance, depending on several underlying contextual factors. These include the role of civil society organisations, the efficiency and commitment of the state and the aspirations and goals of the EWRs in bringing about transformative change in their constituencies, the environment and their immediate families. Recent findings show that in Uttarakhand, innovations undertaken by the *Mahila Samakhya* under the *Panchayat Literacy Programme* paved way for new opportunities to gain political power through the ballot and empowered women to participate in the governance process without fear or hesitation. In more ways than one, the programme was pivotal in enhancing the role of grassroots women in decentralised governance, especially by bringing to centre-stage women from the women's collectives in the political realm,

raising their status both in the *Gram Sabha* and *Gram Panchayat*, and giving due importance to issues of women, thereby putting GRG in place (Banerjee et al., 2010).

Another important debate among scholars is whether women working within the state will undermine or enhance women's power (Basu, 2003). The dilemma of the extent of cooperation or negotiation with the state, by trying to change things 'from within' or pressurize change by remaining on the outside has influenced civil society engagement on this issue in India. The general perception has been that the more powerful the institution, the less sensitive it will be to the interests of women. Thus women's groups in their early years voiced serious doubts about working with the state, political parties and other major institutions for fear that it would result in increased dependence on the state, minimize the power to influence that women can yield, and result in being co-opted on sensitive issues, or absorption of their ideas. Engendering governance is often visualised in terms of a critical mass of women in positions of decision-making in political institutions such as national legislatures, in the executive bodies of political parties, and the number of women ministers and heads of government. However this has invariably been the forte of people from specific classes, or family backgrounds, and has rarely translated into cross-cutting and comprehensive gender-equitable policy initiatives. Thus a study of the women's movement in India will show that there has been fierce resistance from any political party interference, so as not to dilute its cause or be influenced by resources and power. Besides, even if

they give access to institutional power, they would be largely dependent on the nature of the institution, and not necessarily contribute to the growth and empowerment of women.

In recent years, the NGOs have become a critical source for providing space and support to women in developing political awareness, leadership, understanding electoral processes, and various forms of discrimination faced by them. In spite of working in small select areas, effective strategies have been demonstrated, wherein the formation of effective pressure groups has resulted in the raising and furthering of strategic gender interests such as violence against women, child marriage, inheritance rights, equal access to education, employment and many others. They have also provided women with the perceptiveness and skills to develop and understand the uses of collective power: to face discrimination, to demand rights of citizens, or to negotiate with the state what is important to them (*Stree Shakti*, 2002; *Mahila Samakhya*, 2010; *Nirantar*, 2004; *Jagori*, 2005). These groups are often rooted in feminist perspectives, espousing a rights-based approach in all their practices. Some women's groups which were previously committed to autonomy have come to see the value of working with the state. These have accepted state support towards fulfilling the need to create women's collectives at the grass roots level, and help them reach the poor and the marginalised. In some instances, women's organisations have now become important players in engendering governance structures, actively involved in drafting constitutions, budgets and legislation along with party and elected officials,

implying the acceptance of gender concerns by the state and applying relevant norms available. In addition, along with examining governance structures and the way these have altered over time, it is necessary to draw attention to the many ways in which women have created innovative strategies for effective participation in governance.

It is now well recognized that the discourse on engendering governance process must highlight all aspects of representation, that is, go beyond physical presence (as ensured by affirmative action through establishing quotas) to include substantive and transformative representation (often referred to as effective participation). The idea of quotas was initially proposed by a researcher (Philips, 1995) who made the well-known argument of politics of ideas and presence, in which women from minority and other excluded groups could be guaranteed a fair representation. Elaborating on this concept, in her analysis of politics of presence for women in local governance systems, another researcher (Jain, 1998) has divided representation into three aspects: descriptive representation, substantive representation, and personally transformative representation. *'Descriptive representation refers to the physical fact of particular individuals being located in political, economic, social institutions. It is the symbolic effect of quotas for women's representation; it simply means that they are physically in these institutions and everyone can see them there. Substantive representation refers to the substantial content of one's representation. In other words, it is the influence or impact of one's presence on the*

'Whatever maybe the particular effects of movement on institutional participation, women's governance is a product of the conjoined and interacting influences of movements and institutions in a given situation' (Basu, 2003).





The concept of gender responsiveness must go beyond women to place the onus equally on male representatives, on PRIs...on communities ...and on policy makers...

political discourse, the culture of politics, the political party, or political outcomes. It is the substantial content of one's presence. Personally transformative representation deals with the impact of one's representation on oneself, one's identity, one's meaning-making systems, and one's world. While the other two forms of representation are essentially external, this aspect of representation deals with the internal and the individual herself. This pattern of investigation is well suited for the discussion of this paper where all the three forms of representation of women could be evaluated. This implies that women could be present physically without articulating any ideas that represent interest of women, or be informed and able to make a contribution with substantial representation, and additionally during this progression go through a personally transformative representation. Utilising such a method for a meaningful appraisal of their performance, it is necessary to examine structural and other barriers that inhibit the performance of women, and also of men in governance structures.

Finally, the legal and operational framework or mandate of PRIs and their priorities needs security, if gender responsiveness has to be examined with a view of outcomes of social justice and gender equality. Studies (Patel, 2008) suggest that elected women in local Panchayats, legislative bodies and parliament have played a positive role in addressing, or attempting to address, a range of practical gender needs such as inadequacies in living conditions such as water, health care, employment and others, but they have not been able to impact upon strategic gender needs. Key indicators to address the strategic gender needs

of women, according to her, are gender balance in critical areas such as decision-making bodies, finance committees, in business and financial support, share of expenditure devoted to women-specific units, cells, and departments and projects. Many of these indicators will be used to track significant changes in acquiring strategic gender needs for women. Even as emphasis is placed on removing familial, community and structural barriers to women's effective participation, larger effort is needed to bring other players into the realm of gender responsive governance. The concept of gender responsiveness must go beyond women to place the onus equally on male representatives, on PRIs as institutional structures responsive to the gender needs of their communities, on communities to engage in active and equal citizenship and on policy makers to engender acts and operational guidelines.

Accounting for Dynamism in Governance: Additional Insights on the Participation of Women and Their Engagement with Gender Issues in India

The issue of participation of women in local governance has been a dynamic one in India, ever changing, depending on various factors that contribute to this dynamism. This section provides a brief overview of the various facets of participation of women since their induction into the local bodies of governance, and how they have related to the various gender related concepts

described in the section above. This review argues that not only must frameworks and structures guiding governance be examined, governance that is responsive to gender must also take into account the changing needs and priorities of EWRs as they gain experience in political processes. Interventions, indicators to measure change in processes and outcomes, must respond to the time that individual women spend in governance structures, and also the collective political gains of women. It is interesting to note that from a disordered presence in the beginning in these local bodies, women have emerged to be quite confident, informed and capable of decision-making, taking forward the agenda of GRG. Thus, it is important to demarcate this process into different phases, observing the distinguishing features that were prominent when the first elections were held, often bringing women to the forefront without any prior history of activism. In India, women in local governance can be divided into two distinct phases – the initial experiment and the settling-in phase. Studies have researched different aspects in these two phases. The discussion on gender responsiveness must take into account the experiences, gains and challenges over these two phases, to define the issues to move ahead towards a comprehensive idea of gender responsiveness.

The Initial Experiments

Most of available literature from early 1994 to 2000 highlighted the experiences and constraints faced by women in their election to and functioning in Panchayats. It was reported that EWR's participation in local governance structures was limited because of discrimi-


nation, lack of access to information, illiteracy, the double burden faced by women at work and at home, and noted that reservations for women are notoriously prone to corruption by male relatives and excluded from formal participation (Mukhopadhyay 2005, Sharma 2004). Further, women were the objects of violence in many constituencies where strict patriarchal norms existed and indicators of general well-being of women were low (Jayal 2006, Buch 1999). Hence gaining a seat in the *Panchayats* was not adequate enough in tabling issues of concern easily. In many instances though, specific issues of women such as those of dowry, rape and domestic violence were voiced, coupled with everyday needs such as the availability of water, toilets or infrastructure that motivated women to win elections, more than understanding the nuances of governance. It has often been argued that a critical mass of over 33 per cent women is needed before major changes in legislative institutions, behavior and policy occur. Local government, in particular, offers an important entry point for women seeking to represent their local community at the political level.

The Settling-in Phase

Looking beyond the constraints and gender-specific determinants that impact the entry and performance of women in their new roles, newer studies track indicators of fiscal planning and prioritisation. These report that elected women at local levels tend to articulate priorities in planning and decision-making differently from that of men (Chattopadhyay and Duflo 2004), albeit these still remain within the frame of development issues that

Local government... offers an important entry point for women seeking to represent their local community at the political level





Many civil society organisations have planned strategies to form collectives of EWRs to enable them to have a voice in the governance systems, use of groups such as women’s collectives to provide support, and undertake capacity-building efforts to equip themselves with an understanding of governance systems

are more reflective of practical gender needs that strategies interest. It may be noted that many civil society organisations have planned strategies to form collectives of EWRs to enable them to have a voice in the governance systems, use of groups such as women’s collectives to provide support, and undertake capacity-building efforts to equip themselves with an understanding of governance systems. These included several areas; the need and relevance for citizen participation in *Gram Sabha*, active participation in *Gram Panchayat* meetings, new platforms for EWRs, facilities available for women under gender budgets and the women’s component plan, information regarding national and state-sponsored development schemes and aiming to gain membership at the higher levels such as those of Block- or District-level *Panchayats* (Banerjee et al, 2010). Latest indications from Karnataka show a number of significant impacts on women, though some gender biases still remain. Amongst others, the changes include a higher level of inspiration amongst women from rural areas to participate in *Panchayats*, availability of services that reflects gender preferences, and improved access to public provisions (Raabe et al, 2009). Similarly, others (Sharma and Sudarshan, 2010) have noted that although there is substantial research available on EWRs, there is hardly any analysis available on technicalities such as attendance in *Gram Sabhas*, and participation of women in them.

A number of state institutional innovations have been initiated in the state of Kerala to ensure adequate focus on women and their issues. Beginning

from the People’s Planning Program that was introduced in the ninth plan (1997-2002), working under the State Planning Board, this program has made inroads and brought about a high level of awareness and competence on governance and planning abilities amongst the people of Kerala. The Peoples Plan Campaign (PPC) had incorporated many policies and procedures that ensured an inclusive and participatory process of self-government. An offshoot of this is the Women’s Component Plan (WCP) designed after a report was prepared on the status of women for each *Panchayat*. On the basis of this report, women’s development plans are made and their inclusion in sectoral committees assigned. Further, 10 per cent of the budget is allocated for implementing the WPC. So, poor women of the state have been beneficiaries of many such initiatives of the state through the panchayat programs (Devika, 2005).

Gaps and Challenges to be Addressed

The state institutions have been engendered to some extent through enhanced representation for women in executive bodies. However, several aspects still remain unanswered that must be examined for an enhanced and perceptive analysis, and there is need for more robust data to give insights into these issues. The exploration of the political costs of not allowing women to participate in *Panchayats* must be examined. Some of the constraints that need to be addressed include lack of sufficient gender sensitivity of both government functionaries and admin-

istrators, absence of a gender review of Panchayati Raj Acts and rules of different states, and lack of expertise among various stakeholders on how to do gender analysis to assess the differential impacts of programs and policies on men and women (even where there is awareness and acceptance of gender differences). Thus, there is a need to develop expertise to undertake gender differentiated data collection, planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation at different levels (Esther Ofei-Aboagye, 2000). Studies have emphasised that decentralisation does not work in gender-neutral framework. In order for decentralisation to realise gender equity needs, the enforcement of rules against gender discrimination should be put in place along with the transformation of the agencies and structures. Without active involvement and cautious monitoring to equalise gender relationship at the initial phase of decentralisation, women will continue to be marginalised through decentralisation (Siahaan, 2003).

An in-depth investigation on the understanding of governance by women is important to understand their needs and expectations to enable them to fulfill their perceived role and function more effectively. This will entail gathering data from other stakeholders and women in various formal and informal institutions of governance, identification of structural and other barriers, and ways of overcoming them. Although barriers and support systems have been the subject of research, there is need for a boarder representation of diverse strategies, and diverse groups, including the marginalized and excluded groups within processes of governance.

Another important issue is that of state –women interface. Many researchers have discussed the capacity-building measures necessary for the women to be able to actively interact with the state, but this alone is not sufficient to understand this interface. It is also necessary to explore the manner in which the government functionaries have understood the concept of GRG and are responsive to the women members. In this context, the perception of the state institutions and their presiding officers should be probed to understand the manner in which the vision of GRG is appreciated by them. So, it is necessary to evaluate the accountability of the state, political parties and social movements to gender equality outcomes at the local level. Attitudes of both office bearers and male counterparts of women elected representatives are important to map for the potential impact on women’s participation.

Great diversity in performance-related indicators are visible in different states of India, depending upon the state policies, devolution of functions, functionaries and funds, implementation mechanisms utilised, and the presence of basic indicators such as education and socio-economic levels. All these inform the type of scenario that may prevail in future, and it is important to carry out a comprehensive analysis of whether a clear pattern of involvement and participation could be visible or in spite of more than a decade of the introduction of the reservation policy, women are yet to make a significant change in the governance system. All of these, in turn, will give a nuanced understanding of not permitting women to contribute in local governance matters.

In order for decentralisation to realise gender equity needs, the enforcement of rules against gender discrimination should be put in place along with the transformation of the agencies and structures



A New Proposed Framework for Gender Responsive Governance

Taking into consideration all the issues and concerns mentioned, inclusive of the gaps and challenges visible in this area of work, a new and larger canvass is proposed that is able to encompass the various dimensions and nuances noticeable

Taking into consideration all the issues and concerns mentioned, inclusive of the gaps and challenges visible in this area of work, a new and larger canvass is proposed that is able to encompass the various dimensions and nuances noticeable. This uses the human development approach as its foundation within a capability framework underlying rights-based theme, and would further involve an investigation of many other facets of governance that is relevant here.

The definition of Gender Responsive Governance proposed, and that guides this specific research study is **‘a process that embodies measures, attitudes and practices of different stakeholders, both men and women, at different levels of governance, with a clear purpose of impacting issues that foster women’s empowerment and promote gender equality and social justice. It is a process that promotes and sustains the ability of women to fully participate in the governance and development process, enhances their ability to raise critical questions about inequity and collectivise without fear and pressure and ensures gains from the services’.**

This definition would incorporate within its frame, an assessment of the following ideas and aspects:

1. Evidence of the meaning of governance and gender responsiveness within governance amongst women, their perception of public roles and

activities as elected representatives and its consequent implications in their participation; the exploration of the costs of not allowing the political participation of women, not on women, but on development and social justice.

2. Framing of indicators to track the changing extent and nature of various aspects of GRG. This must be accompanied by documenting ways in which systems have worked towards the advancement of EWRs, capacity-building initiatives that have strengthened women, and initiatives towards engendering governance processes, inclusion of strategic gender issues and outcomes.
3. Reexamining structural and institutional barriers that limit both the participation of women and the inclusion of gender issues for discussion within the space of the panchayat. This would record the impact of structural barriers, institutional and operational frameworks, highlight enabling conditions and successful strategies that influence the participation of women in governance and engender its processes. In essence, the macro- and micro-level changes would expand the depth and scope of the investigation, through gaining access to practical and strategic gender needs.
4. Tracking the diversity that is visible in different states and districts of India, depending upon the state policies, devolution of functions, functionaries and funds, implementing mechanisms; and also among various socio-economic, caste and religious groups. This can also further document in detail the best practices/models followed in any district/state amongst those observed.

5. Evidence of the acceptance of GRG as a desirable, feasible long-term goal by all stakeholders. This will need to be separately nuanced to observe if

- a. If the perception, attitude and responsiveness of the state institution functionaries at different levels has changed to become more supportive of gender responsive governance.
- b. If the government has taken adequate and concrete measures to mainstreaming gender in gov-

ernance such as instructing state training institutions to reexamine curriculum and capacities to undertake training on GRG for government functionaries as well as all elected representatives with insights from a rights-based and gender equitable approach.

All of these aspects together can generate evidence of how governance can become gender responsive, such that it ensures effective participation of women – as a *process*, and achieves gender equality – as an *outcome*.



REFERENCES

- Banerjee M, Pillay S and Bakshi A, 2010. Women in Self Governance: Political Empowerment and Participation. *Innovations towards Education and Empowerment: Grassroots Women's Movement*, (Ed, PS), DFID India.
- Basu A, 2003. Gender and Governance: Concepts and Contexts. *Essays on Gender and Governance*, UNDP India.
- Broody A, 2009. Gender and Governance Overview Report, *Bridge – Development - Gender*, Institute of Development Studies, http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/reports/Governance_OR_final.pdf [accessed February 2011].
- Buch N, 2000. Women's Experience in New Panchayats: The Emerging Leadership of Rural Women, *CWDS, Occasional Paper* No.35.
- Chattopadhyay R and Duflo E, 2004. Women as Policy Makers: Evidence from a Randomized Policy Experiment in India. *Econometrica* 72 (5); 1409-43, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3598894>
- Esther Ofei-Aboagye, 2000. Promoting the Participation of Women in Local Governance and Development: The Case of Ghana, *ECDPM*, <http://www.uneca.org/itca/governance/Documents/Promoting%20participation%20of%20women%20in%20local%20governance.pdf> [accessed in February 2011].
- Jain S, 1998. *Redefining the Politics of Presence: Women in Panchayati Raj Institutions in Rajasthan and Kerala*, Harvard University, www.swaraj.org/shikshantar/papers_politics_presence.html [accessed February 2011].
- Jayal N G, 2003. Locating Gender in the Governance Discourse. *Essays on Gender & Governance*, UNDP India.
- Kaazi S, 2010. Democratic Governance and women's rights in South Asia, *IDRC*, Center for Women's Studies, <http://idl-bnc.idrc.ca/dspace/bitstream/10625/43868/1/130390.pdf> [accessed February 2011].
- Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India, 2008. *Study on EWRs in Panchayati Raj Institutions*.
- Mohanty B, 2010. Institute of Social Sciences, Delhi, in UNDP, *Consolidated Reply: UNIFEM's Program on Women's Political Leadership and Governance in India and South Asia – Examples, Advice*, [accessed February 2011].
- Morna, 2004. Gender and Governance: *A Proposed World Bank Action Plan*, <http://gdcrc.org/gender/governance/wb.pdf> [accessed February 2011].
- Mukhopadhyay M, 2005. *Decentralization and Gender Equity in South Asia An Issues Paper*, http://www.eepsea.org/uploads/user-S/11206790221Issues_Paper_MM-gender_decentralisation_equity__2005.pdf [accessed February 2011].
- Mukhopadhyay M , 2006. Creating citizens who demand just governance; *Gender and Development* in the Twenty-First Century. In: *Gender and Development* 11 (3); 45-6.
- Nussbaum M, 2003. *Gender and Governance: An Introduction*. In: *Essays on Gender and Governance* UNDP India.
- Patel V, 2006. *Getting Foothold in Politics... Women in Political Decision-Making Process*, Social Action.
- Patel V, 2008. *Gender Audits as an Input to Engender Governance*. In: *Engendering Governance Institutions: State, Market and Civil Society* edited by Smita Mishra Panda; Sage Publications, Delhi.
- Phillips A, 1995. *The Politics of Presence*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Prayas, 2008. *Women Leadership Workshop*, Kutchh-Gujarat, <http://www.prayas4development.org/reports/wlw%20report-PRAYAS-Dec'08.pdf> [accessed February 2011].
- Promoting Women's Leadership in Local Government: Local Government Associations Help Women Meet the Challenge, *Federation of Canadian Municipalities*, http://www.fcm.ca/Documents/casestudies/International/Promoting_womens_leadership_in_local_government_Local_government_associations_help_women_meet_the_challenge_EN.pdf [accessed February 2011].
- Raabe K, Sekher M, and Birner R, 2009. The Effects of Political Reservations for Women on Local Governance and Rural Service Provision Survey Evidence from Karnataka, *IFPRI Discussion Paper* 00878 www.ifpri.org/sites/default/files/publications/ifpridp00878.pdf [accessed February 2011].
- Ramchander P, 2010. Sampark, Bangalore, in UNDP, *Consolidated Reply: UNIFEM's Program on Women's Political Leadership and Governance in India and South Asia - Examples, Advice*, [ftp://ftp.solutionexchange.net.in/public/gen/cr/cr-se-gen-decn-03021001.pdf](http://ftp.solutionexchange.net.in/public/gen/cr/cr-se-gen-decn-03021001.pdf) [accessed February 2011].
- Siahaan, 2003. *The Politics of Gender and Decentralization In Indonesia*, <http://www.policy.hu/siahaan/researchpaper3.htm> [accessed February 2011].
- Singh H, 1994. Constitutional Basis for Panchayati Raj in India, in *Asian Survey* 34, A Monthly Review of Contemporary Asian Affairs, University of California Press.
- Sharma D and Sudarshan RM, 2010. Towards a Politics of Collective Empowerment: Learning from Hill, Women in Rural Uttarakhand, India, *IDS Bulletin* Volume 41 Number 5 September [accessed February 2011].
- Tambiah Y, 2003. *The Impact of Gender Inequality on Governance*. In: *Essays on Gender and Governance*, UNDP India.
- UNDP, 2009. *Helping Women Lead Change*. <http://www.undp.org.in/?q=undp-enhancingwomen%E2%80%99s-role-and-participation-governance> [accessed on 31 October 2010].
- UNESCAP, 2006. Strengthening Gender-Responsive Governance In The UNESCAP Region: A Building-Block for Post-Conflict Reconstruction Policies, *Technical Background Paper*, <http://www.unescap.org/sdd/> [accessed February 2011].
- United Nations Human Settlements Program, 2008. *Gender in Local Government: A Sourcebook for Trainers*, www.un.org/womenwatch/directory/pdf/Source_BK_9-May.pdf [accessed February 2011].
- Vyasulu, P. and Vyasulu, V. 1999. Women in Panchayati Raj: Grass Roots Democracy in Malgudi, *Economic and Political Weekly*, [accessed February 2011].

In this series:

Concept Paper: Gender Responsive Governance

Country Reviews: Women's Political Participation in South Asia

Local Governance for Gender Equality: A Study in Select Districts in India

Violence, Economics and Power: Decoding the impact of violence and economic insecurity on women's political participation in India



Designed & Printed by: Mensa Design Pvt. Ltd., design.mensa@gmail.com

Ms Anne F. Stenhammer
Regional Programme Director
UN Women South Asia Sub-Regional Office
Email: anne.stenhammer@unwomen.org