

Status of Women Representation in Urban Local Bodies of Rajasthan

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FOREWORD

One of the key indicators of political participation for women would be their representation in the local level bodies like Panchayats and municipalities. With growing urbanization, the role of Urban Local Bodies is gradually gaining importance. It is believed that women can bring about quick and effective changes by getting elected to the for seats of power. Reservation is the instrument of political empowerment which guarantees representation. The passing of 73rd & 74th amendment can be considered as the greatest event for women's empowerment as 50% of the seats in Rajasthan are now reserved for women in local bodies.

The present study taken up by the Institute is an attempt to examine the role of women representatives in urban bodies in the context of the constitutional and other measures taken up for their upliftment at all levels. Such studies on urban representation are only few and I am sure, the findings would help in making the women representation more effective as well as aid in policy planning.

Jaipur, Dec. 31, 2010

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PREFACE & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The focus of the XIth five year plan is on decentralized participatory planning. Gradually, with the growing urban population, the Urban Local Bodies are going attention. Another important initiative is 50% reservation for women at local level. It is perceived that this reservation would positively impact social and political empowerment of women. This means that the overall representations of women at the grass root level has increased from the meager proportion to equal status (50%)

To achieve the coveted goal of decentralized planning, there is a need to ascertain the skills and competence of the representatives so that the implementation guidelines are formed accordingly. This was the basic premise on which the study was initiated by SCM SPRI. The financial assistance was provided by Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung (RCS) Berlin. On behalf of the Institute, I own deep sense of gratitude to the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung (RCS) for providing support for this assignment. The support of Ms. Sonja Blasig, Programme Officer, RLS Berlin Office, Dr. Carsten, Shri Rajiv, RLS – India office is gratefully acknowledge, Our heartfelt gratitude to all the Mayors, ex-Mayors and councilors who contributed immensely at various stages of the study. The work would not have been completed in time without the overall guidance of Shri Pradeep Mathur Chairman, SCM SPRI Dr. Sudhir Varma, Director, SCM SPRI and. Thanks are due to the experts, Dr. Virendra Narain, Shri R.S. Rathore, Dr. Meeta Singh, Dr. M.K. Mathur for their arduous work. At the Institute Shri Vinod Kewalramani, Shri Pradeep Sharma, Ms. Aditi Vyas, Ms. Sonu Pareek, Shri Yogeshwar Singh, Shri Ranveer Singh, Shri Yogesh Chhipa, Shri Mahendra Singh and Shri Atul Sharma provided support which is gratefully acknowledged.

Jaipur, Dec. 31, 2010

Manish Tiwari
Joint Director
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LIST OF ACRONYMS

B.Ed	-	Bachelor of Education
BJP	-	Bhartiya Janta Party
CAA	-	Constitution Amendment Act
CEO	-	Chief Executive Officers
CSWI	-	Committee on the Status of Women in India
Govt	-	Government
EC	-	Executive Committee
IMR	-	Infant Mortality Rate
MLA	-	Member Legislative Assembly
MMR	-	Maternal Mortality Rate
MP	-	Member of Parliament
NGO	-	Non Government Organization
NPPW	-	National Prospective Plan for Women
OBC	-	Other Backward Class
PRIs	-	Panchayati Raj Institutions
SC	-	Scheduled Caste
SEWA	-	Self-Employed Women's Association
SRS	-	Sample Registration System
ST	-	Scheduled Tribe
STC	-	Senior Teaching Certificate
TFR	-	Total Fertility Rate
ULB	-	Urban local Bodies
UN	-	United Nation

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Introduction

An important initiative of the Government of India to strengthen municipal governance was the enactment of the Constitution (74th Amendment) Act (CAA) in 1992. Until that amendment, local governments in India were organized on the basis of the '*ultra vires*' principle [beyond the powers or authority granted by law and the state governments were free to extend or control the functioning of these bodies through executive decisions without an amendment to the legislative provisions. Through this initiative, an attempt was made to improve the performance ability of municipalities, so that they were able to discharge their duties efficiently.

The important provisions specified in the Act include constitution of three types of municipalities, devolution of greater functional responsibilities and financial powers to municipalities, adequate representation of weaker sections and women in municipalities, regular and fair conduct of municipal elections, and constitution of Ward Committees, District

Planning Committees, Metropolitan Planning Committees and State Finance Commissions.

The Constitution (74th Amendment) Act, 1992 provisions, thus, provide a basis for the State Legislatures to guide the State Governments in the assignment of various responsibilities to municipalities and to strengthen municipal governance. Accordingly, several State Governments amended their Municipal Acts/ Laws/ Legislations so as to bring these in conformity with the Constitutional provisions.

Urban local bodies/ municipalities play an important role in the planning and development of urban areas. However, most studies undertaken to assess the functioning of municipalities in India point out that the performance of municipalities in the discharge of their duties has continued to deteriorate over time. It is noted that municipalities in India are confronted with a number of problems, such as inefficiency in the conduct of business, ineffectiveness for the weaker sections of the population in local governance, weak financial condition, lack of transparency in the planning and implementation of projects, etc., which affect their performance adversely.

A review of literature reveals that till date a systematic attempt to assess the impact of the 74th Amendment provisions on the working of municipalities has not been undertaken at the all-India level. The literature review further shows that piece-meal studies have been undertaken on the subject after the Amendment. It is also learnt that the municipalities are confronted with serious problems, despite the amendments in the State Municipal Acts and the implementation of the 74th CAA provisions. For instance, in some States, there exists a problem of ineffective participation by women in the decision making process despite adoption of the policy of reservation, delays in the transfer of funds to the municipalities despite the constitution of State Finance Commissions, poor recovery from various tax and non-tax sources despite devolution of powers, etc. It is further learnt that there is an influence of

various social, economic and political factors on the functioning of municipalities in India. Considering these local-level issues of governance as relevant, it is essential to examine the impact of the constitution (74th Amendment) Act in different states of India.

Urban local governments comprise of persons with diverse backgrounds, namely the elected members (such as Mayor, President and Councilors, who are representatives of citizens), the nominated members (who are selected by the state government from amongst persons having special knowledge or experience in municipal administration) and the ex-officio members (such as the MPs and the MLAs, who are responsible for spending funds received from the government on various development works within their constituency). Moreover, seats in urban local governments have been reserved for persons belonging to the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and backward classes and women. By introducing these changes in the composition of urban local governments, the main objective of the government is to create a representative government at the local level, which is capable of addressing the needs of all sections of the society at that level.

An important provision of the 74th Constitutional (Amendment) Act, with reference to the present study is 33% reservation for women candidates in the Urban Local Bodies. The reservation had been increased from 33% to 50% in Rajasthan so that women may be encouraged to come forward and participate actively in the local government. It has been realized by the government in India that women were not being involved in planning and delivery of municipal services and are even unrepresented in the urban local bodies and the interests of women were totally neglected by the urban local bodies. After long drawn debates in the Parliament as well as in the various State Assemblies in India on the issue of reservation for women in the rural and urban local bodies, it was decided that although it may not be the ultimate solution to empowerment, it would certainly be a catalyst if a 33 percent reservation is made in the rural Panchayati Raj

Institutions (PRIs, the rural local bodies) and in the urban local bodies. Structural changes were, therefore, brought about in the laws governing these bodies. It was, thus, decided that out of all the seats in the urban and rural local bodies, one-third of them should go to women. At the same time, it was also decided that one-third of the total chairpersons in these bodies should be women.

These historic Constitutional amendments have resulted in thousands of women now getting representation in the urban local bodies and millions in the rural local bodies. Keeping in view such positive and active representation of women in the local bodies, the government increased the percentage of reservation from 33 to 50%. As a result greater participation and awareness regarding several issues could be seen among women.

1.1 Socio- Economic Profile of Rajasthan

Rajasthan is the largest state of the country occupying 10.42 percent of it's land area. More than half of the state is part of the Thar dessert. South-east of the state is traversed by Aravali hill ranges. There are 41,353 inhabited villages and 222 urban agglomerations. Many of the state's villages are besieged in difficult topography of desert or hill belt. Lack of surface water, low literacy and feudal legacy adds to the backwardness of the State. Administratively, Rajasthan has 33 districts with 237 development blocks which are clubbed in seven divisions:

- Ajmer Division : Ajmer, Bhilwara, Nagaur, Tonk.
- Bharatpur Division : Bharatpur, Dholpur, Karauli, Sawai Madhopur.
- Bikaner Division : Bikaner, Churu, Ganganagar, Hanumangarh.
- Jaipur Division : Jaipur, Alwar, Jhunjhunu, Sikar, Dausa.
- Jodhpur Division : Barmer, Jaisalmer, Jalore, Jodhpur, Pali, Sirohi.
- Kota Division : Baran, Bundi, Jhalawar, Kota.
- Udaipur Division : Banswara, Chittorgarh, Pratapgarh, Dungarpur, Udaipur, Rajsamand

Table 1.1

Indicators	India	Rajasthan
Area (Sq. Km.)	3,287,240	342,239
Population (Census 2001) (Million)	1028	56.51
Population Density (persons per Sq. Km.)	324	165
Male (Census 2001)	532 Million	29,420,011
Female (Census 2001)	496 Million	27,087,177
Rural Population	72.18	76.61
Urban Population	27.82	23.39
Scheduled Caste (Million)	166.64	9.69
Scheduled Tribe (Million)	84.33	7.1
Sex Ratio	933	921
Infant Mortality Rate (SRS 2008) (per thousand)	53	63
Maternal Mortality Rate (SRS 2004-06) (per thousand)	254	388
Total Fertility Rate (SRS 2008) (per thousand)	2.6	3.3
Literacy Rate (%)	64.84	61.03
Male (%)	75.26	75.7
Female (%)	53.67	43.9
Work Participation Rate (%) (Census 2001)	39.10	42.1

According to Census 2001, State's population was 56.51million with 29,420,011 males & 27,087,177 females. Population of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in the State was 9.69 million & 7.1 million respectively. The state had a population density of 165 as against 324 recorded as national average in 2001 showing a thin distribution of population in the state. Rajasthan has shown a marginal decline in decadal growth rate from 28.44 in 1991 to 28.33 in 2001. It is much

higher than the national average of 21.34 between 1991 and 2001. Incidentally the sex ratio of Rajasthan has shown an increasing trend from 910 in 1991 to 921 in 2001. Yet it is significantly less than the sex ratio of India i.e. 933 in 2001. The Child sex ratio (0-6 years) is worse at 909. Literacy rate among rural women is 37.33% becoming a major hurdle in conveying health information. The state had a literacy rate of 61.03 in 2001, which is also lower than the national rate of 64.84 recorded in 2001. The literacy rate for females is only 43.9 the following table given a comparative picture of the urban population scenario in Rajasthan:

Table 1.2
Urban Population in Rajasthan

	2001	1991	1981
Total	13,205,444	10,067,113	7,210,508
Male	6,987,178	5,356,317	3,084,700
Female	6,218,266	4,710,796	3,369,808

Source: Census 2001

Three primary demographic indicators elicited in a recent nationwide survey have revealed that in Rajasthan the maternal mortality ratio is 388 per lakh live births, (SRS 2004-06) infant mortality rate of 63 per thousand live births, and a total Fertility Rate is 3.3 per thousand (SRS 2008).

1.2 Status of Women in India

Joseph Gathia in his work *Bharat Main Balika*, Concept Publishing Co, New Delhi, 2002 has given an account of the position of the women in epic literature. To some it may sound biased or exaggerated, but the account given in the book compels the reader to appreciate the hard reality. Very often the names mentioned are respectable, if not ideal, like Ahilya, Draupadi, Tara and Sita.

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Ahilya is often mentioned as a *Pativrata* (faithful or virtuous wife). Victim of Indra's deception or fraud as he disguised himself as her husband to outrage her chastity earned the curse to become a stone and with the touch of lord Rama's feet regained her womanhood. Irresistible inference is that though, Ahilya was not at fault, but was still given the punishment.

Draupadi under the orders of her mother-in-law was divided amongst five Pandava brothers and lived as an ideal wife for the five brothers. But she was not fit to go to heaven because of her inclination towards Arjun whom she chose in the 'Swayamwar'.

An exalted person like **Sita** had to undergo a fire test to prove her fidelity to lord Ram and was even then thrown out of the house.

There is a reference to **Shubhru** in Maha Bharat. She was unmarried and committed herself to penance. Despite a good track record, she was not entitled to heavenly abode without being married. Bowing to the advice given by Narada, Shubhru agreed to marry for a night to a man on the condition that half the benefit of her penance will be credited to him.

These incidents bring in sharp focus the fact that women never had independent existence.

With the legal system provided by Manu, the status of women in the society started falling further. Women were not allowed to perform *Shradh* and *Pind-dan* and the birth of a son in the family was considered necessary for succession and performing *Pind-dan* without which the father could not escape the *Narak (Hell)*.

Kautilya Prescriptions

In Kautilya's Artha Shastra, a daughter was made dependent on male members of the family and was not allowed to inherit, if there were a brother. He enunciated the concept of *Stri Dhana*. The husband was allowed to go for the second marriage with the consent of the first wife if

she failed to produce a son. A wife was not allowed even to give alms to a beggar without the consent of her husband. Henceforth, the discrimination between a son and a daughter gradually increased and the daughter was increasingly neglected. Women had a declining role in production activities, and her activities revolved around the kitchen and house keeping. The men assumed the role of the bread earner.

The age of marriage prescribed by Kautilya for boys was 16 and for the girls 12. This gave rise to child marriages.

Reformist Measures in British Raj

The British ruled India for 200 years between the 18 and 20th century. They were opposed to child marriages and *Sati*. Sir John Shore became Commissioner of Varanasi in 1795 and worked against infanticide. It is interesting to note that in the Census of 1846 in Jullundhar, in 200 Bedi families, there was not a single daughter indicating the prevalence of infanticide. So far Rajasthan is concerned, there is eloquent description of infanticide and Sati in the Report on the Political Administration of Rajputana (1865-66 and 1866-67), Exchange Press, Bombay, 1867. According to the report, 'the crimes of female infanticide and Suttee, once so prevalent in these States, are now happily almost extinct As a matter of fact the change came in the past 30 years. An important observation in the report is that 'This is partly due to a judicious check placed by the Chiefs on the exorbitant demands made by the Charans and Bhats on occasions of marriage, but mainly to the fact that the Rajputs themselves now regard it as a crime, and a crime of a heinous nature. (P. 16)

Regarding Suttee, the Report says 'The performance of Suttee or self-sacrifice by the widows of Hindus has obtained from a very early date. Of its first institution nothing certain is known, but it is undoubtedly of high antiquity, being alluded in the documents written before Christian Era..... In Rajputana the crime used to be a frequent one.....' in numerous grave stones..... figures of the husband and the wife who burnt herself after the

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death of the former are engraven. In Rajasthan many such monuments may be seen in every village'..... in many cases Suttee is not voluntary'.

About the nature of Suttee, the report says '.....as a rule, there is strong reason to believe that the victim is sacrificed, not to the despairing dictates of love and affection in its deepest grief, but is induced to self-immolation to maintain a time-honoured custom, and the family of the deceased may be enabled to boast how honorably and faithfully the last rites were performed?

The report gives a graphic account of 'the persuasion done for preparing the women to commit Suttee. The report says 'To effect this desired object every persuasion is used. The bards of the family sing to the wives the fame of former heroines who had acquired immortality by perishing in the flames which consumed the bodies of their lords; if this fails, wretched woman is tainted with cruel accusations of disgracing the family she has entered. One or other of these methods too often

During 1865-66 and 1866-67, two cases of Suttee were reported. One case was from Bikaner and 'the persons concerned were severely punished'. The other case was from Kota but the attempted effort of Suttee was stopped by the local authorities. In the concluding part the report says, 'thus time-honored, custom and usage has now been broken through' and the Agent to the Governor-General assured the Government of India that 'in a very brief period Suttee will be numbered amongst the crimes of the past'. (P 18-19)

prevails, and once induced to acquiesce, they take care she is prevented from drawing back by administering maddening and intoxicating drugs and them brought to the scene of immolation; and the from retreat is not permitted?

Gandhian Approach

In a big measure credit goes to Mahatma Gandhi for creating the conditions for bringing the women to the national mainstream. Gandhi was aware of the plight of women in the society. Therefore, amelioration

of the condition of women was made the part of his Satyagraha which was an all pervasive term. He explained this in the inaugural issue of Nav Jivan (7 Sept, 1919). Pleading for a higher circulation of Nav Jivan to reach every farmer and women to enlighten the afflicted masses. He stated:

What would be the fate of the future generation if the women remain in a state of ignorance and darkness and know nothing about India's plight (*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi Vol XVI p 94*).

Gandhi wanted the women to be literate and also to know about the plight of the country without which the plight of the future generation was in jeopardy.

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Gandhi's call for spread of education among women and their participation in activities like Charkha, Swadeshi, removal of untouchability and prohibition, encouraged large number of women

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to join the non-violent non-cooperation movement. Regarding the ever growing awakening among the women, Gandhi thought that it was 'an event whose value we are not at the present moment able to measure adequately' (*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi XXII p 247*). It is to the credit of Gandhiji that women, traditionally tied down to the domestic chores, joined the movement. Seeing the women as volunteers in the Congress sessions gave the idea that women can work activity in the political field. They played an important role in selling Khadi by door to door contact, picketing of liquor shops and looking after the work after the men were arrested (*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi Vol XXH p. 186-18*).

Gandhi was of the opinion that 'The woman has been suppressed under custom and law, for which man was responsible and in the shaping of which she had no

Gandhi was 'uncompromising in the matter of women's rights'. He was of the firm opinion that 'she should labour under no legal disability not suffered by men' and that daughters and sons should be treated 'on a footing of perfect equality'.

hand'.....men 'considered themselves to be the lords and masters of women.....women have been taught to regard themselves as slaves of men' Gandhi was aware of the paradoxical situation that in the villages, the women sometimes rule men 'but to the impartial outsider', the legal and customary status

of woman is bad enough throughout and demands radical alteration' (*The Constructive Programme 1945 p. 17*).

Gandhi and his movement succeeded because he could, among others, mobilize the women and the religious leaders. Importance of the observation can be appreciated by the fact that Harcourt Buttler, the Governor of the then United Province in his report on 16.1.1916 to Lord Hardinge, Viceroy of British India, emphasized that till such time women and religious leaders are not mobilized, the British Government should not be worried about the consequences of the movement launched by political leaders. To quote him "Priests and women are the most important influences in India and I am not very much afraid of politicians until they play on these two" (Quoted in G. Minault in the *Khilafat Movement*, Delhi p. 149).

But removing the legal inequalities was only a palliative measure to him because the root of the evil lay much

deeper than most people realized – 'it is the man's greed of power'. Therefore, while advocating repeal of all legal disqualifications he wanted 'enlightened women of India to deal with the root cause?' (*Young India, 17 Oct 1929*).

However, he wanted women not to 'ape the manners of the West, which may be suited to its environment. They must apply methods suited to the Indian genius and Indian environment' (*Young India, 17 Oct 1929*). Calling

women the weaker sex was a libel to Gandhi who blamed men for 'injustice to woman' (*Young India*, 10 April 1930).

Starting from 1919, when the non-violent non-cooperation movement was launched till the dawn of independence, Gandhi dominated the Indian political scene. Success of a movement depends on the mobilization of the masses based on the correct understanding of the society of which they form part. Gandhi is the most successful example of launching a mass movement in the contemporary period in the world. Gandhi and his movement succeeded because he could, among others, mobilize women and religious leaders.

Writing in *Young India* 22 Dec 1920 Gandhi said "Every where they (women) have flocked in their hundreds and thousands. They have even come out of their purdahs and given their blessings. They have instinctually understood the purity of the movement". Gandhi worked so much with women and for women that he won their total confidence as is borne out by the following quotation "I have come in contact with lakhs of women who tell me that they find a fellow-woman in me and not a man". (*Harijan*, 3 Aug 1934).

The account given above makes it abundantly clear that Gandhi cared to mobilize women for his freedom movement. He was the leader who not only pleaded but also worked for equality between the two sexes.

Dawn of Independence and Constitutional Guarantee

The political philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, to a great measure, is reflected in the Constitution of the Indian Republic also

It will be in fitness of things to mention here that the Constitution has nothing to say on women and girls' labour at home. Economic assumption of the Constitution enshrined in Art 23, 24, 25 exclude all labour which produces 'use values' (not produced for market) as non-productive and non-remunerable. It does not treat the work women do for the family as economic exploitation particularly in the absence of equal rights over property and productive resources of the family.

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because the founding fathers of the Constitution were not only the fellow workers of Gandhiji but also greatly inspired by him.

At the first sight, the Indian Constitution negates discrimination based on sex under Art 15 of the Constitution. But conscious of the low status of women in the society as the founding fathers of the constitution were, they authorized the state for making any special provision by adding proviso (3) to Art 15. But sometimes the criticism is made that the provision seems to be reformist, welfarist and casual. Art 39 (a) directs the State to make policy for right to an adequate means of livelihood for men and women, and Art 39 (d) states that there will be equal pay for equal work for both men and women in the Directive Priorities but without giving any time frame.

Mid-seventies in India marks a watershed in the history of women's empowerment. The Committee on the Status of Women in India in 1974 submitted its report entitled **Towards Equality**. The report shattered the myth that with the Constitutional guarantee for equality between sexes, the development process would equally benefit all sections of the society irrespective of gender. It revealed that the process of development affected men and women unequally because of women's unfavorable position. There was indeed absence of women's perspective in development.

To operationalize the National Plan of Action, focus was on education, training and promotion of self-employment. For girls in 14-17 years group it was recommended that:

“Apart from imparting general elementary education and knowledge about farming techniques, the curriculum for women should include courses of training in occupational skills like kitchen, gardening, food processing, poultry-keeping, animal husbandry, household arts like cooking, nutritional values of foods locally available, sewing, knitting etc;

and motherhood and childhood care and family planning as also electronics and such fields”.

(Women, Gender Equality and the State, Sadhana Arya, 2000)

The report brought in sharp focus the fact that women remained outside the mainstream of development process and that gender discrimination is one of the most pervading forms of institutionalized deprivation and there is need to rectify this. The report brought out that large sections of women have suffered a decline in their economic status. Though women do not numerically constitute a minority, they are beginning to acquire the features of a minority community by their recognized dimensions of inequality of class (economic situation), status (social position) and political powers. For the first time in the VI Five Year Plan, a chapter was devoted to women and development indicating shift from welfare to development approach.

Cultural patterns and forms of patriarchy collude to keep women in subordinate position. According to a United Nations study women are conditioned in early life to accept a subservient role. The report says that ‘Difference in sex roles begins at the moment of birth when the child is first identified as a male or a female. From this moment, the child is expected to behave in accordance with the roles customarily assigned to his / her sex. By the time the girl becomes an adult, she finds that her world has been slowly but effectively restricted by the rules and expectations of others. She learns that being born female, sets her apart from men and limits her rights in law and practice. The institution of patriarchy has been the main cause of the denial of property rights to women’.

It can be said that the issue of girl child can be properly appreciated in its relational contextuality. The girls in the age-group of 13-18 years are on the threshold of playing the role of women in family because of their status as transient members in the natal family.

India has made considerable progress in social and economic development in recent decades, which is clearly visible from its improved social indicators of life expectancy, infant mortality and literacy rate. However, improvement in women's status is lagging far behind than other accomplishment.

Women in Rajasthan, particularly, live under the strain by various forms of oppression. These are evident from social, cultural and religious pressure in family, law, politics, government programmes, information services and education. These pressures adversely affect women's access to resources. Though the constitution of India and Government legislation grant equal rights in all respects to both men and women, but unfortunately, the reality is that women are often treated as second-class citizens.

Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister stated 'You can tell the condition of a nation by looking at the status of its women'. After more than 60 years of independence women in Rajasthan continue to be seen in the reproductive role i.e. homemakers and child bearers with men seen as providers. Identities and status, linked to ability to bear children especially sons and because of low value attached since birth, health care and education, even when available, do not reach a large proportion of female population.

1.3 Issues that affect women in the urban context

Because women and men have different experience cities differently due to their different roles and activities, and women's needs are seldom represented in policy and planning, it is essential that their interests are now actively advanced. Some areas that have been selected for strategic attention are basic services, human rights, economic capacity, transport, violence and security of tenure. Issues that affect women are not static, as the role of women and men in different societies in Rajasthan are

constantly shifting, specially recently. Issues affecting women that require specific attention are as follows:-

Basic Services

The lack of basic services and infrastructure affects women most fundamentally because they, more than men, deal with water, sanitation, fuel and waste management due to their domestic responsibilities. Women are also most often the direct managers and decision-makers on basic services at the neighborhood and household level. Substandard or non-existent services with their attendant health and hygiene risks therefore affect women more than men. Women frequently remain responsible for subsistence food production, as well as for obtaining water and fuel. Yet their involvement in urban decision-making processes is sometimes very limited. Because of the prominent role of women in managing water, it has however been found that their inclusion in management committees improves services and levels of payment. Likewise, women in planning and management of sanitation improves systems and makes them socially and culturally responsive, while increasing community's sense of ownership.

Economic Capacity

In many countries women predominate in the urban informal economy where they pursue survivalist activities. The economic contribution of these women has remained largely unacknowledged and unmeasured, while the economic potential of women entrepreneurs is constrained. In many cases urban by-laws have not been up-dated to address these women's need for work in or near the home, meaning that their economic activities may contravene the law. This failure to support women's contributions can negatively affect the urban economy as a whole.

The need to recognise the economic capacity and potential of women has been a concern for local, national and international organisations. A major focus of poverty reduction strategies is attention and support to women's

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micro-enterprises. The international and national efforts build on successful experiences such as the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in India, started in 1972 as a union for poor women, which made great strides in assisting poor women to access credit and micro-finance.

The economic capacity of women in urban areas is linked to basic services and security of tenure. With women's economic activities concentrated in the informal economy and close to home, their need for resources essential to business in residential urban areas is crucial. These include water and sanitation as well as property and land. A gender sensitive policy would recognize the value of informal and survivalist economic activities, both in urban poverty reduction and for economic development in the city.

Transport

Women depend more heavily on public transport than men and, given the allocation of household resources, women have less access to private modes of transport. Women also use transport in different ways from men because of gender divisions of labor. For example they are more likely to travel in off-peak periods and to travel accompanied by others, such as when taking children to school or taking older or infirm relatives to hospitals or clinics. There are also particular cultural patterns associated with women's use of transport, such as the separate sections for women on some public transport in countries of South Asia.

It is only in recent years that transport has been considered as more than a technical subject, and even more recently that planning, investing in and managing transport with women's as well as men's needs in mind has been considered. Transport is a social, economic, environmental and technical aspect of urban life. Transport is recognized as a crucial urban governance issue for women. Some World Bank studies indicate that gendering public transport is critical to women in the city because of its

impact on their access to work, employment, safety and time allocated to domestic work.

Women's transport needs can be best served through programmes that:

- Improve access to transport.
- Provide more frequent services.
- Consider the public safety issues of women using public transport.

As with other urban services, transport priorities for women will necessarily differ from one context to another. Their needs can only be ascertained through effective consultation with women themselves.

Violence against Women

Violence affects women the most. The pervasive risk of violence restricts women's full participation in society. Violence against women has been on the international agenda since the start of the first UN Decade for Women in 1975, and continues to be a critical issue in international agreements. It remains a key obstacle to women's equality and empowerment.

Urban violence against women presents itself in the public and domestic domain, and has been linked closely with issues of housing and shelter. Women, subjected to domestic violence, may remain in abusive relationships if they are unable to secure rights to land and property except through their husbands. Violent clashes between different urban groups in the public domain are often played out in terms of attacks on women and, therefore, restrict their access to public space and life.

By including women participants in safety planning, local authorities can use scarce resources efficiently as well as developing effective processes of urban governance. Women safety audits are an innovative way of involving women in city design and planning. The audit is based on the principle that women can best identify elements of the urban environment likely to give rise to the risk of assault and affect their feeling of security.

Report on Urban Local Bodies

Safety Audits can be a key ingredient in the modification of social structures, politics and institutional procedures.

Security of Tenure

Security of tenure, or the lack of it, is a key factor in the ability of poor households to protect themselves from the threat of forced evictions, and their willingness to invest in improving their living conditions.

Where women lack access to and control over land and housing because they are women, constitutes a violation of human rights, as well as contributing to their

increasing poverty. Despite important recent legal reforms, women in many places fail to benefit through increased rights to inherit property. This may be due to legal systems being inaccessible or to a preference for customary over statutory law. Property titling systems may grant title to men rather than women or simply be too costly for poor women.

At present, women are often excluded from secure tenure as a consequence of cultural norms as well as unequal legislative and political systems. Yet the extension of secure tenure to women has far reaching implications for their economic and human rights. It also affects their

CONCERN FOR WOMEN IN URBAN AREAS

- Half of the population in large metropolitan towns lives in insecure households without basic amenities. Two-thirds of those who stay in these areas include women and children.
- There are more women headed household in poor areas than in rural areas but they have not been enlisted in the surveys conducted for the families living below the poverty line and therefore, do not have access to poverty alleviation programmes.
- Generally, the urban poor have lesser access to basic services like water, sanitation, roads, electricity, education, health and urban poor women are affected more adversely than men. These are the issues which have to be articulated by women councilors in urban bodies. Political space for their under 30-50% reservation, gives them an opportunity to work for ameliorating the social and domestic conditions of women in urban areas.

economic capability and thus the effective functioning of the urban economy. Secure tenure helps women pursue income-earning activities and to access credit, which is an important tool for empowering women and reducing poverty.

1.4 The Role of Women in the Urban Local Governance

“Women shall be entitled to hold public offices and to exercise all public functions, established by national law, on equal terms with men, without any discrimination.”

Stated in the Convention on the Political Rights of Women in 1952, this was the first instrument of international law aimed at granting and protecting women’s rights on a world wide basis. The move towards equality between men and women had gained momentum. India, like other countries, was experiencing the move towards equality between men and women. The influence of liberal feminism was becoming overt and the pressure on the government to give equal status to women was building up. As women demanded equal treatment and larger choices in various sectors, it became evident that the existing structure was insufficient.

The Indian Constitution guarantees political equality through the institution of adult franchise and article 15 which, inter alia, prohibits discrimination on grounds of sex. The post independence period in India saw the implementation of many positive steps to improve the socio-economic political status of women. The first attempt in this direction was the appointment of a committee on the Status of Women in India (CSWI) in 1977 to undertake a ‘comprehensive examination of all the questions relating to the rights and status of women’. The focus was on empowerment as reflected in the Ninth Plan document the NPEW (National Prospective Plan for Women) (1988-2000) through convergence of services, resources and infrastructure emphasizing on several priority

Report on Urban Local Bodies

areas like “economic empowerment, special support services, health, nutrition, prevention of atrocities and violence, natural resources and environment , media and advocacy and political participation of women by recommending 30% of the seats for women at all levels of legislation i.e., Panchayats to Parliament”. Its recommendations were widely supported and were incorporated in the Bill raising reservation to 33.3% in urban and rural local government institutions.

The provision of reservation for women apparently owes to two important factors: one international i.e., the worldwide stress on inclusion of women in political decision making, specifically the Beijing Platform of Action which mentioned educating women in civil, political and social rights emphasizing on quota system and other internal, i.e., the organized independent movements of women in India since late 1970 projecting issues on women in society, polity and economy.

Previous experiences show that women have rarely occupied leading positions and have not made much progress in spite of laws that guarantee opportunity. There is thus a need for empowering women. Empowerment has different dimensions- political, social and economic. Empowerment gives women the capacity to influence decision-making processes, planning, implementation and evaluation by integrating them into the political system. This implies political participation which includes the right to vote, contest, campaign, party membership and representation in political offices at all levels and effectively influence decisions thereby leading to political empowerment.

One of the important indicators of political participation for women would be her share of representation in local bodies. In the context of rapid urbanization the role of urban local government becomes important in the proper management of the urban areas. Only by getting into seats of power can women bring about changes quickly and effectively in the society where mobilization and exposure and modernity have been

confined only to a small elite and where there is a need for ‘political modernization’ and ‘political development’. The roles of urban local bodies become all the more important in this context. Reservation is one instruments of political empowerment which guarantees representation. The passing of the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment can be considered as the greatest event for women’s empowerment as one third of the seats are reserved for women in local bodies.

Women as Electors

The following table shows that in the recently held elections to the urban local bodies 61.79% women caste their votes. Although women showed a very keen interest in casting their vote in the elections, the female turnout was also seen very high as compared to men. It is interesting to note that women, over the years, have been actively participating in electoral process and their turn out in state and Lok Sabha elections, have been impressive. The same trend has been noticed in the election to urban bodies in Rajasthan, particularly in the context of 50% reservation for women. The following table gives the total number of registered voters and the gender wise turn out in the elections to local bodies.

Table 1.3
Electorate, Voter Turnout & their Percentage

Population	Electorate as on pre poll date	Voter Turnout	Polling percentage
Total	3020046	1907402	63.16
Male	2652951	1597704	60.22
Female	5672997	3505106	61.79

Source: Report on municipal General Election (2009), State Election Commission, Rajasthan (Jaipur)

It is evident that percentage of women, exercising their vote, was more them 60% which was impressive. Thus, the women councilors did represent women substantively and hence were expected to be more sensitive to their needs and requirements in none too helpful social conditions.



2

Methodology

2.1 Rationale for the Study

Now that women have acquired enough space in urban local bodies, particularly in the context of 50% reservation for them, it is time to examine their role as elected representatives. For, mere reservation is no guarantee for the upliftment of women in a largely male-dominated society. The reservation has to be translated into effective activities in this realm. Effective activities would reflect their concern of women related issues. One has to see as to what extent the agenda of local bodies takes cognizance of the problems with which women are beset, both in the society as a whole and particularly within the forewalls of their households. What exactly is the contribution of women representative in local bodies to make their agenda relevant for women related issues. Women representatives have to work simultaneously on two fronts viz. general societal concerns with regard to problems of urban development and also on the necessity to make urban bodies as active weapon for breaking the shackles of discriminatory practices against women. In fact, their role to highlight and gender disparities, demands both sensitivity and

self-confidence on their part. One has to find out whether women representatives in urban bodies have lived upto these expectations and what exactly have they been doing on these fronts to make urban bodies instrumental for raising the status of women on the one hand and of urban development on the other. This in essence is the rationale for taking up this study. This study seeks to examine the role of women representatives in urban bodies in the context of above stated scenario detracting the status of women in the society and the constitutional and other measures, taken for their upliftment at the national and international levels.

2.2 Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of the study is to ascertain the **Status of Women Representatives in the Urban Local Bodies of Rajasthan** and to examine their role along with the efficacy and gaps in implementation and implications of the laws enacted for the reservation of a woman candidate in urban local bodies as well as record the perception and problems faced by them at the workplace.

The main research questions for probe are:

Woman Councilor Related

1. The priorities of women representatives and see whether they are different from those of men
2. To ascertain the role of women in framing women centered programmes
3. To ascertain the independence of women representatives in determining the priorities of Urban local bodies

General Public

4. To find out the voters perception of their women representatives
5. Are more women voting for women candidates?

Policy Related

6. Have the formal structures like committees with Urban Local Bodies been modified to include more women?
7. To see whether the present reservation policy needs any changes?
8. Looking into gender budgeting at urban local body levels
9. Impact of the two child norm

The issues for micro level probe were to be identified after situational analysis in the initial stages of the research and prioritized subsequently with the help of various stakeholders.

Project Area and Sample

The proposed project covered Municipal Corporations in Jaipur and Jodhpur, Municipal Councils in Alwar and Hanumangarh and Municipal Boards in Barmer and Bundi (Grade II), Chomu and Nathdwara (Grade III) and Nawa and Mandalgarh (Grade IV) of the state.

The sample of the women selected is as follows: 10 members each of The Municipal Corporations in Jaipur, Jodhpur, 5 members each of Municipal Councils in Alwar, Hanumangarh and 5 members each of Municipal Boards in Barmer, Bundi (Grade II), Chomu, Nathdwara (Grade III) and Nawa and Mandalgarh (Grade IV) of the state. The total sample size was 60 respondents.



2.3 Methodology and Strategy for Research

The initial stages of the research project dealt with the collection of relevant data, which included information from secondary sources and key informants to possess an insight into the present situation of the role of women in Urban Local Bodies of the state. For macro level investigations, secondary level information/data was collected from official records, newspapers and journals, other research reports, various governmental and non-governmental agencies of the State including data on implementation of reservation policy, role in decision-making of women representatives in urban local bodies, pattern of reservation policy in different parts of the state, economic status, level of literacy of women and the training received. A quick review of literature and discussions was carried out to prepare draft concept note and questionnaires for discussion in the preparatory workshop.

These issues were deliberated in a dialogue with the various stakeholders including women representatives, political parties, NGO representatives working in the same domain, gender experts, media persons etc in a Preparatory Workshop held in the Institute on 11th May, 2010. The participants included Mayor of Jaipur and Jodhpur, Kota and Sikar, Ex-Mayors, Member of Legislative Assembly, academicians and NGO representatives. On the basis of the discussions in the workshop, research and policy Issues were identified and prioritized. These prioritized issues/questions were included while finalizing the questionnaire for the study.

This was followed by a two-day training programme for selected research assistants. The training was imparted by the team leader and assisted by the resource persons chosen for the study. In the concluding session of the programme a detailed field plan was prepared. Simultaneously, the Chief Executive Officers (CEO) and Mayors of the selected local bodies were informed about the study and their consent was taken for

undertaking the study in their respective district. Accordingly dates were finalized for each district. Each team consisted of four researchers, two for interviewing the councilor, mayor and officials and the other two for interviewing the voters in the selected municipal ward.

The data thus collected, was cleaned and entered in MS Excel and analyzed. A tabulation plan was prepared and tables were generated using the analyzed data. The study report was this generated on the basis of an analytical scrutiny of the data. The study report will be should with various stakeholders through a workshop & media advocacy. The findings will be disseminated in a dissemination workshop including professionals and practitioners, especially with people concerned with grass root interventions on gender related matters. This dissemination is expected to educate these professionals and ensure further dissemination to women at large. Further, the recommendations are to be sent to the Government and the matter is to be properly followed up. This is expected to force a change in the policies of the State Government. It is also proposed to conduct a media briefing about the findings of the study and is expected to result in a media advocacy campaign.

Expected Results

Table 2.1

Inputs (Activities)	Outputs (Short Term Expected Results)	Outcomes (medium term expected results)	Impacts (Long Term Expected Results)
<p><u>Research Team</u> <u>Project Staff and</u> <u>Consultants</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Situation Analysis - Policy Analysis - Enlisting & establishing dialogue with elected women representatives - Policy Dialogue - Field Work - Analysis of Data and formation of Recommendations - Dissemination workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identification of areas of concern and key issues - Identification of efficacy and gaps in implementation and implications of the reservation policy - Resource Group for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy reforms - Implementation Strategies - Social Issues - Communication Tools for Dissemination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Empowering the status of women - Awareness for women candidate - Identification of training needs for the women. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gender Sensitisation - Active and increased women participation - Empowerment of women at policy/program me making levels.



Municipal Governance In Rajasthan

3.1 The Rajasthan Municipalities Act

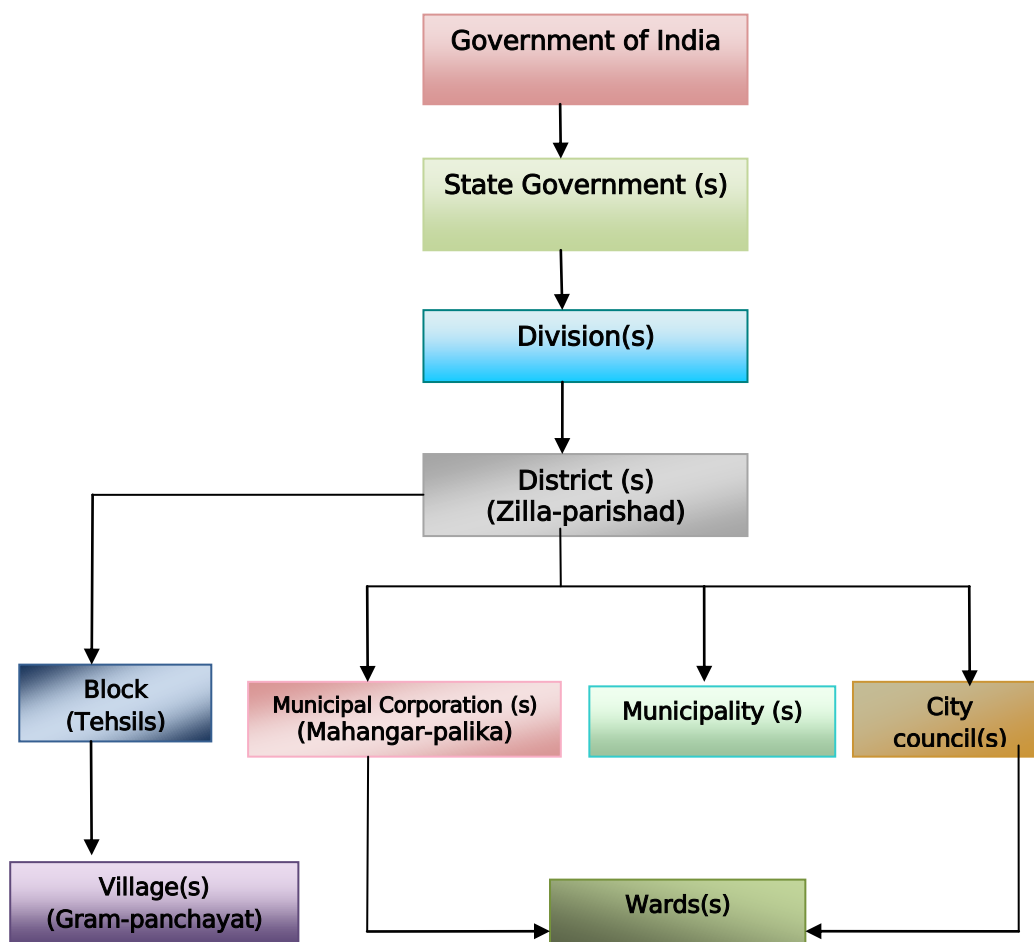
The municipalities of Rajasthan function as an institution of self-governance and the powers are devolved by the state. Articles 243 of the Constitution of India lays down provisions regarding the election, composition, powers, duration and so on of the municipalities. Municipalities are responsible for social and economic development and social justice in there area. They are authorized to implement developmental schemes and also have the power to impose taxes. Currently Rajasthan have 33 districts that are divided into 241 tehsils, 237 panchayat samitis, 9,184 village panchayats and 183 municipalities.

In the direction of strengthening the Urban Local Bodies in Rajasthan, the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act (1992) has been considered as a benchmark. In order to strengthen the Urban Local Bodies in their constitution, structure, functions and powers, financial capacity and

review of planning at the district level, the 74th Constitutional Amendment has brought a sea change. In short, in an attempt to transform small towns into big cities and the development, municipal councils are there in existence. A number of municipal councils have tried to understand their responsibilities and have been successful in their implementation. Still, smaller and medium level municipal councils are still to be aware of the functions and powers and resultantly are not so effective.

The primary responsibility is to educate the representatives and public servants of such municipal councils of the changes brought about by the 74th Constitutional amendment.

Administrative structure of India



3.2 Establishment and Incorporation of Municipality

1. In every transitional area, there shall be established a municipal board and every such municipal board shall be a body corporate by the name of municipal board of the place by reference to which the municipality is known and shall have perpetual succession and a common seal and may sue or be sued in its corporate name.
2. In every smaller urban area, there shall be established a municipal council and every such municipal council shall be a body corporate by the name of the municipal council of the city by reference to which the municipality is known and shall have perpetual succession and a common seal and may sue and be sued in its corporate name.
3. In every larger urban area, there shall be established a municipal corporation and every such municipal corporation shall be body corporate by the name of municipal, corporation of the city by reference to which the municipality is known and shall have perpetual succession and a common seal and may sue and be sued in its corporate name.

Provided that a Municipality under this section may not be constituted in such urban area or part thereof as the Governor may, having regard to the size of the area and the municipal services be provided or proposed to be provided by an industrial establishment in that area and such other factor as he may deem fit, by notification, specify to be an industrial township.

Provided further that having regard to the cultural, historic, tourist or other like importance of an urban area, the State Government may, by notification in the official Gazette, exclude such area from the municipality and constitute, or without excluding such area from the municipality constitute in addition to the municipality, a development authority to exercise such powers and discharge such functions in the said area as may be prescribed and notwithstanding anything

elsewhere in this Act, may, in relation to such area, delegate, by notification in the official Gazette, such municipal powers function and duties to the said authority as it may think appropriate for the proper, rapid and planned development of such area.

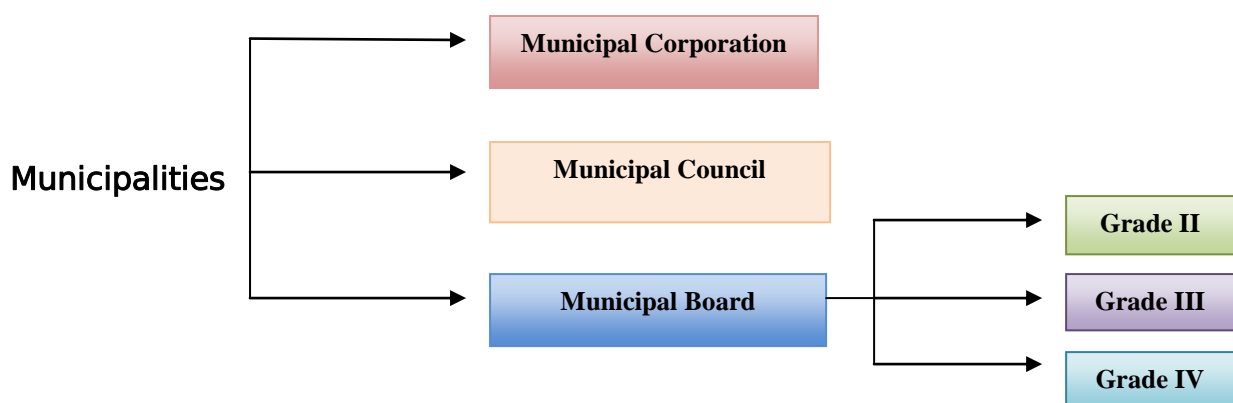
3.3 Structure of Municipality

There is a provision of formation of mainly three types of municipalities in Rajasthan. In first category, Municipal Corporation is formed in cities having population of more than five lakh. In second category, Municipal Councils are found in cities having population of one lakh to five lakh. In the third category, Municipal Boards have been formed in towns having population of less than one lakh. As laid down in the Municipal Act, the minimum number of wards to be divided in municipal board is 13.

In Rajasthan, the Municipal Board has been divided into three categories on the basis of population which are as follows:

- Municipal Board (II)
- Municipal Board (III)
- Municipal Board (IV)

The levels of Urban Governance in Rajasthan



The categorization and division of Municipalities in Rajasthan is clear from the Table below:

Table 3.1

Category	Number of Municipality in Rajasthan	Criteria
Municipal Corporation	3	More than 5 Lakh
Municipal Council	11	1 Lakh- 5 Lakh
Municipal Board (II)	39	> 50,000- 1,00,000
Municipal Board (III)	58	> 25,000- 50,000
Municipal Board (IV)	72	> 25,000
Total	183	

3.4 Reservation in municipality

- In different wards of the municipal council, wards are reserved according to the total population of scheduled castes. One-third of these wards shall be reserved for the women of scheduled castes.
- In different wards of the municipal council, wards are reserved according to the total population of scheduled tribe. One-third of these wards shall be reserved for the women of scheduled tribe.
- The wards for backward classes are reserved through the draw of rest of the wards. Again, one-third of these wards shall be reserved for the women of backward classes. The post of chairperson, president and mayor are also reserved for the persons and women from SC, ST and backward castes.
- In the municipal councils reserved for the chairperson from SC, ST and OBC, one-third municipal councils of these categories shall be reserved for women.
- One-third of the total number of wards of the municipal councils shall be reserved for women.

3.5 Committees of Municipality

Committees are an integral unit of democratic system. It is effective in ensuring public participation in development and governance. Hence, the constitution of committees has been given an important place in municipal administration. The aim of constitution of committees is to encourage participation in decision making so that such decision may be taken that can strengthen governance and development. In this context, Rajasthan Municipal ACT 1996 (Constitution of committees) is very important. Under this, there is a provision of four compulsory permanent committees and other committees as required in Municipal Corporation, municipal council and municipal board.

3.6 The Constitution and Structure of Ward Committees

Such municipalities having a population of three lakhs and above shall have ward committees constituted. Such ward committees can be constituted by clubbing one or more wards.

- The state legislative assembly shall formulate rules for the constitution and jurisdiction of the ward committee.
- The state legislative assembly shall also frame rules regarding appointment of members of the ward committees.
- The public representatives (councilors) representing different wards of the municipal councils shall also be the members of the ward committee.
- If the ward committee is limited to only one ward of the municipal council the councilor of that ward shall be the chairman of the committee.
- If the ward committee is extended to two or three wards, one of the councilors of those wards shall be the chairman of the committee.

Permanent Committees of Municipalities

- Executive Committee
- Finance Committee
- Health and Sanitation Committee
- Building and Construction Works Committee

Executive Committee

There is a provision of formation of executive committee under Municipal Corporation, municipal council and municipal board. The committee is constituted by the resolution sanctioned by the opinion of majority of the present members.

Structure of Executive Committee

- Committee Chairman
- Vice Chairman
- Seven elected councilors out of which two shall be women
- Members of permanent committee formed by municipal corporation
- The ex-officio secretary of executive committee shall be the municipal commissioner

Functions of the Executive Committee

The committee is responsible for the administrative functioning of the municipality. It works on the basis of administrative articles described in the municipality act and various rules and sub-rules under the articles.

- To operationalize the administrative tasks of the municipality
- Permanent ownership of the movable and immovable property of municipality, etc.
- Duties related works of municipalities

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee is formed by the resolution passed by the opinion of majority by the total number of members of corporation/ Council/ Board. The total number of members of the committee is determined by the municipality but the maximum number of councilors would be seven.

Functioning of Finance Committee

- Ensuring effective planning of the financial powers of the municipality
- Ensuring the budget of municipality and thereafter, presenting it for discussion
- Presenting the audit reports of the municipality in the municipal meetings

Health and Sanitation Committee

Health and Sanitation Committee is formed the basis of resolution passed by the opinion of majority by municipality in this context.

Functioning of Health and Sanitation Committee

This committee is responsible for cleanliness, health and beautification related functioning. It ensures the timely removal of garbage and the maintenance of cleanliness and hygiene.

Building and Construction Works Committee

Building and Construction Works Committee is formed on the basis of resolution passed by the opinion of the majority of municipality in this context.

Functioning of Building and Construction Committee

This committee is responsible for the basic public facilities such as construction of the buildings, roads, parks, sewerage lines etc. and looks after their wear and tear and maintenance.

Division into Wards

1. The purpose of elections, a municipality shall be divided into such number of wards as is equal to the total number of seats fixed for the municipality under sub-section (1) of Section 6.
2. The representation of each ward shall be on the basis of population of that ward and shall, as far as possible, be in the same proportion as the total number of seats for the municipality bear to its population.

Determination of Wards

1. The State government shall by order to determine-
 - a. The wards into which each municipality shall, for the purpose of its election be divided;
 - b. The extent of each ward;
 - c. The number of seats, if any, reserved for members of the Scheduled Caste or as the case may be, Scheduled Tribes and for women members of such castes and tribes and for members of the Backward Classes and women members thereof; and
 - d. The number of wards for women candidates.
2. The seats reserved for Scheduled Castes or as the case may be, for Scheduled Tribes and for the Backward classes and for women may be, allotted by rotation to different wards in such manner as may be prescribed.

3. The State Government shall carry out the determination of the boundaries of the wards and allocation of seats reserved in favor of the scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, the Backward Classes and women among the wards having regards to the provisions of section 6 and also to the following provisions, namely:
 - a. all wards shall, as far as practicable, be geographically compact areas;
 - b. wards which are reserved for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes shall be distributed parts of the municipal areas where the proportion of the population of the population of such castes or tribes, as the case may be, is comparatively large; and
 - c. The numbering of wards shall start from the north-west corner of the local area of a Municipality.
4. The draft of the order under sub-section (1) shall be published for filling objections thereto within a period of not less than seven days and a copy of same shall be sent to the Municipality concerned for comments.
5. The state Government shall consider objection and the comments received under sub-section (4) and the draft order shall, if necessary, be amended, altered or modified accordingly, and thereupon it shall become final.



4

Profile of Respondents: Women Councilors

Profiling of respondents is an essential component of field research, as it provides inputs for evaluating different traits of their personality. Their behavior and capabilities are the product of these traits which determine the contents and contours of their activities. In the context of social and political activities, a comprehensive understanding of the traits of their personalities is all the more essential since these have a deterministic learning above their perspectives and professional conduct. It is with this aspect in view that a profile of the women councilors, sampled for this study, is being attempted here.

As has already been stated, 60 women councilors covering 10 urban local bodies have been selected for an in-depth study into their perspectives and performance, both in general terms and with particular stress on their initiatives and activities with regard to women-related problems and issues. Around half of them, 29- have been elected from general wards reserved for women, seventeen are from OBC, eight from SC and three

have been elected from ST wards. The remaining three are from the general wards (not reserved specifically for any social category). It may be mentioned that in Rajasthan, earlier there was a 50% reservation for women in urban local bodies, which provision has now been revised down to 30%, after a court decision. Be it as it may, the sampled women councilors are the beneficiaries of 50% reservation for women. The sample is fairly representative of social and general categories and hence the reflection of social bias in an overall evaluation of their initiatives and conduct has been contained to a large extent.

4.1 Age and Marital Status

Significant components of an individual's profile are age, education, professional qualifications, family and financial status etc. The following table gives age and marital status-wise information.

Table 4.1

Age and marital status

Respondents : 60

Age			Marital status				Total/ %
Age group	No. of Respondents	%	Married		Unmarried		
			No.	%	No.	%	
> 30	13	21.7	59	98.3	1	1.7	60/100
30 – 50	31	51.6	-	-	-	-	-
50 and above	16	26.7	-	-	-	-	-
Total	60	100.00	-	-	-	-	-

As is evident from the table above the councilors are young and hence supposedly mature enough to take up their civic responsibilities as per the expectations of their respective constituencies. It is a fair mix of very

young and adults with above 50% representation in the 30-50 age group when a person is expected to acquire a wide-ranging understanding of his/her socio-political environment and an awareness about civic problems of habitations wherein he/she dwells. Experience gained owing to age is reflected through 26.7% councilors in the age group of 50 and above, while 21.7% councilors are those (under 30 years of age) who represent new generation and are expected to take up issues transcending routinised and traditionally grounded activities, generally characterizing the work of civic bodies. To what extent, the experience and youthful exuberance are translated into real performance is what this study contends to find out.

4.2 Education and Professional Qualification

Education plays an important role in moulding person prospective and activating them in the realm of social problems. In the context of the councilors elected for Urban Local Bodies, educational qualifications may have a qualitative impact on their role and initiatives. Professional qualifications give an added advantage to councilors enabling them to take up issues related to their professional abilities acquired through specialized knowledge about a particular issue. Educational and professional qualifications of the sampled councilors are given in the following table.

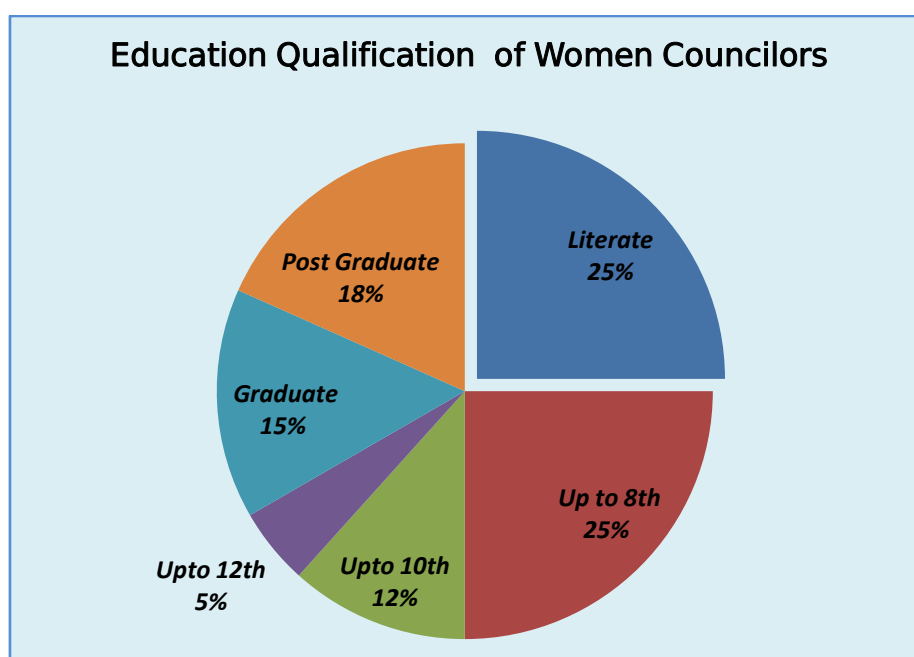
Table 4.2

Education and Professional Qualifications

Respondents: 60

Educational Qualification			Professional Qualifications		
Education Qualification	No. of Respondents	%	Professional Qualifications	No. of Respondents	%
Literate	15	25.0	B.Ed.	5	8.33
Upto 8 th	15	25.0	LLB	1	1.67
Upto 10 th	7	11.7	LLM	1	1.67
Upto 12 th	3	5.0	Nurse	1	1.67
Graduate	9	15.0	STC	1	1.67
Post-Graduate	11	18.3	Non-Professional	51	85.00
Total	60	100.00		60	100.1

Chart 4.1



It is significant to note that 30% councilors are either graduates or post graduates. Literates, that is with below 8th class education constitute 25% of the total sampled councilors. 16% have secondary/ higher secondary education. Thus 75% councilors have enough educational qualifications to deal with civic problems. In the context of women, it is indeed a pleasant augury giving enough scope to expect them to perform well in the civic body. It is, however, a fact that 85% of them do not have any professional qualifications, though 8.33% have done B.Ed. and hence are expected to handle problems related to elementary education.

As we have noted earlier, 98.3% of the sampled women councilors are married. Not surprisingly, in the context of Rajasthan, 62.7% of them below marriageable age and 18.64% of the total 59 married councilors tied nuptial knot when they were below 15 years. The following table gives statistical account of the age at which the sampled councilors got married.

Table 4.3

Age and marital status

Respondents (60 - 1) = 59

Age group	Respondents		Below marriageable age		Marriageable age (18-24)		
	No	%	No	%	No	%	
> 15	11	18.64	37	62.7	22	37.3	
15 - 18	26	44.10	-	-	-	-	
18 - 21	12	20.30	-	-	-	-	
21 - 24	7	11.86	-	-	-	-	
< 24	3	5.10	-	-	-	-	
Total	59	100.00	37	62.7	22	37.3	59/100

As is evident, most councilors got married at very young age, some of them when they were below the legal age of marriage. They, thus were supposed to have the experience of married life, their pros and cons and thus was expected to deal with problems associated with women who were married at an early age. Their concern in this respect is important and has been the subject matter of this study.

Articulation of any individual is the consequence of his/her being an active participant in activities of his/her interest in subjects other than family affairs. On this score, only 33.3% sampled councilors had participated in extra-curricular activities during their school/college days, while others, perhaps, had no interest in such activities. Surprisingly and even as a matter of shock, one finds that almost half of them (48.3%) do not read newspapers/magazines, though interestingly most of them have stated that a councilor must be educated enough to deal with civic problems. Around 80% of them hold the view that atleast high school (and above) should be the minimum required educational qualification to contest for councillorship of a civic body. To what extent their lack of interest in newspapers affects their views is a moot question and may be answered while analyzing their responses with regard to their role and functions as a councilor.

4.3 Financial status and political affiliation

50% of the sampled councilors have monthly family income between Rs. 21000/- to Rs. 40,000 and above, and hence are fairly well off while the remaining 50% too have sustainable financial resources. In political terms, 24 out of 60 councilors belong to the Bhartiya Janata Party, a right wing political party while 28 are from the Indian National Congress, a centralist political party, and eight are independents. Surprisingly 81.7% of them have no political background. As to how and why they were picked up to

contest the election is again a question begging suitable answer. It may be stated that political background of the family does affect a councilor's performance. In fact, however, 80% of the councilors have entered the political and electoral arena for the first time. 11 councilors coming from families having political background had been given party tickets on account of the decision of the related party while others who contested elections on party ticket had been persuaded to do so by their respective families or the friendly people of the concerned constituencies.

In absolute terms, a councilor's profile provides a solid base to analyze their responses with regard to their attitude, initiatives and performance in civic bodies. Substantially educated with age related maturity, stable family life, sustainable financial support and as new entrants into electoral and political sphere, thus not yet polluted with political corruption, ticketing and aggrandizing habits, the women councilors are poised to perform with conviction and élan for handling general and specific gender related issues. For, they represent the ward/constituency from which they have been elected and hence their performance has to be non-discriminatory on the one hand and sensitive to the needs and requirements of the deprived ones, of whom, women constitute a significant segment on the other. A true picture will, however, emerge in the following chapters through an analysis of the data collected for this study.



5

Women Councilors: Their Perceptions, Sensitivities And Involvement in Civic Work

While profiling women councilors of Urban Local Bodies, one finds that age wise and in social status, they constitute a formidable segment of local self governance, thus arousing expectations with regard to their contributions for the welfare of the people in general and women in particular. It should be noted here that 50% reservation for women in local bodies was primarily meant to boost their social status vis-à-vis their male counter-parts and to look at day-to-day issues in the local body with a gender lens. The underpinning hope is that women, if given an opportunity, are no less capable in handling public issues and problems of governance at different political fora-from village Panchayats to state and central levels. This being the rationale behind and expectations from the reservation policy, women councilors have a responsibility to translate expectations into reality. It is in this context that the councilors' own

account of their perceptions, sensitivities and involvement in civic work, becomes relevant.

5.1 Reservation Policy and decision to contest

Initiation into electoral politics is a step which is the consequence of a thought process and cravings for manifesting their capabilities through activities in the political arena. 50% reservation provided an opportunity to a larger section of women to ventilate their suppressed will to prove equal to their male counter-part. It is not surprising, therefore, that 55 out of 60 viz. 91.7% councilors found reservation as a profound necessity in order to provide an opportunity for them to show their mettle in an area hitherto considered to be male dominated. Only 5 (8.3%) gave negative responses on this issue. Fortified with the reservation policy, and with the support of their respective political parties (only eight councilors are independents), women councilors, as candidates for election to urban local bodies, selected their constituencies mostly on the basis of their party's political influence therein, though caste and other factors like family's respectability among the electorate, husband's business etc. also played a role in the decision making process to select a particular constituency.

5.2 Support of respective political party

Though 52 out of 60 (86.6%) elected councilors have been elected on party ticket, their views with regard to their respective party's support in their elections are surprising. Only 61.7% of them stated that they received party support. In terms of material support the situation was dismal as only 35% gave a positive response while 65% councilors fought the election on the basis of their own resources. Such views are suggestive of a weak linkage between the candidate and the concerned

political party. It may be because, as stated else where, most of the candidates, selected by respective political parties had no political background and were new entrants into politics. It was perhaps, in the wake of the windfall of 50% reservation, that political parties had to select women candidates in large numbers. Committed women aspirants were, therefore, few. Needless, to say that this distance between the political party and the elected councilor (as evident during elections as per the views of a substantial number of councilors) would loosen party's hold on them with adverse consequences. The following table gives statistical information about party's support vis-a-vis the candidate-councilors.

Table 5.1

Party Support to councilors in their election

Respondents = 60

General Support				Material Support			
Yes		No		Own Resources		From supporting party	
37	61.7%	23	38.3%	39	65%	21	35%

5.3 Councilors and their families

Having been elected as councilors, what problems did they face in their families? This question is relevant since domestic problems/ support/ opposition in one way or the other do have an impact on their performance as a councilor. According to all the sampled councilors, there was no hostile reaction and in all cases the family members not only supported them, but also encouraged them to take up their new responsibilities in right earnest. It is, however, a fact that the councilors, 76.7% of them, found the family affairs a little problematic but not insurmountable. It is also a fact, as reported by an equal number of councilors, that they were able to give time to their children. In this

context, it is worthwhile to mention that 48.3% of them belonged to joint families and the rest came from nuclear families. In joint families, there are elders and other family members to look after children while in nuclear families children are more dependent on their parents. Be it as it may, children, though posing some problems, have not been obstructive in their parents' functioning as councilors. Hence a supporting and encouraging family with children under control, the councilors have been in a comfortable position to take up their responsibilities with regard to civic work. Their actual output is, therefore, to be seen in the context of a favorable situation.

5.4 Councilors and their performance

The family environment being supportive, with children not posing serious problems, the councilors should be deeply involved in civic activities. Their presence in the office of the civic bodies becomes imperative for proper discharge of their civic responsibilities. In this realm, however, the councilors seem to be reluctant participants. 66.7% of them stated that they did not spend most of their time on corporation/council related work. Only 33.3% councilors took their civic work seriously. The lack of interest, in fact, emanates from the fact that most of the councilors are new entrants. They lack confidence and the most convenient cover to hide their inaction is family responsibilities. Another convenient argument is that women participation in political activities or initiation in politics is marred by male domination in the society. These women councilors have been elected both by male and female voters, though under a policy frame of reservation, and hence there is no reason as to why they should not be actively participating in civic activities. The reasons for lacking in political initiatives as provided by councilors are given in the following table:

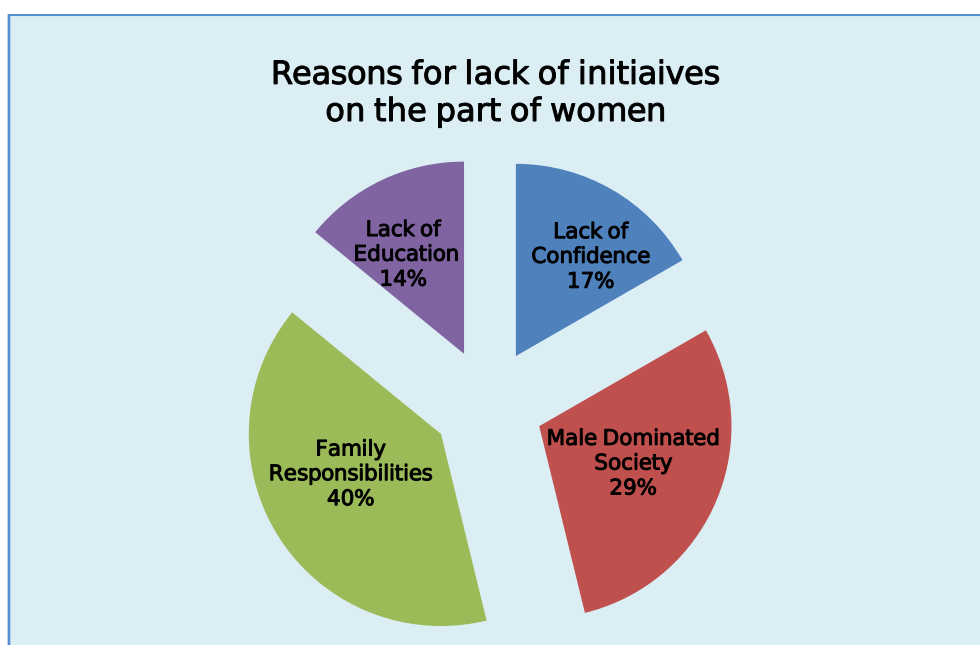
Table 5.2

Reasons for lack of initiatives on the part of women

Respondents = 60 (multiple responses) 78 Responses

Reasons	No. of sample	%
Lack of Confidence	13	16.7
Male Dominated Society	23	29.5
Family Responsibilities	31	39.74
Lack of Education	11	14.10
Total Responses	78	100%

Chart 5.1



As is evident from the table above, the reasons for inaction or hesitation in entering politically active life vary from lack of confidence to lack of

education. These reasons may be valid as hindrances for women to be initiated into politics, but the councilors have already been initiated, and still most of them do not spend the required time in elected bodies. It is indeed inexplicable.

5.5 Women councilors - their activities

A councilor is a link between the civic body and the constituency which he/she represents. The people from the constituency have problems which they would like to be addressed at the civic body's level. Problems are both of a general nature and specific. Women councilors, while being the representative of the entire constituency, do have a special responsibility towards women and their problems. It was in this context that women councilors were asked as to who-men or women, brought more problems to them. Their responses are reflective of the prevailing situation in their respective constituencies. The following table is relevant in this respect.

Table 5.3

Maximum problems brought to councilors-male or female

Responses – 60

Gender	No. of Responses	%
Male	14	23.3
Female	36	60.0
Equal Nos.	10	10.00
Total	60	100%

It is evident that maximum no. of problems have been brought to women councilors by women. According to 60% councilors, women were ahead of their male counterparts in this respect, though as per 10% respondents,

both male and female brought their problems to them in equal number. Inference can be drawn on the basis of responses, that women members of the constituency found it easy to bring their problems to women councilors and to that extent reservation for women in civic bodies is justified. Women, perhaps, feel reluctant to speak out to male councilors. One does not know whether the problems brought to women councilors by women are gender specific or general in nature. Be it as it may, women have found the reservation in civic bodies advantageous to them and whether the problems are gender-specific or general in nature, there is greater articulation among women folk in the ward/constituency and hence more active participation in civic activities. It is a positive development in the realm of women empowerment. It is not to say that male members of the ward have not brought problems to women councilors, as according to 23.3% councilors, male members have been ahead of women in this respect.

Women councilors have taken up the problems brought to them, irrespective of the gender, seriously and in most cases they (60% of them) have personally approached the concerned civic officer to resolve them. Some of them (20%), however, merely referred the problem to the concerned officer for resolution. This is a casual approach, but fortunately it is reflected only in the attitude of 20% women councilors. Still, it is a matter of concern.

5.6 Women Related Problems

Women being generally responsible for household activities feel more concerned with issues directly impinging upon their household management, like water, prices of consumer goods viz. vegetables, spices, food grains, pulses etc. cooking gas and related items. Cleanliness in the neighborhood, condition of roads, availability of transport facilities, communication channels, electricity supply and associated needs for

running a household are matters of concern for women. At another level, women may be victims of harassment, drinking habits of husbands, general family feuds etc. along with the traumatic conditions of widowhood and estrangement from kith and kin. The women councilors are expected to be sensitive to these women related problems. When asked to identify the problems brought to them, specifically in relation to these aspects, the responses were not very specific and were shrouded in the mist of vagueness and reluctance. A look at these responses is relevant here.

Women, according to 38% councilors seemed to be concerned with leaking sewerage system and waste material, polluting the neighborhood and approach roads, while the same percentage brought up issues regarding identity cards for people below poverty line. These were general problems faced by all and not specifically by women. Water crisis too was a problem brought to the notice of women councilors by women. Gender-specific problems were very few according to a vast majority of women councilors. Strangely, the problem of price-rise was conspicuous by its total absence in the responses of councilors except one. Widow pension was an issue brought to them by women, according to 23.3% responses. In absolute terms, women members of the community did bring problems to the notice of women councilors, but their input was too little.

As for the problems related to harassment and cruelty, the responses were overwhelmingly negative. 85% women councilors stated that no such issues were brought to them by women members of their respective wards. It was stated by them that women were generally reluctant to air their plight in public and were content to resolve the problem within the forewalls of their household. One does not know what steps the women councilors took or proposed to take in order to bring women victims of domestic cruelty out of the veil of secrecy and take steps to take action against their domestic tormenters.

There is no evidence to show that women councilors, on their own, ever took initiative to resolve women-related problems. It is indeed regrettable, since women councilors are expected to be more sensitive about problems, which the affected women may not be able to raise in public. Sensitivity on such issues is a sine-qua-non for being concerned about women problems, and also to take steps for their resolution. No such sensitivity is visible in the responses of women councilors.

5.7 Relations within civic body officials

The women councilors have expressed their satisfaction with regard to their relations with officials of civic body. 75% of them have good relations, while 20% rate their relations with officials as satisfactory. Only 5% stated that their relations with officials were bad. Good and even working relations with officials go a long way in the resolution of civic problems. On this plank, the performance of women councilors is satisfactory. The fact that 60% councilors have direct access to officials for the redressal of problems brought to them, is a reflection of good relations between them.

As for the relations with their male colleagues (male councilors) 50% women councilors have found no difference in the warmth of their relations with male and female councilors. 30% women councilors have stated that support from male colleagues is greater and positive than from female colleagues. Only 20% have found greater support from their female colleagues. Low level rapport between female councilors is a matter of concern, since it is likely to hamper coordinated efforts on their part for handling civic and particularly the gender-specific issues.

5.8 Training of councilors, their participation in civic bodies

As stated above, most of the councilors are new entrants, and hence their ability to discharge their responsibilities may not be upto the expected or even required level. For them training is an absolute necessity. In fact, the councilors (96.7%) also hold this view. Only two(3.3%) stated that they did not need any training. The councilors, desirous of training, wanted it in the sphere of civic administration and financial matters.

The councilors are regular in attending the meetings of the civic bodies. Only two out of 60 sampled councilors were casual in this respect. Most of them (88.3%) also acquaint themselves about the agenda, before attending the meeting. It is a positive indication of their interest in the subjects put up for deliberations in the meeting and paves the way for their effective interventions during discussions in the civic body. The level of intensity of their participation is reflected in the frequency and nature of their interventions. The following table is indicative of the nature of their interventions.

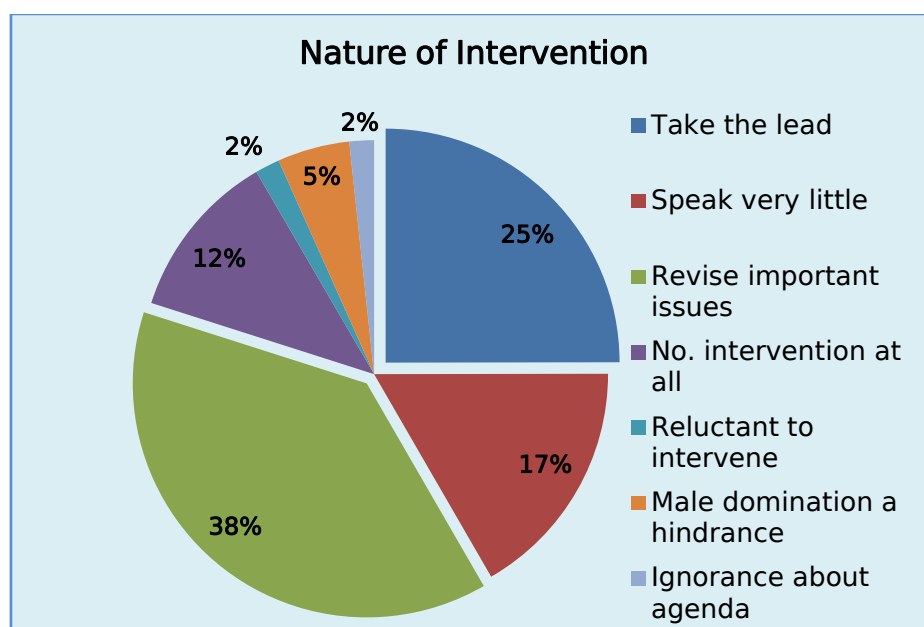
Table 5.4

Nature of interventions in the meeting of civic body

Respondents = 60

Nature of Intervention	No. Respondents	Percentage
Take the lead	15	25.0
Speak very little	10	16.7
Revise important issues	23	38.3
No. intervention at all	7	11.7
Reluctant to intervene	1	1.7
Male domination a hindrance	3	5.0
Ignorance about agenda	1	1.7
Total	60	100.00

Chart 5.2



It is obvious that the women councilors while being regular in attending the meetings, are not necessarily as much enthusiastic to participate in deliberations. Around 31.6% councilors either speak very little or find it a fruitless exercise. But 38.3% councilors are enthusiastic participants and raise important issues for discussions and follow up action. 25% councilors, in fact, have taken lead in bringing issues and problems to the notice of the civic body. On the whole, therefore, women councilors are not mute participants in the meetings of the civic body and though quite a few of them lack confidence in an environment of which they perceive to be dominated by their male colleagues, a majority seem to have crossed this psychological barrier and despite their weak interventions in the discussions, are nevertheless conscious of their own status as elected members of the civic body. This is a positive indication of female councilors' more active and participative role in civic bodies in times ahead.

5.9 Civic bodies and women related issues

We have already discussed issues pertaining to women in the context of their own initiative to bring such issues before the women councilors. We find that women are reluctant to bring the issues related to domestic violence, husband's behavior and other family problems to the notice of women councilors. It does not mean that the problems do not exist. It is, therefore incumbent upon the civic bodies and women councilors to take cognizance of them at their own level. It is in this context, the female councilors were asked to specify if at their own level, in the programme of political parties they belonged to, or at the civic bodies' initiative such problems were discussed to formulate a programme to liberate women from such tortuous life. An analysis of their responses reveals a pathetic insensitivity both at the party and the civic bodies' level.

The following table is an eloquent testimony in this context:

Table 5.5

Civic Body, Political Parties and Women related problems

Respondents = 60

Political Parties			Civic Bodies		
Special programme for women			Emphasis on Women issues		
Yes/No	No. of responses	%	Yes/No	No. of responses	%
Yes	10	16.7	Yes	15	25.00
No	50	83.3	No	45	75.00
Total	60	100%	Total	60	100.00

It is evident that neither political parties nor the civic bodies (as per the responses of the women councilors) are interested in ameliorating the lot of women, who suffer silently domestic violence and other kinds of discriminations within the families and the society at large. According to 83.3% responses the political parties have not framed any specific programme for the betterment of women and as per the views of 75% **Report on Urban Local Bodies**

women councilors there is no special emphasis on the problems faced by women in civic bodies too. This is a woeful situation and more woeful is the role of women councilors, who have seemingly not articulated these problems, either at the party level or in the civic body. At their own level, however, the women councilors have no complaint against their respective political party at the forum of which they (88.3%) do not face any discrimination vis-a-vis their male counterpart. They (78.3%) also motivate feminism in local governance. This is a matter of some satisfaction.

Comparative assessment of the performance of male and female councilors self-appraisal Vs voters' views

When asked to rate the performance of women councilors/chairpersons as against their male counter-parts, 55% women councilors found no difference while 33.3% stated that women councilors were doing much better than their male colleagues. Interestingly 11.7% women rated the performance of their female colleagues as poor in comparison to their male counter-part. Self-satisfaction is, however, not a proper barometer to judge one's own performance or even to pass judgment on comparative performance of male and female councilors. A comparative assessment by an outsider may be nearer the truth in this regard. The inhabitants of the concerned ward/constituency are the stakeholders and their views with regard to their female representatives in the civic body are relevant.

Voters' Views

For this study a sample of 500 voters was taken. The sample was random in nature and no specific criterion for their selection was adopted. The voters' selection was therefore, free from any bias and was more or less on the first come first served basis. Of course the selection of wards was on the basis of social categories-one each from general, OBC, SC and ST.

Corresponding numbers of voters selected from them are given in the following table:

Table 5.6

Social category of wards and no. of sampled voters

Total No. 500

Ward Category	No. of Sample	% of sample
General	300	60%
OBC	100	20%
SC	80	16%
ST	20	4%
Total	500	100%

Among the sampled voters there were 380 males and 120 females. More male voters did help in having a critical evaluation of the performance of women councilors. Out of 500 sampled voters 416 had exercised their franchise in support of the victorious candidates as per their own admission, though 42 voters had, perhaps, voted for those who lost in the elections. The basis on which the voters exercised their franchise is given in the following table:

Table 5.7

Basis for exercising franchise

Responses: 500

Ward Category	No. of Sample	% of sample
Party	6	1.2%
Ability	258	51.6%
Familiarity	144	30.8%
No Response	82	16.4%

It is evident that a majority of voters (51.6%) preferred candidates on the basis of their ability, while party affiliation of the candidate was not a major consideration. Familiarity with the candidate was another major factor as 30.8% voters preferred candidate on this basis. Strangely 16.4%

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voters did not respond to this question. One may infer that in most cases the winning candidates were voters' preferred choice and hence there was a possibility of their cordial or working rapport with the women councilors. It may be worthwhile to note here that these sampled voters (70.4%) had found the councilors in the previous civic body as competent with whose performance they were satisfied. There were, however, 29.6% voters who had a negative view about them. It means that the voters did have an evaluative perspective and appeared to have an interactive relationship with their representatives in the civic body. Hence their views with regard to the present incumbents in the civic bodies are significant in order to understand and evaluate the role of women councilors. The following table gives voters' view with regard to the performance of the current women councilors.

Table 5.8

Voter's view about the performance of current women councilors

Respondents: 500

Response	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Yes	256	71.2%
No	144	28.8%
Total	500	100%

Evidently, the voters' have a positive view with regard to the performance of the present women councilors. 71.2% of them have expressed their satisfaction while 28.8% have expressed their disappointment. Strangely, however, almost the same percentage of voters (70.4%) had expressed their satisfaction about the performance of councilors of the outgoing civic body. There seems to be a catch in these responses. It appears that the voter-respondents gave the same responses when asked the same

question with regard to the performance of the two sets of councilors. These responses, therefore, have to be looked at with a pinch of salt.

When asked about the attitude of women councilors, a majority of them (66.8%) found the attitude as good while 13.25 stated that it was bad. 20% respondents found it just okay. It means that, generally speaking, the respondents do not have much to say on this matter. This is a woeful situation, the adversity of which cannot be negated by the fact that 362 (72.4%) respondents have given credit to the councilors for solving the problem brought to her (or to her husband?).

Women councilors – their main concerns

Be it as it may, the fact remains that 50% of the elected representatives in the urban local body are women. Whatever be the perceptions with regard to their capability and independence in taking decisions, they are there to discharge their responsibilities and to take up issues of public interest for their resolution. We have already stated that as women councilors, they have not addressed women related issues-an expectation aroused when 50% reservation was guaranteed for women in elected bodies. But there are other civic issues on which their concern was sought in this study. Their responses were varied in nature and these were general in nature. The responses were in fact related to issues aired in public through newspapers and electronic media like beautification of the city, repairs of roads, regular supply of electricity, especially road lights, proper management of water supply, demolition of encroachments and the like. While the problems are of general nature, their effective resolution and the role of women councilors in this realm is what matters. It has to be seen how effective they prove themselves and in this lies the future of women as equal partners with their male counter parts in what is perceived to be a male dominated society. It is for them, to step out of this domain and carve out their own path to progress not in conflict but in cooperation with men, in an environment of equality, mutual respect and

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adequate consideration for each other's points of view. For, both men and women constitute a society and its progress lies in their combined efforts.



6

Findings & Suggestions

The women councilors in Urban Local Bodies, as discussed above, have taken up their responsibilities with a sense of commitment within the parameters of their experience (or lack of it) and their status vis-à-vis their male counterpart. Though there is no critical evidence to show discriminatory practices within the local body or outside, involving women councilors, there is no denying the fact that hesitation and lack of confidence in their own capabilities characterize their functioning as elected members. Broadly speaking, the following critical points have emerged on the basis of an analytical account of the data collected for this study: -

1. Though a vast majority of women councilors belong to respective political parties, and have been elected on party tickets, their interaction with their political parties is ineffective and there is no reflection of their political views and affiliation in their activities outside or inside the local bodies. While there are valid arguments in favour of depoliticizing local bodies, it is also true

that political parties do have socio-political views about social developments and local bodies are instrumental in translating them into reality. So long as elections for local bodies are fought on party basis, there has to be a deeper interaction between the party and its women representatives therein.

2. Experience does play an important role in bringing the performance into an effective mould. It is, however, a fact that 50% presence of women councilors in urban local bodies is a recent phenomenon and hence a majority of them are new entrants having little or no experience with regard to their expected role, rights and duties. It is therefore suggested that women councilors should undergo intensive training-a demand made by 96.7% women councilors, so that they take up social and gender related issues effectively. Intensive training will compensate for lack of experience.
3. It is a matter of deep regret that women councilors have not been sensitive enough with regard to gender-related problems. Neither at their own level nor at the behest of women in their constituency/ward, have they raised problems specifically related to women. While reluctance at the level of concerned women is understandable, silence on the part of women councilors in these matters is to say the least reprehensible. There is, therefore, an urgent need to sensitize them about discriminatory practices vis-a-vis women. It is, however, encouraging to find that women do bring problems of general nature to their women councilors with greater ease than to male councilors. What is needed is greater sensitivity at the level of women councilors themselves.
4. There has to be deeper interaction among women councilors – a necessity not reflected in their inter-relationship at present. A majority of women councilors find their rapport with their male

counterparts better than with their female colleagues. Intra-gender distance is not conducive for promoting the cause of women-upliftment. Counseling of women councilors is, therefore, needed to bring about better coordination between them. Mere 50% presence of women as councilors in urban local bodies has little value, if there is lack of concerted and joint efforts at their level for raising the status of women in the society. Political parties which have sponsored their candidature for councilorship, have a responsibility to educate their women councilors in these matters.

5. While planning for urban development, it is necessary to give enough space for the programmes on women-related issues; in order to bring them at par with their male counterparts and women councilors should be associated with the planning processes.
6. 50%-nay even 33% reservation for women in urban local bodies is an opportunity for them to weaken, if not breaking, the shackles of a male-dominated society and to emerge as arbiters of their own future. The study shows only lukewarm concern, if not total absence of it, among women councilors in their activities in urban local bodies. This is a woeful situation. Much needs to be done at the planning level to bring into focus women's interests and gender sensitivities so that these issues get their due space in the agenda of urban local bodies. Women councilors' own sensitivities, at present dormant, can be energized if these issues are properly prioritized, both at the planning and implementation levels.
7. It has to be realized by women councilors in Urban Local Bodies that reservation for them is not merely for raising their individual status. They are there to work for bridging the gender gap in the society as a whole. 50% means equality with their male

counterpart at all levels, despite gender specificities, for, both mother and father are parents in a family and are equal partners in societal development. There is need for them to rise above their individual selves and become true representatives of their gender on equal terms with male, discarding all kinds of discriminations, with which the society is afflicted presently. It may be mentioned that reservation alone is not going to do miracles in the realm of women related issues unless there is a sustained and powerful women based movement for social upliftment of women. Such movement are both scarce and weak, and do not provide the kind of support needed for strong intervention by urban local bodies for the resolution of women related issues. Such movement will strengthen women councilor's endeavors in this realm, and make their sensitivities articulate and effective and their role more focused on the need for liberating women from all kinds of discrimination.

8. Though with a limited scope and small sample of women councilors, confined to a selected number of urban local bodies, the study has thrown up a scenario with bright spots and also scars in the form of larger presence of women in local bodies, quite active in some respects and conscious of their individuality in the company of their male colleagues, on the one hand, and lack of experience, shaky confidence and devoid of required sensitivity with regard to women-related issues on the other. One a waits for the scars to be transformed into bright spots and that is what the study aims at with hope and expectations.
9. A big drawback in the present environment of the Urban Local Bodies is that even after 16 years of reservation for women in them, there is no effort at gender-budgeting, a requirement made mandatory by the Government of India and the State

Government. Till that is achieved the funds of the ULB will be diverted to other priorities preferred by the male councilors.

10. There is no evidence about modification of formal structures like committees to include more women as members. It is, however, possible to infer that owing to 50% women councilors, their number in such committees will have to be at par with their male counter-parts.
11. Women councilors were not sufficiently aware about the long term impact of reservation policy and hence were not able to comment on whether the policy required any changes.
12. The women councilors were aware of the two child norm in the realm of family planning, but were not able to comment on its impact. Training and proper counseling on this matter are, therefore, needed to make them sufficiently conversant about the impact of such schemes on family and population control etc.

