

## Narrative report

### Programme: IND-3090 (08/068) 'Promoting Women's Political Leadership and Governance in India and South Asia'

Period: March – October 2012

#### 1. Background

UN Women launched a three year programme titled '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 program has three main components:

- **Capacity Building** of elected women representatives
- **Research** for evidence-based advocacy
- Creation of a **Regional Centre of Excellence**

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between UN Women and Ministry of Panchayati Raj, GoI on 18 March 2011. As per the MOU –

- Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) is the nodal agency for the implementation of the programme in India. The programme will be implemented in the states under the overall guidance and supervision of MoPR.
- The Panchayati Raj Department of the States of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and Rajasthan is the nodal department for the execution of the programme in their respective states.
- The State Government will designate and empower a Nodal Officer at the district level to oversee and coordinate activities of the district unit and implement its work plan.
- The district level implementation unit will work under the guidance and supervision of the respective State Panchayati Raj Departments. They will also coordinate directly with UN Women Delhi office.
- To operationalize the MOU a National Level Steering Committee will be formed under the programme to remain in charge of planning, implementation and monitoring and to provide strategic guidance.
- To operationalize the programme in the state a State Level Steering Committee will be formed under the programme.
- District Project Officers have been recruited by UN Women to facilitate district administration to hold 100 Gram Sabha meetings in a year.
- In the National Steering Committee meeting held in March 2011, it was decided that the Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA) would be the modality by which UN Women and the six State Governments would cooperate to implement the programme.
- Subsequently the PCA has been signed with following four State Governments.
 

a) Rajasthan	22 June 2011
b) Odisha	15 July 2011
c) Madhya Pradesh	9 August 2011

- d) Andhra Pradesh 9 August 2011  
 e) Karnataka 14 September 2011

Following the 23 March 2012 National Programme Steering Committee Meeting, 4 additional districts were approved under the programme. These include: Uttara Kannada in Karnataka; Sagar in Madhya Pradesh; and Bhadrak and Sambalpur in Odisha.

Apart from the government, UN Women is engaging with (a) other national government institutions such as Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA) and the Centre of Public Policy, Indian Institute for Management, Bangalore (IIM-B); (b) civil society organizations, such as The Hunger Project (THP), Institute for Social Sciences (ISS) for programme implementation and advocacy; and (c) research institutes such as the International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW), the Norwegian Institute for Regional and Urban Research (NIBR), the Royal University of Bhutan (RUB) for research outputs. Details of activities completed thus far are provided under the next section 2.

At the regional level, the programme has been initiated in Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Pakistan. Please refer to **Output 1.2** for details of activities completed in these countries. In each country, the mandate is to strengthen relevant government machinery to promote women's political participation and leadership.

## 2. Summary of Implemented Activities:

**Outcome 1:** Laws and policies on decentralized governance and devolution of powers to local bodies strengthened in line with national commitments to gender equality in South Asia by 2015

**Reference:** SP Outcome 2: Increase in the number of Constitutions, legal frameworks and processes, that promote and protect women's human rights.

**Output 1.1:** A body of knowledge on legal, budgetary, and policy frameworks, that promote and/or act as barriers to women's effective participation in institutions of local governance in South Asia.

### Implemented Activities

The International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW) has developed 4 Knowledge products under ICRW-UN Women Discussion Paper Series on Women's Political Leadership: (i) *Concept Paper: What is Gender Responsive Governance*; (ii) *Country Reviews: Women's Political Participation in South Asia*; (iii) *Violence, Economics and Power: Decoding the impact of violence and economic empowerment on women's political participation in India*; (iv) *Local Governance for Gender Equality: A study in select districts of India* (Alwar, Gajapati and Mysore). A Dissemination Report, *Opportunities and Challenges of Women's Political Participation in India: A Synthesis of Research Findings from Select Districts in India* The key findings of these papers are as follows:

- **Concept Paper: What is Gender Responsive Governance:** has developed a definition of Gender Responsive Governance – 'A process that embodies measures, attitudes and practices of different stakeholders, both men and women, at different levels of governance, with a clear purpose to impact issues that concern 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 collectivize without fear and pressure and ensures gains from the services'.

- ***Violence, Economics and Power: Decoding the impact of violence and economic empowerment on women's political participation in India:*** The issue of violence, compounded by economic dependence and consequent insecurity, faced by women has not been centre staged as an issue that can impact women's political participation, or even as an issue on the development-agenda in India thus far. While Violence Against Women (VAW) has the potential of affecting governance processes through its impact on individual women, family economics and community as a whole, the recognition of VAW amongst issues that should be addressed on a priority basis to improve women's participation in Panchayats is also nascent. The report presented some examples and anecdotes to show the innovative ways in which women have been able to address the issue of violence, and its various manifestations, in the panchayat agenda. It would be interesting to empirically document the various strategies evolved and mechanisms devised in different states, to tackle VAW through the Panchayats. The paper recommends the development of more systematic knowledge on various aspects of violence against women and its impact on their political participation.
- ***Country Reviews: Women's Political Participation in South Asia:*** provides a comparative study on women's participation in politics in South Asia – Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka – observes that while democracy is more likely to secure the participation of marginalised groups, it is by no means a guarantee of the same. Although equality for men and women might be legally provided for, women are still subordinated to men in all spheres of life due to the fact that discrimination persists unabated within the family and other social institutions. Poor enforcement of legal provisions, the lack of effort to strike at the base of institutions and norms perpetuating patriarchy, and gender inequity contribute towards this situation.
- ***Local Governance for Gender Equality: A study in select districts of India:*** An in-depth study in 3 districts under the programme was undertaken by the ICRW team to understand the opportunities and challenges faced by women aspiring for political participation. Some key findings indicate that (i) women have become confident of their capabilities and aspire to become leaders in village councils, not because of family pressure but as an expression of their own individual aspirations. (ii) Many current elected women representatives wish to re-contest elections and carry forward the work that they had begun as leaders. (iii) While village councils continue to remain insensitive to issues related to domestic violence, sexual harassment and other issues concerning women specifically, a small fraction of women across the different study sites (north, east, and south India) have raised issues of domestic violence consistently in panchayat meetings – a small but significant step towards achieving gender equality. (iv) The lack of education and technical training to become effective political leaders and the absence of gender sensitisation among women and men in society are some of the persistent hurdles that prevent women from emerging as effective leaders and decision makers.

Data from ICRW-UN Women research was shared with the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) for drafting of the 12<sup>th</sup> Plan chapter on Gender and Governance by the Planning Commission, Government of India.

The **Norwegian Institute for Regional and Urban Research (NIBR)** has been contracted to develop a Gender Responsive Governance Index (GRGI) and build research capacity on women's political empowerment in Bhutan and Nepal. The contract with NIBR was signed in the latter half of December and work commenced from 15 January 2012. Subsequent to an agreement signed

between UN Women and **Royal University of Bhutan (RUB)** – the main research division of the Royal Government of Bhutan, a North-South cooperation has been established between NIBR and RUB to build research capacity on Women's Political Leadership and Governance in Bhutan. A detailed study on women's political participation in Bhutan is underway at present. The report will be published in time for policy advocacy for the upcoming National Elections scheduled in 2013 in Bhutan. A joint analysis workshop between NIBR and RUB on the data collected is scheduled for the latter half of October 2012.

**N. R. Management Consultants India Pvt. Ltd.** have been contracted to develop a Performance Management Framework and Evaluation Framework with baseline indicators; and evaluate the programme progress. A Performance Management Framework and Evaluation Framework including Baseline was completed in December 2011. This activity will set up a Baseline for the programme based on which an Evaluation will be undertaken by the Royal Norwegian Embassy in 2012. The activity will develop a Monitoring and Evaluation framework so that as the programme is implemented, the Governance unit at UN Women SARO has a clear set of indicators based on which to monitor the programme. From the programme implementation point of view, the assignment will undertake an evaluation – Baseline, Midline, and Endline – to measure the extent of success and shortcomings of the interventions in this first phase. The Performance Management Framework and Evaluation Framework as well as Baseline Report have been completed. The report is under review by UN Women at present.

**Bhutan:** Survey on women's political participation in local government elections in Bhutan in 2011 was completed. The NCWC-UN Women report was launched in Bhutan, in the presence of the Hon'ble Prime Minister of Bhutan, H.E. Jigme Y. Thinley, and the Hon'ble Minister for International Development, Royal Government of Norway, H.E. Heikki Holmas. The programme was initiated in Bhutan with a survey of 'Women's Political Participation in the Local Government Elections in 2011'. This survey was conducted by a local research organisation, Institute for Management Studies, and coordinated by the National Commission for Women and Children, Royal Government of Bhutan. The report was finalised based on consultation with UN Women, UNDP Bhutan, LoD, and NCWC. The main findings of the draft survey report are:

- Contrary to popular belief, almost 80 per cent of women in Bhutan aspire to participate and emerge as elected leaders local in politics.
- An overwhelming majority of women are keen to create a space for themselves in political decision-making and thereby bring about change in the lives of women in Bhutan.

**Evidence on Two-Child Norm** generated on request from Government of Odisha. Two child norm is practised in Odisha. Under this section any elected official at the Gram Panchayat level, who has more than two children, can be disqualified from its post. This norm goes against basic reproductive rights of an individual and is especially hampering the elected women representatives. This is because a child's birth is registered with the mother and hence it is easier to monitor the number of children a woman has. Evidence shows that men, who contest local elections, under report on the number of children they have. In the absence of monitoring mechanisms, the Two-child norm is exercised on women candidates and not on male candidates. In such case they are unable to exercise their political right to contest election and effectively participate in it. UN Women in partnership with The Hunger Project provided the Government of Odisha evidence on the impact of the Two-child norm which is biased against women. This evidence has succeeded in convincing the Government of Odisha to review the existing Two-Child Norm in their state. Consultation with regard to the review in Odisha is underway. THP has constituted a consultative group to take this issue forward.

**Output 1.2:** By 2011, consensus on legal and policy reforms necessary in the area of governance decentralization and devolution of financial powers to promote women's effective political participation in India identified.

**Implemented Activities: India**

**Government of India:** Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been signed between the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India and UN Women, South Asia Regional Office to jointly implement the programme, 'Promoting Women's Political Leadership and Governance in India and South Asia' in *India*. This ensures national ownership of the programme in India. Subsequent to the MOU signing, Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA) has been signed with 5 State Governments – Please refer to **1. Background**, of the Narrative Report for details. Work in the states has commenced. State Programme Steering Committee meetings have been held in all 5 states under the programme – Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and Rajasthan. The state-wise progress of the programme is as follows:

- 16 District Program Officers have joined the program to facilitate state and district administration to implement the program. They underwent gender capacity training and program orientation at the State Institute of Rural Development, Odisha
- Nearly 400 motivators are on board and are playing a crucial role in mobilising the women to take part in local level government.
- Annual Work Plans for the programme districts – have been prepared and approved for implementation. Funds have been transferred to state governments for operationalising the action plans.
- **Andhra Pradesh:** The Minister from Norway, Ms. Liv Signe Navarsete, and Shri V. Kishore Chandra Deo, Hon'ble Minister for Panchayati Raj Government of India, agreed on a partnership between local bodies in Andhra Pradesh, India and Norway – Kurupam, Vizianagaram, in Andhra Pradesh, India and Oygarten in Norway during the visit of the Norwegian ministerial delegation in January 2012. Mutual sharing of best practices; effective ombudsman at national and local level; and key role of gender equality legislations were discussed. The delegation witnessed a special gram sabha meeting in Vizianagaram. The delegation also visited the State Election Commission in Andhra Pradesh and was impressed by the electronic voting system, which they would like to replicate in Norway. The State government has owned the Gol – UNWomen programme has branded it as "*Sambhagam*" (equal share). The GOI-UN Women programme has been selected for the Laldli Media Awards for Gender Sensitivity 2011-12 in the Special Jur̄y Award – Best Public Awareness Programme Category.
- **Karnataka:** The program has been given a special name "*Sampoorna*" by the State government. The intention behind according the name "*Sampoorna*" (which means 100% in Hindi) is the state government's vision to achieve gender equality and equal access for women in all arenas. State government has distributed brochures and badges of Sampoorna to create awareness and recognize the contribution of the Motivators to encourage women to participate in local level politics.

- **Madhya Pradesh:** The Government of India reviewed the programme in January 2012 and found that the interventions have actually changed the discourse in Gram Sabha to focus on gender issues, in addition to a high level of women's participation in Gram Sabha. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj has appreciated the model of incentivising Gram Sabha to take up social sector issues through mahila sabhas and mainstreamed it into its forthcoming scheme in India's Twelfth Plan.
- **Odisha:** Policy note on two child norm and its impact on women's political participation requested by the State government has been prepared and shared. Discussion is underway on next steps. Efforts are also made to converge with NIPI in Sambalpur. Based on the programmatic initiatives, policy directive highlighting the need to have at least 50 % share of women in quorum for gram sabha in panchayat meeting has been issued.
- **Rajasthan:** On 1 May 2012, an order was issued by the Government of Rajasthan by which in the UN Women programme districts every three months a regular Mahila Sabha (meeting of women) should be organised where they discuss issues related to them and their development. Health and education workers and members of the SHGs should be present in these meetings and participate in the discussions. In case the Gram Panchayat is headed by woman then the Mahila Sabha should be under her Chairmanship. Where ever men are elected as Sarpanch a woman should be chosen as the Co-Chair for the Mahila Sabha. The discussion which takes place in the Mahila Sabha should later on be taken up in the Gram Sabha.

**The Hunger Project (THP)** is undertaking a number of initiatives under the UN Women governance programme: Advocacy efforts are underway on Section 40: Section 40 violates the basic principle of decentralization which is removal of an elected representative by a non elected functionary. The power should remain in the hands of the people, and not with the bureaucrat. This has given rise to the number of cases under section 40 and its misuse especially against women and other members of the marginalised communities.

Two state level consultations and two regional consultations were held with multi stakeholders. These consultations covered 28 districts. The main purpose for the consultation was to develop a consensus on repeal of Section 40 versus its amendment within the law. The consultation generated awareness on Section 40 amongst different stakeholders representing diverse perspectives and groups. It has helped in evolving a concrete advocacy strategy.

THP has started an 'Interface' with Parliamentarians and Legislators in Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and Rajasthan. The women in Odisha submitted Memorandum on the Two-Child Norm to the Parliamentarians.

THP has also initiated a Radio programme highlighting the message of their SWEEP (Strengthening Women's Empowerment through Electoral Participation) which was broadcast across all 38 districts of Bihar with 3.8 million households. SWEEP reached out to 21,30,000 persons through intensive and extensive campaign.

**Bhutan**

The Bhutan LoA was signed in 2011. UN Women has been working in Bhutan for the role out of their programme, 'Promoting Women's Political Leadership and Governance in India and South Asia', working through the UN Resident Coordinator's Office/UNDP in Bhutan.

UN Women's work is reflected under the Governance outcome of the Bhutan UNDAF. Accordingly the programme activities were included in the Bhutan Action Plan 2011. During the formulation of the Governance Annual Work Plan 2012 (refer to Bhutan UNDAF 2012) UN Women had been requested to provide support for the finalization of studies conducted and continued support to capacity development including for parliamentarians.

The UNDAF and Governance Outcome are as follows:

### **UNDADF/CPAP Outcome 4 (Good Governance)**

- ❖ To explore the integration of UNIFEM part of UN Women support on enhancing women's participation and leadership into the UNDAF.
- ❖ To look for ways to consolidate activities and focus resources.
- ❖ Comments made by UNODC on ratification of conventions related to corruption and crime noted.

#### **Gender:**

- ❖ Need for consistent and strong Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) leadership in this area underlined.
- ❖ Support from UN Women for gender-responsive budgeting is welcomed.
- ❖ To strengthen coordination with DANIDA for building the capacity of RGoB Gender Focal Points.
- ❖ Need of continued attention to sex and other disaggregated data. The announcement of an upcoming statistical publication statistical publication by GNHC, featuring sex disaggregated data is welcomed.

#### **Objectives of the assignment**

To facilitate implementation of Common Country Programme Action Plan (cCPAP) 2008-2013, UN Women South Asia Sub-Regional Strategy (SRS) 2008-2010 and Promoting Women's Political Leadership and Governance in India and South Asia. The additional funds for additional activities will contribute to *Outcome 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* of the UN Women programme, 'Promoting Women's Political Leadership and Governance in India and South Asia'.

Allocation for 2012:

- Output 3.2 Competencies of Government officials at State, District & Block-levels strengthened to monitor capacity development efforts aimed at women PR members.
  - Activity 3.2.2 Support National & State structures to integrate gender-responsive governance concepts and methods in capacity development modules for all Local Government officials.
    - Support to Bhutan for gender-based capacity development and research
    - Additional support to Bhutan for preparing of next national election

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The National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC), Royal Government of Bhutan is the nodal government agency jointly implementing the programme, along with UNDP Bhutan and the UN Resident Coordinator's Office in Bhutan. A Gender Specialist has been recruited who is jointly funded by UN Women SASRO and the UN Women Governance unit. Her Terms of Reference states that she will contribute 50 per cent of her time in assisting UNDP Bhutan to implement the programme and the remaining 50 per cent of her time to other UN Women programmes in Bhutan.

The programme in Bhutan has been designed in two phases. This is because Bhutan is the youngest member to a democratic constitution and in 2011, the first Local Government Elections were held. In order to better understand the situation of women vis-à-vis political participation and decision-making, a survey was undertaken on Women's Political Participation in the Local Government Elections in Bhutan in 2011. This assignment was undertaken by a local research agency – the Institute for Management Studies (IMS) under the supervision of NCWC and UNDP Bhutan. UN Women SASRO provided necessary guidance and advice as and when required. For details about the report, please refer to **1.1.3** above.

A UN Governance theme cluster meeting in Bhutan was undertaken in 8-10 December 2011. On the sidelines of this meeting, UN Women held consultations with UNDP Bhutan, and NCWC to chart out the work plan for the next phase of the programme on Promoting



Women's Political Leadership and Governance in Bhutan based on the results of the survey. The second phase of the programme will include training of government officials and women in gender responsive political participation by women; and in-depth studies on barriers to women's participation in politics in Bhutan. The latter activity will be implemented through a joint collaboration between NIBR, a Norwegian research organization, and the Royal University of Bhutan, which is the research division of the Royal Government of Bhutan. Through this initiative, a North-South exchange of experiences and strengthening research capacity on women's political empowerment in Bhutan will be achieved.

UN Women Governance unit, SARO has funded a training programme on Gender Budgeting for senior government officials of the Royal Government of Bhutan and internal capacity development of UNDP Bhutan staff members. This was held in June-July in Bangkok conducted jointly by UNDP Regional Centre, Bangkok and UN Women SARO.

UN Women supported Ms Kesang Chuki Dorjee to develop a film on women's literacy and governance issues. In the Local Assembly Elections held in 2011, only 1 woman was elected to office. Participation in politics in Bhutan at the local and national level is conditional on achieving a certain degree of literacy and passing the Functional Literacy Test (FLT) before contesting elections. Many women are unable to clear the FLT and hence do not qualify for political participation. This is considered to be one of the major reasons for extremely low participation by women in politics. Ms Dorjee worked with elected women representatives, children in schools, and women in general who aspire to become political leaders but have not been able to clear the FLT thus far, to prepare a film on the challenges that women in Bhutan face to political participation because of low levels of education and literacy. This assignment has provided important baseline, through a film which documents the current conditions in Bhutan, for the programme in Bhutan.

## Pakistan

The Pakistan country office has initiated a number of programme initiatives.

- A first draft of the mapping of gender responsive governance initiatives in Pakistan has been reviewed by the programme team and knowledge management unit of UN Women. This study will help to understand the gaps in existing interventions and design a strategic intervention for the UN Women programme. Research on *Status on Women's Political Empowerment* has been initiated.
- UN Women Pakistan country office, under the programme is directly funding the publication and dissemination of some important knowledge products such as newsletters, Report of International Convention of Women Parliamentarians, the 4<sup>th</sup> CEDAW report. This process is underway. A document on Gender Equality Policy for AJK has been published and disseminated. Similarly Research Report on Minorities has also been disseminated.
- UN Women Pakistan Country Office has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Women's Parliamentary Caucus. A Call for Proposal has been advertised to

support institutional capacity building in settling up financial and management systems and website.

- At the provincial level:
  - ✦ A Letter of Agreement (LOA) has been signed and first installment released to the Provincial Assembly of the Khyber Pakhtun Khwa in setting up a Women's Provincial Parliamentary Caucus. The LOA also includes capacity development of parliamentarians in CEDAW and Gender Equality (GE) policies and legal reforms.
  - ✦ UN Women Pakistan Country Office has supported the AJK government for consultations and drafting of GE policy. The Policy was approved and adopted with the implementation plan by the government. Consequently the departments of Women and Development were restructured as independent departments with separate budget/resource allocations. Subsequently notification of Women's Parliamentary Caucus and PCSW were issued by the AJK government.
  - ✦ In Baluchistan, UN Women Pakistan Country Office supported the drafting of the GE policy. Consultations with key stakeholders have been initiated.
  - ✦ In WDD Punjab UN Women has been formally requested to support its implementation of women's empowerment package.
  - ✦ A meeting of Provincial Interministerial Group (IPMG) was held to discuss the GE agenda for provinces post devolution. This resulted in a resolution that was presented to the Hon'ble Prime Minister of Pakistan.
  - ✦ UN Women Pakistan Country Office has also supported 3-4 consultations on key legislations by NCSW at the provincial level
- UN Women Pakistan Country Office provided technical assistance to the National Commission on Status of Women (NCSW) in the area of programme management, legal, and communication and advocacy advisory. This resulted in (a) development of a strategic plan of NCSW; (b) 5 laws reviewed and drafted by NCSW in the area of anti-women trafficking law, personal laws of minorities, amendment bill for acid crime laws and anti-women practice bills were passed by the National Assembly; (c) provincial consultations on domestic violence and other laws was supported by UN Women through dissemination of research findings; (d) UN Women provided technical assistance for the drafting of the National Guidelines on GE policy after Devolution through a consultative process.
- A Memorandum of Understanding and Workplan has been signed to institutionalize capacity building in Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR), Government of Pakistan on CEDAW reporting.
- A Memorandum of Understanding and LOA has been signed with NADRA which includes a media campaign. Implementing partners have been identified and oriented about the mobilization campaign in 5 most conservative districts of Baluchistan.

### Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, a mapping study was conducted to understand the current status on interventions related to women's political empowerment. For this exercise two consultants were hired who facilitated the Bangladesh country office to undertake this assignment. The mapping study was followed by a dissemination workshop, followed by the preparation of a draft proposal. This will be discussed with the UN Resident Coordinator for Bangladesh before presenting to the Royal Norwegian Embassy in New Delhi. However, a fund for the Bangladesh component of the programme is assured under the present agreement between RNE and UN Women, SASRO.

### Nepal

Mapping of women's political leadership interventions in Nepal was conducted by the Norwegian research partner, Norwegian Institute for Regional and Urban Studies (NIBR) in February 2012.

**Output 1.3:** Coalitions of women in politics articulate a common agenda for gender responsive governance in India and South Asia by 2015.

**Implemented Activities: 1.3a:**

The Bangladesh and Pakistan country offices have initiated Caucus of Parliamentarians at the national and provincial level to promote women's political decision-making in local governance in their respective countries.

THP introduced a new concept: *Jagruk Manch* (Awareness Forum) - is a group of elected and non-elected women at Gram Panchayat level to support the elected women representatives in their work and strengthen the participation of women in Panchayats. Elected women take a lead in Jagruk Manches and raise issues concerning their Panchayats and women. 315 Jagruk Manch have been formed from 635 Gram Panchayats in Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and Rajasthan. 5898 elected women representatives and 17053 women citizens have participated in these Manch. It is a robust platform to understand political processes, engage with governance and policy issues and demand accountability in local institutions of self-governance.

THP is working towards strengthening Standing Committees: All elected members in Gram Panchayats are members of Standing Committees. Active Standing Committees can play an important role in effective functioning of panchayats. But the ground reality is that most Standing Committees are not active. In most cases members are not aware of which committee they belong to. In most panchayats, standing committees are non functional. In order to strengthen the institution of Panchayati Raj a need was felt to engage with these Standing Committees. It now becomes significant as each Standing Committee meets twice a month on the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> of each month. UN Women in partnership with THP have organized 26 Standing Committee trainings where 503 members attended the training on social justice and 496 for committee on education. All members have been made aware on

their roles and responsibilities as members of the Standing committees, their functions and importance. Having undergone the training and understanding the importance of a functional standing committee, some panchayat members have started attending their respective standing committee meetings.

UN Women supported Women's Empowerment Day celebrations organized by the Institute for Social Sciences (ISS). The 18<sup>th</sup> Women's Political Empowerment Day Celebration was held at Vishwa Yuvak Kendra, New Delhi on 25-26 April, 2011 on the theme 'Panchayats, Women and Safe Drinking Water'. ISS is not an implementing partner of UN Women; however, one of the mandates of the programme is to build networks with organisations and communities in South Asia that work on issues related to women's political empowerment so that the reach of the programme is broadened. Under this aegis UN Women has been supporting ISS for their annual event of Women's Political Empowerment Day Celebration for the last 2 years. The occasion was presided over by Ms Agatha Sangma, Minister of State for Rural Development. Ms Sangma stated 'water management schemes can be implemented in a better way provided women are given 50 per cent representation in village water and drinking water committees'. Among the dignitaries were Mr Aslak Brun, Minister Councillor, Royal Norwegian Embassy, who emphasized the importance of strong assertive women in local decision-making bodies. Two women Panchayat leaders were honoured for their outstanding performance as elected leaders of Panchayats. (i) Ms Rukmani Devi Savi – Sarpanch, Vijaypura Panchayat, Rajasmand, Rajasthan; and (ii) Ms Junpo Jugli – District Panchayat President, Changlang, Arunachal Pradesh were awarded.

**Outcome 2:** Elected women representatives in local government have the knowledge and capacity to transform and implement policies, programmes, and resource allocation for gender sensitive governance in 6 states (now 5 states) in India by 2015.

**Reference SP Outcome 5:** Gender equality experts, advocates and their organizations or networks effectively demand the implementation of gender equality dimensions in national laws, policies, and strategies.

**Output 2.1:** Competencies of women and men representatives in 6 states (now 5 states) in India enhanced on public speaking, understanding budgets, understanding how to link with the constituencies i.e. gram sabhas etc in gender responsive governance.

**Implemented Activities: 2.1:**

**Government of India:** Work plans have been prepared at the district-level in consultation with the District Administration and members of the Panchayati Raj Institutions to hold 100 Gram Sabha meetings in each district on issues concerning women. Thus far a total of 247 Gram Sabhas, 420 Mahila Sabhas, and 1210 Ward Sabhas have been conducted under the programme.

**National Institute for Rural Development (NIRD):** In April 2011, NIRD conducted a Gender Needs Assessment Workshop where officials from all SIRDs under the programme participated. As a follow up to the Workshop, it was agreed that NIRD would collect existing

training modules from all SIRDs to develop a gender sensitive training module for training of trainers to be conducted in the coming months.

Training of Trainers (ToT) module has been prepared by NIRD. The module has been tested and feedback incorporated. The English version of the Modules on Gender Responsive Governance and Livelihoods has been published. The modules will be translated in local languages and customised by SIRDs as per the state-specific requirements.

Within the reporting period, NIRD developed the following deliverables – Gender Capacity Assessment of five State Institute(s) of Rural Development (SIRDs) has been conducted. These SIRDs are from Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and Rajasthan. Training Needs Assessment of the elected women representatives carried out by SIRDs in the five states. Workshop on designing demand-driven gender capacity development module for women’s political leadership organized in May 2011; and ToT module on gender responsive governance prepared, tested and published.

**Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA):** Pilot testing on Gender Based Violence manual was carried out by LBSNAA, Mussoorie as the first work under the project. This was undertaken in June 2011 and was attended by officials from the Indian Administrative Services, Indian Police Services, and district government officials. A joint Gender Training workshop on gender issues was held in July 2011 attended by senior government officials of Joint-Secretary rank to the Government of India. A national consultation was carried out by LBSNAA, 8-9 December, 2011. The aim was to look at the training modules with a gender lens and add wherever required case studies, anecdotes, films, information pertaining to gender on relevant subject.

**THP:** Under THP’s initiative, 20 Gender and Panchayat Resource Centres were opened across six districts in Odisha. These serve as an information and knowledge hub in rural areas. These centres are opened at Block and Gram Panchayat level.

Another initiative by THP is the SWEEP: Strengthening Women’s Empowerment through Electoral Participation (SWEEP) was rolled out through simulation camp, potential women leadership workshops, village meetings, street plays and rallies. Activities were planned at community level, media was sensitized and civil society was mobilized. Information, education and communication material was produced and distributed in the campaign area. Cases of violence against women were reported during elections held in Bihar in April 2011. It ranged from murder, sexual abuse, suicide, threats and physical abuse. After follow-up with State Election Commission these areas were declared sensitive and elections were conducted in a fair manner in such Panchayats. Police protection was sought in some cases. During the Bihar Panchayat election cases of violence against women has been tracked and advocacy towards the same was carried out during the Panchayat elections. It involved networking with experts and organisations on the issue. A fact finding team was formed. 36 cases of violence were reported.

THP has also worked under its SWEEP campaign in Orissa where the elections have recently been held. The details of the Panchayat elections will be announced on 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2012. The same shall be shared with the PSC member at a later date.

**Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore:** In July 2012, UN Women signed a Project Cooperation Agreement with Centre for Public Policy, IIM Bangalore to support the India's first certificate course in political leadership for women-the India-Women in Leadership (i-WIL) programme. The contract amounts to \$ 95000. The i-WIL programme aims to strengthen the effectiveness of women leaders as they enter and progress in Indian democracy. It aims to equip aspiring women leaders with the requisite skills, knowledge and expertise in various aspects of governance, and strengthen their ability to contest elections, lobby for women's rights and strengthen the overall network of politically active women across India. This training is targeted towards women in politics, social activists, and others from diverse backgrounds who have a keen interest in active politics. The course is spread across three months which includes lectures, field visits, as well as a week each of intensive exposure visits in Delhi and Singapore.

**Joint UN Programming:** The first UN Working Group meeting was held in April 2011 to operationalise the MOU between UN Women, UNDP India, and UNICEF India. Under this initiative, the 3 UN Agencies will combine resources and points of leverage at local, state, and national levels so that their ongoing and future programmes on governance issues and gender can be more effective. Each agency's Annual Work Plan would be part of the Integrated Annual Work Plan on Gender Responsive Governance.

**Output 2.2:** Capacities of government officials at state, districts, and block levels strengthened to monitor capacity development efforts aimed at women PR members.

**Implemented Activities: 2.2:**

**LBSNAA,** Mussoorie is preparing a training module on 'Gender Based Violence'. Since LBSNAA is the institute which trains the Probationers who are selected for the civil services before they are sent to perform their duties in their respective regions. The training under the programme shall be at three levels – Probationers; Mid-level career i.e. of the rank of Directors, Joint Secretaries and Joint Commissioners; Senior-level career i.e. above the rank of Joint Secretaries i.e. more than 15 years of service.

The training module shall also help in conducting training for the Parliamentarians and State Legislators. The module focuses on – Empowering women for gender equality; Developing a human rights framework; Capacity building of stake holders to address gender based violence. Activities under the agreement with LBSNAA help contribute to the programme by sensitizing senior government officials and policy makers to issues of women's political participation and empowerment at different levels of the government structure.

**NIRD** has prepared Training of Trainers (ToT) modules with particular focus on livelihoods and to address gender gaps in the existing training modules of NIRD and SIRDs. The modules

are published and being distributed to SIRDs. The training of the trainers from SIRDs, programme State, districts and block level officers and elected panchayat representatives are being organised.

**Output 2.3:** Capacities of civil society enhanced to engage with major political parties in India to ensure affirmative actions for party positions and election tickets for women by 2015.

**Implemented Activities:**

To be undertaken in 2012.

**Outcome 3:** Key capacity development and media institutions and structures in India and South Asia strengthened to mainstream gender responsive governance into their policies and programme by 2015.

**Reference: SP Outcome 7:** Key policy, service delivery, and media institutions create enabling institutional environments to promote and protect women's human rights in-line with global, regional and national agreements.

**Output 3.1:** Regional institutional system (consisting of Regional Centre of Excellence and satellite institutions) for demand-driven capacity development of EWRs in South Asia on gender responsive governance in place and strengthened by 2015.

**Implemented Activities: 3.1**

UN Women Governance programme is participating in the drafting of the 12<sup>th</sup> Plan by the Planning Commission, Government of India. The background papers developed by ICRW for the programme have been shared with the Gender and Governance sub-group.

A Position Paper on a Regional Centre of Excellence for 'Promoting Women's Political Leadership and Governance in India and South Asia' has been developed through a consultative process across the South Asian countries under the programme. Based on recommendations in the Position Paper, appropriate strategies for establishing the Regional Centre of Excellence will be initiated. A prototype of the Regional Centre of Excellence for 'Promoting Women's Political Leadership and Governance in India and South Asia' was launched on 4 October 2012 by the United Nation's Under-Secretary General and UN Women's Executive Director, Ms Michelle Bachelet during the Regional Leadership Summit graced by the Hon'ble Governor of Rajasthan, H.E. Smt. Margaret Alva, Hon'ble Ambassador to India from Norway, Mr Eivind Homme, Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India, Dr Hrusikesh Panda, Hon'ble Minister for Panchayati Raj, Government of Odisha, Mr Kalpataru Das, senior representatives from Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, and other dignitaries and guests from South Asia region.

UNDP toolkit for Gender Capacity Assessment and UNICEF-KILA manual for capacity building of EWRs on child-friendly governance shared with NIRD.

Workshop on gender awareness and capacity development for the teaching staff of SIRD, Bhubaneswar and Government officials of Odisha (Department of Panchayati Raj) was organised in July 2011.

A Request for Proposal for recruiting a suitable agency to develop a Communication Strategy for the programme was advertised. 16 proposals were received which are being assessed for short listing the suitable agency for the assignment. The assignment will cover all the states and districts in India and will be primarily targeted to elected women and men representatives in local governance, and secondarily to donors, other UN agencies, national and state governments, and other countries. Different forms of media – print, television, pictorial, folk art, and new social media such as facebook, twitter, blogs etc will be designed and set up to achieve maximum coverage and visibility of the programme results. A contract was issued to Ideosync. As a first deliverable, they developed the logo for the Regional Centre of Excellence branding.

A film by Ms Kesang Chuki Dorjee has been made on barriers to women's political participation in local governance based on a documentation of the recently held Local Assembly Elections in 2011 – The first in Bhutan. Please refer to narrative on Bhutan under **Output 1.2** for details about the film.

The GOI-UN Women programme has been selected for the UNFPA-supported Laadli Media Awards for Gender Sensitivity 2011-12 in the Special Jury Award – Best Public Awareness Programme Category.

**Output 3.2:** Incentive mechanisms developed within national and state government systems to promote decision-making of women in local governance.

**Implemented Activities:**

To be taken up in 2012.

### **3. Summary of Results:**

1. ICRW-UN Women Discussion Paper Series on Women's Political Leadership developed and disseminated.
2. Findings from ICRW-UN Women Discussion Paper Series informed 12<sup>th</sup> Plan, chapter on Gender and Governance.
3. Baseline on Women's Political Participation in Bhutan developed and disseminated.
4. North-South cooperation for joint research capacity building between NIBR and RUB under UN Women programme established.
5. Baseline for 16 programme districts in 5 states in India under GOI-UN Women programme, 'Promoting Women's Political Leadership and Governance in India and South Asia' developed.



6. Consensus built with Government of Odisha to review Two-Child Norm in the state.
7. Ownership of programme at state and district levels achieved – customized branding of programme at state level by state governments achieved.
8. Under GOI-UN Women programme, 'Promoting Women's Political Leadership and Governance in India and South Asia' 247 Gram Sabhas, 420 Mahila Sabhas, and 1210 Ward Sabhas conducted.
9. Partnership for local government knowledge sharing between Norway and Andhra Pradesh established.
10. GOI-UN Women programme incorporated within India's national 12<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan (2012-2017)
11. Joint implementation of programme, 'Promoting Women's Political Leadership and Governance in India and South Asia' under One UN Bhutan established.
12. Capacity of government officials at national and district level including Elected Women Representatives on gender responsive governance built in Bhutan.
13. Visual baseline for Promoting Women's Political Leadership and Governance and advocacy material developed (film: *From Nangi Aums to Go Thrips*) developed.
14. Knowledge product on Nepal women's political leadership developed.
15. Consensus with Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR), Government of Pakistan for joint implementation of programme, 'Promoting Women's Political Leadership and Governance in India and South Asia' established.
16. Consensus for strengthening Women's Parliamentary Caucus in Pakistan achieved.
17. Agreement with Provincial Assembly of Khyber Pakhtun Khwa, Pakistan signed for Women's Parliamentary Caucus.
18. Strategic Plan for National Commission on Status of Women (NCSW), Pakistan developed with UN Women support.
19. 5 laws under NCSW reviewed and drafted with UN Women support.
20. Gender Equality policy for implementation in AJK, Pakistan drafted and adopted with UN Women support.
21. Policy advocacy on Gender Equality in Baluchistan, Pakistan underway with UN Women support.
22. Implementation of package for women's empowerment in WDD Punjab, Pakistan through UN Women underway.

23. Knowledge products (newsletter, Report of International Convention of Women Parliamentarians, 4<sup>th</sup> CEDAW Report), Pakistan under development.
24. Gender Equality Policy for AKJ developed and disseminated.
25. Consensus built with government and UN in Bangladesh, based on Mapping Study on Women's Political Participation and Governance in Bangladesh. Bangladesh has participated in the consultations for the networking apex training institutions, as a building block for the Regional Centre of Excellence
26. Consensus for strengthening Women's Parliamentary Caucus in Bangladesh and Pakistan achieved.
27. Knowledge products on training by NIRD-UN Women on 'Promoting Women's Political Leadership and Governance in India and South Asia' developed.
28. Effectiveness of women leaders in Indian governance strengthened.
29. Regional Centre of Excellence (RCoE) on 'Promoting Women's Political Leadership and Governance in India and South Asia' launched by UN Under-Secretary General, and UN Women Executive Director, Ms Michelle Bachelet in October 2012.
30. Distinctive branding for RCoE established.
31. Visibility and recognition of the GOI-UN Women programme at state level achieved.

#### **4. Challenges and Risk of Corruption**

Coordination and cooperation with the Government of India has been the priority for implementation of activities and for sustainability of the programme. Various functional modalities have been worked out to work in the States. However, the risk factor would be if there is a change in senior-level personnel at the Central Ministry, it can definitely impact the progress of the programme. The other challenge is to make sure that in the States all the concerned actors from Gram Sabha to District to the State understand the programme otherwise there is a major risk of deviation in the vision of the programme. In a recent case related to the state of Madhya Pradesh, the Government has nominated 'Sanjay Gandhi Institute of Training for Youth in Leadership and Rural Development Panchmari' to undertake the training of elected women representatives under the programme, while SIRD, Jabalpur had been participating in all the consultations of the programme till date. This decision of the state government would affect the pace of implementation of the programme with NIRD and as well as capacity building in two districts in Madhya Pradesh. UN Women is in constant touch with the officials and partners in order to avoid any deviation.

UN Women is also conscious of the fact that the money to the states/SIRDs and to the districts will require strict monitoring to ensure efficient use of funds. The State Steering

Committee and National PSC are key mechanisms for progress reporting and review – and to address challenges – including monitoring of financial expenditures.

### **5. Environment and Climate Change**

The programme, *Promoting Women's Political Leadership and Governance in India and South Asia* aims to empower women in local governance in the south Asian countries of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, and Pakistan. This will be achieved through training of women in political decision-making, research for evidence based policy advocacy, and a Regional Centre of Excellence that will institutionalise the training and research outputs for future reference. As per these activities, the programme will have no negative impact on the environment and climate change in the region.

### **6. Review/Evaluation:**

As per contractual agreement (Please refer to Article V. Evaluation of the Contract Agreement) a mid-term review of the programme progress is to be conducted by the Donor before completion of programme tenure; and agree upon the next phase of the programme. A Norwegian agency for the review has been recruited by NORAD. Preparations are underway for commencement of the evaluation exercise from November 2012. UN Women will provide all logistical support needed by the Evaluation team.

### **7. Norway India Partnership Initiative (NIPI):**

Discussion with the NIPI office in Delhi and Jaipur has been initiated to build on linkages and convergence of issues that could add value to both the programmes.

A meeting was held in Jaipur on 12 September, 2011. Based on discussion at the meeting, the broad areas of convergence under the programme could be –

1. Bringing children for regular immunization to the Gram Sabha,
  2. Getting the mother and the child regularly vaccinated.
- Increase in referral cases to the hospital. The people from the community could be of help in taking the patients to the hospitals as and when the need arises in private vehicles available in their vicinity.

Tripartite consultation between NIPI, RNE and UN Women has been facilitated by RNE so that specific linkages could be established.

NIPI manual on self-assessment for women's health has been shared with NIRD in May-June 2012 and feasible inputs have been included in the TOT Manual.

With the inclusion of Sambalpur district in Odisha, the Programme has two common districts with NIPI. In July 2012, an Action Plan has been drafted by UN Women and NIPI – the next step would be dialogue at the state level in Rajasthan and Odisha with State health Mission (under NRHM) and Department of Panchayati Raj.

## 8. Declining Sex Ratio:

The 2011 Census of India Provisional Figures indicates India's child sex ratio (age group 0-6 years) has declined to 911 females per thousand males. This exemplifies the steadily declining trend in the sex ratio at birth.

The India United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) Gender Equality Cluster is supporting capacity development and sensitization initiatives with government, civil society, panchayats and service providers on removing bias against girl children, better implementation of national laws against sex determination and sex-selective abortion. In view of the stronger national priority to tackle the threat posed by adverse child sex ratio, UN Women has been requested by Government and UN agencies working on the issue (viz. UNFPA and UNICEF) to take up the issue as a gender equality challenge in the GOI-UN Women Programme. The issue has also been listed in the MOU between UN Women and GOI, signed in March 2011. The forthcoming UN meeting in Ha Noi will also mention this initiative.

As the programme gets under way in the focus states – we expect the training programmes and gram sabha (100 per district per year) meetings to take up, inter alia, the issue and identify specific practical local solutions.

MOPR has developed guidelines for Gram Sabha and PRIs to focus on addressing the challenge of declining sex ratio at birth and gender-biased sex selection. This document has been shared with state governments and districts under the Programme, and should inform the deliberations of the Gram Sabhas and action taken on the basis of these deliberations. This is also a possible point of convergence with NIPI in our common districts.