# Role of Women in Decentralisation

**B**y

C.P. Sujaya and Devaki Jain

May 2000

# **Table of Content**

Section I	4		
Introduction and Summary			1 –5
Section II			
Review			6 – 11
Section III			
Some Question and Answers			12 – 18
Section IV		4	19 - 21
Notes			22 – 24
Reference			25 – 27

#### **Role of Women in Decentralisation**

By C. P. Sujaya and Devaki Jain\*

May 2000

SECTION: I

#### **Introduction and Summary:**

While much has been said and can be said about decentralisation especially as conceived by the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Indian Constitution in India, and what it has done for women's inclusion in politics and administration; much more can be said and needs to be said about what women bring to the understanding and improvement of the system of local government.

Thus, this paper argues that women's experience of local government and panchayats cannot and should not be used only in a limited for gender focussed way to **enhance** the participation of women; or to **ease** their way through the political undergrowth, or even to **improve** women's contribution to the panchayat's product. It must be usefully utilized to redesign the very substance of the decentralisation system and process.

What are some of these pointers that women's participation in local government in India are making? Given below is a summary of the items which have been identified by the women, the elected women, as points for attention. These will be further supported with references to studies, reports, meetings – and several articles in the rest of the paper

- 1. While quota has in fact been an important breakthrough for women's participation in politics, it has also been able to yield, out of ground level experience, ideas for reform of the very system. An elected woman in Andhra Pradesh, at a conference called by
- the Dept. of Political Science of Osmania University in February 2000 said "the quota system for women has become a policy of reservation for men". What she meant was that beyond the 33 1/3<sup>rd</sup> percent reservation, all other spaces now are "reserved", i.e. held on for and by men (M. Meera, ISST, 2000). In other words, women are contained into that quota, and are not permitted to enter the unreserved constituencies because of the rules as well as because of the entrenched male power as part of a project to associate women politicians in to a federation at the local level.

At a consultation with elected members of the Zilla Parishad in Tumkur district, (Karnataka) convened by the SSF (Singamma Sreenivasan Foundation) May 2, 2000 in collaboration with the Tumkur Zilla Panchayat and the Chief Executive Officer, the vice president of the zilla panchayat whose five year term was over said that "Five years ago I was in the kitchen, and I only knew the four walls of the kitchen, today I am able to Chair a meeting like this one and know how to handle administration and the public. Tomorrow I will be back in the kitchen for the rest of my life" - because the system

<sup>\*</sup> Assisted by Ms. Nageena Nikhat Khaleel, Research Assistant, SSF.

devised for reservation namely the roster is such that she cannot be renominated to the same constituency or even renominated to stand for elections.

- 2. At consultations on May 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2000 in Karnataka (Ref. SSF Report) women pointed to, what could be called, the hard core of entrenched political patronage systems which had been developed over decades and which still rule the political processes including selection of candidates, support systems etc. Thus one of the important aspects of women's advice to political processes in India is the need to reconsider the present electoral system. They have many recommendations which need to be addressed to the Election Commission in its rules, procedures including to the People's Representation Act. "Women want to transform politics", (Revathi Narayanan, Mahila Samakhya, 2000)
- 3. Another area to which women's experience points and which can be considered more theoretical is the role of politics based on identity. Many women who have come through the quota, perceive themselves as representing the area and not necessarily women. While this attitude is legitimate, it also invites criticism as whether it is women dalits or backward caste, reservation is supposed to enhance the representation of that particular group be it women, dalit, backward caste or minorities. If the representatives or the person who takes that ticket does not necessarily identify themselves with that particular social category, it is perceived to be "unrepresentative". The question of politics based on "identity", its positives and negatives is debated in several layers of political discourse and this experience of local women politicians needs to be taken note of in the discourse. We need new yardsticks to measure performance. (Revathi Narayanan, Mahila Samakhya).
- 4. A fourth finding or pointer, in a sense, speaks to the earlier point but also contradicts it. Where women have found that they are able to assert their voice whether it is a voice for an issue or for woman kind, analysis reveals that this is either due to the effective availability and access to support structures such as proximate women's organisations, proximate women's awareness programmes or sustained interaction with training orientation programmes. (Mahila Samakhya, SEARCH, ISST) where they operate in isolation, they are truly alone. Thus the cushioning of the elected person whether it is dalit, woman or minority by support structures derived from the same social categories, seems to be an enabling necessity.
- 5. Further broadening this point, it also seems that for the voices of these groups which have had historical discrimination to have what can be called the transforming impact namely to redress or rearrange the hierarchies in politics, the hierarchies of power, backup is necessary from the broader social and political movements or struggles. Struggles which are fighting for the rights of dalits, or women or displaced persons or tribals socio political struggles which attract the attention of the political leadership if they ally themselves with these group who are fighting for a voice of these groups within the local government structures can become more powerful. Therefore the pointer here is to an from alliance between these political personnel and the broader struggles of power of the historically subordinated groups.

6. A sixth pointer coming out of the women's experience is one which has also been affirmed and elaborated by many of those who are working in the field of decentralized government, namely that the current structure of devolution is inadequate. In a brilliant paper, Nirmala Buch (ISI, April 2000) describes the fault line in the very Bill and Act which led to the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Amendment. She points to the lack of clarity in the handing over of funds and powers for administration to the local government. Further (Search 2000) the only schemes which are truly in the hands of the Gram Panchayat are infrastructure schemes. Since this is all that is given to them, whether it is men or women, they are involved in the implementation of infrastructure. This has two flip sides. One, the limitation of not being able to participate in the design and implementation of social development and anti poverty schemes. Two, the accusation from the "non believers" in Panchayat Raj that the elected representatives in local government are not interested in development but only interested in contracts because it gives space for corruption. A trap.

It is interesting that **in Kerala** the people's campaign for decentralisation has in fact taken this point already on board in the sense that the science movement is the partner to the movement for decentralisation and in the districts, it is the members of the People's Science Movement and other volunteers who are providing technical services to the elected persons in their efforts to design and manage the fund s which have been devolved uniquely in Kerala. However, the fault line in Kerala is that the movements which have been harnessed for enabling local government do not include the women's movement and other such struggles. Thus Kerala which is often acclaimed for its social evenness as reflected in the human development indicators and indices such as GDI and GEM is unfortunately notorious for the socially deprived status of its women.

Whether it is Suguna Kumari of the State Commission on Women or Aleyamma Vijayan of SAKHI or other social scientists and activists, the appalling powerlessness of Kerala's women, the high rate of suicides, the high rate of dowries, the low participation in leadership and governance, raises the significant question or the proposition that gender equity while it is a necessary condition, is not a sufficient condition to recast hierarchies of power - domination and subjugation. The relations of power, the scope for affirmation of rights, especially autonomy, and what can be called real equality - are not completely provided by merely having equality in education, health status or even earnings.

The hard rock of patriarchy historically embedded, requires a greater knock than levelling social development. This is starkly revealed in the Kerala experience.

7. At another level of debate – where ideas such as subsidiarity are discussed, women's experience cuts across the "whys and buts". Proximity of place of work, of agencies of governance, of social amenities to place of residence, is clearly preferred by women for the obvious reason, that they are still (despite so many changes in rhetoric and perception), home-makers, carers. Hence a government, especially an elected council, a people's agency, proximity is an undiluted value. In addition, its <u>powers</u> in women's perception have to be broader and deeper, rather than distracted with

conceptual constraints. For example, representatives of the anti arrack movement in Andhra Pradesh recommended that the district government (zilla parishad in Karnataka) be imbued with judicial powers to arrest arrack vendors, rather than go to a court (NCW 1996). Similar suggestions have come from other "sectors" such as those working to reduce domestic violence against women (ICRW 2000) or those working to provide social security including worker land security to home based workers, and others in the informal economy (SSA, 2000).

- 8. Women are pointing to the importance of working out the linkages between institutions outside of the local self government itself, such as cooperatives, trade unions, Mahila Mandals, other registered societies, educational institutions and sector specific associations and the elected body suggesting that these have to be more specifically worked out so that the skills of these agencies can be of use to the elected agencies. (Renana Jhabvala, SSA, New Delhi, 2000).
- 9. Women's experience is pointing to the need for new yardsticks to measure progress, new methods of using monitoring frameworks for stimulating progress towards social justice (gender Audit) monitoring frameworks, measures of equity and inequity as now being used are not adequate, not appropriate for measuring the democratization of government.
- 10. The contradictions between local and global (WDR 1999) are also being "melted down" by women's efforts. In an area called Ulloor in Kerala, women had taken credit and started producing what are called basic consumer products like soap, processed foods like pickles and papads. These conventional foods often get competed out in the market because of the larger food manufacturers, who have a better marketing and packaging skills and who invade all the super markets. I was surprised that they had survived. I was told by the District Collector, who is the civil servant in charge of a district, that they had survived and expanded because they were doing mutual support networking in the neighborhoods. In other words, one neighborhood group decides to produce certain items and the other neighborhood group decides to only buy from them. So by making the production consumption cycle amongst themselves, they have managed to quadrapulel their initial financial turn over from and 12,000 to and 50,000 within one year on the basis of the first credit that was given to them in the beginning of the year.

Even the Collector and of course the economists who are doing research on this project, were surprised, as was I, because we all believed that producing conventional products like soap and semi processed traditional food stuffs, garments, leather bags, leather shoes from local leather would all be competed out by the mass produced goods in the markets.

11. People led, people centered localizing government – these terms and their aspirations, need the backing of stake holders: and what is more stake holders who are organized into collectivities who can make that claim, backed by numbers, - themselves and allies.

Women, more than men, by the very domain they occupy in the social and economic landscape, have appeared as the most vivid, interested "parties" in this effort – from their own experience of working in the panchayati raj system in India.

12. International experience or the experience of other countries, reveal women's interest in proximate government, in quotas to ensure their presence (UNDP, International Conference on Women's role in politics, New Delhi, 1999).

In the following pages, we give evidence from a wide range of sources to support there propositions.

#### SECTION: II

#### Review:

There has been a quantum jump in women's representation in rural local bodies following the 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional amendments. From a miniscule 2%---4% overall in the country, women have now reached impressive percentages ranging between 33% to 40%. In terms of absolute numbers, they constitute a mind-boggling figure of next million. When the Constitution was being amended for this purpose, there were many non-believers as well as those who wanted to believe in women's roles in local governance, but had too many doubts, who scoffingly asked "But where *are* the women? Today, we are told that hundreds of women in a few districts in Karnataka want to contest elections, have offered their candidatures, but have not been able to get into the fray for a variety of reasons related to the mechanics of the electoral process, but not for want of trying.

Could these women have entered these elected bodies in such a large numbers, without the reservations of seats, and there considerable pressure it put on the parties to field women candidates? There is evidence to suggest that women would not have entered there councils in these numbers were it not for this constitutional mandate. It was the pressure of national law, combined with the political imperative of winning elections, that changed political parties perception of women limited capacity for public office.

# PRI: Transforming Women

Women's experience of PRI has transformed many of them. The elements of this transformation include empowerment, self confidence, political awareness and affirmation of identity.

# Empowering women

Women have gained a sense of empowerment by asserting control over resources, officials and most of all, by challenging men (jain 1980: anveshi 1993). Men and their habits, long outside the relam of female influence, seem to be a major concern of elected women. For example, Deviramma, a 50 year old woman from the Golla or cowhard community, kept cattle and sold curd until recently. Today she is president of the Yeliyur Gram panchayat, one of the 5.611 Gram Panchyats constituted in December 1993 under the Karnataka Panchayat Raj Act 1993. As quoted by Raj et al (1995), she states:

If we are outspoken they- the men call us brazen and dub us shameless. But now we don't care because we know we have access to people who will have to hear us. The day we

have our Gram Panchyat meeting, the men and the people at home mock us- that's when we bring out books and show them what we know.

Nevetherles, Devirramma report that: "Our secretary, who is a male, doesn't let us talk at the meeting"., a complaint that she has already made to the Deputy commissioner. Similarly, 50 years old subammaa caste member of the Brahmasahra Gram Panchayat, she says (Rai et al 1995):

The men have always ridiculed us, and perceived us as incapable of the management of public affairs, we now make up on third of the councils. This adds to our sense of strength. We must be 50 percent or more. We must overpower them with our numbers.

Women are also aware that their strength comes not only from their numbers but also from their knowledge and skill, for example literacy. Thus, women see training as a important part of their empowerment. Many NGO's have sized on this a s fundamental issue and have begun to focus on the training of women. Clearly this is necessary, but the danger of too narrow a focus is to suggest that it is only women who need training. What the presence of women politicians has done is to invert the conventional hierarchies as to who are the teachers and who are the taught. Such women are making it clear that it is the male extension officers who need training, and not just the female representatives. This is an important message for donors and other funders of training, who have tended to assume in the past that the objects of their support must be women.

Women's empowerment challenges traditional ideas of male authority and supremacy. It is unsurprising, then, that PRI has been opposed by some men. Ratanprabha Chive (Ratna) is the sarpanch (head) of the seven hamlets that comprise the Ghera Purandar Panchayat. Ratna was beaten up as soon as she assumed office by her rival who could not accept the fact that a female had outwitted him (Rai et al 1995). Today Ratna puts forward proposals in this male-dominated office and poses questions when she is unsatisfied. She says:

Whenever there is any tension in the villages, they come to me and I have learnt how to sort out the problem. Many people have realised that it is indeed a waste of time to make a complaint to the police chowki(station).

She has launched programmes for adult education, digging wells for drinking water and repairing school building. She seems to have tackled the political and bureaucratic system which is complicated for a women who has studied only upto standard 7 (the public education system runs from standard 1-12). As Ratna says:

It is not the education that matters so much here. It is the grit and determination, which a woman has in plenty.

Self-confidence gained through belonging to local organisations seems critical to enabling women to step out of unequal relationships (Antrobus 1985; ISST 1992). This sense of freedom is even more profound when the group to which women belong is the

PRI. This freedom is carried into the very activity of politics by these women. There is a visible difference, a sense of excitement, in the women of rural India.

We are better representatives than men, as we can always be found at home in the kitchen or in the nearby fields. Men wander about, they are either in the town or the beer shops.

Nagamma was an elected member, from a reserved constituency, but she won against a male scheduled caste member, which was a very unusual occurrence in the Panchayat Raj elections. The villagers in the area who were interviewed during this study were unanimous in their view that this women was the most effective among all the female elected members of the mandal, a view which was also shared by the Pradan (the head of the village).

Not all men have opposed PRI and the changes it has brought. Kultikori, a big village in West Bengal, elected an all-woman Panchayat in 1993. When it was time to decide on party candidates for the May 1993 elections, all the members of the male-dominated body stepped down. They asked their party, the CPI(M), to field the young women of the Ganatantrik Mahila Samiti (the women's wing of the party) who had done remarkable work in eradicating illiteracy in the village. The CPI(M) fielded women candidates in all 11 seats of the Panchayat, and they won (Rai et al 1995).

### **Understanding Politics**

PRI has given many women a greater understanding of the workings of politics, in particular the importance of political parties. Vijayalakshmi was a Congress-I member of the Mandal, a homemaker, of munnuru village. She wanted party politics to operated in the elections to Mandals because the party bureaucracy (at the State level) usually controls its members in the Mandals. Without the party, no one else would be able to control them. The party functionaries and the leaders are well-informed of the activities of the Mandal members, and they take some care to see that they function in such a way as not to jeopardize the outcome of elections, which since 1993, means that female members must be respected.

Kamalamma is a Scheduled Caste member and belonged to the Janata Party. She used to roll beedis to earn some money, and remained at home most of the time. She says that the influence of the political parties is such that now.....

.......... persons from deprived groups have a better chance of being elected members. Earlier, only persons with money and of the upper castes could be elected to any position of importance.

Affirming Identity

On the other hand, some women's involvement in PRI has helped them affirm their identity as women with particular and shared experiences. A woman at a Panchayat meeting in Karnataka stated (SSF 92):

When we meet we work together as women, for our lobby. We don't notice party identities.

Such women seem to be drawn to an identity above caste or party. This self-perception arises from two sources: from women's own sense of their shared experience and from attitudes and imagery imposed on them by the men. The men see these new political actors as women not as party colleagues. Party politics, a necessary condition for classical democracy, is competitive, but the women bring a non-competitive or cooperative ethic as they are drawn to work together across party lines and seem to have similar interests. Gender can superscde class and party lines. Women have opened up the possibility for politics to have not only new faces but a new quality.

#### Women Changing Governance

PRI has helped to change local government beyond simply increasing the numerical presence of women. There is now a minority of women who are in politics because of their leadership qualities or feminist consciousness, for example, the owmen who were formerly part of the Sanghas of the Mahila Samakhya Programme, an awareness-raising, group-based programme. Visible changes in the articulation of ideas and leadership qualities exhibited by this minority were noted in the survey between 1987, the first year, and 1990 (ISS 1994). The difference women are making to local government is becoming evident in different priorities and different priorities and different values (Jain L.C. 1994).

## **Changing Priorities**

Some of the ways in which women, through PRI, are changing governance are evident in the issues they choose to tackle; water, alcohol abuse, education, health and domestic violence. For example, forty teams of women in Sonbhadra (Uttar Pradesh) area had carried out systematic yatra, or processions, covering ten villages each, or 400 villages in all, to explain the salient features of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment and the place given in it to women. In the discussions that took place during these yatras, women voiced clear priorities. For nearly 90 percent of the women, the top priority was water. They expressed a need for clean water for fields, for their cattle and for their families. They said life was unbearable and cultivation impossible without developing the water resources of the area. Even as they were determined to prevent the outflow of water from their areas, they were equally determined to prevent the inflow of liquor into their area.

We have been ruined by liquor. We are being ruined day after day. The day's wages are drunk by the men-folk. There is no money for groceries hence no cooking.

Alochana, a centre for documentation and research of women in Pune, found that only two of the nine members in Bittargaon could sign their names. However, in this village which has a 16,000 population, Alochana found out that the women have "learnt to keep accounts from the local school teachers and the gram sevaks (rural workers). They have put an end to gambling and have come down heavily on liquor dens". The policy they adopted was to "shut the door on every drunken husband". Any protest made by them or children is met by physical assault.

We will not bear it. Once we acquire some position and power, we will fight it out. We know that it is not going to be easy because this battle will be carried out in each home. But the fact that the Panchayats will have a minimum number of women we will use that strength for mobilising women at large and keep liquor out, as a priority.

Women are also taking action against child marriage and child domestic labour, whilst promoting girl-child education, as is evident from the many success stories from Nellore, the heart of the successful anti-arrack struggle (Rohde 1994; Anveshi 1993).

But the enormous expansion of women's representation in decentralized government structures has highlighted the advantages of proximity, namely the redress of grievance and (most important of all) the ability to mobilize struggle at a local level where it is most meaningful, for example, the anti arrack movement.

We want education for our children. There are schools and teachers who draw their salaries regularly. They mark the attendance of non-existence students in their registers. But they scarcely come to the schools. With this sorry state of affairs, how can you have education for your children? We are going to tell those teachers: either teach or go.

As with education, women have used their elected authority to address quality health care as a critical issue. In Maharashtra, the Indian School of Political Economy organised 60 workshop at Pune under the project of "Leadership Training for Rural Women". The chief conclusion of these workshops was that family planning, drinking water, schools and bio-gas plants are the priorities of women, rather than the TV set or temple.(Manipal 1994). Women, Too, have brought domestic violence onto the agendas of political campaigns. In theses and other ways, the issues women choose differ from conventional political platforms, which are usually caste/ ethnic/ religion-based.

But not only do women choose different issues, they appear to choose less corrupt practices as well. Kogendranath Mohato, Panchyat secretary of Kultikori, says: The men I had worked under formally passed on their expenses in cigarettes and paan(bread) to the Panchyats. But the didies (sisters)n here are not only clean on this score, they are more dedicated

Women value proximity, whether it be to a drinking water source, a fuel source, a creche, a health center, a court of justice or an office of administration. Poor women have to walk to access these facilities. Which is exhausting and consumes valuable time. Moreover when there us an attack, a rape, a burning, a witch hunt or other violence against a

women, seeking redress from councils. Which are located far away, may not be feasible, But if these Councils and the people in them are near, the chances or redress and effective action are greater.

The decentralization of government structures has, however, been regarded with suspicion and anxiety by progressive groups. Decentralisation can exacerbate lack of local resources and perpetuate regional disparities. It has often been misused by central government to offload social security provision. It has also been misused political by dictators or single authority regimes to control from the Centre through decentralized mechanisms.

But the enormous expansion of women's representation in decentralized government structure has highlighted the advantages of proximity, namely the redress of grievance and (most important of all) the ability to mobilise struggle at a local level where it is most meaningful, for example, the anti- arrack, movement. Thus women critique of macro-economic polices is about equity, then what better responses can there be but to put political power in the hands of those most in equitably treated, namely women? In this sense, PRI may be conceived as a macro-political adjustment whose effects are felt at the micro-level.

Women are beginning to change not only the issues and values of governance but are also adopting different methods to those of men. They do not let official protocol stand in their way Narayanan (1993) recounts the story of one Panchayat official, Suman

According to them (the officials) the area was not a catchment area and hence not suitable to construct a tank. They could not think anything beyond that. But Suman wanted to keep up her promise to the electorate of reviving the old tank. She mobilized necessary resources through other sources, and was able to fulfill her promise, After a good monsoon, the tank was flooded with water much against the scientific thinking of the bureaucracy.

#### **SECTION III**

#### Some Question and Answers:

How well equipped are the women to take part in this act of administrative reconstruction? One unanimous feed back received from the field during the electoral experiences of the last 6-7 years is that women have learned to look at themselves in a new light. They are more confident. (what does this mean, how is it seen and measured? A recent story heard is that elected women representatives from very poor communities have started using coconut oil to rub into their hair, and not remnants of used cooking oil as heretofore. (record of documentation committee meeting of KWIRC Project, Laxmi Krishnamurthy's statement) Another woman (Susheela Kaushik's study of Haryana) said that even her adversary in the village has sent her an invitation to a marriage in the adversary's family. This was seen as a status jump. Other stories refer to dalit women raising their voices when talking to upper caste men of the same village, whom they would not have even dared to address directly in the past. Many other stories are available, which speak of personal transformations within the psyches of women as a consequence of working in local government)

Many women, when confronted with the question of their own capabilities, turn round and blame the external environment (their lack of powers, authority, financial resources, information, less exposure to training, etc.) for their not being more successful in their work---it is rarely that these have a poor self image of themselves as panches or sarpanches; nor do they feel they do not have the inherent capability for carrying on the work of the panchayats. They feel that if most, or at least some of these external constraints are removed, they would be able to function better, even within the constraints of their social situation. These external constraints have been generally articulated as lack of co-operation and devolution of powers from the State, lack of finances, lack of information, lack of legal powers and authority and non-involvement (at the best) and enmity and friction of the local bureaucracy and panchayat staff. (Susheela Kaushik----) The Haryana study showed an interesting correlation between women's feeling no change in status even after the elections to the non-devolution of powers from the state government. Some women in Haryana (same study) went further. They explained that they did not feel a rise in status after their elections but they felt it was because their husbands did not allow them to participate in the panchayat meetings!!! In other words, their participation means their status rises.

Grass roots research have helped to invalidate the many myths that have sprung up in the last decade about the quality of women's participation in running the panchayats.

Nirmala Buch (Women's Experience in new Panchayats: The emerging leadership of Rural Women---Occasional paper no.35, CWDS, 2000), surveying three large states of India, has produced figures of elected women's awareness and knowledge about

panchayat related matters, of elected men's and women's attendance in panchayat meetings, on weekly time spent by elected men and women in panchayat work, on efforts made by women representatives to solve problems presented to them in panchyats, on efforts made by the elected women to carry their view point in meetings, etc. Her findings are that the level of participation of women is quite high, while not reaching the performance levels of the men. In the three states (Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh), for example, the women's attendance in the panchayat meetings ranged from 55.5 to 74.4 as against the men's attendance range of 68.7 to 95.6. The findings relating to the other quality aspects of women's work, similarly, brought out that women were by no means laggardly, ignorant or lazy. Majority of the women surveyed had a good awareness level and knowledge about the working of the panchayat. A substantial proportion of the women devoted time to panchayat activities. In order to argue their views strongly and to convince the panchayats in the meetings, they took other members into confidence, held informal discussions, repeated these efforts, took help of others, including husbands, etc.

A study from Tamilnadu (Women's Participation in Panchayati Raj: A case study from Tamilnadu—V.B.Athreya and K.S.Rajeswari, paper presented at the IX National Conference on Women's Studies, 8—11 January 2000, Hyderabad) where the sample was 100 women from district panchayats in two districts, showed that 95% of the women studied, stated that they had actively participated in the meetings. 63% of the women responded that they also spoke in community meetings and put forward suggestions.

Elected women keenly feel the lack of what is termed (for want of a better and more inclusive word) "training" or "capacity building". They invariably express their felt need for this type of support. Wherever elected women have received the benefit of innovative training and support, their performance has exceeded expectations, collectively, as a group.

Swayam Shikshan Prayog, which works in Maharashtra with grass roots women and communities on issues of economic empowerment and local governance, reports that alliances between elected women and women's collectives, which are strengthened through focussed training, result in new institutional arrangements for improved governance. As a result, women are participating in village assemblies and gram sabhas in larger numbers, demanding greater accountability from all elected members. Village women and elected members participate in dialogue platforms at block and district levels so as to give feedback to local officials. SSP believes that capacity building exercises should involve state officials and planners so that they recognize women's capacities to participate in governance.

Mahila Samakhya in Karnataka, has provided an accountability mechanism to the elected women who were earlier, Sangha members. The elected woman treats the sangha as its reference and validation point. Where the elected woman does not break her trust with the sangha, she gets benefitted, as the women of the sangha constantly support her with information of what issues she should take up in the meetings of the panchayats, what are the burning issues in the village/ward which affect the women collectively and

which need intervention at the local government level. The sangha guides the elected woman in this way, a hand-holding and step-by-step consultation process where the sangha's collective energies are at the disposal of the elected woman.

The training efforts of RUWSEC based in Chingleput, Tamilnadu, helped the elected women to prioritise reproductive health concerns of the women in the community. Such a concern for their own bodies and reproductive matters did not come naturally to them. Women are used to neglecting their bodies because of their own perceptions of low value attached to their bodies. The training received has now challenged the elected women to think of activating the panchayat structure to make it accountable to the people.

Do the elected women affirm their collective identity as women, do they push for a women's need-based agenda and programme? There appears to be a quality difference between the priorities of elected men and elected women. Dr. Shanta Mohan (National Institute of Advanced Studies) found that the elected men wanted immediately "do-able" things such as taking up construction activities, building of local infrastructure. These items were not only visible, they were costly and caught the attention of the public quickly. The elected women wanted different things, they could be lack of water, dealing with alchoholism in the area, increasing the access of children to schools, coping with domestic violence and marital conflict. She found that generally, the women's prioritised programmes had a longer time perspective than those of the men. The immediacy and the visibility of the men's suggestions, however, generally carried the day and therefore she found that the men's programmes generally subsumed those of the women.

Anti-liquor campaigns in Haryana and Andhra were spear headed by women. 84 out of 100 women in Haryana who were studied by Susheela Kaushik, proudly said that they took up the liquor issue in their constituencies and panchayats.

Is there a danger of women being type-cast, of getting stereo-typed as a "woman panch"? One Zila Parishad Pradhan in Haryana said (Susheela Kaushik) "Women can only speak to women". Whom do women represent? SUTRA in Himachal found, somewhat to their surprise and concern, a commenality in elected women's perceptions just after they were elected. The women felt that they represented only the ward in which they stood for elections. They did not feel responsible for the Gram Panchayat as a whole. They were wary of stepping into the other wards. They called themselves 'ward members' and not panches or members of the panchayat. Similarly, do women feel that only women's issues should concern them?

The evidence from the field is a resounding no. Women may not yet have the space to think out their own priorities slowly and carefully, but they have no intention of getting type cast. But here, the dominant culture of panchayati politics and administration also play a role, both for shaping men's as well as women's day to day 'bread and butter issues'.

ISEC study (1982) on panchayats in Karnataka in fact, showed that both men and women elected representatives, spent more time on items of infrastructure such as roads, lighting, drainage, other civic amenities than on more basic concerns, say, poverty or employment creation or micro-planning.

Many other studies show that women are not really happy to be restrained into a 'woman-and-child' folder or box. They would like to be involved in all the activities in the Panchayat. It is another matter and a rather significant one at that, that mostly all Gram Panchayats as well as the other two tiers are given the responsibility of infrastructure works rather than planning and development of the panchayat as a whole, or social justice or employment or agricultural, horticultural or animal husbandry production. The old habit of entrusting only local civil or physical works to the panchayats is still very much around.

Thus the working orientation of the panchayats in general, has had the inevitable effect on the elected members, both men and women. There is an overwhelming focus on 'village works' being taken up. This prevents the women (and the men) from getting into the more crucial area of planning for the village as a unit, into the complexities of natural resource management, etc.

But here and there, we hear of many women being led by their intrinsic concerns with depleting resources. UMA PRACHAR [September 1995] recounts the story of an elected member of a Gram Panchayat in Bangalore (Rural) who is also, simultaneously, President of a local self-help thrift group as well as a member of the Water Management Cooperative Society involved in a participatory tank rehabilitation scheme since many years. This woman is deeply concerned with the degradation of village resources and sees clearly that the gomal cannot support grazing activities much longer, since the vegetation, the trees, etc. are fast disappearing. According to Madhav Gadgil, [see interview in the same issue o f UMA PRACHAR], the village level institutions [i.e., the water management society, in this case] should be properly linked up to the Panchayati Raj institutions. It is the concern of women over the fast depleting natural resources, [water, trees and grass] that can bring in these different frames of reference and these institutional linkages into action and planning.

In a study of Rajasthan panchayats and women's participation in them (1995, ISST), it was found that elected women and village women have responded to mobilisation round food, water, work, housing, violence, etc. This study notes that there are more women's groups in Rajasthan than men's groups or mixed groups.

Another story from Andhra Pradesh, to show the synergy that is created with the linking of different institutions through the agency of women. The concern here is food security in a poverty context. Neela Mukherjee stresses the point that 'the indigenous knowledge about the varied dimensions of food-livelihood security lies with the local communities....... It is the local-level panchayat which can initiate and implement plans along with the local community for appropriate interventions in approaching food-livelihood security at the local level'.

Women's good management of grain banks has been exemplified in the experiences of Agragamee in Kashipur and Gram Vikas in Kalahandi, both in Orissa, a state vulnerable to food shortages and natural calamities.

A poor semi literate woman farmer, who is the Sarpanch of the Gram Panchayat in Medak Distt. has built up an impressive food security scheme in the village with the help of an NGO which has encouraged the setting up of Sanghams, or women's organizations. She became a member of the sangham and attends the weekly meetings regularly. Thus, a three-way relationship has developed amongst the Volag, the women's group and the PRI.

#### ('Food Security and Panchayati Raj', pages 219—221)

The women's movement has the biggest stake in building up powerful and dynamic leadership of women in pri's. The 'empowerment' of grass roots women (though the word itself was coined later) has been an imperative with the women's movement ever since the renewed debate on the women's question started in the seventies. The debate threw up various models of grass roots organizations, of which one of the important were the mahila mandals, which had been legitimised by the Government already, in the Community Devlopment programme. But they were seen as inherently weak in both functioning and coverage.

In 1974, when the Report of the Committee on the Status of Women recommended statutory all-women's panchayats, it was as a transitional measure to ensure greater participation by women in the political process, especially in the area of development planning. This suggestion did not find favour and today, all women's panchayats are found in very isolated numbers, in just a few states.

(Grass roots Empowerment [1975---1990] A discussion paper by N.K.Bannerjee, CWDS)

Today, a large number of women's organisations and women's volags support the elected women in panchayati raj structures, mainly in the areas of capacity building and awareness raising. Compared with the lakhs of women who are holding elected office, even these efforts are very thinly spread. Nirmala Buch has found that the training resources go in a reverse order to the actual training needs---- the village panchayats get the least, the intermediary level gets more and the district parishads take the lions' share. (Marg Workshop) The voluntary sector has, on the whole, been successful in forging linkages with the elected representatives. The other movements such as the trade union, the workers' movements, etc. are able to find linkages only through the committed work of voluntary organizations or when they themselves act as link organizations.

Neither the women's lobbies nor any of the other people's movements or the workers' movements or campaigns have been able to prevail upon the state in the form of a sustained force or campaign, to fulfil the constitutional commitments it has made in 1993

of turning panchayats into effective units of local government. This is perhaps the biggest failure of the movement.

The basics of "planning from below", that is the crucial exercise of integrating the plans prepared by the panchayats at district level into a district plan, has still not got off the drawing board. Pointing out this as a very serious gap in the Ninth Plan between commitment and practice, D.Bandhyopadhyay terms it as a "wilful disregard of the third tier of governance at the district level". ["Planning from below—Is Planning Commission Performing its Role?" EPW March 18 2000] Many of the elected women have echoed their unhappiness on the irrelevance and uselessness of many of the schemes and the general lack of congruence between them and the needs of the villages. (Asha Ramesh's study) It is not just a change from co-option or nomination to election, that has taken place in the quality of women's representation. A change in mind set has taken place in the country between the fifties and the nineties on what exactly panchayats stand for. It has been summarised as a change from the search for a more efficient delivery system to a basic change in administration, whereby a non-representative autocratic and bureaucratic régime is being replaced with a representative and responsive elected system of governance. [D.Bandhyopadhyay---Man and Development, December 1999] "Exercise of power was downwards and the nominal accountability upwards". This was sought to be reversed.

The unwillingness to part with power is nowhere more graphically illustrated that in the institution of the district collector and the collectorate. The 73<sup>rd</sup> amendment to the Constitution has brought in a third tier of government, below the state government. But no review or redefinition of the collector's role vis-a-vis the Panchayati Raj institutions has taken place so far. The collector has so far, since the British era, been the "pivot of the district administration". But with so many functions having been now decentralized and devolved under Article 243---G of the Constitution, a new look at the old institutions is very much over due. ('Pioneer, 4<sup>th</sup> December 1999, "Collector versus Panchayat" by Rahul Arun and Samir Arun)

Another upcoming debate is whether "decentralization" as a concept, takes us far enough. Writing in the Hindu on this theme, Vinayak N. Srivastava points out that "decentralisation" refers only to the transfer of 'functions' and not transfer of 'power' whereas "devolution" encapsulates transfer of functions as well as of powers. ("Decentralisation without devolution is meaningless" Hindu, 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1999)

The framework of the Act and Rules of the Panchayat can be tested on the touchstone of women's experiences, especially in those states where the second elections have taken place. Euphoria has given place to disillusion. The roster, first hailed as an effective mechanism to bring in large numbers of women into the electoral fray, is now being exposed as vulnerable to misuse, to the disadvantage of women. Large numbers of women who have completed one term, are unable to continue their engagement with local governance. (meeting of 3<sup>rd</sup> May)

The Act has been used as a "hold all" or a portmanteau to push in the Government's priorities. The small family norm has been introduced to the greater disadvantage of women rather than men. More than half a dozen states in India have introduced this into the statutes. There are stories of men divorcing their wives, of families giving children away in adoption. (reference either Marg or ISST, to find out)

The "no confidence motion" is a black law that is contained in most of the State Acts. The women and the dalit sarpanches have been at the receiving end. In Maharashtra, the law is so obtuse that the sarpanch's vacancy caused by a woman sarpanch being asked to leave as a consequence of the no confidence motion, does not go to another woman for the remaining part of the term. It invariably goes to a man. (Rohini Gawankar in her Hyderabad paper)

In Karnataka, the posters put out by the Government wrongly show that the seats not reserved for women, as per the roster, in the recently concluded gram panchayat elections, are 'reserved' for 'men'. The fact that women can offer their candidature against open seats along with men, is just suppressed by the election. machinery. No campaign has been mounted by local groups against this type of insidious propaganda by the organs of the State. (personal communication from Asha Ramesh).

Meera Saxena, Secretary, Women and Child, GOK, in the meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2000 (SSF), hinted at field officials wanting only 'somewhat' literate women alone being made eligible to stand for elections. The failed experiment of restricting eligibility to contest elections to households having a latrine brings out the same tendency to use the Act to restrict the benefits to the asset-owning class. Women, who are at the bottom of the heap, have to constantly keep running if they have to stay at the same place.

Mainstream policies, such as those on population, total literacy, legal reform and others, proceed along conventional lines of reasoning and thinking.

#### SECTION: IV

The paper has deliberately been called 'Role of women in decentralisation' and not 'experience of women in local self government' because we wish to make a larger point. We have already mentioned one aspect of this larger point, namely that women have been influencing the understanding and direction of decentralisation, that women are perhaps the stronger stake holders in decentralisation. But what we wish to add here is to broaden the argument to include the discourse, even at the global level.

Some of the skepticism about local government and its value in terms of improving the possibility of achieving development with social justice; or put in another way, eradication of poverty and access to development rights by the 'people' etc. has been because of negative experiences, almost worldwide. Whether it is (Pinochet Chile, Ayub Khan Pakistan, Zia Bangla Desh, Ujaama Nyerere, Commune China and many more ) there have been hidden motives, or fault lines, where the local becomes a pawn or a system in order to strengthen central control; and in India the basic critique is that the civil servants, the bureaucracy and the politician at the higher level of elected council , are unwilling to disable their positions of power, patronage and direction this alliance with struggles for power, for wresting power from the traditional bastions becomes crucial for the achievement of the stated goals of local government, namely a more participatory and perhaps more efficient if not more equitable system of government. The notion of enabling power to develop at the local level has been abused. There have been hidden agendas and these have put people including those who have commitment to the idea of people led government of the idea of localising power into a skeptical mode. Other arguments are well known such as local is more conservative and central is more progressive. Feminists are worried about highly localised governance, as it gives space for conservative cultural, traditional attitudes and practices to be exercised at the village and community level.

These anxieties are genuine and to them one can also add, from the Indian experience, many negative notes. In the Indian case, as has been pointed out almost ad nauseum, devolution has not really taken place and most of the State governments have found innovative back door means to obstruct the localisation of government. The list of such experiences have been recorded in other forums of the same seminar namely:-bureaucracy and its unwillingness to hand over its patronage, State level and national level politicians unwilling to hand over patronage, the skepticism that elected persons do not represent the poor or the subordinate and in women's case that they are proxies for men. A further allegation is that local politicians do not necessarily represent local interest but sectional interest, which are nothing more than a clone of the problems at the national level.

Other scholars have pointed out the complete lack of devolution of development funds and schemes to the local government. Except for Kerala, no state government has passed on its development funds to be actually designed and implemented by local government. A study by Dr. Vinod Vyasulu made of two districts in Karnataka also emphasizes the impotence of the district in carving its own development. A report that was submitted to

the Karnataka State Planning Board by one of the authors of this paper, Devaki Jain, who was the Chairperson of a Sub Committee set up by the Government of Karnataka to look at district level planning for social development also pointed out that not only were there no devolution of finance, but the departmental schemes which try to reach out to the village were so multitudinous and so tied up with the departmental accounting systems, that no locally elected body could possibly have any space for design. This Committee made several significant recommendations ranging from the importance of rationalizing the schemes to the importance of giving what is called untied funds, to be utilized by the elected body. This is what Kerala has already done namely to give funds to the locally elected body and have them design it for their own use with the help of volunteers. Unfortunately in Karnataka, even though this recommendation was made and the P.R. Nayak Committee on Panchayati Raj also recommended the same procedure, the State government has continued to hold all the strings in its hands.

A study conducted by the ISEC in Bangalore on an experiment to give funds without specification to the gram sabhas has revealed that the choices made by a local council have not only greater relevance, but also mobilize greater resources than when a scheme is handed down –(Gram Panchayats have the wisdom to manage their own funds", Indian Express, dated April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2000)

Thus it could be argued that by and large the aspiration of localizing government has not been achieved, except perhaps with a few flaws in Kerala.

Yet in the World Development Report 1999, the themes are local and global and economist such as Stiglitz laud the importance of people led government, which means local self government. They argue that it is only local led government which can be efficient, which can provide growth with equity, which can reduce disparities, which can provide the institutional framework for globalization with justice. However, the same document also flags the importance of a liberalised political economy without showing the design by which a federation of local self government can in fact be a challenge to the careless invasion of globalisation into a country.

The importance of participation by 'People' is highlighted in the WDR 1999, in Stiglitz 1998, in Bhagwati 1999, in Norgaard 1999 and the Human Development Report 1999. The intention of this inclusion may vary from those who see it as more just, to those who see it as promoting more efficiency, to those who are interested in preventing breakdown and civic instability. But the accommodation of "people" is seen as a necessary component even for the hard headed single mind, "growth" generation. The 1999 WDR has two pillars, globlisation and localization. is valuable for participation, and for the *Ownership*, claiming what Stiglitz talks about. But as the report also admits, globalization disconnects with the "local" often trampling over it. Localization can create problems for what is called national consensus on say the fiscal deficits. And yet national consensus on such items as fiscal deficit is almost a necessary conditions for the foreign Direct Investments (FDI) and Multinational Corporation (MNC).

Yet, there is an example from the state of Kerala in India, where women's groups have actually dealtgh with this disjunction and used localization to deal with what are called the market forces of globlisation.

Responding to this black hole in the discourse on decentralisation, the importance of people local government, four institutions in the four states of southern India have set up a programme to build a Federation of local women politicians — a clone of the Indian Federation of Women Lawyers or Women Journalists. This will be a Southern Indian Federation of Women politicians in local government.

It is hoped that through such Federations such collectivities of political personnel who have a freshness, and a stake in redesigning development there will be one more important actor to pull down state structures which are impeding local government.

It is hoped that this Federation will also inform itself of not only technical skills like budgeting, designing fiscal policy, utilizing funds such as the component plan for women, use new promoting framework like the Gender Audit but will start a process of revisiting or redesigning development with women. It might be called women designing or redesigning development planning and implementation through the local self government institutions (see SSF Project Report)

The Gender Audit, a module a Performa which can be used every three years (or two years) by the local administration to collect fresh data on some crucial variables, derive indices like from them, which can monitor development impact. G-D-I & G-E-M disparities (SSF: the gender audit 2000). Thus audit can be made into a dalit audit also.

It is such initiative which might in fact "pull up" Local government into a key player in development with social justice.



#### Notes:

In Kerala, they have launched in support of their local self government programme a people's campaign for preparing a five year plan'. There is a gazette notification by the state government to this effect. The elements of people's campaign are as follows:

- they have formed neighbor hood associations, called in Malayalam, 'Ayil Koottam'. 'koottam' is gathering. Neighborhood gatherings which take place almost every week.
- they have 'employed' resource persons from the area, retired school teachers, engineers, nurses, civil servants, functionaries, even students, post graduates working towards their Ph.D., unemployed as volunteers.

There are key resource persons, conveyors of neighborhood groups, members of task force. For every village which could be in Kerala a population of 10-15,000 there is a panchayat, namely a local elected body with these 'enablers' who are the volunteers.

The neighborhood group discusses what they think are their needs, the issues in terms of development and sets out a plan of action. Every month, the Conveyor and co-conveyor of the neighborhood group meet together in something like a conference at the village level, in which they are divided into task forces according to sector. Then in the afternoon, it is summated by the Chairperson of the Gram Panchayat. The minutes of this conference are then carried forward to a District Level meeting for district planning, convened by the Chairperson who is an elected person and that prepares the district level plan. Parallel to this process of designing what are called the nuts and bolts of development, namely budgetary allocation, there is a process of accountability. If a particular work, what is called civil works has been sanctioned after this process, the actual detailed expenditure allocations are written by hand in a big chart and nailed to a tree, wherever the neighborhood group meets, as well as on all the boards of the Panchayat for everyone to see what is the expenditure. Second, there are beneficiary committees in every village. We have what is called BPL which is "below poverty line", where we define the poverty line as being something like US \$ 150. The Beneficiary Committees are composed only of these BPL households and individuals. They decide who should have the priority in getting the benefits of a development programme, whether it is an animal, a house, credit, pension, according to the budgetary allocations under these heads. In other words, the beneficiaries decide on what they want as benefits and in the order of ranking in terms of who comes first.

One of the resource persons I met is a man who owns and runs a private college for 700 students. He comes from the area which is a tribal hilly area. I asked him why he is doing this full time unpaid job. He said he loves it because it makes him feel he is participating in a social justice movement. He in turn is a product of another movement which took place in Kerala, which is the People's Science Movement. The People's Science Movement (KSSP) was one of those "walks" which is very common in India, where a leader decides to walk (padayatra) from one part of a province to all over the province

with some message, stopping overnight as a guest with free hospitality for himself and his fellow marchers. Gandhi's salt march which many of you have seen on the screen, Vinoba Bhave's land gift (bhoodan) walk are part of our tradition: as I know they are of yours. The great march of your kings and chiefs.

This march for the KSSP carried with it scientific knowledge, - knowledge about land, water, traditional medicine, both natural resource and technological skills. They would stop in villages and demonstrate through posters, talks, audiovisuals and as they moved from place to place, more people gathered to join them. It was of course a political ideology driven movement namely to level up knowledge and ensure that science and technology should not be the privilege of the technocrats and the elite. That shared information on scientific and technical knowledge can be the most powerful tool for people for building equity. This movement was so successful that it inspired a national movement called the Literacy Movement in India, which was also one of those, walks, where the movement believes in what is called peripatetic or mobile 'march' type processes to mobilize people.

Most of the "volunteers", resource persons whom I met were people who had come out of these movements and who had seen both the effect of this movement on those for whom it was meant, but it also inspired them to stay with it, as it was to them, a way of serving the people. Three post graduate students joined a neighborhood group when I was there, and this neighborhood group was mainly composed of women, who seem to represent all the classes that we have in rural areas, from the very rich to the very poor, including the single old woman who is the widow, left behind by everybody else. I could not believe that 100 such women could sit and listen under a tree for nearly one hour in sweltering heat of 40 degree centigrade to a man who was explaining to them a new programme called 'kutumba sthree', i.e. woman of the household.

This programme is a financial assistance programme where if a group of women, minimum ten, decide what they would like to do, the district level government will give them all the necessary support – finance and technical help. I asked these three young men who were sitting there, who they were. They said 'we are local students'. I asked them 'why are you here'. They said that 'we are interested in seeing that these programmes are put on the ground. We are inspired by the enthusiasm of the people to learn and to do and we would like to be involved in that'.

Some of the innovative projects that the beneficiaries have chosen and which the district elected persons had implemented were even for me, first time. For example, one women's group was running a tiny 'hotel'. Hotel in India does not necessary mean residential accommodation, but something more like a café. They were giving coffee, tea and one square meal. It was run by a group of "BPL" women. The local government had given them money for putting up a small building on private land and the owner of the private land had leased it out for five years at rent which the women paid out of their profits. This shack or the little building was the grant given by the local government. Within two months, the café was beginning to attract 100 customers a day. The customers were drawn by the fact that when women run a kitchen, it was assumed that the food

would be tasty and would be 'authentic'. The woman who was keeping the accounts was a nurse and she had given up a lucrative nursing job and joined these other nine women to run the 'hotel'.

Another was where a women's group packed into a bag all the ingredients that were required for the seasoning of food for a family for one week. There were little packets of all these spices including the Indian favourite red chilly. These packets were sold for 15 rupees, which is 30 cents of a US dollar and was vended on a bicycle in a basket. Housewives found it a great relief just to pick up that packet, rather than to struggle for the small quantities they require for their weekly needs of about 8 or 9 "spices" or condiments.

- 18. Towards Political empowerment Profiling women elected to the rural and urban bodies in Karnataka and Gujarat Asha Ramesh and Bharti Ali.
- 19. Towards a New synergy in Political Consciousness C.P Sujaya –Paper (work in progress) prepared for associating elected women representative in PRI Institutions one day consultations with Karnataka based organisation March 20, 2000.
- 20. Panchayats and Development Elite's Vs Dalits Man & Development, December 1999.
- 21. Collector Vs Panchayat- strengthen local self- governing bodies to increase popular participation in administration, says Rahul Arun and Samir Arun- pioneer, 4 December 1998.
- 22. Decentralisation without devolution is meaningless -Vinayak N. Srivastave Hindu, 23 February 1999.
- 23. Changing the Text of local governance grassroots women's leadership in governance women and political participation 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges.
- 24. How important is the Private Public dichotomy the case of the EWRs Devaki Jain Seminar women in Panchayat raj 27-28 April 2000, New Delhi.
- 25. Grassroots -Vol.1 No.4 (12) April 2000.
- 26. Grassroots -Vol.1 No.3 (11) -March 2000.
- 27. Grassroots -Vol.1 No.2 (10) February 2000.
- 28. Grassroots -Vol.1 No.1 (9) -January 2000.
- 29. Participation of women in Panchayati raj Devaki Jain December 1998.
- 30. From Margin to Mainstream Building stakes in the SHG-BANK linkage Programme- Gayatri A. Menon & Suranjana Gupta Swayam Shikshan Prayog-October 1999.
- 31. Panchayat Raj women changing governance- Devaki Jain- September 1996- Gender in Development Monograph series #4 UNDP.
- 32. Women Leadership and the Ethics of Development Bella Abzug and Devaki Jain August 1996 Gender in Development Monograph Series #4 UNDP.
- 33. "Home Thoughts From Abroad"- Devaki Jain, University of Westville, Durban, May 15 1999.
- 34. Censorship And Silence Vasanth Kannabiran Review Of Women Studies Ws-2-EPW-Vol XXXV April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2000.

#### Reference:

- 1. "And who will make the chapatis?" A study of all- women panchayats in Mahrastra Edited by Bishakha Datta, 1998.
- 2. Women's participation in panchyati raj: A case study from Tamil Nadu V. B Athreya and K. s Rajeswari paper presented at the IX National conference on women's studies, 8-11 January 2000.
- 3. Women sarpanches- empowered or disempowered ? (A study of womensarpancehes in Maharastra ), Usha Thakkar and Rohini Gawankar.
- 4. Minutes of the meeting of the documentation team April 26<sup>th</sup> 2000.
- 5. UMA PRACHAR Newsletter September 1995.
- 6. UMA PRACHAR Newsletter March May 1995.
- 7. Panchayati Raj update Institute of social sciences -June 1994.
- 8. Panchayati Raj update Institute of social sciences September 1995.
- 9. Panchayati Raj update Institute of social sciences -July 1999.
- 10. Ten -Food Livelihood Security at the community level and role of Panchyati Raj Institutions Neela Mukherjee.
- Thirteen women, food Security and Panchayati
  Raj Ambika Menon.
- 12. Fourteen Panchayati Raj the key to food Security and Nutrition- Shashi Prabha Gupta
- 13. Twenty- Seven towards a village food security in Rainfed Areas : a case study K.S. Gopal and Shashi Kumar.
- 14. Women's experiences in New Panchayats: the emerging leadership of rural women Nirmal Buch Occasional Paper No. 35 –2000.
- 15. Planning from Below Is planning Commission Performing its Role? EPW, March 2000.
- 16. Note on Swayam Shikshan Prayog's Efforts with PRIs
- 17. Grassroot empowerment (1975 –1990) A Discussion Paper N.K Banerjee Occasional Paper No 22-1995.

- 35. Structured Silences of Women Ritu Menon- Review of Women Studies WS-3-EPW-Vol. XXXV April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2000.
- 36. Word as Censor- Mridula Garg Review of Women Studies- Ws-7 –EPW-Vol XXXV April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2000.
- 37. Censorship And Silence Perspective on Freedom of Expression Pushpa Bhave Review Of Women Studies Ws-2-EPW-Vol XXXV April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2000.
- 38. State, Market and Freedom of Expression: Women and Electronic Media \_ Umas Chakravarthy Review Of Women Studies Ws-2-EPW-Vol XXXV April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2000.
- 39. To censor or Not to Censor: Film and Public Policy \_Volga - Review Of Women Studies Ws-2-EPW-Vol XXXV April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2000.
- 40. Centre for Gender and Development Studies- University of the West Indies-Nuancing globlisation or mainstreaming the downstream or reforming reform – devaki Jain – working paper No. 3- May 2000.
- 41. Towards just development identifying Meaningful indicators, UNDP, South Africa, 1999.
- 42. Hegde for consensus on women's quota bill, A newspaper clipping, Deccan Herald, May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2000.