

Evaluation Report

MAKING WOMEN'S VOICES AND VOTES COUNT

A project led by IT for Change and KMVS

in partnership with ANANDI

Supported by UN Women FGE

Project Area: Mysore (Karnataka), Kutch and
Bhavnagar (Gujarat)

Evaluation Team: Vandana Mahajan and Anita Ratnam

Report Submitted on 13th July 2015

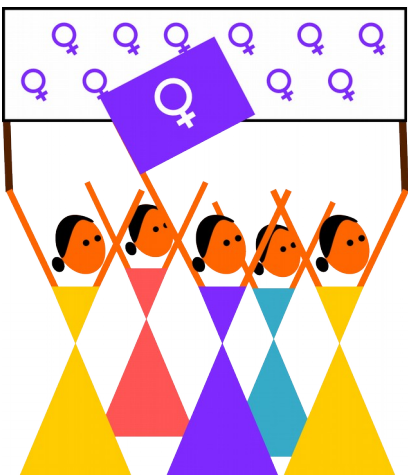


Table of Contents

Abbreviations.....	1
Glossary.....	3
Executive Summary.....	7
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	13
1.1Context of project.....	13
1.2 Relevance of the MWVVC Project.....	15
1.3 Object of the Evaluation.....	15
1.3.1 Project Brief.....	16
1.3.2 Theory of Change and Expected Results Chain.....	17
1.3.3 Contextual factors influencing the results chain.....	18
1.3.4 Scale and Complexity of the Project.....	19
1.3.5 The beneficiaries and key stakeholders of the MWVVC Project.....	20
1.4 Purpose and Scope of Evaluation.....	21
1.5 The Evaluation Framework.....	24
1.6 Methodology.....	25
1.7 Structure of the Report.....	26
Chapter 2: Elected Women Representatives: Their horizontal networks with peers, linkages with women's groups and participation in local governance.....	28
2.1 Relevance of EWR networking, linkages and participation.....	28
2.2 Planned outputs, expected outcomes and anticipated impacts.....	28
2.3 Strategies to increase participation and networking.....	29
2.3.1 Face to face Interactions.....	29
2.3.2 ICT enabled approaches.....	30
2.3.3 Strategies to build linkages of the EWRs with women's groups.....	30
2.3.4 Strategies to strengthen EWRs' peer networking.....	30
2.4 Enhanced Participation, Linkages & Networking: Evidence Sought.....	30
2.5 Effectiveness in Changing EWRs' Perspectives, Attitudes, Information and Understanding.....	31
2.5.1 EWRs' Understanding of <i>Gram Panchayat</i> Rules, Guidelines and Processes.....	31
2.5.2 Changes in perspectives on governance.....	32
2.5.3 Shifts in Self perception.....	32
2.5.4 Changes in understanding of their role as EWRs.....	33
2.5.5 Understanding gender responsive governance.....	33

2.5.6 Role of ICTs in building perspectives, knowledge and changing self-perceptions.....	34
2.6 Effectiveness in Enhancing Levels and Arenas of participation.....	35
2.6.1 Shifts in women's nature of participation in <i>Panchayat</i> Bodies.....	35
2.6.2 Thrust Areas of EWRs' Participation.....	37
2.7 Changes in Linkages with women's collectives.....	38
2.7.1 Linkages between EWRs and women's collectives strengthened.....	38
2.7.2 Strengthening of horizontal and vertical linkages between EWRs and women's collectives with ICT based strategies- its contribution towards gender responsive governance.....	39
2.7.3 Effectiveness of ICT enabled networking.....	39
2.8 Effectiveness of Strengthening EWR networks.....	40
2.9 Impacts & Significance of Achievements.....	43
2.10 Sustaining the EWRs' leadership and participation: Some Challenges.....	44
2.10.1 Systemic barriers to EWRs' political participation.....	44
2.10.2 Embedded Patriarchy.....	44
2.10.3 Caste hierarchies and women's participation.....	45
2.10.4 Hierarchisation of issues.....	45
2.10.5 Exclusion of EWRs from Financial Matters.....	45
2.10.6 Digital Divide.....	46
2.10.7 Tenure of EWRs.....	46
2.10.8 De-politicisation of the development and governance discourses.....	46
2.10.9 Morale of Women.....	47
2.11 Conclusions.....	47
Chapter 3: Ushering in a culture of entitlements through ICT enabled Information Centres.....	49
3.1 Relevance of creating a culture of entitlements.....	49
3.2 The History of the Information Centres before the MWVVC Project.....	49
3.3 Planned Targets, Expected outcomes and anticipated impacts.....	50
3.4 Strategies Adopted.....	50
3.4.1 Location and ownership of Centres.....	50
3.4.2 Conceptualisation of the Infomediary.....	51
3.4.3 Consolidating information about entitlements using digital technologies.....	51
3.4.4 ICT enabled and face to face dissemination of information.....	51
3.4.5 Tracking Claims through digitised MIS and conducting social audits.....	51
3.4.6 Involvement of EWRs in the management of Centres.....	52
3.5 Effectiveness of the Information Centres.....	52
3.5.1 Collective Ownership of the Centres.....	52

3.5.2 Increased accessibility.....	53
3.5.3 Credibility of information provided.....	53
3.5.4 Speed and simplicity of information provision.....	53
3.5.5 Dissemination of information through IVRS.....	54
3.5.6 The <i>Info Melas</i> (information fairs).....	55
3.5.7 The creation of data bases about entitlements status.....	55
3.5.8 Claims Processed.....	56
3.6 Efficiency of Information Centres.....	56
3.7 Impacts.....	58
3.7.1 Demystification of the claims-making process and promotion of a new culture of entitlements.....	58
3.7.2 Becoming active rights-holders and engaged participants in the local processes of governance.....	58
3.7.3 Information, Communication and Management Capabilities of EWRs and Leaders developed.....	59
3.7.4 Enhancing Transparency and Accountability of Local Governance Institutions.....	60
3.7.5 Inspiring and Equipping <i>Panchayats</i> to start IT enabled Information Centres.....	60
3.7.6 Information Centre seen as Community Space for Active Citizenry.....	61
3.8 Sustainability of Impacts: Potentials and Challenges.....	61
3.8.1 Potentials.....	61
3.8.2 Challenges.....	63
3.9 Conclusion.....	64
Chapter 4: Harnessing ICTs for a shift in public discourse.....	66
4.1 Relevance of the Objective.....	66
4.2 Project partners' engagement with media resources before MWVVC.....	66
4.2.1 KMVS.....	66
4.2.2 ANANDI.....	67
4.2.3 ITfC.....	67
4.3 Strategies adopted as part of MWVVC.....	67
4.4 Targets, Expected Outcomes and Anticipated Impacts.....	68
4.5 Effectiveness of Community Video Resources as Challenge to Existing Discourse.....	68
4.5.1 Have women's leaders been able to contribute to ideation and creation of video resources that challenge existing discourses on gender and on governance?.....	68
4.5.2 Have the videos produced been able to challenge existing discourses on gender and governance? Has the dissemination/circulation of these resources reached sufficient numbers to effect a change in norms about gender roles, women's rights and gender justice?.....	71
4.5.3 Effectiveness of strategies for screenings/narrowcasting.....	73
4.6 Effectiveness of Community Radio Strategy.....	74

4.6.1 Limited Access of women’s organisations to radio broadcast facility.....	74
4.6.2 Access to Radio.....	75
4.7 Campaigns and Advocacy for Gender Mainstreaming in Local Governance.....	75
4.7.1 Campaigns and advocacy at the local level.....	75
4.7.2 National Level Campaigns and Advocacy.....	77
4.8 Efficiency.....	78
4.9 Impacts.....	78
4.10 Sustainability of Impacts –Potential & Challenges.....	80
4.10.1 Potential.....	80
4.10.2 Some problematic aspects and challenges.....	81
4.11 Conclusion.....	82
Chapter 5: Project and Partnership Management.....	84
5.1 Efficacy of tools and formats used to monitor the project progress.....	85
5.2 The nature and level of engagement between the partners and the state actors.....	86
5.3 About partnership between UN Women and implementing organizations.....	86
5.4 Conclusion.....	87
Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations.....	88
6.1 Domains of change emerging from the project.....	88
6.1.1 Changes in women’s consciousness: the individual- informal realm.....	88
6.1.2 Changes in women’s access to resources.....	89
6.1.3 Changes in the formal- systemic sphere.....	89
6.1.4 Changes in the informal cultural sphere.....	89
6.1.5 Porousness and interconnectedness of domains.....	90
6.2 Key Conclusions Regarding the Project.....	90
6.2.1 Achievements.....	90
6.2.2 Spaces where women have gained significantly.....	91
6.2.3 Middling gains seem to have been made in.....	91
6.2.4 Slower areas of progress.....	91
6.3 Some Issues in Project Design.....	92
6.4 The Dilemmas That Remain.....	93
6.5 Contextual Factors Mitigating against Women’s Political Participation.....	94
6.5.1 Contested Gender spaces.....	94
6.5.2 Governance Issues.....	94
6.6 Recommendations.....	95
6.6.1 Sufficient and necessary conditions for the future road map.....	95

6.6.2 For Women's Rights Organizations, Women's Collectives and Implementing Partners.....	96
Annexure 1: Project Monitoring Framework.....	99
Annexure 2: Evaluators' Response to Endline Survey Tool.....	105
Annexure 3: List of Documents Studied.....	109
Annexure 4: Broad Reference Group Members.....	110
Annexure 5: Schedule of field visits.....	112
Annexure 6: Inception Report.....	118
Annexure 7: Terms of Reference.....	143
Annexure 8: Report of the draft evaluation presentation.....	156
Annexure 9: Presentation from Evaluators.....	168
Annexure 10: Compiled feedback document.....	203
Annexure 11: Trainings and capacity-building efforts.....	215
Annexure 12: Biodatas of evaluation team.....	220
Annexure 13: Endline Tables referred to in the document.....	235

Abbreviations

AWC	<i>Anganwadi</i> centre
BJP	<i>Bharatiya Janata</i> Party
BPL	Below Poverty Line
CBO	Community Based Organizations
CSC	Citizen Service Centre
EMR	Elected Male Representative
EWR	Elected Woman Representative
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FGE	Fund for Gender Equality
GIS	Geographic Information System
GP	<i>Gram Panchayat</i>
GPRS	General Packet Radio Service
GPS	Global Positioning System
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Services
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IGNOU	Indira Gandhi National Open University
IVRS	Interactive Voice Response System
LS	<i>Lok Sabha</i>
MIS	Management Information System
MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
MNREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act

MS	<i>Mahila Samakhya</i>
MSK	<i>Mahila Samakhya Karnataka</i>
MSM	<i>Mahila Swaraj Manch</i>
MWVVC	Making Women's Voices and Votes Count
NMEW	National Mission for Empowerment of Women
NMK	<i>Namma Mahiti Kendra</i>
NRLM	National Rural Livelihoods Mission
PDO	<i>Panchayat</i> Development Officer
PDS	Public Distribution System
PEVAC	Pre-Election Voter Awareness Campaign
PMF	Project Monitoring Framework.
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRI	<i>Panchayat Raj</i> Institutions
RD	Rural Development
RDPR	Rural Development and <i>Panchayat Raj</i>
SEZ	Special Economic Zone
SHG	Self-Help Group
SJS	<i>Saiyere Jo Sanghatan</i>
SMS	Short Message Service
SNP	Supplementary Nutrition Programme
ST	Scheduled Tribe
TDO	<i>Taluk</i> Development Officer
VLE	Village Level Entrepreneur

Glossary

Anganwadi : A government sponsored child-care and mother-care centre in India, which provides basic health and nutrition services to children under the age of six, pregnant women and nursing mothers.

Antyodaya ration card : Unique ration/Public Distribution System cards provided to the poorest Below Poverty Line families identified under the *Antodaya Anna Yojana* scheme, that enables them to avail the food grain quota at a subsidized rate.

Bahu : Daughter-in-law

Dai : Midwife

Daru Virodhi Jumbish : Anti-alcohol campaign

Devipujak caste : One of the OBCs (Other Backward Castes) in the state of Gujarat.

Darbar caste : A dominant caste in Gujarat, who are part of the Rajput community.

Gram panchayat : Village-level local self-government in India.

Gram pradhan/ sarpanch : The elected head of the *Gram panchayat* .

Gram sabha : The village assembly, consisting of all persons registered in the electoral rolls of the *Gram Panchayat*. It serves as a political forum for the people of the village to voice their concerns as well as discuss the activities undertaken by their local government.

Gram Shashini Manch : A collective of former and currently serving elected women representatives established by *Kutch Mahila Vikas Sanghathan*, to enable feminist leadership-building through peer-learning and dialogue.

Gyanvani FM : An educational FM radio station that was operational in several cities across India. Due to administrative difficulties, all broadcasts on this channel were stopped in September 2014.

Izzat : Honour

Jumbish : Campaign

Kelu Sakhi : 'Listen, my friend', a thirty-minute weekly community radio programme run by IT for Change's field centre *Prakriye*, which targets women's collectives (*sanghas*).

Khaso Shasan : 'Good governance', a community radio programme run by infomediaries in Kutch which focuses on catalysing local debates on gender and governance issues, through dramatization of the experiences of the woman President of a *Gram Panchayat*, in a fictional village.

Koli caste: A Scheduled Caste mainly belonging to the central and western regions of India, especially the states of Maharashtra and Gujarat.

Kshatriya : One of the four *varnas* (social classes) of Hindu society, it refers to the warrior or ruling class which includes various caste groups.

Kunjali panje Kutch ji : 'The *Sarus* crane of Kutch', a 52 episode radio serial introduced by *Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan* focusing on issues faced by women elected to local government.

Laaj : A veil worn by Hindu women, especially in Western India.

Lik Buchani : Literally 'hide-and-seek', a radio serial launched by KMVS as part of their Pre-election Voter Awareness Campaign, to generate dialogue within the community on political maneuvers at the local level.

Lok Adhikar Kendras : Women-run information centres set up at the block and village cluster level in Bhavnagar district of Gujarat, by ANANDI, and the grassroots federation of women community leaders and former and currently serving elected women – *Mahila Swaraj Manch*.

Lok Sabha : House of the people, it is the lower house of the Indian Parliament whose members are directly elected by the citizenry. Currently, there are 543 constituencies in the *Lok Sabha*.

Mahila Gram Sabha : All-women village assembly, organized before every *Gram Sabha* in order to ensure that women's concerns are brought up and addressed by elected representatives.

Mahila Swaraj Manch : Grassroots federation of former and currently serving elected women representatives, and women community leaders, set up by ANANDI in Bhavnagar district.

Mahiti Sakhis : Literally 'women friends who provide information'. The term used by the ANANDI team to refer to women community volunteers who assist the infomediaries of their *Lok Adhikar Kendras*.

Mahila Samakhya Sanghas : Women's collectives of the pan-Indian *Mahila Samakhya* governmental programme, that has adopted a mobilisation and collectivisation strategy towards the vision of 'education for empowerment' for marginalised rural women.

Mantri : Minor official at the *Gram Panchayat* level.

Mela : Fair

Mera Haq Mere Pehchan Patra : A tool employed by ANANDI to build women's awareness about the various 'proof of identity' cards issued under various government schemes, to build their awareness about their rightful entitlements.

Namma Mahiti Kendras : Women-run community information centres established at the block and village cluster level, by IT for Change, with the support of women's collectives and *Gram Panchayat* members, in Mysore district.

Nirbhaya crisis centres : One stop crisis centres for legal, medical and psychological support to women in distress, to be established in each state of the country, named after *Nirbhaya*, the pseudonym assigned by the media to the victim of the infamous Delhi gang-rape case of 2012.

Nyay Samiti/ Samajik Nyay Samiti : Social Justice Committee

Panchayat Beheno nu Milan : A meet for women *Panchayat* members, which was organised by Working Group for Women's Issues in 1997 to provide a forum for women to share their experiences, and initiate a process of interaction and capacity building for elected women representatives. It was designed as an information fair and was one of the largest gatherings of elected rural women representatives in Gujarat.

Panchayati Raj : A decentralized form of governance in India, where each village is responsible for its own affairs and the village *gram panchayats* are the basic units of administration.

Panjo Haq : A web portal set up by *Kutch Mahila Vikas Sanghathan*, containing information about 45 government schemes from 16 departments.

Pooja room : A room in a Hindu household where the figures of the deities are placed, and the religious rituals are carried out.

Poorna Shakti Kendras : Women's centres established in villages under the National Mission for Empowerment of Women for integrated service-delivery to women at the grassroots level.

Pucca house : A house designed to be solid and permanent and in the construction of which materials such as stone, brick, cement and timber have been used.

Purdah : The practice of seclusion and veiling of women.

Saiyere Jo Sanghathan : A women's collective in the Nakhatrana block of the Kutch district of Gujarat, set up by *Kutch Mahila Vikas Sanghathan*.

Sakhi : Literally 'woman friend', a term used for the young women infomediaries in the information centres in Mysore district.

Samras : Refers to the *Samras Gram Yojana* scheme in Gujarat which gives monetary incentives to village *panchayats* that select their representatives to local government, through a process of consensus-based decision-making, instead of village-level elections.

Sangha : Collective/association

Sanghatan : Organization

Sarpanch : The elected head of a village *panchayat* .

Sarpanch pati : The practice of husbands of women *sarpanches* wielding political power through their wives.

Sasural : The family a woman is married into.

Shreemanth vidhi (godbharai) : A blessing ceremony to mark the third trimester of pregnancy.

Soorvani : An autonomous organized association of folk musicians in Kutch.

Talatidaar : Village accountant

Taluka : A block, which is the subdivision of a district, a group of villages organized for administrative purposes.

Taluk Pramuk : President of the *Block Panchayat*

Ujjas Mahila Sangathan : A rural women's collective working in the Mundra block of the Kutch district

Yajmana : literally 'Leader', also used to refer to one's husband.

Zilla Panchayat : District council, the third tier of the *Panchayati Raj* system.

Executive Summary

The goal of the '*Making Women's Voices and Votes Count*' (MWVVC) project was to strengthen local women's political constituency in 3 districts of India. The project was led by three highly credible and accomplished women's rights organisations viz. IT for Change, Bangalore as the lead organisation and *Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan* as co-lead and ANANDI was the project partner who have worked with Elected Women Representatives (EWRs) over a long period of time, who have worked with community media and who were interested in engaging with ICTs as key influences for gender equality.

The project was supported by a two year grant from UN Women Fund for Gender Equality (FGE) with a budget of USD 2,80,000 for project implementation in 2 sites in Gujarat in Kutch and Bhavnagar and 1 site in Karnataka in Mysore, and for coordination by IT for Change, Bangalore.

The project design comprised the following three key strategies towards the outcome of influencing governance processes to be gender responsive, i.e. enabling women's perspectives and gender equity goals shape governance agendas.

- Using a combination of face-to-face dialogic meetings, and mobile phone-based IVR networking, for strengthening elected women's linkages to their peers, and to women community leaders and women's collectives in their constituencies. The intention was to support the EWRs to represent marginalized women's concerns in local governance processes and claim local media spaces to legitimise women's perspectives on governance.
- Creating a new public information architecture at the grassroots to strengthen marginalised women's individual and collective claims-making on state structures, through the setting up of women-run ICT-enabled information centres rooted in a rights-based entitlements culture, in all 3 sites.
- Catalysing community-media based campaigns and advocacy, and GIS-enabled participatory mapping and social audits, to bring in an alternative discourse on gender and governance, into the local public sphere.

Objectives of the Evaluation

'End of the project' evaluation was undertaken for assessing the robustness of the project design in moving towards the goal of gender responsive governance. The project strategies were evaluated in terms of their pioneering and innovative dimensions and reviewed for their effectiveness in making the desired impact, and for their sustainability. The intersectional dynamics of the three key strategies were also examined for their impact in altering gender power relationships at the individual, community and institutional level. Project and Partnership Management was assessed for its effectiveness to manage the project, levels of coordination between the partners and UN women and

leveraging partnerships. The evaluation was also mandated to provide the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations for replication and scaling up to be given for the important stakeholders associated with the project.

Methodology

The standard DAC evaluation criteria of Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impacts and Sustainability was complemented by Gender@ Work's "Domains of Change" framework of analysis.

Desk review of all the key project documents- proposal, baseline report, progress reports, perusal of records maintained and Project Management Framework (PMF) was followed up with the writing of the inception report which outlined in detail the approach and tools for the evaluation. A reference group and a broad reference group (BRG) were constituted to support and guide the evaluation. In the field, data collection was largely done by using the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and individual interviews with key groups of beneficiaries and stakeholders during the field visits at all three sites by the evaluation team. The communication products produced in the project period were also reviewed.

Participant observation and meetings at the information centres, *panchayat* offices and extensive interactions with EWRs, leaders and members of women's collectives/federations & claimants, *Panchayat* Raj Institution (PRI) representatives and officials from the *Gram Panchayat*, Block/district administration, infomediaries and the project teams, resource persons and trainers, and government officials at the village, block and district level and tele-conversations with the UN Women team responsible for the project were undertaken. For drawing the conclusions and key findings, the evaluation report was corroborated with the process documents and baseline and endline reports.

Most Important Findings

The project has been catalytic in building innovative linkages between gender, governance and technology. Through the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), the project has caused a disruption in the traditional landscape of male control over information and communication, positioning women as key interlocutors in the local governance context.

After an initial learning lag, the core group of EWRs have built a comfortable relationship with ICTs and are adept at handling devices and using technology in ways relevant to women's lives breaking the myth that technology is not for women. EWRs and women's leaders have become generators, users and providers of information.

For EWRs in the core group the most significant change is in their self-perception, self-esteem and aspiration to be effective in their political role.

Convening of *Mahila Gram Sabhas*, greater number of resolutions passed including passing of resolutions on women's entitlements and girls' education with the influence of the EWRs in the *gram sabha* meetings were important changes effected towards including women's issues in governance.

EWRs have shown an increased commitment to help poor and vulnerable women, paying attention to women's safety and security, addressing maternal health and convene *mahila gram sabhas* to help women articulate their needs.

Their increased competencies as *panchayat* members has exploded the myth that politics is not for women and has increased the credibility and stature of EWR platforms like *Mahila Swaraj Manch* and *Gramshasini*.

The setting up of women-owned and rights-oriented information centres run with involvement of EWRs inside the *panchayat* offices was a major achievement symbolising acceptance of women-led knowledge management enterprise as part of governance. Thousands of women benefited through accessing their basic entitlements of food, shelter, education, employment, social security, sanitation etc. from the state which helped to improve their wellbeing, health, security, nutrition, and dignity. There were some instances of women coming forward to claim their property rights to land and housing.

As a result of increased awareness of entitlements and realization of claims, women perceive themselves not merely as beneficiaries but as an engaged citizen with rights. The claims making process has been an empowering one in demystifying the complexity and opaqueness around governance and one's on relationship as citizens vis-a-vis the government.

A very impressive increase in the number of footfalls of women at the info centres, *gram sabhas*, *panchayat* offices & Government departments, especially in places where women's mobility is curbed, is a sign that women are moving out of the home and entering public spaces. Taboo topics like cervical cancer, single women's issues, and domestic violence are entering the public arena and health and security are now being talked as rights issues in the PRIs where the project has intervened.

However, the continued hold of men in PRIs and masculine form of politics seems to have acquired more complex forms combined with increasing influence of money and state power, business lobbies, influence of mainstream, dominant political parties and their ideological discourse on the local governance institutions and their functioning. A significant numbers of the EWRs from the core group have expressed their desire to run the *panchayats*, "*differently from the way men have*".

Though the PRIs and local service delivery institutions seem to be addressing women's concerns, women's perspectives still do not influence and inform the governance agenda and its functioning. The end line study shows that among the core group of EWRs, there were not many EWRs who saw themselves as women's representatives who could further the political constituency of women. The understanding of the EWRs on the gender responsive agenda was not very clear and strong nor was their position and condition in the PRIs very conducive in building the gender responsive agenda in the *panchayat* processes and functioning.

Despite the project being successful in showcasing increased instances of EWRs managing to get the resolutions concerning women's claims and entitlements and health and education in the *gram sabhas* and *mahila sabhas*, the thematic issues of health, education, PDS, and social security entitlements are predominantly perceived and addressed as women's issues by the EWRs and the other PRI members and functionaries.

Main Recommendations

- The ground work done in the past 15 years and more by KMVS, ANANDI and IT for Change in building and nurturing rights based women's constituency and promoting women's empowerment based on strong feminist principles, needs to be deepened further and supported with projects such as MWVVC. The window of the project period needs to be extended to at least another four years to allow for more time and space for EWRs and the women leaders to use ICT-enabled pedagogies for scripting a transformative agenda. The networks of EWRs such as *Mahila Swaraj Manch* in Bhavnagar and *Gram Shashini Manch* in Kutch and the women's federations in Mysore need longer and sustained investment of time, human, technical and financial resources to enable them in building a critical mass of politically active and gender responsive political constituency of women.
- To sustain the learning and impetus that the project has generated it is recommended to strengthen local level women's alliance building and networking processes and institutions. Further investment also needs to be made in designing of appropriate strategies guided by feminist methodologies and tools for making the triad of gender, governance and ICTs, work in an organic and holistic manner. Solidarity and building associational power of women need to be based on the notion of 'power to' and 'power with' so as to provide an alternate discourse for gender equality.
- The project outreach among the core group of EWRs and women leaders is recommended to be expanded for making a more concerted pitch for a stronger women's political constituency. A much larger number of networked, assertive and aware EWRs are required to add their voice and perspective for the gender-just and gender-equal policies and agenda to be pursued in the local governance institutions.
- ICT enabled pedagogies need to be continuously reviewed and revisited – i.) to ensure their access, control and use remains with, for and by the women; ii) to ensure their use to create the script of transformative agenda for social justice and gender equality; iii.) To be acknowledged more and more as public goods; and iv.) to build a stronger interface of ICTs with different forms of community media for creating dialogic spaces on understanding and addressing local patriarchies and in terms of its influence on the mainstream media.
- Wherever the state is setting up e- and/ or ICT enabled governance processes, these need to be advocated to be managed and controlled by local collectives and platforms of civil society and women, especially by those women who are inside the PRIs and by those who are part of the local federations/ collectives. An ICT enabled architecture of the PRIs could be designed for addressing the claims and entitlements of the women from the poor and vulnerable sections of the society, based on the learnings from the project in setting up and management of the information centres as a 'good practice' model.

- Sustained inputs for building a stronger gender and women's perspective need to be provided to the EWRs and EMRs to effectively use the platforms of *Gram Sabhas* and *Mahila Gram Sabhas*. The need is to build their capacities and skills for their 'vision building role' and not merely to enhance their administrative efficacy for improved service delivery, increased attendance, knowledge about the rules and procedures.
- A new training model for EWRs and EMRs is needed that moves beyond the current supply-side, classroom based, one-off training modules of the state. The perspective building processes in Rural Development (R.D) and PRI processes should strongly be informed by a social justice agenda and move beyond building role clarity and efficiency.
- Short term, intermediate and long-term advocacy plans need to be drawn up from the local to the national level by civil society – women's rights and human rights organisations – for ensuring the commitment of the state to a free, fair and transparent functioning of local systems of governance as decentralised and autonomous institutions of democracy – thereby allowing for legitimate concerns of women and poor to be addressed.
- The PRIs need to be supported to deliver on its social justice agenda and not remain as a mere implementing arm of the government to administer village development activities. For the PRIs to take up social justice and mediation issues, suitable championing and advocacy strategies need to be designed by civil society and women's rights organisations on the ground. Concrete proposals need to be made for strengthening PRIs with adequate human, technical and financial capabilities for the gender responsive architecture of PRIs to be translated into reality.
- The present partnership model of implementation, with the lead and co-lead engaged in a thematic support based collaborative partnership with the third partnering organisation, in which all responsibility is shared, needs to be sustained and nurtured as a good practice. The technical niche provided by IT for Change in broadening the reach and uptake of ICT enabled pedagogies among EWRs and women leaders was strongly augmented by the strong mobilization work done by the women's rights organizations and the local women's collectives in Bhavnagar by ANANDI and in Kutch by KMVS. This partnership model could be made stronger by adding to it the experience of an advocacy based organization.
- It is suggested to build capacities of the *Panchayat* officials, *Sarpanch* and EWRs in gender-budgeting and for EWRs to be able to track budgets and expenditure and to make such information available in the public domain.
- For UNWOMEN, MWVVC can be used as a good example to further promote working on innovative and catalytic ideas in the space of women's political empowerment in a more collaborative approach with, and for, women's rights organizations. This would involve provision of increased financial resources and more flexibility in terms of time, space and resources to invest in collaborative ways of project designing, monitoring and resource mobilisation and its utilisation appropriate to the unique histories and contexts of the women's collectives and women's rights organi-

sations. These entities are working with a diverse spectrum of issues, approaches but in defining ways for the social-political and economic empowerment of women.

- The work in the domain of systemic change and efforts to change harmful gender norms and exclusionary cultural practices need to be focused concurrently along with work in the other domains of enhancing awareness , increasing access to resources and making formal institutions and policies more gender responsive. Changes in the former domain would only lead to long lasting changes for a more equitable and just social order.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Context of project

Status of women's political participation nationally and in the project states

Political participation of women in India can be understood through the numbers of women in parliament and state assemblies, the number of women candidates fielded by political parties, the percentage of women candidates who won elections, and the share of women in the voter turnout. On all four counts India lags behind world averages despite improvements over the last seven decades.

In Parliament, the number of women members of the *Lok Sabha* increased from 22 (4.4%) in the first *Lok Sabha* of 1952 to 61 (11.2%) in the 16th *Lok Sabha* of 2014, which is still much below the world average of 20%¹. In the state assemblies of Gujarat and Karnataka where the MWVVC project has been implemented, the story is dismal. In the 2012 Gujarat assembly elections, 47 of the 846 candidates fielded were women and there are today 13 (7.1%) women in an assembly of 182 members. Both Bhuj and Bhavnagar have women MLAs from the BJP. In Karnataka the scenario is even more dismal with only 6 (2.6%) of the 224 present MLAs being women.

This begs the question whether women candidates were fielded and lost, or whether parties themselves acted as gatekeepers and gave very few women tickets. Of the 8070 candidates who contested LS polls in 2009, only 556 or a pathetic 6.9 percent of candidates were women. More importantly, within these 556, only 29 percent were ticket-holders of national or state political parties, 34 percent belonged to unrecognized parties, and 37 percent ran as independents. While the Congress has fielded almost a constant number of women, the only party that has increased tickets given to women has been the BJP². This is absolutely in tune with their co-option of women into the cultural nationalism agenda with their narratives of motherhood and motherland³. In Karnataka only 175 (6.4%) of the 2722 candidates fielded across parties in 2013 were women⁴.

Clearly parties are not ensuring that 33% of the candidates they give tickets to should be women, even among parties who claim to support the Bill for reservation of 33% seats for women in Parliament. Both the BJP and the Congress have about 10% of their candidates as women in the *Lok Sabha* polls. The legacy of male control over political power dominates. This is despite women being increasingly active in party ranks and despite the gap between men and women voters narrowing to just 1.5 percent in 2014⁵.

1 Rai, Praveen. 2014. <http://blogs.reuters.com/india-expertzone/2014/06/13/election-2014-imbalanced-participation-of-women/> . Retrieved 01 July 2015.

2 Ravi, Shamika. & Sandhu, Rohan. 2014. Women in Party Politics. India: Brookings Institution India Centre.

3 Menon Sen, K. 2010. Everyday Nationalism: Women of the Hindu Right in India. University of Pennsylvania Press

4 Election Commission of India. 2013. Statistical Report On General Election, 2013 To The Legislative Assembly Of Karnataka. http://eci.nic.in/eci_main/StatisticalReports/AE2013/StatReports2013.pdf , Retrieved 01 July 2015

5 Rai, Praveen. 2014. *op.cit*

At the PRI level, the scenario is very different for several reasons. Firstly there is a legally mandated 33% (now changing to 50%) reservation for women, and officially there is supposedly no role for political parties. While this seems like a removal of major obstacles, all the biases and power play and subtle exclusions that are there in the national and state level elections operate at the level of *panchayats* as well, making a mockery of the law. This is compounded by the feudal character of agrarian society and rural communities and gets exacerbated when constituencies are geographically smaller as power dynamics are more personalized. And rural women's disadvantaged position in terms of education, health, mobility, autonomy and access to information, all make it difficult for affirmative action to translate into actual political power in their hands.

The affirmative action has meant that 2 million women are now *panchayat* members. The fact that the reservation quota is increasing to 50% is an important enabler, something to be lauded, fiercely protected and unabashedly claimed. There are also reservations for women *Sarpanches*. *Mahila Gram Sabhas* are being made mandatory, creating a space for women to collectively engage with community level debates and deliberations. In Karnataka, the forthcoming elections will have 50% reservation for men!⁶

Despite the PRI level measures, the larger picture of state commitment to women's empowerment is not hopeful. The National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW) has been dismantled by the current regime, and a new policy on women is on the anvil, and the current scenario doesn't give much cause to hope for an empowering and rights based policy thrust for women and other vulnerable sections of our society. The funding for *Nirbhaya* crisis centres has been drastically curtailed as has been the case of all major women and child development schemes under the aegis of the ministries of Rural Development, *Panchayat Raj* and Human Resource Development. Officials from Women and Child Development have indicated that the outlay of the Ministry which was Rs. 21,000 crore in 2014-15, has been cut to Rs. 10,286.73 crore in 2015-16, registering a decrease of about 50%. Of this more than 80%, i.e. 8335.77 crores, has been allocated for the Integrated Women and Child Development scheme which focuses on child nutrition⁷. Not only is this a serious setback in terms of the budget for children, it also leaves no provision for women's development.

With the state withdrawing increasingly from social responsibilities and the constitutional promise of gender equality, this space is largely being left to civil society organizations to advocate and champion socio- legal reforms. Women's and human rights organizations have been doing path breaking work for advocacy to bring legal and constitutional reforms to address the increasingly virulent and entrenched forms of gender inequality and gender based violence, in the passage of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (2005), the passage of the sexual harassment at work place law and in pushing for the repeal of article 377 from the Indian constitution for securing the rights of the same sex and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans-gender community. However, the civil rights and

6 Aji, Sowmya. 2015. Reverse Quota: Karnataka reserves 50% of seats for men in *Panchayats*. http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2015-05-15/news/62192465_1_women-empowerment-50-seats-panchayat-members Retrieved 1 July 2015.

7 Outlook. 2015. 50% Cut in Allocation of Funds for Women and Child Development Schemes. <http://www.outlookindia.com/news/article/50-cut-in-allocation-of-funds-for-women-and-child-development-schemes/894694> Retrieved 1 July 2015.

women's rights organizations have been struggling to survive in an increasingly hostile environment with shrinking resources to sustain movement- building work with marginalized sections of society. Over the past few years, civil society-led spaces have been singled out for questioning the dominant development paradigm.

At this juncture it is necessary for women's rights organizations to explore new ways of pooling resources, attempt innovative strategies for networking, and pro-actively pursue issue based solidarity platforms for addressing systemic and structural inequalities. An important pathway towards gender equality has opened up with the Information, Communication and Technology revolution. Its potential to connect all the citizens of a networked society is mind boggling and hugely exciting, making it imperative for women's rights organizations to learn to tap the potential of ICTs in advancing their goals.

1.2 Relevance of the MWVVC Project

'Making Women's Voices And Votes Count' (MWVVC) is an aspirational project that seeks to deepen democracy at the base, by strengthening elected women representatives (EWRs) in *panchayats* and promoting gender responsive governance at the village level. The project is significant because EWRs across the country are struggling to participate meaningfully in governance, to be accepted as leaders, to truly represent women, to develop a women's political constituency and to challenge hegemonic discourses on governance and gender.

Addressing institutionalized exclusion, subordination and marginalization of women, which thwarts EWR's agency at every stage, requires a critical engagement with patriarchal and feudal structures, norms and practices that intersect to relegate EWRs to the periphery, despite their sincere and diligent efforts. Their lack of information, mobility, autonomy, property rights and limited decision making power, make it almost impossible for EWRs to claim their rightful space and to participate meaningfully in governance.

In a culture where gender based violence, sectarian identity politics, increasing withdrawal of the state from its public service role and lack of political will and accountability of the duty bearers is the norm, alternative strategies and new pedagogies for building critical consciousness among women's representatives and building a women's political constituency is the need of the hour. *'Making Women's Voices and Votes Count'* is therefore an extremely important intervention. It facilitates established women's rights organizations to embark on a journey of leveraging ICTs for transforming the numerical presence of women in *Panchayats* into substantive participation.

1.3 Object of the Evaluation

The object of the evaluation is the project titled 'Making Women's Voices and Votes Count' which commenced on 01 January 2013 and was to end on 31st December 2014. It was given a six-month no-

cost extension up to June 2015. The object of the evaluation includes the MWVVC project's aims and objectives, strategic directions and project design, operations, implementation and execution, outcomes and outputs, tentative impacts, management of the project, management of partnerships, sustainability of impacts, and challenges and potentials for taking the project objectives forward.

1.3.1 Project Brief

The project goal was to strengthen local women's political constituency in 3 districts of India.

The project was led by IT for Change, Bangalore and supported through a two year grant from the multi-donor UN Women Fund for Gender Equality (FGE) under the Women's Political Empowerment thematic area. The co-lead of the project was *Kutch Mahila Vikas Sanghathan* (KMVS), and ANANDI was a project partner. The overall responsibility for project coordination was IT for Change, Bangalore. The project had an overall budget of USD 2,80,000 for project implementation in Gujarat and Karnataka and for coordination by IT for Change, Bangalore.

IT for Change provided conceptual leadership to the project, and its field centre *Prakriye* spearheaded the implementation at the Mysore site. *Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan* and ANANDI steered the implementation at Kutch and Bhavnagar respectively. The MWVVC partners are highly credible and accomplished women's rights organizations who have worked with EWRs over a long period of time, who have worked with community media and who were interested in engaging with ICTs. The path-breaking and ingenious project emerged from discussions and reflections among the implementing partners, to use the idiom of ICTs, and harness the associational linkages and networking of the women's groups at the local level and the power of information networks and flows for gender responsive governance. The project design comprised three key strategies:

- Using a combination of face-to-face dialogic meetings and mobile phone-based IVR networking, for strengthening elected women's linkages to their peers, and to women community leaders and women's collectives in their constituencies.
- Creating new public information architecture at the grassroots to strengthen marginalized women's individual and collective claims-making on state structures, through the setting up of women-run ICT-enabled information centres, in all 3 sites.
- Catalyzing community-media based campaigns and advocacy, and GIS-enabled participatory mapping and social audits, to bring in an alternative discourse on gender and governance, into the local public sphere.

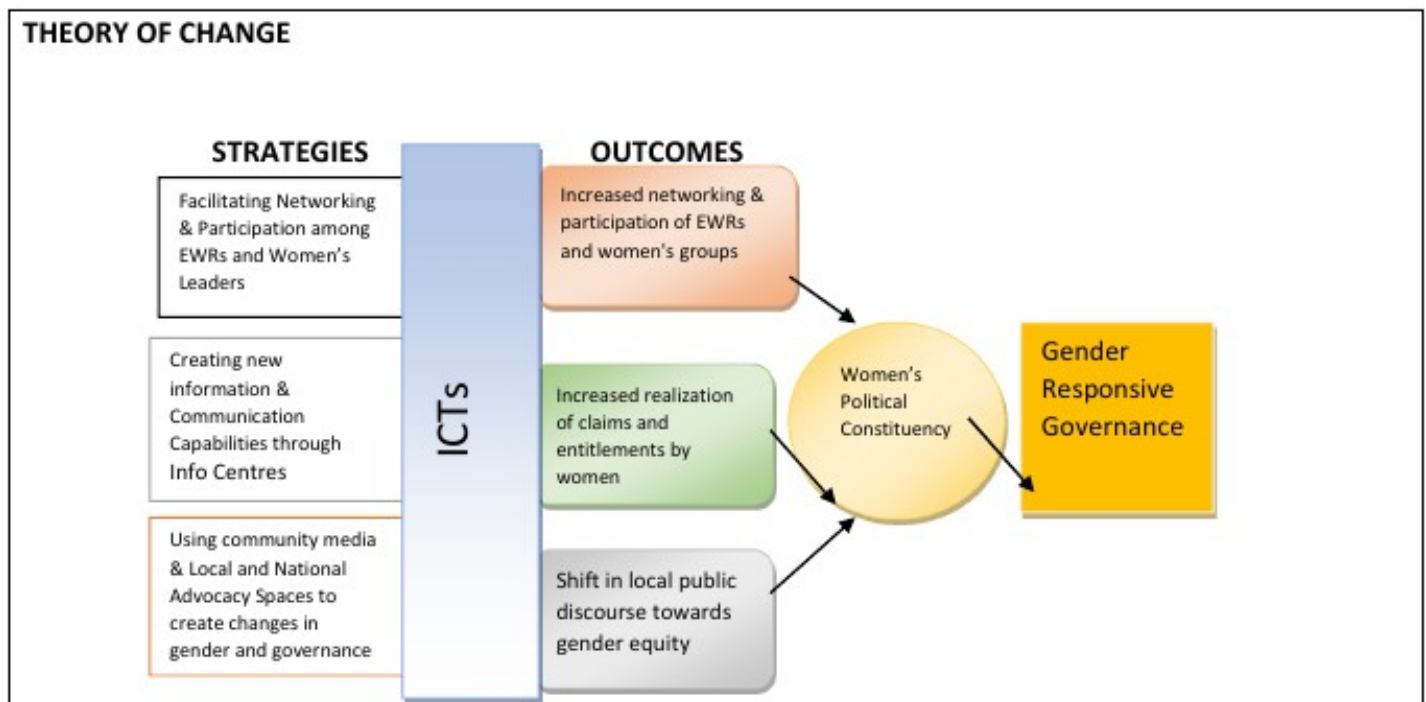
In brief, the project supports the use of ICTs to enable horizontal networking among EWRs in local *panchayats*, connect EWRs to local leaders from marginalized women's groups, support them to represent marginalized women's concerns in local governance processes and claim local media spaces to legitimize women's perspectives on governance. Use of mobile-based SMS and voice services to

build a strong, peer-to-peer networking platform to support women leaders is an important project intervention. Setting up of simple information systems facilitated by trained women infomediaries to usher in a rights-based entitlements culture is also a crucial part of the intervention. The video and radio components of the project aim at creating women-owned community media spaces for a new local discourse on gender and to support learning processes of the EWR networks.

These strategic interventions were conceptualized as the foundation to strengthen a women's political constituency for gender responsive governance. The theory of change is elaborated below.

1.3.2 Theory of Change and Expected Results Chain

The theory of change as outlined in the project proposal spells out how these three strategies were expected to lead to the outcomes necessary for achieving the goal. In this logic model ICTs are embedded in the strategies and in the outcomes of the directions of the project.



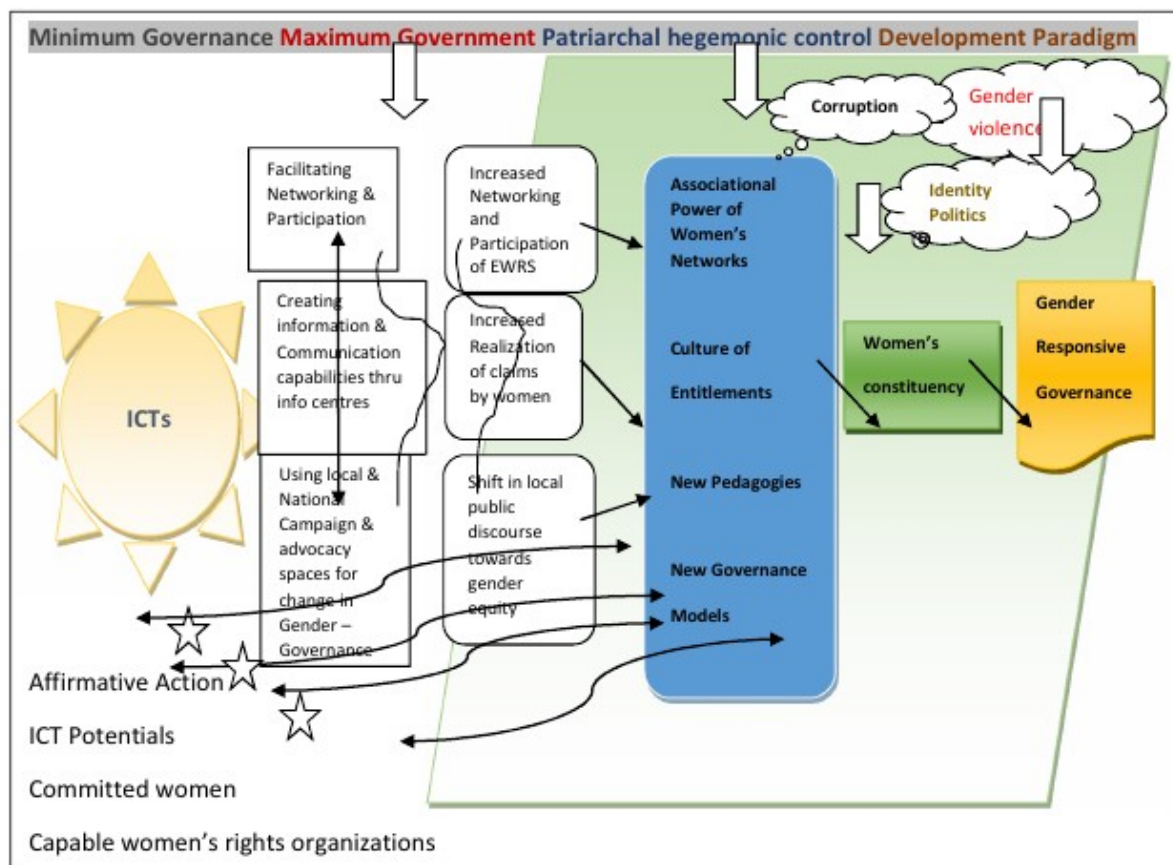
The logic model envisages that project outcomes converge in the formation of a woman's political constituency. This can also be seen as a precursor to gender responsive governance where both men and women leaders, but especially women's representatives ensure that women's empowerment and gender equality shapes governance.

1.3.3 Contextual factors influencing the results chain

The change processes leading to the goal of gender responsive governance and building women's political constituency intersect with a complex web of factors operating locally, nationally and globally.

Taking these factors into consideration, an expanded theory of change arising from the project could be used to guide the project evaluation wherein the non-linearity in the pathways of change is incorporated and the role of mitigating factors is acknowledged. This will provide the necessary scaffolding to the logical results framework of the project and allow for factors over which no particular project or NGO has control.

AN EXPANDED THEORY OF CHANGE TO GUIDE THE EVALUATION



The project's theory of change as given above was expanded by the evaluation team with the rationale as mentioned here.

The evaluation views the logic model of the project as a continuum of work done by implementing partners in their respective locations and incorporates the value of the long-term investments in forming women's collectives and support the networking of EWRs which has enabled the achievement of results from short-term projects. The continuum approach allows for realism in attributing critical shifts to the MWVVC project as a specific and time bound intervention, while assessing it on the parameters of effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

This representation provides leeway and flexibility in evaluating the project's short term results, intermediate outcomes and long term development goals. It also allows for reviewing the intersectional dynamics of the key project strategies for a more nuanced analysis of the working of the triad of gender, governance and technology.

1.3.4 Scale and Complexity of the Project

The project has been implemented in 6 blocks in 3 districts of the country separated by physical distance, diverse socio-political contexts, varied size, character and trajectories of implementing organizations, different levels of community engagement at the village/cluster level and a range of experiences with exposure to ICTs. More importantly, the implementing architecture, its approach and the ground realities at each site has been unique, enriching the project in many ways but also limiting generalizations.

The Partners

In Kutch district, KMVS has been organizing women for over two decades. The organization is actively engaged in all 6 blocks of the district with a clear district level presence and works closely with women's collectives, embroidery artisans, EWRs and *panchayats*, midwives and health workers, paralegal support and folk musicians. The women's collectives have a membership of 12000 women from 165 villages. Two strong federations (*sanghatans*) of village level collectives have emerged in Mundra and Nakhatrana blocks where it was decided to implement the MWVVC project. The presence and role of *Ujjas Mahila Sanghatan* and *Saiyare Jo Sanghatan* and the producer companies for farmers and cattle-rearers promoted by them provided a backdrop of deep engagement with women's concerns and livelihood issues in the region. To support EWRs establish themselves as leaders in the community for effective implementation of the 73rd amendment, a knowledge centre on governance,

Sushasini ('good governance' in feminine gender) was established in 2008. *Sushasini* formed block level EWR *manches* (platforms) in six blocks and worked towards building capacities of EWRs in 350 *panchayats*. Gradually it was decided that the 6 *manches* need a district level forum to advocate for collective issues and *Gramshasini* was formed in 2010. *Gramshasini* is governed by 18 member governing body with representatives from all the 6 six blocks.

At *Bhavnagar*, ANANDI has been mobilizing *Dalit* (Scheduled castes), Muslim and tribal women for over two decades. The *Mahila Swaraj Manch* (MSM) promoted by ANANDI goes back to 1997 when ANANDI started working with EWRs in *Shihor* block and began a process of involving EWRs in running and *Lok Adhikar Kendras* (community resource centre for gender justice), helping EWRs in the 2nd and 3rd round of *Panchayat* Elections. *Mahila Swaraj Manch* emerged in this process, taking on more and more responsibility of mobilizing EWRs, working with them and was finally registered in 2009. ANANDI has not formed village level collectives of the women and has worked primarily through MSM which includes EWRs, ex-EWRs, potential EWRs and women's leaders from the community.

IT for Change (ITfC) as a techno-social organization has worked in Mysore district through its field unit *Prakriye* in collaboration with *Mahila Samakhya Karnataka's* (MSK) *Mysore* district team. Information centres at the village level were set up in partnership with MSK promoted village level collectives called *sanghas*, and at the block level, information centres were promoted in association with MSK promoted women's federations. The withdrawal of MSK from Mysore district during the MWVVC project was a huge setback as ITfC had to continue work directly with the collectives and federations without the backward and forward linkages that MSK's presence ensured. The federations and women's *sanghas* have also been in a state of flux following MSK's withdrawal as they are struggling to find their feet and work as independent organizations. The EWR platforms promoted by the state government and by the *Hunger Project* (an international NGO supporting Indian NGOs to work with the EWRs) also did not have village level linkages in the two blocks where MWVVC was to be implemented. ITfC therefore decided to work directly with *panchayats*, collectives and EWRs, and had to start almost from scratch, taking on tasks that were not in its domain of expertise.

The centrality of EWRs in all three project strategies

Of the total number of 1500 EWRs in the 6 blocks, the project sought to work intensely with a core group of 122 EWRs and build their capacities to enhance participation. The 122 core group of EWRs, their linkages with women's collectives at the local level, involvement in information centres, contribution to community media resources, leadership of campaigns and advocacy efforts were all integral to the project, cutting across project strategies and reflecting the centrality of the core group of EWRs in all aspects of the project. Recognizing that 122 is too small a number in the context of number of EWRs at each site, the project also aimed at facilitating networking among 770 EWRs through IVR platforms, hoping to gradually draw them into a closer engagement.

1.3.5 The beneficiaries and key stakeholders of the MWVVC Project

The primary beneficiaries of the project are

- 122 core group EWRs ((approx. 41 in KMVS, 25 in ANANDI and 56 in IT for Change)
- 200 Women leaders involved in ideation and community media production
- 770 EWRs linked through IVRS platforms (600 in KMVS, 100 at ANANDI and 70 at ITfC)
- Women's collectives and 550 women leaders
- 2710 women and 301 men from 35 G.Ps in Kutch, 1629 women and 1090 men from 48 G.Ps in Bhavnagar, 807 women and 70 men from 7 G.Ps in Mysore were covered through the infocentres, community media strategies and *panchayat* forums convened by the project.

Other Stakeholders:

- *Panchayat* and Block level officials
- *Panchayat* Body members
- Men and women from *panchayat* sub committees
- 650 men including husbands of EWRs, EMRs, male officials and men in the community
- 18 infomediaries
- Project teams –at KMVS, ANANDI, ITfC (Programme coordinators, Project coordinators, community coordinators, documentation personnel, radio and video associates, finance and administrative staff)
- Technical support personnel from ITfC and other media organizations
- Leaders/directors of Project Implementing Partners and collaborating organizations such as *Mahila Samakhya Karnataka*
- Officials and Policy makers in the Ministry/state-level departments of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Ministry/state-level departments of Women and Child Development, Department of Telecommunications, Department of Electronics and Information Technology, National Mission for Empowerment of Women.
- UN Women Team (Political Empowerment Thematic)
- Fund for Gender Equality

1.4 Purpose and Scope of Evaluation

The evaluation is an exercise for assessing the viability and appropriateness of the initiatives in the project towards reaching the goal of creating and strengthening gender responsive governance. It attempts to throw light on how a critical mass of women leaders can provide the pathways of change in the existing institutions of governance at the local level and contribute to enlarging the space for women to actively participate in deliberative democracy enabled by ICTs. More specifically the evaluation aims to:

- Assess the impact of the project through the realization of planned outcomes and outputs using the Standard Evaluation Framework – Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability and Impact.
- Draw from the documentation of the lessons learned and capture best practices emerging from the current phase of the project.
- Suggest recommendations for future programming, replication and scaling up – with emphasis on distilling specific insights for each stakeholder associated with the project - NGOs implementing the programme, duty bearers and the donors.

The evaluation hopes to provide learning and insights from the bottom up experiences of networking, communication and mobilization by women's groups and women's rights organizations at the local and national levels.

An evaluation of the project at this stage is imperative for pointing to the next steps that could be taken by the implementing organizations, the women's collectives, the information centres and EWR networks. The key conclusions drawn from the evaluation will also inform state actors, replicators, lead agencies and donors about what works and what doesn't work in terms of the main project components, while providing recommendations for sustaining and continuity of the key outcomes and for replication and scaling up.

What is being evaluated

Each of the project strategies is evaluated separately in terms of their relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impacts. The intersectional dynamics of the three key strategies is also examined for their impact in altering gender power relationships at the individual, community and institutional level. As the project feeds into partners' long term engagement with EWRs and women's collectives, the evaluation will focus on how and to what extent the specific and time bound interventions of the project have added to their long term work towards gender responsive governance.

For the **first** project strategy of facilitating networking among EWRs and active participation of EWRs and women's groups in gender-responsive governance, the evaluation asks the following key questions:

- Are EWRs now clearer about their roles and tasks as *panchayat* Members and as women in the *panchayat* system? Is there a shift in the way EWRs perceive themselves? Have EWRs gained perspectives on gender responsive governance?
- Have there been changes in the arenas, levels and nature of EWR participation? Has attendance and level of participation of EWRs in *Panchayat* Body Meetings, *Gram sabhas*, *Mahila Gram sabhas* and subcommittees changed? Has their participation helped public service delivery? To what extent have EWRs been able to raise women's concerns in PRIs?

- Have linkages between EWRs and women's collectives been built/strengthened? How do networks and linkages contribute towards gender responsive governance? How have ICT based strategies contributed towards strengthening of EWR networks?

The **second** project strategy of creating new information and communication capabilities through information centres owned and run by women, is assessed in terms of:-

- Have the information centres been able to increase awareness about entitlements among members of the community? Have ICTs helped to increase claim making? Have women been reached and have women been the majority of successful claimants? How have information centres contributed to successful realization of claims?
- Have women gained new skills and capacities related to informational, communicative and mobilization skills, including technological skills?
- Has the claim making process been demystified? What are the impacts of realization of claims by marginalized women? Has a culture of entitlements been fostered?

The review of the above mentioned processes will also help in understanding the associational power that women are expected to gain through access to, and control and use of information facilitated by technology.

The **third** strategy of promoting advocacy and campaigns at local and institutional levels for a shift in local public discourse towards gender equality through creation and dissemination of media resources is assessed in terms of:-

- Have women's leaders been able to contribute to ideation and creation of audio/video resources that challenge existing discourse on gender and on governance?
- Has the dissemination and circulation of these resources challenged norms about gender roles, women's rights and gender justice?
- Have campaigns and advocacy at the local and institutional level fostered a change in public governance discourse towards gender equity and in governance discourse towards gender responsiveness?

These questions will be explored as movements from a gender-blind/insensitive public discourse to a gender responsive one, where every small step and building block in this direction of redefining politics and power dynamics is significant.

Apart from assessing the three key strategies as per the standard OECD-DAC evaluation criteria, the evaluation will also review project management and partnership management using the same criteria.

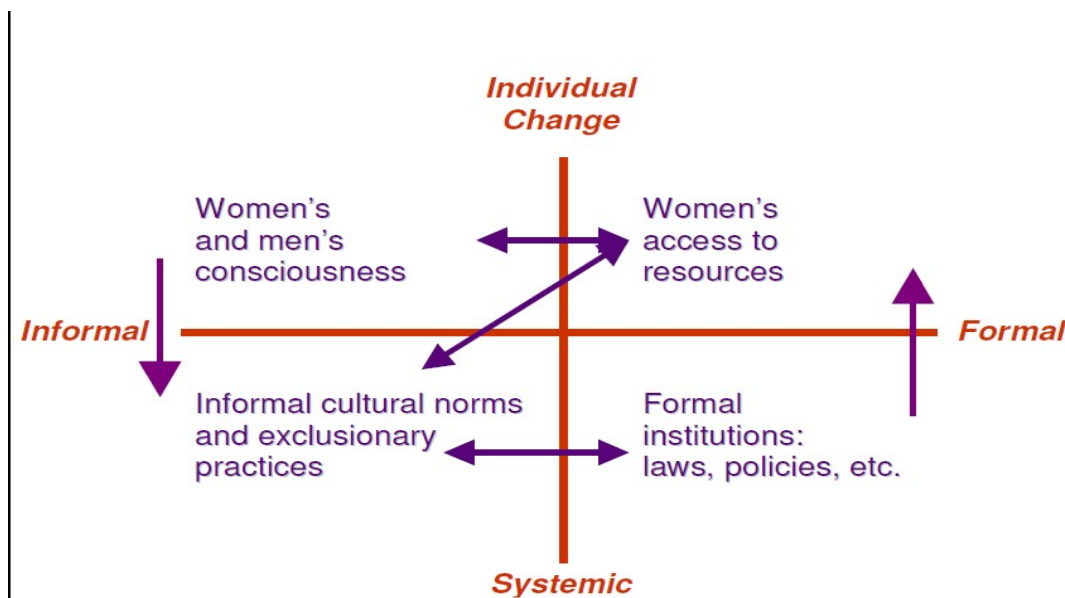
Project Management will be assessed for relevance of structures, processes and systems used to manage the project by the lead agency and the project implementing partners; and the efficacy of tools and formats used to monitor the project's progress. As the project involved multi-layered

partnerships, *partnership management* will be assessed in terms of levels of coordination between the partners, between the lead agency and the other implementing agencies, and UN Women; the building blocks of partnership management applied in the project; effectiveness of leveraging partnerships in furthering the advocacy agenda of democratic and gender responsive governance, and for skill building and capacity enhancement.

1.5 The Evaluation Framework

The DAC evaluation criteria of Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impacts and Sustainability is complemented with the use of a monitoring and evaluation framework drawn from the feminist methodological repertoire to analyze impacts. The Gender@ Work's "Domains of Change" framework of analysis is an adaptation by Aruna Rao and David Kelleher from the work of Ken Wilbur

The Gender @Work's Domains of Change analytical framework⁸:



In the context of MWVVC, the framework is used to analyze the project's impacts in four different spheres as follows:

- Changes at the informal-individual level in EWRs' and women's awareness, consciousness, satisfaction and self esteem

⁸ Rao, Aruna and Kelleher, David. 2002. What is Gender at Work's approach to gender equality and institutional change?. <http://www.genderatwork.org/gender-work-framework> Retrieved 1 July 2015.

- Changes at the individual- formal level in terms of access to knowledge, technical and material resources by women
- Changes in the informal-systemic sphere in relation to shifts in local public discourse and community norms
- Changes in PRI policies and local practices in panchayat meetings, decision making processes, agendas and systems

1.6 Methodology

The evaluation began with a desk review of project documents- proposal, baseline report, progress reports and PMF ([Annexure 1](#)) following the initial briefing at ITfC on 11 February 2015. The evaluators also contributed to the design of the endline survey, including offering suggestions on questions to be posed ([Annexure 2](#)). This was followed by preparation of the inception report based on the insights gained from documents studied and the expectations of the evaluation as outlined in the ToR. The list of documents studied is in [Annexure 3](#).

Alongside, a reference group and a broad reference group (BRG) were constituted to support and guide the evaluation. The reference group comprised project implementing partners and representatives from UN Women. The broad reference group included a range of feminist researchers, writers, academics and activists with experience of working on women's political empowerment. A complete list of the BRG is provided in [Annexure 4](#).

The Draft Inception report was submitted to reference group members and based on their feedback it was finalized on 13th March.

This was followed by field visits to the project sites. The Mysore site was visited on 4th and 5th March, ANANDI site on 16th and 17th March and KMVS site on 18th & 19th March. The detailed schedule of the visits is in [Annexure 5](#). In the field, data collection was largely through FGDs guided by questions listed in the inception report ([Annexure 6](#)) and the evaluation ToR ([Annexure 7](#)) with beneficiaries and stakeholders, individual interviews, observation of meetings, watching of films produced and visits to beneficiary homes, information centres, *panchayat* offices and extensive interactions with project teams and perusal of records maintained. Questions asked in each FGD were based on question guides prepared, and this process flowed organically with the conversations enabled by providing adequate space for listening, probing, sharing and collective reflection. Experiential sharing and reflections were corroborated with process documents, progress reports, baseline and endline data, and reports and records maintained. A judicious mix of quantitative and qualitative tools was deployed to locate changes and shifts taking place through the project.

Initial findings of the evaluation based on the field visits and interactions with the implementing partners and other key stakeholders were put together in a power point presentation and shared with the reference group and BRG members. There was a half a day high level consultation organized on April 10th 2015 in Bangalore where the findings, observations, impressions and initial drawing of

conclusions was done with the gathered group from the broad reference group. The report of the consultation along with the list of participants and the power point presentation made by the evaluation team is attached as [Annexure 8](#) and [Annexure 9](#).

Post the consultation, the first draft of the detailed evaluation report was prepared by the evaluation team and shared on 19 May 2015 with the reference group and broad reference group members. The revised evaluation report based on the collated feedback was prepared and was submitted on 13 July 2015 by the evaluation team. The complied feedback document is attached as [Annexure 10](#).

The evaluation team met the following key stakeholders:

- ITfC (lead agency), KMVS and ANANDI teams (co-lead and project partner)
- Women: EWRs, leaders and members of women's collectives/federations & claimants
- PRI representatives and officials from the G.P, Block/district administration
- Infomediaries at the Information centres
- Project teams
- Concerned technical and training resource persons
- Government officials at the village, block and district level
- Project Focal points at the UN Women office (for off-site interview)

1.7 Structure of the Report

The evaluation report is focused on the three key strategic directions of the MWVVC project and outcomes envisaged. Within each of these, the chapters begin with relevance of the specific project objective, the project partners' historical engagement with this objective, and the strategies adopted to reach the objectives during the MWVVC. The narrative then moves on to clarifying the evidence sought by the evaluators to verify effectiveness of MWVVC interventions. This is followed by a detailed account of findings based on review of documents, data analysis from the endline survey report and also draws upon observations from field visits, FGDs, case studies and examples from the process documentation.

Each of these chapters then offers a listing of significant impacts of the MWVVC interventions followed by an exploration of challenges and potentials in sustaining these, and finally conclusions are drawn regarding the achievement of objectives.

These strategy-focused chapters are followed by a chapter on Project and Partnership Management wherein coordination, synergies, accountability, efficiency and transparency of Project and Partnership management are explored.

The report concludes with a chapter titled Conclusion and Recommendations where we examine shifts in gender power enabled by the project and trace key shifts in the four domains of change mentioned earlier. Connections between different domains of change are also analyzed in detail. This is followed by key conclusions and findings drawn from all the five chapters with reference to qualitative shifts. A section on contextual factors that impact the project goals is also presented before suggesting recommendations for future programming, replication and scaling up, with an emphasis on distilling specific insights for each stakeholder.

Chapter 2: Elected Women Representatives: Their horizontal networks with peers, linkages with women's groups and participation in local governance

2.1 Relevance of EWR networking, linkages and participation

After 23 years of its enactment, the basic tenet of the 73rd amendment to the Constitution of India (1992) on *Panchayati Raj* Institutions (PRIs), for ensuring women's participation in local governance for an inclusive democracy, still remains a work in progress. Presently there is huge disconnect between the constitutional obligation of state institutions to follow the principles of formal and substantive equality, and the ways in which these institutions function, as they continue to be governed by entrenched vested interests which prevent the marginalised and vulnerable sections of the society, especially women and poor, to have their say and to participate in governance.

Effective participation of Elected Women Representatives (EWRs) continues to be severely hampered by a social fabric that resists women's public roles and political leadership. Women's entry into the PRIs, their gradually increasing attendance at meetings, participation in decision making, influence on agendas and contributions to governance are precious at every step, as these are yet to be accepted by society as normal, rightful and desirable. Their isolation, lack of confidence, illiteracy and/or limited education, lack of knowledge of their rights, roles and responsibilities and their tussles with their own husbands, who are out to reduce them to dummies and proxies, are just some of the mammoth obstacles that EWRs have to negotiate and overcome to just participate in the *panchayats*. In such a context, the MWVVC project's objective of facilitating and strengthening EWR's participation is both crucial and pertinent.

As they are also divided along social fault lines of caste, class, age and religion, and are geographically scattered, it is almost impossible for EWRs to support each other, learn together, share their struggles, and collectively address the issues they face, or promote a gender responsive governance culture. Apart from encountering EWRs in their own *panchayats* for official purposes, the chances of EWRs in a district or block even meeting each other and exploring ways of working together are remote. In the face of their common challenges and the opposition they face individually, such dispersion becomes a disabling and dis-empowering factor. Building peer networks for EWRs is thus an extremely important and relevant objective of the MWVVC project.

While a few EWRs emerge from among leaders of women's collectives, a large portion of EWRs have been persuaded to contest elections by families or caste leaders and have weak or negligible connections with grassroots women's groups. As a consequence, EWRs do not always have a grounding in women's realities and needs, do not feel accountable to women as a constituency, and do not receive the support and solidarity of women from their communities. At the other end, women members of grassroots collectives are hampered in their efforts to access entitlements, are looking for accountable and supportive leaders, and need connections and allies inside the PRIs especially with EWRs. In such a scenario, the relevance of, and need for, linkages between EWRs and women's collectives can hardly be overemphasized. The MWVVC project's objective of fostering such linkages is thus appropriate and significant.

2.2 Planned outputs, expected outcomes and anticipated impacts

The specific outputs expected of the project were:

- Increased participation by EWRs and women's collectives/leaders in local governance processes, especially on women's rights issues
- ERWs are networked through a platform for knowledge sharing and peer learning

The key dimension of change through this objective was of foregrounding women's concerns in local governance. The baseline revealed that 63 of the 79 EWRs interviewed were already involved in passing *panchayat* resolutions, but found it difficult to frame agendas in core areas such as grants management and to frame agendas that address gender inequalities, hegemonic gender norms and marginalized women's concerns.

Therefore the final target planned for the project was that 122 EWRs would participate in *gram sabhas*, *mahila gram sabhas* and *panchayat* meetings and frame gender responsive agendas so that 52 gender responsive resolutions are passed in *gram sabhas* and *panchayat* meetings. As the baseline revealed that very few women leaders actually attended the *Gram sabhas*, and the process of holding exclusive *gram sabhas* for women was advocated by the respective state *Panchayat Raj* departments during the same time-window as that of the project period. In the MWVVC, the target was set for 550 women community leaders and members to participate in *gram sabhas* and *mahila gram sabhas* during the project.

In terms of networking, EWR platforms for sharing, learning and advocacy already existed at ANANDI and KMVS, while at Mysore some of the EWRs associated with the project, were in touch with *Mahila Samakhya* Federations. The MWVVC project set out to leverage on existing networks and build a mobile based information and communication platform covering 770 EWRs and 500 women from the community harnessing ICTs for networking, sharing and learning. The target planned was that 300 IVRS messages would be sent out by infomediaries to EWRs (about 4 messages per month at each site).

The project also planned that 145 EWRs across sites would be linked to information centres which would open up another arena for peer networking and linkages with women's collectives. At KMVS and IT for Change the target was to link 105 EWRs with the existing 77 women's collectives in the project sites, whereas at ANANDI the target was to link 90 EWRs with 90 key women community leaders.

2.3 Strategies to increase participation and networking

A variety of face to face, ICT based and ICT enabled strategies were designed and deployed by project partners to increase EWRs participation and networking, and to build linkages between EWRs and women's collectives and leaders. As each partner worked in a unique geo-political setting and had a specific trajectory of working on governance, their interventions in the project attempted to address site specific realities of women and PRIs.

2.3.1 Face to face Interactions

The main face to face strategies adopted to increase EWR participation were workshops and trainings on gender, governance and technology, regular meetings of the EWR forums, and individual dialogues with EWRs whenever they needed support. These were held to enhance their perspectives, knowledge and skills and to bolster their confidence by providing them a clear picture of how *panchayats* function and their role as EWRs.

2.3.2 ICT enabled approaches

The key ICT-based strategy that was used to increase EWR participation in *panchayat* body meetings and in *gram sabhas* and *mahila gram sabhas* was the provision of information about *panchayat* events and proceedings to core group EWRs and women leaders in the project sites through IVRS messages. During the project, 825 EWRs received relevant and timely information about entitlements, *Panchayat* proceedings, health, and *Panchayat* events through IVRS. A total of 266 messages were sent and almost half of these related to *panchayat* proceedings, events and entitlements that could be accessed through *panchayats* and line departments.

A second ICT facilitated strategy to increase EWRs' participation in *panchayat* bodies and *sabhas*, was involving them in the ownership and/or management of the information centres.

2.3.3 Strategies to build linkages of the EWRs with women's groups

At the village level, the *mahila gram sabhas* and the *gram sabhas* were used as spaces where women's collectives and EWRs would meet face to face.

In villages/clusters where information centres were set up during the project, EWRs and women's collective leaders were involved in the establishment and management of Information centres owned by women's collectives.

Another strategy used at the block level was to bring EWRs and women's collectives' members and leaders together for important events – rallies, women's day celebrations, info-*melas*, etc.

2.3.4 Strategies to strengthen EWRs' peer networking

The key project strategy to strengthen networks of EWRs was to facilitate regular meetings of the EWR platforms at ANANDI and KMVS and to build a spirit of solidarity among EWRs based on a shared vision, common problems and culture of mutual support.

Most importantly, at ANANDI and at KMVS the EWR platforms, i.e. *Mahila Swaraj Manch* and *Gramshasini* included the present EWRs, ex-EWRs and potential EWRs who were leaders at the community/village *sangha* level.

EWRs were also trained to use audio and video resources for governance. They also participated in developing content for films, IVRS messages and radio programmes on governance.

2.4 Enhanced Participation, Linkages & Networking: Evidence Sought

The quality and strength of participation, networking and linkages is never easy to measure or quantify. In this evaluation, the evaluators were guided by the indicators laid down in the PMF and added a few questions to help capture qualitative changes. Since participation is deeply intertwined with internal changes in self-esteem and in self-perception, a section on this has been added. The quality and tenor of relationships between EWRs and women's collectives has been raised as an area that needs enquiry. Also, as elaborated in the Expanded Theory of Change, associational power of EWR networks has been added as a key dimension of networking.

2.5 Effectiveness in Changing EWRs' Perspectives, Attitudes, Information and Understanding

2.5.1 EWRs' Understanding of *Gram Panchayat* Rules, Guidelines and Processes

Lack of understanding of rules, processes and systems of the PRI functioning had emerged as an impediment to EWR participation at the beginning of the project. During the project trainings, workshops and production of IEC data base was used to address these lacunae. Evidence about changes in this domain are largely drawn from the endline as the FGDs did not focus on this area directly.

[Table 8](#) of the endline reveals that while 18.2% of the EWRs interviewed in the baseline were fully clear and confident about knowing rules, procedures and systems for convening *panchayat* meetings, this has increased to 33.34% of core group EWRs by the end of the project. While this is a significant and encouraging increase, it is still disheartening to see that after all the training, information provision and high levels of EWR attendance of *panchayat* meetings (91% during baseline itself), **two thirds** of EWRs, even today, are not confident that they know the rules. While 42.2% of them feel they need a LOT more information, 24.4% feel they are somewhat confident but have more to learn.

Regarding functioning of standing committees, the endline shows that only 14.8% of core group EWRs are confident that they have understood the rules and processes. What is disturbing is that this is slighter *lower* than the baseline where 16.9% reported confidence and clarity. The baseline showed that 79.7% of core group EWRs attended sub committees without optimal participation due to their lack of awareness of committee guidelines and roles. At the end of the project 27.78% are participating in subcommittees but 54% of the EWRs feel they need a lot more information about the procedures and role of the sub committees. Additionally, 31% feel they are partially informed but need to learn more. As participation in standing committees could continue to be affected, this is an area that requires immediate attention. Here again it is clear that attendance and participation are not synonymous.

Was information not provided? The endline indicates that of the 118 EWRs who reported having access to a mobile phone, only 28.8% recalled receiving messages on *panchayat* functioning though a significant portion of messages sent related to *panchayat* functioning ([Table 12](#)). Was it comprehensive and comprehensible? How were the trainings and workshops designed? Was the content and pedagogy suitable to the EWRs? Were EWRs able to attend? While it may be difficult to pinpoint the causes for this overall lack of information and awareness, hard questions need to be asked.

The holding of *mahila gram sabhas* was taken up with the seriousness it deserved in the project. At the end the project however only 16% of EWRs felt they are abreast with the processes and rules regarding *mahila gram sabhas* and 52% feel that they know very little ([Table 8](#)). Considering the importance of *mahila gram sabhas* for the project objective of building a women's political constituency, and the efforts made to promote and facilitate them, this low level of clarity among core group EWRs is an area of concern.

While the baseline revealed that 50% of core group EWRs had a very limited understanding of *panchayat* finances and budgets, the endline indicates that this increased to 55% ([Table 8](#)). This was also corroborated by FGDs where with the exception of a few literate women *sarpanches* others seemed to be either in the dark or were informed after the decisions were made. The fact that only 33% of EWRs reported that they were consulted on finance related decisions ([Table 5](#)) is to be seen in the backdrop of EWRs' lack of literacy and men's reluctance to share financial matters with women. EWRs' right to know about budgets and their

need to learn about the financial transactions of the *panchayat* need to be foregrounded and highlighted along with affirmation of women's track records of having financial prudence, different spending priorities and higher levels of integrity, all of which can be assets for the *gram panchayat*.

2.5.2 Changes in perspectives on governance

The endline report stresses that the project focused on *building governance perspectives* rather than pushing the minutiae of PRI procedures and rules, where awareness can emerge through consistent practice and follow up on the norms and procedures laid down. There are no direct questions about EWR's perspectives on governance in the endline, however the FGDs held with EWRs across sites shows that administrative related and delivery of schemes dominated their understanding vis-a-vis governance. At the same time, the fact that 93% of core group EWRs engaged with social concerns is laudable ([Table 2](#)). Within this, the EWRs demonstrated a wide and impressive range of issues that they engaged with. [Table 3](#) of the endline clearly shows that EWRs have been concerned with health, education, livelihoods, violence, against women, village infrastructure, water, sanitation, food and rations and especially entitlement claims of marginalized women.

Other issues impacting the social fabric such as exclusion and discrimination in the name of caste, religion, and ethnicity were conspicuous by their absence in the mandates of the local governance agenda of the *gram panchayat* members. However the women's collectives and the EWR networks supported by ANANDI and KMVS in Bhavnagar and Kutch were seen to be more proactive in taking up issues related to violence and domestic conflicts, alcoholism, health, land disputes and resisting vested interests in land takeovers by the private and industrial lobbies. At MSM, the *Lok Adhikar Kendras* had also addressed these issues as well as provided para-legal support to the cases brought by women and addressed caste discrimination at the local level (Box 1). At KMVS site, EWRs were involved in struggles with local industry regarding pollution, land, and transmission lines in farmers' fields.

Box 1. Infomediary at ANANDI site challenges caste discrimination

"The EWR *Madhuben* who is an infomediary from *Ukharla Village of Shihor block* began regularly monitoring the Village *Anganwadi* centre. The caste equation also changed when the Infomediary facilitated that the *Anganwadi* worker from the *Devipujak samaj* (a backward caste) do the *Shreemanth vidhi (godbhara)* of the upper caste community woman in the *anganwadi* and asked the *Anganwadi* worker to sit as an equal on the chair at the *Anganwadi*. Initially the *Anganwadi* worker was reluctant as she didn't want to offend the women from the upper caste but the infomediary, *Madhuben* insisted on her taking the chair (...)" (excerpted from the process documentation of ANANDI).

However the perspective of the PRI members need to be developed so as to take up similar social justice agenda, as an integral part of governance which can't be strictly addressed through provision of services and by ready-made schemes.

2.5.3 Shifts in Self perception

Focus group discussions (FGDs) held with the EWRs pointed to the shift in their self-perception. Today they see their role as not being bound to the home, hearth and *pooja room* (prayer room) alone, but as active citizens and as duty bearers with a set of responsibilities in the political and public arena. They have moved from viewing their presence in the PRIs with a grudging reluctance and seeing themselves as outsiders or

puppets, to negotiating/seeking respect as critical insiders and gaining recognition as equals. There was a palpable increase in the level of confidence in the groups of EWRs met by the evaluators, as the project had opened up spaces which they earlier couldn't think of accessing.

During a FGD conducted for the evaluation, one of the ex EWRs of the *Gram Shashini Manch* in *Mundra block of Kutch* expressed her learning curve and her experience of being a EWR in a song composed by her as, *"for the first few years I felt that this position is like a burden put on my head against my will, it is now that the term is coming to an end that I realise that I'm more than a stamp (...) Now I can go out freely and ask questions. Now I feel fresh and awake."*

This is validated by the endline data which shows that 68% of EWRs believe it is a right of women to participate in governance and to become leaders in the public sphere, even as they continue to take help from husbands. And most importantly only one EWR reported that she takes directions from her husband on how to push social concerns within the *panchayat* – See [Table 6](#). Such a paradigm shift internally in the short duration of the project is one of MWVVC's biggest achievements, especially in a situation where 75% of EWRs contested elections due to pressure and persuasion from husbands and caste/community leaders!

2.5.4 Changes in understanding of their role as EWRs

There has been an increasing recognition among the elected women, of their role as responsible, accountable duty bearers and as official representatives of the people in their wards. The FGDs and process documents revealed a sense of purpose and sincerity among the EWRs to serve the community, as indicated by the story in Box 2.. Most of these EWRs were associated with ANANDI, KMVS and *Mahila Samakhya*. For EWRs from political/party connections and affiliations, their membership in the *Gram panchayat* was seen as a stepping stone to higher political roles or for keeping the seat for their families/husbands.

Box 2. How a dalit EWR asserted her right to participate, after the trainings conducted under the project

Gangaben from Depa village of Mundra block belongs to a scheduled caste. She got elected because it was a seat reserved in the *panchayat* for the scheduled caste. She was also a part of Village Health and Sanitation committee (VHSC). She rued the fact that she was never called for any meetings of *panchayat* and VHSC. Rasilaben, the *sarpanch* of Depa village came to know about this during one of the trainings held by KMVS for the EWRs. She assured *Gangaben* that she would take lead and ensure that she gets notified about all the meetings and be consulted for decisions by VHSC. Following this positive intervention, *Gangaben* has started visiting the *panchayat* regularly and has been taking an active part in the VHSC meetings.

(Excerpted from KMVS process documentation)

2.5.5 Understanding gender responsive governance

Though 'gender responsive governance' has often been referred to in conversations and documents, a clear definition of what this means in the MWVVC project context is not readily available. The endline finding reveals that 44% of EWRs believe *"it's high time we show men a different way to run the panchayat"* ([Table 9](#)). Along that continuum, 32% believe that *"only women in governance can ensure that women's concerns get addressed"* displaying an understanding of Gender responsive governance as an amalgam of *"more women in governance, addressing women's concerns and serving more women in the community"*.

An examination of the questions asked in [Table 10](#) throws some additional light on how EWRs perceive gender responsive governance. Addressing safety and maternal health needs of women is considered important by 47% of EWRs: a sign of their heightened sensitivity to women's vulnerabilities that is to be much appreciated.

At the same time, one of the important dimensions of gender responsive governance is gender mainstreaming. It is therefore encouraging that reaching vulnerable women during beneficiary selection for schemes is important to 49.62% of EWRs and 25% of EWRs feel women should be listened to in the general *gram sabhas* instead of being silenced by men.

However, the penultimate parameter of gender perspectives – being brought into *panchayat* deliberations or shaping governance – was prioritized only by 6% of the EWRs and this could be an area of future work so that EWRs acknowledge women's vulnerabilities alongside their unique strengths and worldviews to foster gender responsive governance that “*enhances the abilities of women and men to contribute to and benefit from development*” (Phillipine framework plan).

2.5.6 Role of ICTs in building perspectives, knowledge and changing self-perceptions

226 IVRS messages relevant to the work of EWRs were sent during the project. 82% of those who had access to phones (owned/shared) recalled receiving messages relevant to their work ([Table 11](#)).

The perception of these EWRs was that the messages were mainly about entitlements, panchayat events and health ([Table 12](#)). It is to be noted that IVRS focused on providing information and not on changing perspectives, except at the KMVS site where a conscious decision was made to use IVRS for sensitisation.

Video and Radio programmes were planned and designed for value change and perspective building. At all sites video was used before and after the project started – with the difference being that the MWVC project also created space for women to produce their own videos. As a result, the perception of 35% EWRs that the videos were relevant to their work is a significant leap from the baseline of 17%.

Box 3. Use of video and photography training in the project

EWRs have used photography skills for documenting existing conditions in their villages and have used photos as evidence when needed. Also, at the Mysore site, where all *Gram Panchayats* have been issued a camera by the Department of Rural Development and *Panchayat Raj*, the project team used the camera training conducted under this project, as an entry point into debates on women members' rights to use *Panchayat* assets – using the example of cameras, as they are usually kept under lock-and-key by male members. In fact, after the training, in Thumbasoge Panchayat in Mysore district, Shobha, an EWR, successfully asserted her right to use the Panchayat camera and today, she takes official photographs at all *Panchayat* functions and events. About 40% of EWRs in the core group have either given video interviews or been part of ideating/video production team/dissemination processes. The 238 EWRs linked to information centres have become users, developers and providers of information.

(Story excerpted from IT for Change process documentation and statistics from Project progress report of July-Dec 2014)

Community radio at KMVS and ITfC predates the MWVVC project, and during the project period had to be discontinued at the ITfC site. Despite this there is 8% increase in the percentage of EWRs who found the programmes relevant, a testimony to the quality of the programmes. On the other hand, low levels of radio listenership among EWRs also needs to be taken into consideration ([Table 22](#)).

On the whole, the use of ICT enabled media with a more focused agenda of using them to highlight women's concerns and for building a gender perspective was an exciting idea with which the EWRs engaged with during the project. However limited access to individual phones, radios and the dependence on cable channels or village level screenings of videos had an impact on the overall outreach and retention of the messages for EWRs to play a more informed role.

The endline sample showed that only 47% of EWRs have their own phones with significant variations across sites from 32% individual ownership in Bhavnagar to 66% individual ownership in Kutch. This is possibly a reflection of general income levels in the region and possibly the caste/class backgrounds of EWRs. In Bhavnagar that fact that 56% of the core group have never been to school could also be in factor in lower levels of phone ownership.

Though there is no survey information about EMRs (elected male representatives), it is likely that the percentage of EMRs who own individual mobile phones will be significantly higher than the 47% of EWRs. The purchasing power of an EWRs' family and their notions of her responsibility and entitlements are factors to be considered. However, if the family had spent even a few thousands on her election and if they are expecting some returns, it is quite likely that they can afford to buy a basic mobile phone. The gender dimension in such matters is therefore significant.

2.6 Effectiveness in Enhancing Levels and Arenas of participation

The project has made concerted efforts towards increasing EWRs' participation levels, expanding arenas of participation and influencing the nature of participation in local governance. In this section we will again draw on the FGDs, process documents and endline to trace the effectiveness of these interventions.

While examining changes in participation patterns and levels, it is important to note that in the core group of 135 EWRs, over 85.92% are first-timers who are dealing with multiple pressures from public, family, and male colleagues in the *panchayats*.

The baseline report established the high levels of attendance in *panchayat* meetings even at the start of the project. Despite being first timers propelled into the PRIs by family/community, an impressive 91% of EWRs had attended the *panchayat* body meetings regularly and 92.4% of EWRs attended *gram sabha* meetings! The baseline also revealed that 79.7% of EWRs were part of *panchayat* sub-committees. By the end of the project, organising *mahila gram sabhas* had been instituted in both the sites as mandatory by the respective state department of Rural Development and *Panchayat Raj*. EWRs had embraced this forum with 47% of EWRs now using *mahila gram sabhas* to push issues in the *panchayat*!

2.6.1 Shifts in women's nature of participation in Panchayat Bodies

The shift can be gauged from the evidence that 88% of EWRs across sites had engaged with community level development/welfare issues at the start of the project, this already high level of engagement increased to 93.3% at the end of the project. Not only have they engaged with community issues, this engagement has

led to EWRs framing agendas for the *panchayat* body with 86% EWRs playing an active role in passing resolutions from the baseline 80%.

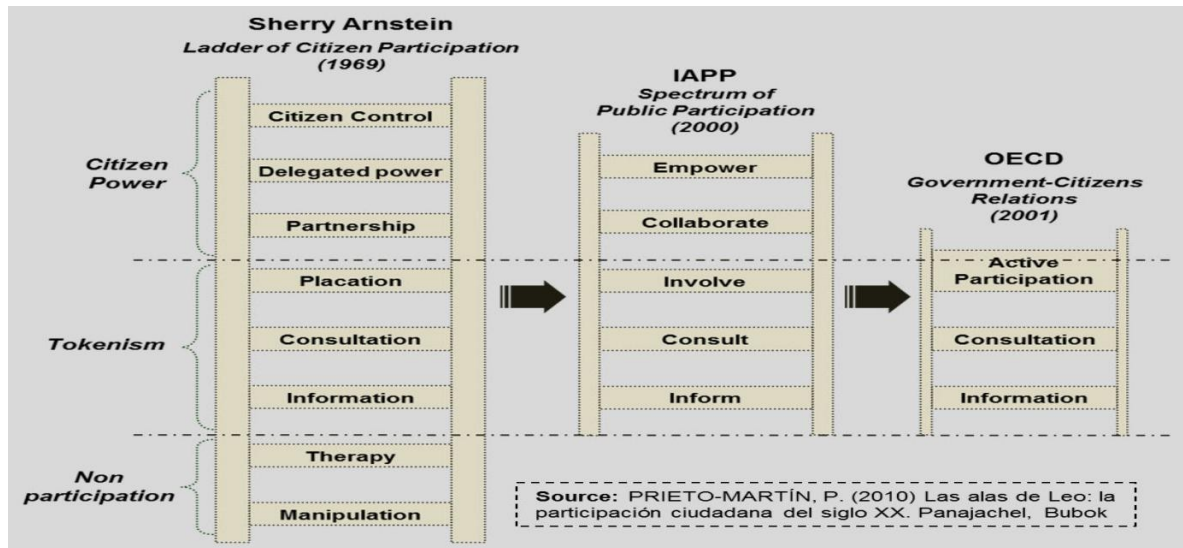
Having mostly been pushed into the political arena, the EWRs have begun to assert themselves and take up community development issues in the PRIs. This was well substantiated in the FGDs and interactions with EWRs across sites and corroborated by the endline. The following two cases from the ANANDI and IT for Change sites illustrate this more clearly. At Amargadh *gram panchayat* in Bhavnagar district, Manju Ben, who had been elected to power as a proxy for her husband, after attending the meetings of the *Mahila Swaraj Manch* (the EWR collective formed by ANANDI) gained the confidence to assert her right to attend *Panchayat* meetings, push for the *mahila gram sabha*, and even challenge the other male members when they were demanding bribes to process a legitimate request for a 'Completion Certificate' for a boundary wall, from a local charitable trust that has been running a public hospital for the past 30 years. Similarly, at the IT for Change site, Jayalakshmi, an Elected Woman Representative from Attiguppe village did not attend any meetings in her official capacity – as her husband was managing all her official work. The local women's collective put pressure on her husband to provide his wife her legitimate space in formal public forums, and she started attending public meetings. Shortly after, her husband died, and she was at a complete loss – but the women's collective helped her cope with the situation and journey back to public life.

Are women doing all this with autonomy or are they being used as proxies to get resolutions passed by their husbands and family members? The endline ([Table 7](#)) shows that 87% of core group EWRs continue to take support from their husbands to take decisions and solve problems. There is a two percent reduction from the baseline when 89% EWRs had reported that they seek husbands support for taking official decisions. The FGDs also showed that men continue to influence and drive women's participation. As revealed in the group discussions with the EWRs and leaders of the women's collectives in Nakhatrana, Kutch, the seasoned EWRs were of the opinion that, *“encouraging women's participation in trainings and other events was seen by men as an important strategy in gaining proxy control over the business of the Panchayat and in promoting certain vested interests and party agendas.”*

Even if they seek support, are women finally taking decisions or has male control changed into subtle forms? It is the EWRs need for that support that first needs to be recognized. The fine line between seeking support and being controlled or manipulated is a tight rope walk for the EWRs.

There is hope as the methods EWRs used to push their concerns are well spread out. [Table 6](#) shows that they use the EWR platform and women's collectives (47%), *panchayat* colleagues (42%), infomediaries (40%), *gram sabhas* and *mahila gram sabhas* (47%), as well as their connections among government officials (28%), to push their concerns. Taking directions from husbands to push their concerns is almost nil.

In such a context using Sherry Arnstein's ladder of participation is appropriate as it begins with the phase of manipulation and highlights the need for a phase of therapy of re-building oneself and one's identity and autonomy before being able to move from tokenism towards empowered collaborations/partnership and to finally take control.



Currently, it appears that core group EWRs are struggling to break out of the phase of tokenism by using the support systems that the project is offering. Comparisons with the remaining 900 EWRs not in the core group, would be revealing at this juncture.

2.6.2 Thrust Areas of EWRs' Participation

Apart from the *level* of informed and autonomous participation of the EWRs in the PRI functioning, the type of community issues engaged with and the focus of resolutions passed by EWRs can throw light on the *nature* of their participation.

The influence of EWRs is visible in the increased number of *Panchayat* resolutions placed by them in *Panchayat* decision-making sessions, for the award of housing loans to women from the BPL families, for ensuring the clearance of dues to women and their family members under MNREGA, and for improving the functioning of Anganwadi centres. These could be seen as steps in moving towards a gender-responsive governance system. The endline survey reveals that out of the 135 elected women surveyed across the 3 sites, over 85.93% have played an active role in getting a *Gram Panchayat* resolution passed. The themes of resolutions passed by EWRs reflect a commitment to women's concerns with drinking water and sanitation being the focus of most EWR resolutions (65.51%) followed by *anganwadi* upkeep (40.52%), girls' education (39.65%), school maintenance (37.93%), and PDS (35.35%).

A significant change was that food rations through PDS and entitlement claims of marginalized women which were not addressed at all at the baseline stage were now priority areas for EWRs in Gujarat, whereas in Mysore the big shifts were that most EWRs were taking up sanitation, village infrastructure and water on a high priority. At KMVS, health and education were given the highest priority by more than 80% EWRs. The reduced attention to Violence against women (VAW) in ANANDI could be attributed to the fact that VAW cases were being referred to the *Lok Adhikar Kendras* and the reduced attention to VAW in Mysore could be that due to the weakening of linkages with *Mahila Samakhya* supported women's collectives. However these could be in relation to handling existing cases, and preventive measures to address VAW still needs to become an important issue on the *Panchayat's* governance agenda.

2.7 Changes in Linkages with women's collectives

The baseline had revealed weak linkages between EWRs and women's collectives across all the sites. In Kutch the savings and livelihood groups were not involved with governance issues and the EWRs and *sanghatans* (women's federations) had little collaboration or synergy. At ANANDI, where the MSM was the forum of the EWRs, in the absence of the village level women's collectives supported by ANANDI, the women in the community sought the EWRs on a case to case and individual basis. FGDs revealed that in Mysore, there was a mood of disenchantment in the women's collectives with the EWRs over issues of corruption and manipulation in choice of selection of beneficiaries.

2.7.1 Linkages between EWRs and women's collectives strengthened

The *Gram sabhas* were earlier the main forum for EWRs to link with women from the community and with the members of the women's *sanghas* (collective) and their leaders. As less than 10% of women from the community previously attended *gram sabhas* and even fewer women spoke, there was little scope for EWRs and women to use this as a platform to build linkages with each other. Over the course of the project, much attention has been paid to creating spaces for building linkages between EWRs and women's collectives. The evaluation process showed that there was strengthening of the linkages between EWRs and women's collectives at the three sites, when compared to the situation at the start of the project.

Across sites, a great deal of emphasis was placed on ensuring *Gram Sabhas* took place and mobilizing women to attend and participate in discussions that affect the village/cluster as a whole. The FGDs at Mysore revealed that women's participation in *Gram sabhas* was either to raise their own individual/household issues, or to provide support and solidarity to specific cases of women from her SHG/community. During the project, core group EWRs, along with infomediaries, had invested considerable time and energy in mobilizing women from SHGs and *sanghas* to participate in the *Gram Sabha* and *Mahila gram sabha* and *ward sabha* meetings, and communicating the importance of participating on these platforms using IVRS messages to remind people of the date and time of the *sabhas*. The *Gram Shashini* forum in the Kutch region and *Mahila Swaraj Manch* in Bhavnagar in Gujarat had been leading the initiatives for increased participation of women in *Gram Sabhas* and *Mahila Gram sabhas*, voter awareness campaigns, information centres and public hearings.

These efforts had brought EWRs in touch with women's collectives and their leaders. The linkages between EWRs and other women got a further boost with the mandatory holding of *Mahila Gram Sabhas* by both the states. Over 100 *Mahila Gram Sabhas* were organised during the project in 90 *panchayats*, bringing together 135 EWRs with over 2000 women from the community. The *Mahila gram sabhas* have helped 48% of EWRs address women's agendas ([Table 24](#)).

Across sites, EWRs and members of women's collective were also brought together on special events, women's day celebrations, inaugurations of info centres, info *melas* (fairs), protests and rallies and campaigns. Informal meetings and campaigns had helped 35-40% of EWRs connect to women's collectives ([Table 24](#)).

2.7.2 Strengthening of horizontal and vertical linkages between EWRs and women's collectives with ICT based strategies- its contribution towards gender responsive governance

Involving EWRs as *mahiti sakhis*, infomediaries or as the managing committee members in the management of ICT enabled information centres was another strategy that helped build linkages between women's collectives and EWRs.

At KMVS the information centres at block and village level were directly managed by *Saiyare jo and Ujjas sangathans* (block level women's federations). At ANANDI the village and block level centres were managed by MSM. At Mysore the village level information centres were managed by the local women's collectives while the block level information centres were managed by the block level women's federations promoted by *Mahila Samakhya*. Strategically most of the information centres were located in *Gram* and Block *Panchayat* (GP) offices.

The endline study revealed that, of the core group 135 EWRs, 102 (75%) were associated with information centres with 19% of EWRs being part of the managing committees. Endline interviews with core group EWRs revealed that 38%-40% of them were in constant touch with infomediaries to get information about women's needs and stay abreast of government circulars etc. Also, 40% of EWRs were now accompanying women to the info centres to make and follow up on claims, thus strengthening the grassroots base of the EWRs (Table 25). EWRs using ICTs were able to push individual and collective demands of women into the formal governance system with the support of women leaders from the local women's collectives. While all these efforts had led to significant strengthening of the previously weak linkages, there is still scope for synergy building and sustaining the linkages developed.

2.7.3 Effectiveness of ICT enabled networking

Whether it was the physical remoteness of being located in a region like Kutch or the cultural isolation enforced on the women of the Durbar community by the practice of *purdah*, connecting through phones, radio broadcasts or receiving IVRS messages increased connectivity and managed to deliver information to hundreds of women.

Apart from receiving messages with information, here are a few excellent examples of how women took to using the mobile-based technology for initiating communication, connecting with and providing prompt support to other women in need.

Many of the EWRs infomediaries and leaders of the two women's federations in the Kutch region had set up WhatsApp groups and were regularly uploading pictures of their meetings with the community and *Gram Panchayat* members, using it as a quick reporting tool and as a means of sharing and associating with their fellow group members.

There were several stories narrated by EWRs and women leaders of using the mobile telephone to call for a group meeting, to share and pass information on official orders and resolutions, and to ensure speedy response in the cases of women facing violence or other forms of distress

There were instances of women using the mobile network individually and collectively to access services from service institutions such as banks, and health/PDS/educational and other block and district development offices.

Video-taped sessions of *Mahila Gram Sabhas* were used to inspire other *Gram Panchayats* and EWRs and create a ripple effect.

The scope of digital networking to improve peer learning and horizontal linkages among EWRs was limited by less than 50% of personal phone ownership in the case of EWRs and women leaders. As IVRS is basically a one-way process, training was introduced on using SMS-es for decentralised communication. However, once again the limited access to phones, and low literacy levels, remained a deterrent for improving the effective usage of SMS-es among the women. Face-to-face interactions during meetings and trainings were found to be the most important avenue for sharing, peer learning and exchange. The endline study showed that the route used for lobbying and pushing concerns within the *Panchayat* (see [Table 6](#) of the endline study) was mainly face-to-face interactions with peers and officials.

2.8 Effectiveness of Strengthening EWR networks

The project's efforts to strengthen peer networking among the EWRs was built on the robust, painstaking and long standing work done with EWRs by KMVS and ANANDI since 1997. At KMVS, though work with EWRs began in 1997, *Gramshasini Manch*, a district level EWR platform was established in 2010 after a decade of sustained capacity building and networking of EWRs. At ANANDI, the *Mahila Swaraj Manch* was established in 2009, also after twelve years of helping women contest elections and supporting *Sarpanches* and EWRs through opportunities for learning and action. At Mysore where there is no active EWR platform promoted by ITfC or *Mahila Samakhya*, a few EWRs were members of a platform initiated by another NGO, while others met their peers through personal or party based networks.

The MWVVC project created multiple spaces for peer dialogue, creative learning and action so that EWRs' linkages with their peers could extend beyond acquaintanceship or friendship to problem-solving partnerships and supporting others on some of the common issues and challenges. The main project interventions for strengthening horizontal networking among EWRs were the trainings and workshops organised for capacity building, the IVRS platform for information sharing and peer learning. The long term processes of regular *manch* meetings also continued as forums to forge linkages.

What did this result in? The consolidated baseline and endline data revealed that 90% EWRs "*interacted with their peers*" at the start of the project and this increased to 94% of the EWRs at the close of the project. However merely one-off or occasional interactions cannot always be equated with having a peer network. It is important to distinguish between *peers* who are co-learners, occasional supporters, a source of solidarity and partners in advocacy, from *peers* who are connected more closely and whose collaboration, consultations, partnership and support is an ongoing and daily experience. EWRs need both kinds of relationships with peers. Therefore it is the findings about quality, extent of networking and strength of linkages that are much more pertinent.

To probe this further, the question that was asked was as how has the project created changes in the span and reach of an EWR's circle of contacts especially with other EWRs?

The baseline report (p.7) highlighted that 100% of EWRs in Mysore and 61% of EWRs in Kutch were already members of village level collectives, SHGs, livelihood groups promoted by *Mahila Samakhya* and KMVS respectively. Though the inspiration to contest elections or support during elections did not directly come from their collectives, ANANDI and KMVS have fostered a shift in this direction. At ANANDI, where village level collectives of women were not promoted, women leaders at the community level who are potential

EWRs and ex EWRs have been invited to join MSM and build linkages with existing EWRs, with the vision of building long-term women's leadership.

At KMVS, where EWRs had primarily emerged from among the leadership of women's collectives, a synergistic relationship between the EWRs and the women's federations was consciously nurtured to the effect that the women's *sanghatans* were now even speaking about forming a women's political party for promoting gender responsive governance!

In the baseline, 90% of core group EWRs from Kutch attributed their linkages to other EWRs to their membership in the *Gramshasini manch* and a majority of EWRs from Bhavnagar attributed their linkages to membership in the *Mahila Swaraj Manch*. The span and reach of an EWR's networks are clearly dependent on the reach of the networking platform they were associated with, the dynamism and cohesiveness of the networking platform and the opportunities of face to face or ICT enabled interactions.

In terms of span and reach, the *Gramshasini* network has a district level presence and thus offers EWRs with opportunities for solidarity and support at the district level. The federal structure of *Gramshasini* and its close connections to *Ujjas and Saiyare Jo sanghatans* that were strengthened during the project, have offered spaces for EWRs to emerge as leaders at block and district levels. Also, the extensive and increasing membership base of 1700 women's leaders has meant that each EWR is connected to a large and growing network of peers.

The *Mahila Swaraj Manch* at ANANDI which was earlier confined to *Shihor* block has now been expanded to *Umralla* block. This expansion has offered EWRs scope to collectivise and network across 2 blocks and connect with 89 EWRs and 283 women's leaders from 50 villages.

In Mysore, there was no network building process among EWRs beyond the *panchayat* level. Though the district level EWR platform promoted by a Mysore based NGO had invited EWRs regularly, however without strategic collaboration and synergy building between the promoting organisations, and without constant mentoring and support, this remains a tenuous option for the EWRs in the core group of the MWVVC project.

In terms of vibrancy and cohesiveness both *Gramshasini* and *Mahila Swaraj Manch* are very active networks with regular meetings especially as *manch* members were also active in a number of other thematic groups and issue based campaigns. It was therefore not surprising that in the endline as well as in the FGDs, EWRs cited *Manch* meetings and trainings as the main forums for connecting with their peers.

To bolster the connections that were made through these meetings and trainings, the MWVVC project aimed to connect 770 EWRs and women's leaders through three IVRS platforms at the 3 sites. Today 825 EWRs across sites are connected to the IVRS platforms.

Table 19 of the endline revealed that EWRs linkages with peers in their own *panchayats* and with peers in other *panchayats* went up by only about 5% across the three sites. The overall endline finding that only 11% of core group were linked to EWRs from other *panchayats* is disappointing. Also disturbing is the fact that 35% of EWRs in the core group were not linked even to the EWRs in their own *panchayats*!

The horizontal networking between the EWRs despite the trainings, meetings and IVRS messaging has been a weak link in the project. The endline established that *Manch* meetings, followed by trainings and interactions at the info centre were experienced as the most effective sites of interaction for 86% of EWRs and 50% of EWRs reported phone conversations as a site of interaction. What this suggests is that face to face interactions and learning spaces, have emerged as most effective and powerful in promoting

connectedness and that building linkages is a slow and intense process requiring multiple and sustained opportunities for trust building and sharing over a period of time.

Leveraging the power of peer networks by EWRs

Peer networks have been a source of power, credibility, prestige and confidence for the EWRs and the women's leaders. At FGDs across sites the evaluators encountered the immense pride with which the EWRs and leaders introduced themselves as members of EWR platforms and of the women's collectives.

Apart from power and pride, women have also experienced the peer platforms as spaces in which they seek guidance, nurture and support when faced with slights, innuendos, humiliation and threats of violence from family and from members of the public.

These associational networks have played a critical role in cultivating a consciousness of the value of women's collectivization and solidarity which is not experienced through affiliation with a political party, nor when working for or representing any of the state/public institutions, as explicated in Box 4.

Box 4. A network identity

Sarju Ben, Mundra Block, Kutch district: "You are not seen as a *Panchayat* representative or a ward representative. I represent the larger political constituency of women, it's not one village, one street, but for Ujjaas *Mahila* Sangathana and for the *Gram Shashini Manch* it is the women from entire Kutch region that I'm accountable to. The Ujjaas *Mahila* Sangathan places women's interest above all other considerations."

In the peer networks, EWRs and women's leaders have used the principle of 'power with' rather than 'power over' to draw support from and mutually reinforce each other. Unlike men's clubs and networks which establish exclusive power cliques for consolidating their privileges and maintaining control over public and private resources, the EWRs' horizontal networks and vertical linkages have built associational power through large scale collectivisation of women from the poor, vulnerable and marginalised sections of the society. For instance at the Kutch site, EWRs associated with the *Gram Shashini Manch*, have represented the interests of the most marginalised women, by standing in solidarity with them over the issues that matter most to them, whether it be fighting transmission line projects taking away the commons (grasslands) of communities, or challenging the illegal sale of alcohol in *Panchayats* that are close to the Special Economic Zone in Mundra, or the Goonj campaign against VAW that used face-to-face and Internet platforms for advocacy. Similarly, at the Mysore site, the 'networking meetings' have contributed to raise demands for rights and entitlements, before the *Panchayat*; instead of joining hands with the power elite controlling the *Panchayat* in their domination of marginalised women.

EWRs have also used their networks as sites of cross learning and sharing experiences. This is significant as the endline suggests that it was the 61% of EWRs who had exchanged notes, most likely with peers in their own *panchayats*, who were also discussing dilemmas and the need for bringing gender responsive agendas of the *panchayats* ([Table 23](#)).

Associational power has earned EWRs and women leaders respect and credibility from their families, communities, and in spaces such as the district and block development offices, police stations, and *Panchayat* development offices.

Lastly and most importantly, the networks have helped women leaders contest elections without being dummies or being used by family/community. It has also meant that women could resist the tokenism of being used by political parties whose credibility and electoral successes fluctuate with every electoral cycle.

2.9 Impacts & Significance of Achievements

In the deeply contested political space of the PRIs, the enhanced participation, networking and claims-making by these women need to be celebrated, as evident from the key findings of the project. The gains made become especially significant because elected women representatives (EWRs) across the country are struggling to participate meaningfully in political spaces, expand women's constituency in governance and be accepted as leaders in their own right.

The project has opened up possibilities of strengthening the networking mechanisms of EWRs by developing the digital capabilities of the EWRs at the village level. The set of new skills offered has opened up opportunities for the women to take on the role of building a pro-women's interest and gender-responsive governance lobby. In this respect the project has moved on its aspirational promise to deepen democracy at the base.

The project has created potential pathways and pedagogies for building communication networks of women at the local level. Women have given these idioms their own interpretation and put their unique perspective and colour to use in relating to the technology. This has been a journey of many women from loneliness and silence to the solidarity of sisterhood, finding their song and story *en route*.

Using ICTs for sharpening the perspectives of women's organisations on gender and governance-related issues, and building the political constituency of women through knowledge networks, was a definite innovation of this project. The project showed that as a theoretical possibility, ICTs have the potential to link each and every woman in the world and open up avenues for life-long learning.

Women's concerns have entered governance and the public domain which were earlier not considered important enough to be taken up in the *Gram Sabhas*. These primarily include the concerns that women have vis-a-vis health, sanitation, education, water, livelihood, issues of social security, and the safety of girls and women, all of them impacting the quality of their lives and those of their families and communities.

The improved frequency of holding *Mahila Gram Sabhas*, has helped in establishing that 'women's issues are public issues' and 'development issues are women's issues'.

For the women in the communities who raised their issues or represented the problems of other women in their SHGs, there seems to be an enhanced sense of citizenship in claiming the space of forums such as the *Gram Sabhas*, sub-committees and *Mahila Gram Sabhas*. Another area of impact reported from the KMVS project area in Kutch, Gujarat – the core group of 45 EWRs have activated an equal number of EWRs *outside the project area* to participate in the *Gram Sabha* and *Mahila Gram Sabha* meetings of *Gram Panchayats*.

For all three implementing partners their long history of mobilising rural poor women was the bed rock on which the project strategies got embedded. Their previous work of forming EWR platforms, strengthening women's collectives/*sanghatans* and building a women's political constituency provided the fertile soil on which the project could build upon and make an impact on women's participation in governance processes.

The results of and shifts in socio-political processes, brought about due to such a project-based partnership, need to be rightly attributed to the strong feminist ideological work done by women's rights organisations such as ANANDI, KMVS, *Mahila Samakhya*, Karnataka, and ITfC.

The project has demonstrated that the associational power of women's networks is much better harnessed in places where women's organizations have established prestige, credibility and influence through their earlier efforts in taking up radical issues of gender inequality, gender-based discrimination and violence with sustained and large scale local mobilization of women.

The organisational structures of EWR platforms, women's federations and collectives at the village, block and district levels, created by and of local women's struggles, have provided leadership and support to the EWRs in agenda-setting processes meant to enrich deliberative democracy.

2.10 Sustaining the EWRs' leadership and participation: Some Challenges

2.10.1 Systemic barriers to EWRs' political participation

Women have climbed up the ladder of political participation BUT are they able to change the political discourse significantly? PRIs seem better prepared to address women's concerns, but women's perspectives still do not shape and influence governance agenda; nor is the political constituency of women taken with the seriousness it merits.

During the elections, it is class and caste dynamics, rather than choice of individual that mediates the selection of female candidates. Once elected, their participation is further complicated by the largely indifferent functioning of the *Gram Sabhas*, the different interest groups operating in and controlling the functioning of the PRIs and the lack of will to make these institutions democratic and egalitarian in their functioning. The EWRs therefore seem to be carrying the burden of huge expectations on their shoulders, to deliver on good governance and to enhance women's political constituency in hostile, indifferent or poorly functioning PRIs.

2.10.2 Embedded Patriarchy

Building and sustaining a political constituency of women is a process fraught with high voltage tensions of inter and intra group dynamics. The aspiration of the women's networks to be based on notions of 'power with' and 'power to' and 'power within' is constantly challenged by the patriarchal and hegemonic model of seeking 'power over' in the functioning of institutions. The attempts by the project partners, women's collectives and EWR platforms to sustain their independent identity as change agents has been, and will most likely continue to be, an uphill task.

Embedded patriarchal ideologies intersect expansively and in subversive and subtle forms to relegate EWRs to the periphery, despite their sincere and diligent efforts to participate. Women's lack of income, education, status, information, authority, mobility, autonomy, property and lack of peer power lobbies cumulatively make it very challenging for EWRs to participate meaningfully in governance. Process documentation of ANANDI and *Mahila Swaraj Manch* (in 2015) indicated that even after the third round of *Panchayat* elections, more than 50% of women *Sarpanches* continued to be used as rubber stamps for *Panchayat* management. 'No Confidence' motions were being used more frequently against active women

Sarpanches, more than 70% of the EWRs weren't in a position to make independent decisions, and women-centric agendas were rarely mooted and discussed in *Panchayat* meetings or *Gram Sabhas*.

2.10.3 Caste hierarchies and women's participation

There are multiple challenges to dalit and poor women's participation in PRIs. Increasing economic challenges to everyday survival prevents poorer women from meaningfully engaging in the public sphere. Women from economically marginalised sections do not have the resources to contest elections, and if dalit, they also have to deal with the stigma of belonging to the oppressed castes. Being given a seat, being allowed to speak, being listened to cannot be taken for granted by dalit EWRs and *sarpanches* who are 25% of the core group. There were signs of vulnerability displayed by EWRs from dalit and Scheduled Tribe communities when they were sitting in the mixed community set-up of their *Panchayat* meetings. Though many of the EWRs narrated stories of asserting their dalit identity, truth be told an EWRs' lower caste status and her low self-image as a poor dalit woman continue to disempower her in public and community spaces.

EWRs from dominant Other Backward Castes and other higher castes who are 32 % and 43% of the core group had other problems. Despite the fact that their castes were part of ruling lobbies, and their families dominating local economies due to the size of their land holdings, the women from the upper castes, OBCs and especially those from *Rajput Durbar* community had to comply with more stringent social taboos and practices. Strict enforcement of *purdah*, restrictions on their mobility, fear of violence for voicing their opinion, and greater gate-keeping in relation to their marital choices, and lack of assertion of property rights constantly curtailed their participation.

The representation of women from Muslim and other religious faiths was disproportionately lower than the demographic figures for these communities in those geographic locations.

The intersections of caste, class, religion and location overwhelmingly weigh down the EWRs in effectively taking up the governance agenda from a women's rights perspective.

2.10.4 Hierarchisation of issues

A hierarchy of issues was also seen to operate in the way EWRs were taking up village welfare, development, gender and women-related concerns. In the order of priority, issues of livelihood, housing, sanitation and village development works took maximum time and space and the issues of monitoring the PDS and education/health services were next on the list and last in the hierarchy were social and gender-related concerns such as incidents of violence against women, single women's issues, polygamy, destitution and property rights of women. A comparative study of the baseline and endline figures indicated a decline in the number of cases of gender-based violence being taken up by the *Gram Panchayats* in two of the three project sites. In the current scheme of things, PRIs taking up gender-responsive and social justice-oriented agendas looks like a distant goal.

2.10.5 Exclusion of EWRs from Financial Matters

The exclusion of EWRs in the financial planning, budgeting and accounting is an issue which has not received much attention from the EWRs themselves, the male GP members, the PDOs, the *sarpanches* or the infomediaries in the project teams. The idea of EWRs initiating gender budgeting was seen as crucial but

not yet feasible. The project implementation partners are cognizant of the fact that more efforts need to be invested in this area.

2.10.6 Digital Divide

The access and use of ICTs as enablers in building the political constituency of women remains an idea with immense potential which generated huge excitement within the project scenario. Yet, access to, and use of, ICTs by women varies greatly. 47% own individual phones, 41% share with family and 12% have no access at all. Some are passive users, others actively use ICTs to communicate with family and peers, and still others are seekers- creating, changing, and managing these mediums for communities of women. Also, societal attitudes continue to be in a time warp wherein seeing women in an empowered *avatar*, equipped with information and technology, threatens male sensibilities. For women and EWRs to use ICTs as their entitlements they need to enjoy other fundamental rights such as mobility, equal participation and equality of access to and control over resources.

2.10.7 Tenure of EWRs

Organising EWRs is a challenging task as these are term-based posts. ANANDI and KMVS have worked around this by keeping current EWRs, ex-EWRs and aspiring EWRs together in the EWR platforms, thus ensuring a long term presence in the platform even as their tenures as EWRs come and go.

There were differences in the levels of participation, between the women who had become EWRs for the first time and those who were seasoned by their previous experience of being EWRs. As an ex-EWR at the KMVS site commented during field visit to the Kutch site conducted, the first-time experience of becoming an EWR was akin to the experience of a 16-17 year old girl getting married and being expected to play the role of *good bahu* (daughter-in-law) from day one in her *sasural* (in-laws' place). Also, the seasoned EWRs have learnt the rules of the game and how to play it the way a king would play it. Hardened by the politics of governance, many of the second time EWRs seemed less amenable to change and more vulnerable to political pressures.

2.10.8 De-politicisation of the development and governance discourses

Governance in the state of Gujarat, and to a lesser extent in Karnataka, display all the symptoms of a classic majoritarian, centrally controlled, capitalist, neo liberal and feudal-patriarchal developmental model. In this model there is more gloss and window dressing than substance, with an emphasis on selling ideal notions of family, community and state in smartly packaged ideas (one such big economic development campaign is *Vibrant Gujarat*) and monetizing and incentivizing the value of public goods and services.

This has meant the shrinking of resources for social development by the state, a slow dismantling of the socialist character of the state and the greater control allowed to private and for-profit business lobbies. As a consequence citizens are being treated more and more as beneficiaries, under a plethora of social security projects, programmes and campaigns with defined resources and short sighted approaches. Under the threat of increasingly becoming politicized along party lines, transforming PRIs into institutions with a developmental agenda of delivering gender and social justice is a big challenge.

There is also no serious outrage expressed about the levels of corruption that have to be dealt with in the PRIs. Rather, there rather seems to be a feeling of helplessness and/or acceptance of the fact that women

EWRs are also pulled in by the lure of money and power, either of their own volition or due to pressure from the family, *Sarpanch*, male ward members and the *Panchayat* development officer.

NGO efforts to collectivise marginalised women through consciousness-raising pedagogies have also met with dead ends given the limitations of inadequate resources for women's empowerment programmes and framing of gender equality within the neo-liberal development discourse of the global south. EWRs have discovered that retaining their place at the table demands deft balancing and manoeuvring to be pragmatic and settle for 'the best possible option' instead of pursuing radical gender equality or social justice goals⁹.

2.10.9 Morale of Women

One of the most disturbing trends currently being seen in Bhavnagar preceding the fourth round of elections (due in the early part of 2016) for the PRIs is the sharp decline in the number of women volunteering to contest elections even from the reserved seats. Ex-EWRs and current EWRs stated that contesting elections has become an increasingly expensive proposition that is beyond their means. With every round of elections the political stakes have become higher with the display of money and muscle power by mainstream political parties.

The constant pressure from their families and community, to either cop out or opt out of a system in which powerful lobbies of state, ruling class, caste groups and private interests operate stridently and subversively, was another reason cited by EWRs for opting out.

2.11 Conclusions

The project has been effective in enhancing the core group EWR's participation in the local PRIs from being tokenistic to being active in the placing of women's and community welfare issues in the *gram panchayats*. It has opened up possibilities of strengthening the networking mechanisms of EWRs by developing a set of contextually relevant digital capabilities in elected women's representatives at the village level. EWRs, women leaders and the women's rights organisations have enthusiastically taken up the unique opportunity offered by the project to break their inhibitions around technology and challenged the stereotype that 'women don't have a political sense and therefore can't be politically inclined'.

Women have given these idioms their own interpretation and have put their unique perspectives and wisdoms in using and relating to technology. Investments made in perspective building of the EWRs on gender and governance have been effective in strengthening EWRs' self-perception as women's representatives in the public interest.

Informational, associational and communicative agency of EWRs and women's collectives has got strengthened with the intermediation of ICTs. The triad of gender, governance and ICTs is a new mould in the making and it will take much more sustained and constructive action for the triad to have a positive alignment and change the gender relations in favour of women and other marginalised populations. For women to actualise the scope of ICTs to influence socio-political institutions and organisations, open up such entrenched and complex spaces to the idea of women's rights and entitlements, and work towards

⁹ Menon Sen, K. (2015), "Twenty years after Beijing: Time to re-evaluate policy engagements with the state?", <http://www.unrisd.org/UNRISD/website/newsview.nsf/%28httpNews%29/741C7ECC1427BD57C1257E3E002BA043?OpenDocument> Retrieved 1 July 2015.

making them truly democratic and non-discriminatory in their functioning. Two years is just a beginning of the journey.

Though the project explored a number of digital pathways for strengthening women's political role in *Panchayats* and proved to be effective in strengthening the linkages and outreach among of the EWRs, it is the momentum created by trainings and regular interactions through the organised women's forums at the district, block and community levels that have proved most crucial in supporting action by the EWRs within the space of the PRIs.

More than lack of information and networking opportunities, what obstructs women from playing their role in PRIs are the attitudes towards women in politics. Though there are numerous stories from the field, of women reaching out to support one another across caste, class and communal lines; there is still tremendous pressure from entrenched power-elite for evoking kinship identities and replicating inequalities. The conflicting interests and influences of class, caste, gender, religion and politics continue to be the main bottlenecks in sustaining the influence of EWRs for gender-responsive governance and for them to effectively build their associational power for cultivating a women's constituency.

Besides the cultural factors, restricted access and gated control over the means of communication by women is a challenge for them to network more effectively. The time window of the project is too small to test the assumption of whether the culture of divisive politics can be challenged through a new gender discourse in politics enabled by technology.

The results from the three project sites that sought to translate women's political presence into effective participation present a mixed and uneven picture as despite an increase in EWR assertion and participation, these institutions seem to be largely managed by the *Sarpanch Pati/EMRs/PDO/Talati*. In Gujarat the practice of *SAMRAS* (monetary incentives being given to the GPs for putting up unopposed candidates) and the increasing role of mainstream political parties in the institutions of local governance has been a major obstacle for effective EWR participation. In Karnataka there is palpable tension between the local-level bureaucracy and the PRI due to the high financial stakes which have been vested by the state government of Karnataka in the PRIs.

Women, vulnerable communities and the poor are constantly having to battle against the heightened private interests to make these institutions responsive and accountable to address the issues of poor.

How far the EWRs can pole-vault the historical disadvantages is going to be critically dependent on the continuation of efforts such as that of the MWVVC. It is only with the assurance of being given learning opportunities, inclusion, building solidarity and providing psycho- social safety offered by the women's networks and collectives that the women will be ready to transform the PRIs from a patriarchal institution into a more reflective, inclusive and egalitarian one in its functioning.

Chapter 3: Ushering in a culture of entitlements through ICT enabled Information Centres

3.1 Relevance of creating a culture of entitlements

For India's rural poor, access to entitlements from the state, even if meagre, can make a difference between hunger and full stomachs, living in a ramshackle hut or a *pucca* house, getting work or being unemployed, having the privacy of a toilet or using public spaces, walking miles/waiting for drinking water or having a water supply. The list could go on to include widow pensions, ration cards, farm subsidies, scholarships, disability support, old age pensions, etc. Across the country, the *mahila sanghas* and federations have been engaging with community level issues like drainage, street lights, community halls etc. and have also attempted to facilitate individual claims of women. However, individual claims-making has proved more complex especially where different government departments responsible for the delivery of schemes need to be approached for specific entitlements, with varying eligibility criteria, during particular time windows.

Lack of timely information about what schemes are available, where, how to make claims and how to track them has been a major obstacle. Information access and communication capabilities have thus emerged not just as sites of power, but critical and necessary lifelines for the marginalised who live with insecure land tenures, unreliable rains, scarce employment, and without access to health, housing, sanitation or education. For these women, access to information about entitlements and the claim making process is limited, and accessing these entitlements without support could appear impossible or extremely daunting. Their limited access to information and communication is an embedded historical disadvantage, caused and compounded by culturally imposed seclusions, the inability to own/possess communication devices, restrictions on private and independent communications and a perceived discomfort with gadgets/technology.

In such a context, the MWVVC objective of providing information and communication support for women and enhancing their claims-making is pivotal to their individual wellbeing, citizenship and to the larger concerns of gender equity.

3.2 The History of the Information Centres before the MWVVC Project

Recognising the critical nature of information support, MWVVC partner organisations had already attempted to facilitate the process of claiming entitlements over the last decade. Independent of each other, the three organisations had established 6 block level information centres. At ITfC site in Mysore, cluster level centres had also been set up in partnership with village level *sanghas*.

At the KMVS site, *Mahiti Kendras* (information centres) were established from 2005 onwards in 6 blocks to provide a bridge between block *panchayats* and communities and focused on land issues, the PDS, BPL schemes, health insurance, etc. They were initially managed by a few EWRs active in the block level *manch*. The centres in Mundra and Nakhatrana blocks were later handed over to *Ujjas Sanghatan* and to *Saiyere Jo Sanghatan*. As the MWVVC project focused on these two blocks, these established information centres became the starting point of new expansions and ICT enabled initiatives.

At the ANANDI site, the first block level *Mahiti Kendra* at Shihor block was started in 2001 and the second at *Umrula* block in 2006 in partnership with *Mahila Swaraj Manch*. These were initiated with involvement of EWRs who felt the need to help the claim process. Both the centres later grew into *Lok Adhikar Kendras* (Citizens' rights centres) as work included a range of campaigns (*jumbishs*), a dispute resolution wing (*Nyay Samiti*) and an entitlement facilitation wing. When the MWVVC project began,

Mahila Swaraj Manch and its *Lok Adhikar Kendras* were well established but in need of a stronger grass-root presence.

At the Mysore site, 2 village/cluster level centres and 2 block level centres were initiated by ITfC over a decade ago to enable *Mahila Samakhya* Karnataka programme to “internalise the power of managing their sanghas’ economic and socio political projects”. The centres, called *Namma Mahiti Kendras* (our information centres) were run by representatives from village level women’s collectives and housed in the *sanghas’* premises without involvement of EWRs. The centres were handled by *sakhis* (literally women friends, referring to infomediaries) appointed by ITfC and were equipped with computers, TVs, printers. The *sakhis* also organised discussions that brought together women’s collectives and EWRs for dialogue. However the involvement of EWRs prior to the MWVVC project was not very significant in the management and programmes of the centres.

3.3 Planned Targets, Expected outcomes and anticipated impacts

The MWVVC project attempted to strengthen and transform existing centres, and to establish new centres, with ICTs playing a key role, to increase awareness, enable marginalised groups file applications and successfully realize their claims. Increased realization of claims and entitlements by women in Gujarat and Karnataka was the expected outcome of this set of interventions.

Targets

The project aimed at strengthening the existing 6 block level and 2 cluster level centres. In addition, 7 new village/cluster level information centres in Gujarat, and 4 new cluster level information centres were planned in Karnataka.¹⁰

Using the baseline, aggregate number of daily footfalls across centres was targeted at 11160 over the life of the project. As information provision and follow up over the telephone was also an established practice, phone calls to be received and handled were also planned. A target of 50 calls per month per infomediary/centre at KMVS, 20 calls per month per infomediary at ANANDI, and 15 calls per month per infomediary at IT for Change was set.

Emerging from these visits and phone calls, a target of 8000 claim applications across the centres was set. Of these, a total of 4000 claims were to be successfully processed over the course of the project-1800 from KMVS, 1400 from ANANDI and 800 from IT for Change. To ensure emphasis on women, it was planned that 60% of the beneficiaries would be women – and at the end of the project, the percentage of women among applicants who were able to successfully realize their claims through the info-centres were 66% at KMVS site, 76% at ANANDI site and 57% at IT for Change site.

The anticipated impacts emerging from this broad strategy were:

- Increase in awareness of entitlements
- Demystification of the claim making process
- Increase in success rates of claims realisation
- Promotion of a new culture of entitlements and citizenship

3.4 Strategies Adopted

3.4.1 Location and ownership of Centres

¹⁰ Revised targets.

The MWVVC project emphasised the need for strengthening information centres at the block level and establishing centres at the cluster and village level, owned by local women's collectives. Initiating centres in dialogue with community members and leaders and housing the information centres in premises owned by women's collectives or in *panchayat* offices was given a high priority.

3.4.2 Conceptualisation of the Infomediary

The infomediary was conceptualised as a key actor in the day to day functioning of the information centre; someone who belonged to the community and mediated information between the community, the *panchayat* and the various government departments responsible for implementation of schemes. Her unique role included being present at the centre, accessing and disseminating information, maintaining data bases and tracking applications. In order to ensure her accountability to the community, women's collectives were involved in the selection of the infomediary and in monitoring her work.

3.4.3 Consolidating information about entitlements using digital technologies

The information centres first accessed information about individual entitlements and village infrastructure schemes from government offices, websites and circulars. This information was then disseminated using various face to face and ICT based methods to inform men and women in the community about their rights. Computers with internet access were made available at most information centres, except at ANANDI, where due to lack of secure premises for the centres, computers were not installed. However the infomediaries accessed information from computers at the main MSM office as and when needed without any problems.

The actual status of entitlements on the ground were also continuously established using manual and GIS enabled surveys and social audits.

Box 5. FGDs sought to review the effectiveness and efficiency of the ICT based claims making by women with the following set of questions:

Have the information centres been able to increase awareness about entitlements among members of the community?
Have ICTs helped to increase claim making?

Have women been reached and have women been the majority of successful claimants? How have ICTs contributed to successful realisation of claims?

3.4.4 ICT enabled and face to face dissemination of information

IVRS messages were specifically used to inform women about entitlements and these messages were supplemented by information provided through meetings, *melas*, posters, radio and video programmes.

3.4.5 Tracking Claims through digitised MIS and conducting social audits

The key strategies for increasing success rates of claims processed were digitised and systematic tracking of claims through a Management Information System (MIS) that classified types of claims made and tracked the time taken and process followed for realization.

Box 6. Use of GPS and Social Audits for evidence based governance

“As a space for collective movement building for bringing in more transparency and accountability at village level, social audit process was discussed in information center meetings. *Sarpanch of Devisar* village agreed to hold a social audit process in his village. He asked for support of the infomediary team to prepare the audit documents and carry out audit. A Team consisting of infomediary, subject expert, and MNREGA muster clerk conducted the audit with each worker who was working under the MNREGA scheme. Their job cards, payment schedules and other information were checked. It was found that payments of 40% families was delayed and they had not received instalments since 3 months. Also, the members who were engaged with excavation process, didn’t know about the exact measurements and wage rate for their work. All these issues were recorded and were put in a report.

After the audit process was over, the families were encouraged to participate in the *Gram sabha* for raising their issue. In the evening when *Gram sabha* started, one of the EWRs who also worked under MNREGA raised her voice saying: “*we never knew that the wage rate for work we carry is more than Rs.150 while we are paid only Rs.100. Also, our pass books remained with Talati and we don’t know when money is actually transferred.*” The *Talati* who was skeptical of the audit process since the beginning flared up saying: “*I never told anyone to keep their passbooks with me, you can take it from me.*” The dialogue on delayed payments and other issues served as a mirror to other *panchayat* members and the *MNREGA* clerk. The *sarpanch* also presented the total income and expenditure statement of the *Panchayat* and total grants received and allocated for the interventions. This was the first time that the village had seen a social audit process, even though it is mandatory for each *panchayat* to undergo at least two social audits in each financial year. The process made the *panchayat* more sensitive towards community’s issues and also became more transparent towards its own funds utilization.

(Story from KMVS site- an instance of Infomediary involvement in social audit).

3.4.6 Involvement of EWRs in the management of Centres

EWRs were increasingly involved in lobbying/ follow up of claims and in the management of the centres, especially at ITfC where EWRs were not earlier associated with the *Mahiti Kendras*. Across sites EWRs were involved as *mahiti sakhis*, as infomediaries and as managing committee members.

3.5 Effectiveness of the Information Centres

3.5.1 Collective Ownership of the Centres

The collective ownership of the centres is one of the hallmarks of the MWVVC project. Setting up of the new village/cluster centres was done in dialogue with communities and especially with women’s collectives who had welcomed or requested for a centre. For example, at the ANANDI site, the *Sanotrassa info centre* was set up when women who were unhappy with the *panchayat* functioning approached MSM and asked for a *Mahiti Kendra*. In *Thumbasoge and Mullur* at the ITfC site, *panchayat* members were closely involved in the process of setting up the centres. The *Vithon* centre at KMVS site was set up as a result of the courage and determination of Maimuna from Vithon village. Similarly, *Mohanaba* from *Kotda Village* and *Sitaben* from *Ugedi* village at KMVS site lobbied with their *gram panchayats* to set up info centres in their villages. At KMVS, the inauguration of new centres was attended by approximately 400 community members. All these indicate community ownership from the inception itself.

3.5.2 Increased accessibility

The MWVVC project helped take information from the *taluka*/block level to the *panchayat*/cluster level. This is a significant contribution as information has become accessible to women who may not have the time, resources and “permission” to travel to the *taluka* level.

The fact that cluster/village centres have been set up in remote areas and in Dalit colonies is especially heartening and significant, as it demonstrates a commitment to reach/be accessible to the most marginalised communities. This was possible because ICTs shrink distances while increasing possibilities and choices in choosing physical locations.

3.5.3 Credibility of information provided

In order to make information available, the centres took on the primary task of gathering information about entitlements and seeking out the details of schemes or programmes through which the entitlements are addressed. Information was continuously accessed and updated through interactions with the PDOs, the EWRs and EMRs, visiting local government offices, and visiting government websites to ensure accuracy of information. The process of regularly accessing information is now well streamlined across sites. At KMVS, information centres advertise that they have application forms for more than 40 schemes! At ANANDI, a booklet has been prepared which has details of 14 schemes. At Mysore, information which has been accessed and stored is provided orally to visitors.

On the whole the info centres have caught peoples’ imagination and have been effective in attracting a large number of visitors. The total number of footfalls across the 17 centres during the course of the project was 17558 and total phone calls handled by information centres was 11394. This clearly demonstrates the accessibility and credibility of the centres and of the infomediaries. The total number of footfalls also increased during the project. Between January 2013 and June 2014 the total footfalls were 6662 and this rose to 10896 between July to December 2014 (6157 at KMVS, 1390 at ANANDI and 3349 at Mysore). This is indeed commendable as the info centres exceeded the target of 11160 by a significant margin. More importantly this, number is likely to increase with time.

Across sites, the *mahiti kendras* are well established as sources of relevant and true information. This is a big change from half-baked or inaccurate information earlier elicited from touts or gleaned from hearsay.

3.5.4 Speed and simplicity of information provision

Across sites, once information was accessed and application forms were downloaded, and infomediaries/*mahiti sakhis* helped in filling up forms for women to take to the various line departments for submission making the whole process simple and transparent. One of the highlights of the MWVVC project is the “[Panjo Haq](#)” portal developed by KMVS which has been installed at block level and village level centres to provide information to those who visit or call. While the block level centres are online, the village centres use the portal in offline mode. The portal is user friendly and EWRs, infomediaries and *mahiti sakhis* use it with ease – making this one of the most quick and simple ways of accessing information. *Mera haq mere pehchan patra* (in Fig.) - a special tool developed by ANANDI based on the principles of Participatory Action Learning Systems was used for action around entitlements to reinforce women’s independent access, control and ownership over resources. The tool measured individual women’s access to entitlements under public programs in



relation to possession of primary proofs of identity and helped individuals pursue the crucial documentation they needed.

3.5.5 Dissemination of information through IVRS

Apart from making information available at the centres, IVRS was used to disseminate information about entitlements, not just to EWRs and women's collective leaders but to all women in the community. As sending IVRS messages requires a mobile phone number data base, much time and energy was expended in gathering phone contacts of women, officials and EWRs. At the end of the project, 189 EWRs and 356 women are linked to IVRS at ANANDI and 750 women including EWRs are part of the mobile data base at KMVS. At ITfC 366 members from the community have signed up for such public information updates and 270 women are being reached regularly, and at KMVS and ANANDI a total of 2200¹¹ women are on the data base. While these figures appear significant, they are much less than the planned target of 500 at ITfC and of 3250 for Gujarat. This is an area which needs to be addressed immediately.

During the course of the project, a total of 226 messages have been sent to EWRs and to community members. The messages were developed by the infomediaries in consultation with the women's leaders and EWRs associated with the infocentres, and the entire process of deciding the theme of the message, drafting the exact message, recording and sending was an exciting process for all involved. The message service was also given appealing names like *Khaso Shasan* at KMVS and *Apno Awaz Seva* at ANANDI which fostered a sense of ownership and identification of oneself with the voice and the message.

At KMVS, 53 IVRS messages were sent to 400 women, and a decision was taken to use IVRS also for sensitization and challenging of prevalent attitudes and myths about gender. An example of a message targeted at EWRs is provided below in Box 7.

Box 7. IVRS message to EWRs sent at KMVS site

"Dear male, female members...last time we talked about how women can take lead to raise issues. EWRs from Devisar village did exactly like this...they sensitised their *panchayat* to repair the Primary Health Centre (PHC). Now, everyone in Devisar can go to PHC for betterment of their health. You too, can take such initiatives in your village. So, let us make our villages developed. To learn about more such initiatives, visit your nearest information centre in Nirona, Ravapar or Nakhtrana"

Below in Box 8 is an example of an IVRS message aimed at women in the community in Nakhtrana prepared by Jayshreeben when the *Swach Bharat* mission was launched.

Box 8. IVRS message on *Swach Bharat* sent to women in the community

"Dear male- female members, as you are aware our government has launched *Swach Bharat* mission under which you can avail grants to build toilets. You can even apply to get a repair grant. So, please contact your nearest information centre to avail forms."

At ANANDI, 45 messages were sent out during the course of the project.

The number of messages sent at ITfC has been fluctuating. For example, the last PMF reveals that only 5 messages were sent to 65 community members in the last 6 months possibly due to the turnover among

¹¹ The data –base is larger than the number of women who receive messages on a regular basis .At KMVs 700 women (including EWRs) are on the data base with 400 receiving messages regularly. At ANANDI, just before the info mela, IVRS messages were sent to more than 1500 women though the regular reach of IVRS is 189 EWRs and at ITfC 270 women are on the data base, but 65 received messages in the last 6 months.

infomediaries. At ITfC sites during the course of the project 47 messages were sent (8 on agriculture, 16 on health, 14 on schemes and 9 on *panchayat* events).

3.5.6 The *Info Melas* (information fairs)

Another method used to disseminate information at a much wider level than the IVRS platform was the information *melas*. At KMVS 45 village information *melas* have been held reaching 5501 women at the community level, all the EWRs and leaders. This is an outstanding effort and speaks of high energy levels and time invested in taking information to the grassroots. At ANANDI, one *info mela* at the block level reached 533 women. At ITfC, two block level and two village level *melas* reached 750 women.

Box 9. Info mela at Sihor block, Bhavnagar district

On 9 November 2014, ANANDI and Mahila Swaraj Manch organised an “info-mela” (a day-long information fair in Sihor block. More than 500 rural women (including former and current elected women representatives and women community leaders) participated in the event, and shared their experiences in the Making Women's Voices and Votes Count project, on using ICTs for strengthening women's rights-struggles within the local governance system. The event had two parts: a) An official ceremony at which Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director, UN Women; Ms. Lakshmi Puri, Deputy Executive Director, UN Women; and Ms. Bhartiben Shiyal, Member of Parliament, Bhavnagar constituency shared their thoughts on women's public-political participation and the vision of the Making Women's Voices and Votes Count project; and grassroots women activists from the three project sites (Ms. Hiraben, Ms. Sharifa Sedat, and Ms. Vinoda) shared their journeys in the project. b) An exhibition/fair component as part of which stalls dedicated to the various ICT strategies set up under the project (such as community radio, community video, GIS-enabled mapping, IVR etc.) from across the 3 sites were set up at the venue. After the official ceremony, women participants were free to spend time at the stalls and interact with each other – there were also some learning exercises and games (such as a 'snake-and-ladder game' on negotiating local governance) that were organised for the women.

The *melas* integrated face to face interactions and screenings of films with demonstrations of ICTs and proved to be an effective and excellent outreach mechanism. They lead to more awareness of entitlements, more footfalls, more claims made, and were useful platforms to market the availability of services at the information centres. The info *melas* also involved the EWRs and *mahiti sakhis* and also built linkages with women in the community.

3.5.7 The creation of data bases about entitlements status

In order to be abreast of actual status of entitlements in the community, the information centres conducted household surveys to create a data-base on basic demographics and characteristics of populations covered in key cluster level villages. Five such surveys were conducted at ANANDI and IT for Change and 20 surveys were completed in KMVS.

More importantly, each organization added unique dimensions to the surveys conducted in tune with organizational priorities and issues emerging from the community. At KMVS the functioning of the PDS, availability of toilets and school attendance of girls was studied. At ANANDI a survey of 402 single women from 12 villages was conducted to ascertain the level of their access to their entitlements as single women and a GIS enabled participatory mapping of single women's access to sanitation facilities and their access to housing was carried out in 3 villages. At Attiguppe in the Mysore site, the managing committee of the centre conducted a survey of beneficiaries of old age pension scheme as they were

requested by *panchayat* to expose those claiming benefits from more than one *panchayat*! These have been possible because of access to computers to tabulate, store and analyse data.

Box 10. GIS mapping helped to expose toilet scheme subsidy allotment corruption at the KMVS site

Infomediaries at both Mundra and Nakhtrana block centres found that in the records many villages had shown that community members had received benefits of toilet sanitation scheme, but in reality it didn't reach them. During a *Mahila Gramsabha* in Sayra village of Nakhtrana one woman raised issue to EWRs that: "in RS. 2000, how can i build a toilet? Can panchayat help poor like me to build our toilet?" Kasturiben who as the EWR replied "grant is RS. 4600, how come you got only RS.2000?" After a dialogue, she came to understand that previous *panchayat* members had provided only half the money to community the other half was kept by the *panchayat* members. They had told the community members that only if they provided the bribe, their grant would be sanctioned. Similarly in Lakhapar, Tappar and other villages of Mundra the funds had been sanctioned but no one had actually received any grant. To bring out such issue, GIS mapping was done in 3 villages of Mundra- Navinal, Karaghogha, Lakhapar. More than 800 households were mapped to ascertain if a member had applied for grant and if they had received it. The maps and visualisation process was to be presented at the village *Gramsabha* meeting.

3.5.8 Claims Processed

The final barometer of the effectiveness of the information centres is the number of claims handled and the success rate in claim realization. By the end of the project, more than 7477 claims were processed with increases towards the end of the project as the new centres got established and fully functional and built linkages with block centres and government offices. The centres at KMVS far exceeded the target of 1800. At ANANDI the target of 1400 was met. However ITfC could not meet their target of 800 as one centre was shut down and time was taken to set up a new centre.

The success rate of claims being realised was also good with an impressive 76% success rate at ANANDI, 66% -70%¹² at KMVS and 57% at ITfC. These were all higher than the target of 50% for successful claim realization. The high success rate at ANANDI is an indication of robust linkages with departments and effective follow up by EWRs and the *Mahiti Sakhis*.

The target of 60% women among those whose claims were processed and realised was also reached. In 2014, at ANANDI of 1470 claims filed, 1094 were by women and of these only 60 were pending in Feb 2015. Single women were especially targeted. Between October and December 2014, of the total 856 claims processed by MSM, 654 were of women and of these 366 were claims of single women.

3.6 Efficiency of Information Centres

Largely the current model of infocentre seems to be a cost efficient one. A typical information centre has just one computer, post of one infomediary and a team of women leaders / EWRs who volunteer and help to run the centre. Technical assistance is provided by the project team and field support to the infomediary is from the group of EWRs and *mahiti sakhis*.

Also most centres are in *panchayat* premises which reduces rental expenses. In KMVS only 3 of the 6 centres in *Patri, Bhujpur and Ravapur* are in rented premises. In ANANDI all the centres are in the *panchayat* premises, and in ITfC the centres are located in *sanghas'* premises/ federation offices and

¹² 70% if 3127/4468 as mentioned in the project presentation

recently the *Thumbasoge* centre has been initiated inside a *panchayat* office. While this has been done for strategic reasons of promoting linkages and sustainability, it has also been a cost-reducing strategy.

Cost effectiveness was kept in managing the information centres at different project sites. At ANANDI and KMVS, the village centres did not “operate” from their designated spaces on a daily basis and were open once/twice a week as the staff and volunteers were also involved in village level screenings, *info melas*, managing committee meetings, *panchayat* events, surveys, preparation and sending of IVRS messages. The staff was therefore occupied in a variety of tasks to maintain optimum use of human and financial resources. Also number of infomediaries deployed to centres varied according to the workload. For example at ANANDI site the *Shihor* block centre had 3 infomediaries and a *mahiti sakhi*, the *Umralla* centre had two infomediaries and the village level centres were managed by just one infomediary with one *mahiti sakhi* keeping human resources to the minimum.

Efficiency can also be assessed in term of number of visitors handled and claims processed per centre per month. This MWVVC target reflects no significant attempt to increase the average number of visitors at the 17 centres and keeps it at 620 visitors per month as time would be needed to set up the new centres and establish their credibility. More specifically the targets envisaged a modest increase in number of visitors from 40 to 50 per centre per month at KMVS, a reduction at ANANDI from 50 to 40 and zero change from the 20 visitors per centre per month at ITfC.

KMVS exceeded the target and nearly doubled it with 7556¹³ visitors (with 6 centres, the average number was 1259 per centre). Considering the first 6 months as zero period and the actual project duration of 18 months, this works out to 70 clients per centre every month.

At ANANDI, before the project, the “Entitlement wing” of the two *Lok Adhikar Kendras* reached about 500 people a year which was an average of 20 per centre per year. With the MWVVC this went up to 1509 for 5 centres over 18 months, reflecting an average of 17 claims per centre per year.

At ITfC the total number of claims processed i.e 592 across 6 centres over 18 months works out to 5 per centre per month which is only 1/3rd of the target of 15 claims per centre per month. While this could be attributed to the high turnover of infomediaries, however it also raises concerns about relative cost efficiency of the info centres. The fact that despite 3349 footfalls the number of claims processed is only 592 shows that only 17% of footfalls translated into claims. This combined with a low claim realisation rate of 55% is a cause for concern which could be rectified by having a stable team of infomediaries and *mahiti sakhis*.

At KMVS and ANANDI, the efficacy issues were also impacted by the time taken in the use of ‘ubuntu’ free software versions. The teams there felt that it took physical time and it was challenging to learn and operate this software. Other IVRS applications were easier but more expensive to use. Considerable time was spent in training staff. Here ITfC had an advantage as the staff and the organisation are familiar with the ‘ubuntu’ operating systems.

However, efficiency needs to be understood not only in terms of direct outcomes and outputs, but also in terms of overall impacts. In such a perspective, costs incurred need to be seen as small investment towards a very significant change in the culture of entitlements. More importantly, as information about the schemes of various government departments related to housing, education, sanitation, health, welfare, food, pensions, etc., are not normally available in a single space, getting information, accessing forms, filling them, submitting them and following up at different department offices is a time consuming and daunting process. In such a scenario, the centralization of information through a single

13 Project presentation

window of an information centre has saved more than 7000 people considerable amounts of time, energy and stress and these savings cannot be monetised.

3.7 Impacts

3.7.1 Demystification of the claims-making process and promotion of a new culture of entitlements

By providing clear information about schemes (eligibility criteria, how to apply, where to apply), by providing application forms, helping get all necessary identity proofs, and by helping to map current status of entitlements, ICT enabled information centres have de-mystified the claims-making process and encouraged people, especially women, to make claims. In the process the adage that 'information is power' had become alive in the hands of thousands of men and women.

3.7.2 Becoming active rights-holders and engaged participants in the local processes of governance

The info centres have contributed to a paradigm shift in the minds of citizens and the duty bearers in shifting the discourse from one that is charity or welfare based to one of rights. For example, as revealed by the case study shared by the ANANDI team, Uma Ben, an elected women representative from Sanosara village, who had not even stepped out of her village except for family events/functions, was able to grow into her role of being a woman community leader after becoming a *Mahiti Sakhi*. In addition to building her awareness about *Panchayat* functioning, she also acquired a rights perspective in her work at the infocentre. In fact, at the info *mela* in Sihor block held in October 2014, Umaben was part of a stall on the *Lok Adhikar Kendra* and was confidently advising other women on their rights and entitlements. In fact, she was overheard explaining to two women who are entitled to widow pension, that it is their right (not something that depended on the vagaries of decision makers). Similarly, at the endline field visit conducted by the evaluation team to the Hosavaranchi information centre, Shashikala who is part of the Managing Committee of the Information Centre shared that, *"Generally, when we look at the work of the Mahiti Kendra, what is most striking is that the information outreach efforts have touched even those people who are sitting in the corners (meaning marginalised). We need efforts like this – for many people in the village will hesitate to come on their own to the Panchayat – and even for a Panchayat member, it may not be possible to get in touch with each and every person in their ward – and that is why the Varanchi Mahiti Kendra is very useful"*.

Across sites the IVRS messages sent by the information centres about *panchayat* events and functioning led to increased attendance at the meetings. More public discussions about individual claims, as well as village level facilities in the *Gram sabha* and *mahila gram sabha* meetings, led to increased claiming of entitlements and exercising one's identity as rights holders in the democratic processes of governance. For instance at ANANDI soon after the IVRS message about voter ID cards was sent, 10 people from *Tana* village contacted the infomediary, took help and got their voter-ids cards issued. *Radhaben* an elderly widow from *Tana* heard the IVRS message and immediately applied for her pension as well as her *Antyodya* ration card.

Gram sabha related IVRS messages had a huge impact (See Box 11) and women had started asking for holding of the *gram sabha* meetings in their respective villages. This can be seen through specific impacts in several villages and the support and information provided to *sarpanch*, *panchayat* members and active women *Sangathan* members in the village to be able to ensure greater participation of EWRS in the *gram sabha* and *mahila gram sabha* meetings.

Box 11 : The impact of a *Gram Sabha* IVRS message : Stories from ANANDI

Padapan village: In 2013 when in Padapan the *Gram Sabha* meeting date came, the infomediaries after sending the information on IVRS followed it up by personally informing the *sarpanch* and *Panchayat* members and found that they had no idea that there was a *Gram Sabha* meeting that day and that the *Mantri* had not informed the *Sarpanch*. The *Sarpanch* Ilaben called the *Talati* immediately and asked him why he hadn't informed her in advance when he had access to this information 8 days prior. The *Talati* was avoiding holding the *Gram Sabha* in Ilaben's village as he had charge of another *Gram Panchayat*. Ilaben insisted that he come to the village. He arrived and the *Gram Sabha* happened. The second time the *Gram Sabha* date was announced, the infomediary decided to send an IVRS to inform the *sarpanch* Ilaben and not go herself as it is amongst the remote villages of Shihor block. Due to the voice message Ilaben got to know about the *Gram Sabha* in advance and was able to prepare in the village for the *Gram Sabha* and ensure that the *Talati* came for the same. The infomediary was able to also give inputs on how to plan for an effective *Gram Sabha* including how to set the agenda, inform other Sangathan women and ensure that the deputy *Sarpanch* was also informed.

Katodiya village: When the infomediary sent the IVRS message to the *panchayat* members, women leaders and officials like the PDS shop dealer, nurse, and medical officer, they found out that the *Sarpanch* hadn't informed anyone. The *Gram Sabha* took place due to this message and the *sarpanch* asked the infomediary why he hadn't received the message. The infomediary explained that he was also sent the IVRS message but he hadn't picked up the phone. He then asked the infomediary who belongs to this village that he also wanted to be informed by the infomediary. In this case the infomediary was able to ensure greater accountability of the leaders and officials.

Tana village: The ANANDI team and MSM run an info centre in the Tana GP office despite opposition from the male *sarpanch*. They had sent an IVRS on organising the *Gram Sabha*. The infomediary also reached the village and IVRS was sent to some women of the marginalized community, the clerk and the peon at the *panchayat* and when they reached the centre the clerk asked if the team had sent the message? He informed them that since the infomediary sent the IVRS message the word has been going around the village i.e. since 2 pm and everyone has been asking the exact time of the *Gram Sabha*. Due to this several people came for the *Gram Sabha* and there was an important discussion on the work of the nurse and how she isn't regular and a major issue related to the village sanitation system.

Krashnpara village: MSM infomediaries sent a message to the *Panchayat* members and EWR on their phone and since EWR's phone was with her husband he heard and informed her and questioned the *Talati*. It was raining very heavily but even then the villages demanded the *Gram Sabha* happen and it was conducted".

3.7.3 Information, Communication and Management Capabilities of EWRs and Leaders developed

The infocentres served as vital interface between EWRs, women's leaders and community members for effective liaison on issues and concerns of mutual interest. The learning time and space that has been excellently provided to the EWRs and leaders at the info centres allowed ample opportunities for leadership development and in forging stronger ties of the EWRs with the women in the communities, thereby helping them in nurturing their constituencies. At KMVS and ANANDI sites, EWRs have attended meetings and trainings related to information centre management and campaigns whereas at IT for Change, EWRs have learned the ropes of info-centre management along the way. These have given them technical skills and very important managerial skills of planning, monitoring, liaison, leadership and

governance which have been used within and outside the info centres – such as illustrated by the journeys of grassroots women leaders such as Savita Ben from the ANANDI site.

3.7.4 Enhancing Transparency and Accountability of Local Governance Institutions

Across sites, the findings of surveys done by the information centres have been used during *Mahila Gram Sabhas / Gram Sabhas* to establish the factual situation concerning the particular issues in the community, hence exposing any false claims on the part of state agencies. At KMVS the PDS focused survey has been an integral part of the campaign to ensure accountability and transparency of the PDS system and is an excellent example of information being used to expose irregularities in the system.

In Mysore, the information collected from household surveys in Bharatwadi and Hosavaranchi was used to step up work on realisation of entitlements.

The survey of toilets constructed for the BPL families in Thumbasoge village of Hunsur block in Mysore revealed the actual number of toilets constructed, the number of those who had not yet received subsidies for the same, and the number of those who despite not being eligible for subsidies had received it through offering bribes. Using GIS mapping the information centre was able to handle a sensitive issue effectively and also sent a message to all that corruption could no longer be easily hidden. From the same survey, information was used to raise funds from the private sector for construction of toilets.

At the KMVS site, as *panchayats* started associating with information centres, *Gram Panchayat* members asked help of information centre to plan an 'entitlement day' in their *panchayats*- 20 *panchayats* in Mundra and Nakhatrana blocks organised the entitlement day at *panchayat* houses and processed more than 400 claims.

At ANANDI, the survey of single women became a focal area of work as attempts were made to help single women become aware of their rights and access their entitlements. The poster *Mera Haq Mera Pechan* is a case in point.

The Infomediaries played a key role in strengthening Village health committees and monitoring the health grant. In Katodiya, the *sarpanch* was helped to access a grant to get waste cleaned. The PDS system in *Sanosra* was in a state of confusion about the newly introduced system of biometrics and the information centre helped sort it out by organising the 3 PDS shops to conduct the biometric verification locally so that the community members didn't have to travel to the block *panchayat* office for the task. *Anganwadis* at *Jharia, Khambha, Piparla, Ukharla, and Meghwadar* were strengthened and quality of services improved as a result of the GPS based survey done by the members of the MSM.

3.7.5 Inspiring and Equipping *Panchayats* to start IT enabled Information Centres

One of the most basic impacts of the information centres has been the generation of interest in the need for IT enabled information centre. At the KMVS site, 20 *panchayats* from both blocks showed willingness to open information centres in their villages. Discussions with KMVS, *panchayats* and collectives led to a decision that these centres should also keep registers and should function exactly like cluster level centres under the programme. The project team helped conduct surveys, capacity building for infomediaries, EWRs and VLEs and training on audio recording, video shooting, voice message system and *Panjo haq*. By the end of the project 4 such information centres— *Vithon, Kotda, Sayra, Ugedi* are functional in *Nakhtrana* block and 2 centres- *Baroi, Navinal* are working in *Mundra* block. Through these centres, the *panchayats* have realised that it is hugely beneficial for the communities to have their own space and process their claims in the centres itself. All the centres are also equipped with the basic

infrastructure just like the cluster level centres set up as part of MWVVC. On one occasion, one of the staff from the *Navinal* centre called KMVS team asking “*we are in urgent need of some forms but the printer is not working*”. With guidance on how to browse for an online version, he could get the required forms and was happy to get the issue sorted so easily.

At Mysore, in the beginning of 2015, two *panchayats* have approached *Prakriye* for starting of *Mahiti Kendras* implying that *panchayat* run info centres could be the future.

At ANANDI too, there have been expressions of interest from the *Panchayat* at Tana.

3.7.6 Information Centre seen as Community Space for Active Citizenry

Along with claims processing, information centres which have adequate and demarcated space have also become venues for audio and video viewing and for men and women to claim this as a community space to dialogue and seek redressal for their individual and collective issues. Young boys and girls too come to centres and learn about how to use the computer and support infomediaries. Such initiatives have shown that the centres which have their own space either in women's collectives' premises or in *panchayat* premises have successfully helped in furthering the identity of the women from the local community to be recognised as active citizens and to be more visible in formal, public spaces within the villages .

The information centres located inside *panchayat* offices have the disadvantage of not being a space where women can talk freely. However the advantages of community members walking in and out of *panchayat* offices, and the notion of women occupying a “public” space are both strategic and symbolic achievements.

3.8 Sustainability of Impacts: Potentials and Challenges

3.8.1 Potentials

Using ICT enabled information centres to strengthen women's claim making and their agency enhancement as rights-holders is a pioneering strategy not yet adopted by the large numbers of women's rights organisations across the country. Formation of women's collectives at the village level, aggregation of collectives or *sanghas* into federations, promotion of SHGs, micro finance for livelihood/enterprise building and working with EWRs have all been attempted over the last three decades. But information centres as spaces for women to seek their entitlements and also owned and run by women, with access to ICTs, is still an exception and a growing idea, rather than being the norm.

Leveraging the strength of women's collectives

Apart from leveraging ICTs, the information centres continue to leverage on the past and present achievements of the women's collectives' rich engagement with local communities on diverse social and economic issues. At *Ujjas* and *Saiyare Jo Sanghatans* in KMVS, the 4000 strong membership base from 40-50 villages of each continues to provide a strong backdrop for the information centres as they are actively involved with livelihood issues of farmers, cattle-rearers, fisher folk, fighting ill effects of industrialisation, and are linked to the village level women's sanghas, *dai* associations (community based birth attendants), paralegal groups, women's enterprises, water committees, savings groups and single women's forums.

Similarly, at ANANDI, the *Mahila Swaraj Manch's* multiple *jumbishs* (campaigns) started in 2001, have since become further focused on activating *gram sabhas*, creating voter awareness, fighting female foeticide and VAW, demanding joint names of husband and wife in all entitlements, and the work of the entitlement wing of the *Lok Adhikar Kendras*. All this has fed into the work and spirit of the information centres. The *Nyaya Samitis* too, with their focus on women's safety and security concerns, marital disputes, land disputes have grown to provide legal aid in cases of child marriage, caste atrocities, domestic violence, rape, murder and sexual harassment. MSM's engagement with these issues is the core strength for the information centres managed by them and vice versa.

This could have been the case at ITfC Mysore, however the situation of the Federations promoted by *Mahila Samakhya* and their relationship with the information centres are currently in a state of flux and uncertainty.

Empowering women by positioning them as information providers

The potential of information centres as a means to empower women and improve governance had already been recognized by the implementing organisations before the commencement of the project. At all three sites, the organisations were clear that women will own, run and manage the information centres and will become information-givers and not just the receivers of information by men. Information centres have proved their potential in challenging power equations and in ensuring that women who have been systemically denied information are prioritised as information providers and as recipients of information.

Leveraging ICTs

Using ICTs has demonstrated that the range of information accessed could be broadened and speed of information dissemination could be accelerated despite geographical dispersion and difficulties of face to face interaction. There is great scope to cast the net of the IVRS system much wider with greater cost efficiency. As the data base of women in the community who have access to phone has been created in all sites, getting them to opt for the IVRS is a crucial next step and entitlement information needs to go far beyond the EWRs and leaders to women at the bottom of the ladder. For instance, if *Ujjas and Saiyare Jo Sanghatans* together have 7000 members, assuming 50% ownership of the phones to be at household level, the number of women getting IVRS should be 3500. At ITfC site a survey was conducted in 3 villages to identify users for the IVRS services and ended with 366 members from the community signing up for public information updates. With such promising results in just 3 villages, this can be expanded to more villages to reach a larger number of women.

ICTs also helped in building linkages with *panchayats* and even made it easier to locate the centres inside the *panchayat* offices as PDOs and TDOs found the computer and ICT services-equipped dimension an attractive prospect. Claiming space within the formal *panchayat* offices has great potential for mainstreaming women's political concerns. The option of an exclusive space which is secure with the provision of separate room for the *Mahiti Sakhis* to function is just as necessary.

Change in Discourse

Though information centres had existed before the project run by the implementing partners and several state governments also run *Jan Suvidha Kendras* (Public Service Convergence Programme) at the district and block level with the aim of helping communities access and claim entitlements, the widened outreach through the ICT enabled infocentres has further strengthened the objective to move the discourse of claim making from "beneficiary" based to a rights-based active citizenry

approach . There is also positive shift in the entitlement discourse from simply seeking individual claims to pushing for greater effectiveness and accountability of the system to deliver for all.

More than being the window for the community to access their entitlements, the centres have also shown a potential for scheme delivery with a gender perspective. An infomediary's access to a Government circular in *Ukhralain, Shihor* resulted in housing titles being issued jointly in the name of women and men, despite initial refusal by the local bureaucracy.

3.8.2 Challenges

Time needed to learn

Across sites it was reported that the time taken to learn to use these technologies was quite substantial. Mastering the sending of IVRS technology based messages (learning the entire cycle from drafting of messages to sending the bytes and receiving the responses) took six to eight months for the infomediaries and EWRs.

No Automated/ Digitised feedback loop

Once the claim forms reach the various departments the info centre team are dependent on the claimant to call and tell them when the claim was realized. As ownership and use of mobile phones by the women is not universal, the information received about success/rejection of a claim may not be reliable. When schemes are implemented through the *panchayat* rather than through line departments, it may be easier to track information. In such cases the info centre and the EWRs associated with it have been allowed access to this information at the *panchayat* level.

Estimation of value of claims realized is not done

Though the number of claims realized is somehow traced, the estimated monetary value of these hasn't been computed. Such a process would give a different sense of the efficiency of the centre as the investment of time, money and energy can then be assessed by the sum of monetary benefits accrued from the total number of claims processed. Of course money cannot be the only index as the value of security, dignity and confidence gained and enhanced perception of, and towards, women is immeasurable.

Balance between digitised and face to face methods for entitlement awareness

While the attraction and power of ICTs has been highlighted here, it is equally important that non ICT methods and face to face communications continue to be practiced alongside. For instance, at ANANDI, due to lack of safe premises and power supply, the information centres at village and block level do not have computers. As mentioned earlier, the *Mera Haq Mere Pechan Patra* that they developed has been used in a face to face participatory manner to help women measure their access to entitlements and has been just as, if not more, successful as the ICT enabled services. Such simple traditional PRA techniques have been deployed effectively and creatively and remind us that their appeal and effectiveness remains irreplaceable.

There are both advantages and limitations of IVRS communication processes. IVRS messages are brief, can be listened to on a phone, they do not require literacy, and they directly reach the individual who picks up the phone. The disadvantage is that it cannot be replayed or forwarded. Moreover, as a sizeable

portion of women in the community could be sharing phones with family or not having any access to phones, IVRS messages reaching those it is intended for cannot always be assured.

Conceptualisation of the Infomediary

Each partner organisation had a unique profile of intermediaries.

At ANANDI, the six infomediaries were also the office bearers of the *Mahila Swaraj Manch*- middle-aged, experienced as EWRs, and from a mix of castes and religions, they worked in teams with *Mahiti Sakhis* to manage the centres.

At KMVS, experienced staff of KMVS, both male and female and in their late twenties to 30s was the main profile of the infomediaries. They played a technical and liaison support role and seemed to be increasingly leaving the info centres to the *mahiti sakhis* i.e. the volunteers from among leaders and EWRs who participated actively (in rotation) in the day to day running of the centres.

At ITfC the infomediaries were all mostly young women, mainly dalit in their early twenties or thirties. This model with dependence on the lone infomediary, a young girl has proved difficult to sustain. There have been high attrition rates since they have seen it as a job and left for “better prospects”. Project experiences indicate that an infomediary’s role is best delivered when she/he works closely on an everyday basis with teams of women leaders, backed by technical support, rather than being seen as an individual technical hand. It is the collective ownership of the process and of the centres shown by these ex-EWRs and aspiring EWRs that has made a critical difference. However for the *mahiti sakhis*, ways of compensating them for wages lost in the process need to be clarified in Mysore as has been done in ANANDI and KMVS.

Danger of Co-option

Information centres getting a space inside the *panchayat* offices has been symbolic of their linkages to formal governance systems and is proof of the recognition of the info centre as an important activity of the *gram panchayat*. At the same time, there are risks to the autonomy of the information centres. As the centre gets more successful and effective, vested interests could also try to co-opt them into the system. It is scary to think of the infocentre sitting in a hotbed of corruption, kickbacks and commissions without succumbing to pressures especially in cases where EMRs and PDOs are part of the managing committee etc. While physical location of the info centre inside *panchayat* spaces is strategically important, the presence of PDO, school headmaster and EMRs in the managing committees is a proposition whose risks need to be carefully analysed.

In Mysore, the centres have also been requested by the *panchayat* to conduct surveys to identify beneficiaries. While these surveys can be seen as contributing towards better governance, there is also a danger of being used by *panchayats* to do “their” work using the skills, goodwill and credibility of the *mahiti kendras* and of course the “free” labour invested by these women. Ways of partnering without being exploited needs to be explored.

3.9 Conclusion

One of the most important achievements of the infocentres *owned and managed by women*, has been the perceptual shift from seeing oneself as a “beneficiary” to a citizen with rights and entitlements. The infocentres have facilitated both men and women access information and claim entitlements with

moderate to high success rates. Women owned information centres augmented by ICTs have emerged as pivotal points for tracking, convergence, decentralization and as an inter-mediation space between claimants and government departments and institutions. In the process there has been a transition from obfuscation to demystification of the claim making process.

From the feeling of being disempowered and lost in the maze of official hierarchy and opaqueness, women using ICTs have become far more confident and assertive. The info-centre strategy has addressed the practical informational needs of women to claim individual entitlements as well as women's strategic needs of individual and collective power, visibility, control and entry into participatory governance.

There is also a positive shift in the entitlement discourse from seeking individual claims to pushing for greater effectiveness and accountability of the system to deliver. However there is also the risk of co-option of the centres by the state machinery as the *gram panchayats* are seen as an arm of government service delivery and administration.

Challenges however remain in asserting autonomy and sustaining the momentum of the centres beyond the project period.

From the long term perspective, the focus on claiming social entitlements from the state would need to be balanced by staking claims of women's rights from the families, communities and civil society. These need to be addressed through separate spaces like the *Lok Adhikar Kendras*, *Nyaya Samitis* and more empowered social justice committees of the *gram panchayats*.

There is a critical need to continually inform, assess and monitor the role and use of ICTs to prevent them being used in either a gender blind or gender harmful manner. The dangers of over dependence on technology without balancing face to face methods need to be heeded. Technology needs to be guided by the concerns of the marginalised and vulnerable not only to overcome the last mile connectivity challenge but also to stay on course for marking ICTs as a public good accessed and used universally without any discrimination. In this regard there is a need to be cognizant of the criticality of embedding the ICTs in the feminist approach of women-led, -controlled and -owned processes and organisations to ensure that the concerns of women, especially marginalized women, are included in the framework of gender responsive governance. The role of feminist organizations in monitoring and providing critical support for such ICT enabled interface is key.

Chapter 4: Harnessing ICTs for a shift in public discourse

4.1 Relevance of the Objective

Governance has been described as the art of steering societies towards a vision. Governance has to be about how those entrusted with the responsibility and power to govern are able to do so by listening and responding to the community while being transparent, accountable, equitable and fair. When these principles are not embedded in the culture of a society, governance processes too would reflect this.

In the context of PRIs and local governance, one of the major obstructions for democratic and gender responsive governance is the absence of a public discourse of participatory, transparent, gender just, and inclusive decision making. As a result, those vested with the responsibility to govern behave in a partisan manner, driven by self-interest that culminates in a reproduction of existing inequities. Those who are governed acquiesce and resign themselves to being treated like objects under the largesse, control and domination of the government. Both these positions are naturalised and normalised by a public discourse that justifies this in the name of culture, tradition, morality, and even “*public interest*”.

An attentive and critical public discourse necessitates a localised alternative to the homogenised mainstream media which constantly obliterates local world-views, excludes marginalised communities, reinforces patriarchy and romanticises or commodifies local cultures. Gender debates in the mainstream media are sensational and rarely address issues of social justice and equity. Healthy debates on democratisation and governance are lost in a cacophony of scams, political sycophancy, hyper nationalism and GDP focused reporting where questions of inclusion and gender equity are consistently sidelined.

In such a scenario, the MWVVC project objective of creating an alternative public discourse of gender equity and gender responsive governance through community owned media resources, and advocacy at the local and institutional level, is extremely relevant.

4.2 Project partners' engagement with media resources before MWVVC

Recognising the need for media services which address local patriarchies, the MWVVC project partners have attempted to create and use local media resources for many years now. Their endeavour was to challenge the stereotypes perpetuated and to break the silence on issues which the mainstream media ignores.

4.2.1 KMVS

KMVS began working with governance and community media in 1997 through the radio serial ‘*Kunjai Panje Kutch ji*’ (Sarus crane bird of Kutch). This was a 52 episode radio serial about issues faced by women in panchayats after the 73rd amendment. Each episode addressed a specific issue and ended with a small message embedded in a dramatic format. The serial was extremely popular as *Sarpanches* and EWRs identified with the struggles represented and realized that they could do much more than they first imagined.

Following the success of this serial, various songs and skits were created which told stories of EWRs to enhance perspective building. The journey of working with community media also grew with each phase of the electoral process. Post the 2001 earthquake, radio serials were produced on welfare efforts and

on misappropriation of materials by community and other stakeholders. Programmes on education were used to motivate *panchayats* to work for girl's education in remote areas of Pacham region of Kutch. In 2011, a voter awareness campaign through a radio serial '*Lik Buchani*' (hide & seek) was used effectively to generate dialogue among the community on selecting appropriate candidates. A monthly magazine reaching 2400 *panchayat* members and a bi-monthly magazine reaching 2700 women in the community addressed issues of governance and highlighted successes stories of EWRs.

4.2.2 ANANDI

At ANANDI, documentary film screenings and theatre performances were used as local media resources. These played an important part in their awareness campaigns since the inception of the organisation. In 2005 the *Daru Virodhi Jumbish* spread over 8 days during which the documentary film '*Jyare Behno A Karyo Badvo*' was screened. A street play '*Dikrio Ne Janamva Do*' was performed in 2006 in villages where foeticide cases were reported. A film based campaign against female foeticide was carried out using the film '*Brunhan Hatya*' in 10 villages where the maximum number of cases had been dealt with by the *Nyay Samiti*. The campaign against dowry, *Vyasan Mukti* Campaign in 2 villages in 2009 and the *Jumbish* to stop violence against women as a result of alcohol were done using a play titled '*Beek Nu Potlu*' which was performed in 10 villages. '*Lathi Pratha*' a play on violence against women was performed in 10 villages. In 2010 a documentary on manual scavenging and a film on NREGA formed important campaigns. Later a film titled '*Bhaage Padti Bhoi*' was screened in 5 villages to create awareness amongst women about their right to land. To draw attention to the issue of dowry a film titled '*Dikri Ne Shu Aapsho, Dahej Ke Jindagi*' was screened in 5 villages and screenings of *Bol Basanti* highlighted issues of NREGA, Sangathans, gender and the law.

4.2.3 ITfC

As ITfC worked in collaboration with *Mahila Samakhya* (MS), radio programmes were developed keeping in mind the needs of the women's *sanghas* and federations. A weekly 30 minute radio programme, *Kelu Sakhi* was broadcast from December 2006 onwards for members of the *sanghas* and federations, and content covered a wide range of issues. The programme format for the *Kelu Sakhi* programme included a scripted performance of 7-8 minutes set in a fictional village and the rest of the 22 minutes was devoted to announcements, informational interviews with officials, one Vox pop question, sharing of inspirational stories by *sanghas* and EWRs, and folk songs by women that do not promote gender stereotypes. The *Prakriye* team also worked with the MS team to create a number of learning resources on livelihoods, gender, health, education and government schemes. Infocentres were equipped with video banks containing edited footage of meetings and other films.

4.3 Strategies adopted as part of MWVVC

The MWVVC strategy focused on leveraging partners' community media experiences and expertise through creation and dissemination of ICT enabled media resources by women and by promoting advocacy and campaigns at local and institutional levels for a shift in local public discourse towards gender equity.

Each partner organisation approached this strategy differently. KMVS perceived that the MWVVC would be an extension to their media and governance journey and provide an ideal space to experience new tools and mediums to engage with EWRs in a limited geographical region. The ANANDI team were excited to be able to create their own video resources and began the process with a training workshop titled "*Understanding Community Media and Democracy, Politics of Representation and Communication Process*" to highlight the need of making local media. ITfC shifted gears from a strategy focusing on MS

sanghas to *all* women's collectives in the region, focusing on citizenship education for women and capacity building of EWRs to trigger dialogue between the two.

4.4 Targets, Expected Outcomes and Anticipated Impacts

The MWVVC project strategy of harnessing ICTs to create local media resources for a shift in public discourse has been executed through the creation of gender sensitive local media products created by women and ensuring their circulation in the local public sphere. The specific targets were as follows:

About 200 women leaders would be actively engaged in ideation processes around community media strategies with the project team. 120 Key leaders from women's collectives (50 from KMVS, 50 from ANANDI and 20 from IT for Change) were to be involved in radio-video content ideation, feedback and co-creation, and about 200 women leaders would be trained in facilitating discussions based on local media broadcast across sites.

30 video products were planned across all 3 sites. Weekly broadcast of videos were targeted to reach 6000 women in KMVS, Gujarat including 100 EWRs and 750 members of collectives and 50 EWRs and 500 *sangha* women in IT for Change, Karnataka. Post-broadcast discussions were planned in the cluster level villages with women leaders and EWRs at all sites.

104 weekly radio programmes were to be created in 2 sites and weekly radio broadcasts targeted to reach about 10000 women in KMVS, Gujarat including 100 EWRs and 750 members of collectives and 50 EWRs and 500 *sangha* women in IT for Change, Karnataka. ANANDI would undertake narrow casting on a monthly basis and reach 800 listeners in 50 villages.

Information centres would undertake periodic meetings with key leaders among EWRs (40 in KMVS, 20 in ANANDI and 15 from IT for Change).

Different video formats and production cycles (one informational video per month in each of the 6 blocks) along with clips, montages, digital stories, etc., – were to be developed for information and discursive purposes.

Advocacy on gender-mainstreaming in local governance was planned to be carried out across project sites (such as a gender score card exercise for select *panchayats*/villages in the project area, social audits, campaigns on local governance issues and GIS based discussions at the community level). Campaigns, including ones that utilise GIS possibilities (6), Social Audits (3) and Gender Score Card proposals were to be tabled before 37 *panchayats*.

Gender responsive local governance processes adopted through *Mahila Gram Sabhas*, and meetings between EWRs and women's collectives would help identify women's priorities in and use community media in campaigns. 18 infomediaries and 120 community women leaders would also participate in external events.

At the national level, advocacy for harnessing ICTs to empower EWRs at a national level would be initiated through a scaling-up workshop co-hosted by the NMEW, involving multiple departments and capacity building institutions in the local governance arena. Documentation that synthesizes MWVVC project learning and insights for replication would be produced by IT for Change and project partners.

4.5 Effectiveness of Community Video Resources as Challenge to Existing Discourse

4.5.1 Have women's leaders been able to contribute to ideation and creation of video resources that challenge existing discourses on gender and on governance?

The creation of video resources to challenge existing norms and beliefs requires that the women involved in the process should have a critical understanding of gender, of existing public discourse on gender and governance, and should possess the basic technical skills needed to convert their ideas and stories into films.

For women who have internalised and accepted patriarchal power structures, being able to communicate an alternative view point requires firstly a radical internal transformation and then an ability to speak with a new voice. This means that they would have to be firstly sensitized and empowered to analyse their experiences and struggles using a critical gender lens, and how this process reconfigured their worldviews. Personal cameras, computers, laptops and tablets are rarities in the project area and even men would have limited access to these devices. Census 2011 indicates that 5% of households in Kutch district, 4 % in Bhavnagar district and 7% in Mysore district have computers, and computers with internet access at the household level is less than 3%. *Has lack of prior access, exposure and low levels of education deterred women leaders them from engaging with new technologies? Were they able to handle and use the new devices with ease and confidence?*

Box 12. Evaluating the community media strategy – Key questions

Have women's leaders been able to contribute to ideation and creation of audio/video resources that challenge existing discourse on gender and on governance?

Has the dissemination and circulation of these resources challenged norms about gender roles, women's rights and gender justice?

Have campaigns and advocacy at the local and institutional level fostered a change in public governance discourse towards gender equity and in governance discourse towards gender responsiveness?

Across sites, multiple trainings on gender, governance and technology attempted to create these new skills, sensitivities and perspectives among EWRs, women's leaders and infomediaries enabling EWRs and women's leaders to participate enthusiastically in both radio and video production. At the ideation stage of community radio and community video production, 46 EWRs and women community leaders have contributed at KMVS site, 15 at ANANDI site and 36 at IT for Change site. The radio and videos also focused on local realities and inspirational narratives of local women's lives. For example, in the radio programmes, 80 EWRs and women community leaders at KMVS site have featured in the 96 digitized audio productions! At IT for Change 20 EWRs have featured in community radio broadcasts telling their stories to motivate and inspire others. The prospect of featuring in a video and telling their own stories was also exciting for many. As a result 87 EWRs and women community leaders featured in the videos produced at KMVS, 21 featured at ANANDI and 30 at IT for Change.

In terms of the actual video shooting and audio recordings, EWRs and women community leaders who received training were able to contribute significantly. For instance, video shootings involved 41 at KMVS, 12 at ANANDI and 12 at IT for Change. Table 15 of endline reveals that 9 % of the core group have been involved in video recording and 18% have spoken on video.

As a result of the video training 14 videos have been produced at KMVS, 9 at ANANDI and 6 videos made at Mysore. In the context of the socio-economic background of the women, their participation in ideating, recording and producing these videos is no mean achievement and the key to this achievement was the rigorous trainings conducted for perspective building and technical skills. Though the EWRs had no prior exposure access to digital cameras the trainings conducted during the project have ensured that, across sites, the core group of EWRs, all the infomediaries and the *mahiti sakhis* have been trained in handling cameras and now have basic photography skills. They have learnt and used photography skills to document meetings and as evidence of the condition of village and household level amenities

and infrastructure. Their confidence and ease in handling cameras was a heartening sight during evaluation visits.

ANANDI

At ANANDI, preparing women to participate in community owned video began with a 2 day training module on *Understanding Community Media and Democracy, Politics of Representation and Communication Process* was held in Sihor and infomediaries then conducted workshops in the new clusters. The module included sessions and discussions on understanding mainstream media in the context of India, politics of representation, different types of media, role of media, process of communication, media ownership and helped understand the significance of creating their own media in the MWVVC project.

The participatory appraisal process used for the *Mera Haq Mere Pehchan Patra* tool also sharpened women's capacities to analyse and understand rights, and the work of MSM in the context of Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the Indian Constitution. For technical training, two infomediaries were sent for a workshop conducted by IT for Change being held in Bangalore in early 2013 and were helped to make a short photo montage on the MSM history. A series of 8 short films on 'violence against women' was screened for the infomediaries. Trainings on Gender and Violence were then conducted for community leaders by infomediaries.

A training on production processes was held covering technicalities of story boarding, framing & compositions, as well as visual communication by the team from Dhrishti, a media organisation. Media trainings with the village *sarpanch*, EWRs and women in the village, included topics such as: how to use a still camera and video camera, to record audio, how to take photographs and how to do video shootings to enable EWRs capture their work on camera. At the end of this workshop each participant wrote a story of a woman *sarpanch* or EWR who has been active or the story of a single woman. 10 such stories were documented and some of these stories were used in the main film on MSM. All this led to 15 leaders participating in video ideation and production processes during the project.

KMVS

The trainings at KMVS were also intense and comprehensive. Trainings on "Gender, *Panchayats* and Technology" were held to create gender sensitive pressure groups at the village level and a core group of leaders/ EWRs to impact the governance processes through community media. The topics included gender discrimination analysis, *panchayat* processes, and identifying and raising gender sensitive agendas using technology. An advanced training recapped gender analysis and then focused on case studies of gender oppression to conceptualise and clarify the role of EWRs in addressing gender issues.

Though community video ideation and production was a new process for KMVS, as a result of these trainings, 46 EWRs and women community leaders were gradually involved in ideation and production during the MWVVC project. The first story identified was of Aandsar village where Sushilaben who is an active EWR took the lead to call a special *Gram Sabha* to address the issue of alcohol abuse. When women members didn't participate, she was motivated to call a *Mahila Gram Sabha* so that women members would come and talk about their issues. When Sushilaben was contacted by the team on whether she would be willing to share her story to be made in to a video, she was skeptical whether she would be able to speak in front of camera. Finally, she gave her consent, and the shooting covered her doing household chores, having meetings with *panchayat* members and her attempts to mobilise women for a *Mahila Gram Sabha*. When the film was edited and screened at a meeting of the *Gramshashini Manch*, there was much excitement and more EWRs came forward to tell their stories through videos.

ITfC

At ITfC, trainings focused on *panchayats* (EWRs and EMRs) and were packaged as technology and skills training though the objective was to facilitate debate and discussions on patriarchy in governance. This was done in two steps with step 1 being a technical training on using a camera, tablet and introduction to the craft of photography where clips introduced highlighted women's issues. A separate session only for EWRs also created space for discussion on using technology to highlight community and village concerns and EWR's equal rights over *panchayat* assets. The second step focused on community media based interactive sessions on gender and governance with films that highlighted the role and the predicament of EWRs.

The digital photography and community media-based training sessions covered 40 elected women across the 7 *panchayats*. Video content was created for this project based on some of the questions/issues raised by the women in the photography trainings. In addition to these trainings for EWRs, IT for Change trained 12 members of women's collectives in the project area in videography. With respect to community radio, collective-listening sessions were organised weekly at the information centres; and content ideation happened through informal discussions with the Managing Committee members of the information centres – covering 36 women.

More important than the number of women, it is the spirit of ownership that women leaders and community members feel as a result of their involvement in the ideation process that is a significant achievement of the project.

4.5.2 Have the videos produced been able to challenge existing discourses on gender and governance? Has the dissemination/circulation of these resources reached sufficient numbers to effect a change in norms about gender roles, women's rights and gender justice?

Working from ideation to the final production demanded that women leaders demonstrate an ability to work in teams to amplify their perspectives and thereby inspire others to challenge gender norms.

KMVS

At KMVS a total of 14 videos were produced with infomediaries, *sangathan* leaders and EWRs participating in the ideation and shooting processes and KMVS staff supporting in post-production and editing stages. About half the films produced in this manner were motivational films as they told success stories of *panchayats* and EWRs. Stories of the social audit of the MNREGA scheme at Devisar village, the *jan samvads* (public hearings), the *mahila gram sabhas*, the radio ideation sessions, the info *melas*, the community radio belong to this genre. Another set of films were created to build awareness: films on legal awareness, impact of industries on traditional occupations, impact of transmission lines on grazing lands, legal provisions regarding SEZs, etc., fall under this category. Even women's learnings through the ideation process has been captured in a film by KMVS depicting the ideation meetings as spaces for EWRs to learn and reflect on issues!

The content of these films has focused on gender in governance and raises issues both overtly and subtly. For instance, the film on Anandsar highlights how Susilaben perceives the need for *Mahila Gram Sabhas* and then motivates women to participate in them. The film was created with the Anandsar members, produced by KMVS team and infomediaries and screened at village level screenings, tablet screenings, *manch* meetings, and *Sangathan* meetings. The scenes of Susilaben sitting on a chair, next to men, without covering her face in the *Panchayat* office while two other EWRs are covering their faces is surely a strong signal and a powerful image about *purdah*. In the same film Susilaben speaks about women's issues and then goes around inviting women to come to the *Mahila Gram Sabha*, building a

women's political constituency. The film is persuasive and motivational and the fact that a woman like them is doing the inviting, not an official or a staff of K MVs, is what makes the film stand out.

The film on Navinal portrays the problem with the PDS system in the village, the role the EWRs play in raising this with the *Panchayat* and the final resolution of the issue. The film on Devisar highlights the social audit of NREGA and the film on Susilaben tells the story of social audit of the PDS. Such films have been effective in raising issues of transparency and accountability in local governance and administration and contributed to a culture of vigilance and accountability.

The film *Kuch Kunchato* describes experiences of EWRs with the IVRS system and the use of mobiles as a tool, and another film describes Community Radio and its impact. These films have demystified technology and demonstrated how close technology is to their lives encouraging viewers to befriend and engage with these as their resources.

As Mundra block is seeing a rapid industrialisation that is affecting the livelihoods of the farming/pastoral communities, a few films have been made to create awareness about the social and ecological impacts of this process. A film on the effects of transmission lines in farmers' fields, a film about SEZs and laws pertaining to them and a film about the Bio-Diversity Act and its provisions were made. These films were screened in the affected villages and helped mobilise *Machimar Adhikar Sangarsh Sangathan* (MASS) which is in the forefront of the struggle to oppose certain projects and to negotiate compensations in some cases. The *Ujjas sanghatan* leaders including few EWRs have been very much a part of this *Sangh*. Though these films were not connected to changing the gender discourse, women speaking as farmers and women speaking about farmer's rights, is an assertion that women are integral to the farming community.

The K MVs films also uses evocative local music which resonates strongly.

ANANDI

At ANANDI, the first film made by the MSM is a photo essay titled *Mahila Swaraj Manch: Ek Jhalak* which traces the story of the MSM and its achievements over the years through 40 photographs and a narrative by Hiraben, the leader of the *Manch*. The film is inspirational and has been used to tell new EWRs about the *Manch's* journey and motivates them to join the *Manch*. More importantly, it gave the ideating and production team the confidence to attempt more complex films and 8 more films were made during the project!

A significant number of films at the ANANDI site were focused on EWRs struggles and successes. For instance, the film about Rasilaben, the *sarpanch* of Navagam depicts her struggle to assert herself as a leader, as one who hoists the flag amidst struggles with her father in law. The film traces her efforts to save the natural resources of her community from the charcoal making units and shows both her vulnerability and her agency. Similarly the film on *Sarpanch* Ilaben highlighted her struggles to improve the quality of the local school and create a greener campus.

The film *Beheno No Sandesh Ane Gaam No Vikas* tells the story of women *panchayat* members who struggles to move out of the home into the public arena and learning about their role in improving accountability.

The films and their simple but sharp content are in stark contrast to, and challenge, dominant myths about women leaders and single women.

ITfC

At ITfC a total of 9 films were produced during the project which largely focused on *panchayat* matters, *gram sabhas*, women in *panchayats*, a social audit at Thumbasoge and a few films which document and showcase the work done by *Prakriye*. The film on *What I Think Is My Role* attempts to depict the role of an EWR through an interview with Sakkamma, a Dalit EWR, and an interview with Dr. Thukaram from the State Resource Centre. He talks of women being scientists who should come into the public arena with confidence, while Sakkamma clearly enunciates her role is that of a “*Yajmana*”! Another film is a digital story of the camera training provided to EWRs and a film on the moonlight dinners organised by women’s collectives. These films attempt to highlight women’s ability to handle technology and build solidarity networks.

4.5.3 Effectiveness of strategies for screenings/narrowcasting

Weekly broadcast of videos were targeted to reach about 6000 women in KMVS Gujarat (including 100 EWRs and 750 members of collectives) and 50 EWRs and 500 *sangha* women in IT for Change, Karnataka. Post-broadcast discussions were planned in the cluster level villages with women leaders and EWRs.

The project partners explored various options for video screenings as changing public discourse requires reaching a critical mass among the public with messages that challenge the existing discourse. Without access to broad cast facilities, screenings at the village level, narrow-casting at village level, walking to villages with tablets loaded with videos and showing them to small groups of women at their doorsteps, and arrangements with local cable operators to telecast the videos provided, were all attempted.

Most of these options proved labour-intensive and ended with a small reach. For example at KMVS, 22 village level screenings got an audience of 1779 viewers and village level narrow-casting in 26 villages reached 2600 people. As videos were made for deeper level shifts in gender perspectives, discussions following screenings are important though this reduces their wider circulation. Screenings during network meetings and trainings were effective as they were embedded in a learning intervention. This is corroborated in the endline where 89 % of core group EWRs recall video based learning indicating the effectiveness of the content.

While ANANDI’s arrangement with two cable operators was an efficient way of reaching large numbers of both men and women, there was no way to track the actual number of viewers. Smaller screenings for specific groups allowed for discussion and reflection and screenings during network meetings and trainings proved most effective as shared by 70% of core group EWRs.

ITfC had a target reaching 50 EWRs and 500 *sangha* women through videos. As there is no EWR network, they have watched the videos in various trainings and at block, village and ward level meetings, and 87% of EWRs are able to recall specific content from the videos.

Some films were made for an entirely external audience. The film by ITfC about *Digitally Enabled Pathways* highlights the ICT enabled strategies used to facilitate *Mahila Gram Sabhas*. Similarly, *Kuch Kunchato* was made with the UNESCO presentation in mind and *Montages*, the film about KMVS journey is an organisational narrative.

4.6 Effectiveness of Community Radio Strategy

With the establishment of the Community Radio Station in Bhimsar in April 2012 at the KMVS site in Kutch, a new landmark was reached during this project. The station reaches 5000 listeners in 26 villages of Nakhatrana Block and broadcasts for 3 hours a day with 4 segments. One segment is *Khaso Shasan* about good governance and another is *Soorvani* which showcases the talent of local folk musicians and artistes who carry a rich legacy of different musical forms and instruments unique to Kutch. There are also segments on education and agriculture.

The MWVVC project was linked to the *Khaso Shashan* segment with its focus on gender responsive governance. Content was created by EWRs and infomediaries in response to community queries and focused on EWRs who have done something exceptional as well as those who have worked on basic governance issues such as drinking water, sanitation, ICDS centres and ration card processes. As the broadcast covered only 26 villages, recorded versions of these programmes were narrow-cast to listener groups formed outside the radio station coverage area. 1656 women members of 34 villages have been part of narrow-casting sessions. Such ingenious attempts to bring more people into the listener net are commendable as they require much legwork and coordination.

The efforts have also paid off as listeners have been inspired by stories of EWRs like Ishitaba who have fought illegal mining and EWRs who stood up against a *Sarpanch* because he supported illegal excavation of the village pond.

With daily broadcasts, they are way ahead of the weekly broadcast target of 104 programmes. In this regard, the commitment and capacities of the team who manage the radio station in pre-recording enough interesting programmes for a daily broadcast without fail is to be much appreciated!

ITfC

At ITfC the forum for content ideation of *Kelu Sakhi* continued to be the monthly meeting of the Managing Committee of the information centre. Subversive strategies have been necessary such as depicting a scene where women are returning home late at night after a SHG meeting, or a woman and her husband guarding their fields against elephant attacks instead of directly discussing curbs on women's mobility. The shutdown of the *Gyanvani* channel by IGNOU in October 2014 is a serious setback to the radio component of the project at Mysore.

4.6.1 Limited Access of women's organisations to radio broadcast facility

The project's assumption that community radio broadcasting facility being used by KMVS and *Mahila Samakhya* would continue to be available, and could expand, ran into rough weather. In KMVS the broadcasting is limited to Nakhatrana block and 26 villages in a small radius and is also proving expensive. In Bhavnagar, the feasibility of using an existing public broadcast service from the neighbouring district of Rajkot, was explored, but later dropped due to limited range of the broadcast from Rajkot. At Mysore, the weekly broadcast on *Gyanvani* FM channel through IGNOU which had grown to include *Mahila Samakhya sanghas* as well as women's SHGs in 7 *panchayats*, was shut down in October 2014 simply because IGNOU had not paid its bills. This means that now only one among the 6 project blocks has a radio broadcast facility, indicating that community radio is not a technically and financially viable option in most spaces.

4.6.2 Access to Radio

The project investment in community radio production is based on an assumption that women have access to radios in order to listen in. The census 2011 reveals that radio /transistors are owned by 15% of households in Bhuj district and 26% in Mysore which are the districts where community radio was implemented. Within the small percentage of households that own radios, women's access would have to be negotiated with family members. The community radio *khaso shashan* broadcast is currently reaching 5000 women in Nakhatrana block, which is a significant number. Though reach is high and women in the community are possibly tuning in, among EWRs in Kutch and Mysore only 22 of the 85 actually listened to the community radio.

4.7 Campaigns and Advocacy for Gender Mainstreaming in Local Governance

4.7.1 Campaigns and advocacy at the local level

The project targets included 6 campaigns, 3 social audits and a gender score card to be tabled before 37 panchayats as part of attempts towards gender responsive governance.

At ANANDI, campaigns carried out which were issue-specific, time-bound, and with high visibility for a short duration. The campaign by MSM for ration cards for women and the campaign for the mothers' name to be added in a child's birth certificate in 2011 were both significant attempts to shift public discourses towards gender equity and to sensitize the administration to the same. The campaign on single women and their entitlements utilizing GIS mapping, and a campaign on women and land ownership were also critical to gender equity. Each campaign represents an attempt to engender a significant shift in the existing gender discourse as issues such as single women's rights, land rights for women, mother's name on birth certificates strike at the core of patriarchal hegemony.

Similarly, their interventions such as the memorandum to the Secretary, *Panchayat Raj* Department on Human Rights Day to remove the two child eligibility norm for *panchayat* members is another challenge to existing norms. It is an assertion that women cannot be penalised or discriminated against for having more than two children especially when they have not been the ones to decide how many children they have. Such demands represent a paradigm shift, challenge deeply held values and are laudable efforts towards building a gender equal public discourse. The rally organised by MSM to protest the *Nirbhaya* gang rape and murder in Delhi also demonstrated that MSM is an outward looking *Manch* connected to the larger women's movement and responsive to critical events that affect women across the country. Their participation in a National rally on food security in Delhi in 2012 is a message to the local administration and the local public that MSM is connected to the food security issue at village level and participates in advocacy at the national policy level as well.

At KMVS, efforts for mainstreaming gender in the governance discourse were approached differently. Instead of focusing only on EWRs, they chose to focus on the entire *panchayat* body and worked with both EWRs and EMRs. *Sushasini*, the governance capacity building and knowledge centre at KMVS, worked closely working with 50 *panchayats* to help them develop a gender index which is not an easy process as male members are not always open to such efforts. After much effort, the Gender Score Card process has been introduced in 20 *panchayats* and is a stupendous achievement.

The four campaigns by the women's collectives raised public awareness on violence against women, PDS, structural changes in powers and duties of the *sarpanch*, and the issue of grasslands. The issue of adequate allowances for *sarpanches* was taken up as a campaign by *Gramshasini* through a symposium where 375 *Panchayat* members from 250 *Panchayats* of Kutch participated. Two MLAs, an MP, and block and district level chairmen of *panchayats* participated in the advocacy symposium. The MLAs and MP

wrote back, assuring the EWRs that they will forward this issues to ministry. Another impressive campaign is the *Goonj* movement led by *Gramshasini manch* of EWRs and all the collectives and *Sanghatans* of KMVS, where women collectively raised their voice against violence on women occurring out of alcohol consumption. They demanded that members of parliament should address issue of women's safety and security. These are just a few examples of the emerging assertions and increasing demands for dignity and rights.

Four social audits were also undertaken at KMVS which also yielded immediate results. For example at Devisar, the social audit of NREGS revealed that that payments of 40% families was delayed by 3 months and those engaged with excavation processes had no idea about how their work was to be measured and how wages were to be calculated. All these findings were recorded, put in a report and raised in a *Gram Sabha* and finally resolved. It sent a message to *panchayat* members that they were under scrutiny and also sent a strong message to the village community that accountability is possible as 2 social audits a year are mandatory for a *panchayat*. Following the Navinal film screenings a social audit drive was taken up in 42 villages of Mundra block. This is a significant shift in governance where citizens audit the functioning of the state mechanisms and see this as a right as well as a responsibility!

At ITfC, where EWR networking and work with grass-root level women's collectives has not been a part of the organisation's history, innovative efforts had to be made to build linkages so that synergies develop. Ward level meetings were conceptualised and held as spaces where EWRs could meet women's collectives and discuss campaigns or advocacy strategies. 18 such meetings were held which helped defuse tensions around *Mahila Gram sabhas* and proved an effective platform to bring EWRs in touch with women's collectives to raise issues. However, larger advocacy campaigns across villages or *panchayats* could not be conducted without a strong women's network. In these difficult circumstances, a cervical cancer awareness campaign was conducted by the info centres which reached 300 women. Of these, 100 immediately underwent pelvic examinations.

Leveraging on ITfC's strengths as a technology savvy organisation, a GIS-enabled audit of school infrastructure under RTE was carried out in Doddahajjur *Gram Panchayat* and a GIS-enabled social audit of allocation of benefits under *Nirmal Bharat* sanitation programme was carried out at Thumbasoge *Gram Panchayat*. The Thumbasoge audit opened a Pandora's box of issues regarding beneficiary selection and subsidies, leading to exposing the irregularities and corruption. Though these had to be done by the info centres and *Prakriye* team in the absence of a women's/EWRs platform, the purpose of challenging the silence and secrecy around corruption was achieved.

The *Prakriye* team also made efforts to engage with *panchayats* as a whole and to creatively engage with EMRs as well as *panchayat* officials who are mostly male. This alliance building process was complicated by changes in PDO (as in Uyigondanahalli) and changes in the *panchayat* president (as in Madapura). In other villages, the dialogue with men in the community has emerged from decisions about space for infocentres and these have not been easy conversations. At Attiguppe, the farmers' club shares the *sanghas* space with the infocentre and at Kalihundi the infocentre shares space with the Milk Producers society. While these offer opportunities for working together, current tensions need to be addressed in a strategic manner. Inviting members of the Milk Producers Society to be on the managing committee of the infocentre may buy peace but could place the autonomy of the infocentre at risk.

Across sites, infomediaries have also trained the EWRs to do GIS mapping using the GPS machine. The idea of mapping has caught the imagination of the women, and with basic instructions they were able to handle the GPS device with much enthusiasm. Women with young children and elderly women have all participated in GIS based mapping, and have understood its potential to create accountability and transparency. The involvement of EWRs in surveys and social audits has also brought them in touch with digitized data and with the help of infomediaries and other project staff, a basic introduction to data tabulation and analysis processes has been possible. This regular and consistent touch with computers

has removed fear and instilled a culture of systematic management and accurate monitoring necessary for governance.

4.7.2 National Level Campaigns and Advocacy

Apart from changes in local public discourse, the project included national level campaigns and advocacy, based on new models of ICT enabled gender sensitive local governance developed. Attempts were therefore made to engage senior officials in the Rural Development department and the Knowledge Commission at state and national levels, to share evidence from the project for policy and programmatic directions. Drawing on support of the National Mission on the Empowerment of Women of the Ministry of Women and Child Development a national workshop was organised by all 3 project partners in September 2014 on *"Rewiring women's rights debates in the digital age"*. Researchers, practitioners and policy-makers were brought together to reflect on the key concerns for gender justice in the digitally mediated social world, also weaving in key insights from the MWVVC project. The NMEW drew insights from the model developed under this project for its *Poorna Shakti Kendras* - convergence centres for women empowerment and gender responsive governance at the village level.

. In August 2013, ITfC was invited to be on a panel arranged by UN Women on 'Gender and Infrastructure' during the 8th Annual Conference on Public Policy and Management organized by the Center for Public Policy, at the Indian Institute of Management (Bangalore). UN Women Partners' Meet which aimed at developing a shared research programme and advocacy agenda on women's economic rights and security also was a space for the MWVVC project partners to advocate for gender responsive governance as a priority. In June 2014 the Department of Telecom, Government of India approached UN Women for the field evaluation of '*Sanchar Shakti*' project which focuses on the delivery of mobile Value Added Services to rural women's self-help groups. UN Women nominated representatives from ITfC and ANANDI, the partnering organisations of MWVVC project, to the evaluation team. In June 2014, IT for Change was invited by the Expert Committee on the Amendment to the Karnataka *Panchayat Raj* Act, to make a presentation on the digital opportunity for inclusive local governance ITfC was also invited to the India CSO National Consultation on the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) organised by the Beijing+20 Working Group which included UN Women in August 2014. Using insights from the project ITfC on behalf of all the partners prepared a policy brief on fostering an ICT enabled local governance ecosystem for women's political empowerment in April 2015.

These efforts suggest that multiple attempts to build awareness and interest in ICT enabled gender responsive governance have been made during the project. However this requires synergies across the Ministry and State Departments of *Panchayat* Raj and Rural Development, Department of Women and Child Development, the Department of Telecom, women's rights groups and civil society organisations. Such advocacy therefore needs to be seen in a long term perspective.

UN women has also put the MWVVC project on an international advocacy space by facilitating project partners to share experiences in different international forums. For the Mobile Learning Week (Feb 23-27, 2015), organised by UNESCO in partnership with UN Women (Paris), MWVVC partner KMVS was invited to share experiences and Kruti Laheru and Lata Sachde participated. In April 2015, during the 'Girls in ICT' event organised by the Asia Pacific Telecentre Network (APTNet) and the Center of Communication and Development Knowledge Management (CCDKM) of Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University in Thailand, Anupama Suresh of IT for Change was invited to share experiences.

4.8 Efficiency

On the whole during the project, a total of 31 films were made (14 at KMVS, 9 at ANANDI, 8 at ITfC) meeting the target of 30 films indicating an efficient management of time.

120 Key leaders from women's collectives (50 from KMVS, 50 from ANANDI and 20 from IT for Change) were to be involved in radio-video content ideation, feedback and co-creation and about 200 women leaders would be trained in facilitating discussions based on local media broadcast across sites. Reports indicate that about half of this target was reached, mostly from among the core group. This could mean that a smaller group was repeatedly involved instead of giving more opportunities for newer and less experienced members.

The films involved a larger number of EWRs and where they were involved in production and editing, time inefficiencies set in as their role as owners of the message was overpowered by their role as production managers and editors. The process would be more efficient if editing could be handled by experts even as messages are monitored by the women.

While a majority of films were meant to be motivational, inspirational and challenging extant gender discourse, the fact that some films served the purpose of simply showcasing or documenting the project is a loss.

Media resources, campaign and advocacy efforts reached large numbers and were therefore cost effective in terms of the amount spent per "audience" as unit. At the same time, shifts in discourse are invaluable. Costs and benefits in monetary terms are not an adequate measure of efficiency.

4.9 Impacts

Has there been a shift in local public discourse towards gender equity? During the MWVVC project, EWRs and women's collectives' leaders have been sensitised on gender and groomed as thought leaders so that they can influence thousands of women in their communities during and after their term in the *panchayats* through face to face interactions and through community owned media. As the radio and video resources feature women from the community, their stories find resonance in other women.

Where intense and sustained gender trainings have been done, sharper articulations and moving messages have emerged. For instance at ANANDI, gender trainings and watching of films on women and violence, discussions about different kinds of violence women face from psychological to physical to economic preceded the ideation and film planning sessions. This led to a decision to make a film about individuals who have made a difference to village education and then a list of such women was made as part of the story-boarding.

At KMVS the two-phased intense training on gender governance and technology played a key role in changing women's perceptions of themselves and in preparing them for the ideation process.

Without direct or confrontational stances the messages that have been introduced into the local public discourse are that;

1. Women are capable and competent leaders in *panchayats* who take active interest in community issues and women's concerns.

2. Women who are not highly educated are also able to take prudent decisions and handle public responsibility.
3. Women's education, safety and health are important. Culture or tradition cannot come in the way of these basic rights.
4. *Panchayats* are accountable for women's wellbeing and need to recognize and address women's strengths, vulnerabilities and citizenship.
5. A woman leader who lifts the *purdah* and talks to men is not immoral and does not lose *izzat* or honor.
6. Single women exist and their needs are legitimate.
7. Women who are not leaders also can and should be seen and heard in village assemblies and *gram sabhas*.
8. Panchayats are accountable to communities, and good governance includes transparency through participation.

EWRs across sites shared that the process of brainstorming on ideas and on the messages to be conveyed was a process of clarifying one's understanding and stances. Women also gained skills in planning and doing interviews, video and audio recording, storing footage. At ANANDI, the infomediaries themselves did the editing while at ITfC and KMVS, editing was often outsourced or done by skilled staff within the organisation. Such skills were associated with confidence and an overall sense of achievement, which is precious. Though 61% have not been part of video production, a small beginning has been made and efforts could be made to widen this circle.

FGDs with EWRs who watched films about other EWRs' struggles have revealed that they found them inspiring and motivated them to think "*if she can do it, so can I*". The film *Shikshan Nu Mahatva Samjhavta* is the story of Meenaben, EWR from Piparla and member of the Education committee of the *panchayat*. The film is about how she continuously persuaded her community members and members of the Koli caste to send their children to school. The film led to more girls being sent to school, more active monitoring of schools by parents and even inspired *Koli* women to think about standing for *panchayat* elections in the next round! This is just one among many examples of the media resources changing perceptions of gender roles that women play in the family and community, and breaking stereotypes.

Single women's issues, normally taboo, have been highlighted in some of the films and a film on Kusumben from the Devgarh *Mahila Sangathan* even highlights issues of single women. Another taboo broken was regarding cervical cancer. Following the cervical cancer screening in 17 villages and discovering that 20% of the women tested positive to the VIA/VILLI test, *Gramshasini* and KMVS have worked together to make *panchayats* accountable to combat cervical cancer and bringing into the open an issue which has been shrouded in a cloak of secrecy and privacy.

Claims making also increased due to increased awareness created by films. For instance, after women watched the film on *anganwadis* at ANANDI site, more women demanded the nutrition supplements for their children. The film led to demands for Supplementary Nutrition Programme (SNP) for children from mothers in different villages across castes causing the film to even impact caste relations. As an outcome of the film, the EWR in Ukhrala began regularly monitoring the *anganwadis'* distribution of nutritious food. The infomediaries there facilitated that the *devipujak* worker to do the *Shreemanth vidhi* (*godbhara*) of an upper caste woman in the Anganwadi. They also insisted that the hesitant *Devipujak* mothers sat as equals on the chairs at the Anganwadi.

Have panchayats and male elite - from panchayats, government departments and the village community started supporting the women leaders? Have gender sensitive resolutions been passed as a result of advocacy? The films on the need for participation in *Gram Sabhas* and especially *Mahila Gram Sabhas* have contributed to women's increased participation in these meetings. Toilets have come across as a woman's concern and discussions across sites also revealed that it is mainly women who ask for the

toilets and use them. A social audit of toilet construction subsidies helped resolve the issue of pending subsidy payments and identify those in need of toilets.

The advocacy, social audits, gender score cards, and awareness campaigns have led to changes in institutional practices and unwritten policies in recognition of women's rights as a result of the campaigns, but more because of the robust linkages and credibility that the information centres, EWRs and EWR forums have built with line departments at the block and cluster levels. Corruption, sidelining of EWRs, avoiding *gram sabhas* and *mahila gram sabhas*, tolerance of alcoholism, tolerance of violence against women, inadequate attention to education and *anganwadis* are all gradually coming out of the shadows into the public glare transforming everyday governance.

4.10 Sustainability of Impacts –Potential & Challenges

4.10.1 Potential

Across sites there is a great amount of raw footage that leaves open the option of making more films that focus on specific messages such as women's mobility and women's property rights. The emphasis so far has tilted towards messages on women in governance.

There is also scope to combine local media products with screenings of films made by professional documentary filmmakers-activists who have the luxury of making longer, more researched and in depth films. Such films have been the staple of people's movements and can continue to be used alongside resources that the women themselves produce.

A few of the state actors we met were appreciative of women's work and encouraging, while others were openly patronising. Changing perceptions of gender equality among concerned state actors and community, especially among men is a slow and hard process. Dialogues with men in the community need to be emphasised as a more conscious strategy to help them re-think their positions on women's place in society and in the *panchayats*. At ITfC 70 men – EMRs, husbands of EWRs and opinion leaders have been part of meetings and screenings, at KMVS 300 men have associated with the project and at ANANDI 105. This needs to be increased significantly considering the resentment men are feeling regarding loss of control over PRIs, and their lack of faith in women's leadership rights or abilities.

On the whole, the radio and video content has not directly critiqued existing patriarchal hegemonies or practices but have appreciated and highlighted those who have been able to transcend them. As information about entitlements has now percolated, more emphasis needs to be paid to deeper beliefs and values, moving away from the safe zone of announcements, information and inputs by officials to more challenging messages. Showcasing the achievements of young girls who have completed school/college, or the story of a girl child who escaped foeticide, or a man who refuses to take dowry or has a friendship with his daughter or a positive story of a single woman, etc., are some avenues that can be explored to show women outside home and *panchayat* and legitimise women's public participation as well as their attempts to break out of gendered oppression.

At KMVS, the advanced training of gender responsive governance made the EWRs aware that there are issues in their villages, which they still need to address. Dhiraben (*Sarpanch*, Mandvi block) said: "initially in the training, when we were asked to discuss about issues in our village, we said everything is fine and we are empowered enough to address them. But, after going into the exercise of rating mobility and autonomy that women in our village have, we understood that there is still a lot of work to be done. I could also realise that even as I rated myself a 9 (in terms of autonomy and mobility) on a 10 point scale,

women in my village are still only at 5. So, as a *Sarpanch* I have to bridge the gap. Since I myself am a woman I also have to look into these aspects”¹⁴.

It bears repeating that advocacy and campaigns have been possible where strong women's collectives exist, where EWR platforms are robust and where synergies between them are cemented. Lessons from such a model can be used across sites.

4.10.2 Some problematic aspects and challenges

The subtle messages conveyed by some of the films over and above their overt message need more careful scrutiny. For instance the film about the Navinal PDS issue portrays the EWRs as hardworking, sincere and committed. When the community has problems they approach the EWRs who raise it in the *panchayat* body. There are discussions with the *sarpanch*, women taking trouble, doing the social audit with the infomediaries, going to the ration shop etc. All the male figures in the film- the *panchayat sarpanch*, the PDS shop man and the male infomediary- speak with authority and power. Finally the *sarpanch* resolves the issue. While women's agency is shown – the film also perpetuates the idea that ration for the home is a woman's problem, kerosene is her issue, that women do all the legwork for the survey and social audit, but finally men will be the villains and the saviours!

The film made at ITfC on 'What I Think Is My Role as an Elected Representative' gave a lot of space to Dr. Thukaram who speaks about women as scientists because they cook, as managers because they rear children, as people who know life's difficulties and therefore are qualified to serve people. Their right to participate in governance is barely there. On the other hand, Sakkama who has been a *panchayat* leader for more than 2 years spoke that she was selected to discharge responsibilities and she is clear that her role is that of a leader or *Yajmana* which implies “male head of household”! More powerful voices from EWRs could be added and an alternate gender-just vocabulary for women's leadership roles and concerns needs to be adopted.

In a similar vein, the film “Should women participate in the *Panchayat*?” a woman PDO and State Resource Centre director speaks about women participating as a duty and not as a right. Such stereotypical messages about serving family/community need to be avoided and women as citizens with rights as well as responsibilities could be highlighted.

In the film on Sunanda Jayaram, a farmer's movement leader and member of *Zilla Panchayat*, she speaks about women needing support from family and community - to play their public role. She stresses that this is what gives them the courage to grow and with such support their public speaking will move from stuttering to giving speeches, even if illiterate! There is no mention of women's inner strength or strength that can be drawn from a network of EWRs. Therefore the message is confusing and not very empowering and is not from a feminist perspective as family and community can also be sites of control and oppression.

Most films were very short with some being only two minutes and a few that were more than ten minutes. Deeper engagement with beliefs on gender and governance require more nuanced content and close overseeing by organisational staff on the subtexts and underlying messages. The need to broaden the understanding of governance beyond an administrative frame is urgently needed.

Backlash as reality : Some of the films made by MSM are very powerful, especially the films about individual EWRs and their struggles, as each of them does push the envelope in some way in a society that is focused on *purdah* and women's seclusion. Such films help in communicating to men that women are not just pawns to be used by them in the *panchayat* system, but capable, committed and competent leaders in their own right.

However, women have sometimes paid a heavy personal price for featuring in this kind of film. The film on Arunaben- *Sarpanch* at ANANDI site, who tackled sexual harassment and violence was opposed by the *Taluk* Pramuk and by her husband. Finally MSM had to give in to these pressures and decided to stop the screening! Hansaben of Meghawadar *Panchayat* is a *Kshatriya* women who initially did not attend MSM meetings as she was chosen through *samras* and later associated with MSM and made significant changes in the water problem of her village which was persisting for 40 years. She installed solar lights in her village for the security of women and came out confidently against the power structures in her village and in the film she has even taken off her head cover (*laaj*) and it is the first for a Darbar woman of her village. The film is based on the work she has carried out in her village and MSM screened it at EWR trainings and meetings, telecast on local cable channels, and screened in several villages. The irony is that while the film has inspired many and continues to do so, Hansaben herself has currently stopped coming to the *Panchayat* as the *Mantri* and other male members of the community have made lewd comments about her.

Baseline research at all 3 sites reveals the close interference of husbands and male family members in the work of EWRs. Also, at all 3 sites, liaising with block level departments is considered the prerogative of male *panchayat* members. Field research also revealed that male elite were supportive of governance agendas that focused on the 'trickle-down' of the benefits of community development initiatives to women; while remaining extremely hostile to agendas that questioned prevailing gender norms. Changing public discourse means changing these attitudes through media resources that reach and appeal to men. On this count much needs to be done and expecting the women to do this without direction and support from gender experts may be asking for too much.

The non- core group EWRs who do not participate in network meetings and trainings need to be targeted more sharply to watch the videos and engage in discussions and participate in campaigns and advocacy.

4.11 Conclusion

Without direct or confrontational stances, the messages that have been introduced into the local public discourse are that women are capable and competent leaders in *panchayats* who take active interest in community issues and women's concerns; that women who are not highly educated are also able to take prudent decisions and handle public responsibility; that women's education, safety and health are important and culture or tradition cannot come in the way of these basic rights; that *panchayats* are accountable for women's well-being and need to recognize and address women's strengths, vulnerabilities and citizenship; that a woman leader who lifts the *purdah* and talks to men is not immoral and does not lose *izzat* or honour; that single women exist and their needs are legitimate; and that women who are not leaders also can and should be seen and heard in village assemblies and *gram sabhas*.

Community media production processes have created spaces for reflexive learning, alongside imparting technical expertise and vesting the ownership of community media processes with women. The falling costs and increasing agility and simplicity of radio and video production is an opportunity that the project has effectively leveraged, to open up a dialogue on the operation of local patriarchies. However changing the perceptions of gender equality among concerned state actors and community, especially among men and the younger generation requires more attention.

While promising beginnings have been made on governance related beliefs, there is a need to address deep seated gender inequalities. Personal stories and narratives have an emotional appeal and power that are different from strictly didactic methods and can be harnessed creatively. Implementing organisations, with their long term engagement with local patriarchies, can play a more proactive role

and steer the content tone and overall media strategy to address deeply entrenched prejudices. At the same time there is a need to ensure that it's women's *voices* which are heard, rather than women becoming technical experts in film/radio, as that remains the critical element in creating a new discourse on gender equality.

Changing gender and governance discourses requires a combination of public campaigns, community media resources and advocacy efforts that feed into each other while maintaining their distinctive objectives and styles. The project has offered spaces for such an approach enabled by ICTs. However, as demonstrated by the ITfC experience, even with technology, it is the presence of strong women's collectives and long term work with EWRs and sustained capacity building of entire *panchayats* that makes for a critical difference.

Chapter 5: Project and Partnership Management

MWVVC was an idea first mooted by IT for Change who explored the basic tenets of the project with KMVS, ANANDI and *Mahila Samakhya Karnataka* (MSK) while looking for suitable partners from among women's rights organizations in the country. These initial discussions led to a decision to submit a proposal to FGE with ITfC as Project Lead, KMVS as co-lead and ANANDI as Partner. *Mahila Samakhya Karnataka* was not an official partner as MSK was in a withdrawal phase and the implementation was envisaged as a joint effort between the ITfC field centre in Mysore, *Prakriye*, and the MSK promoted women's federations in Hunsur and HD Kote Blocks of Mysore District.

The preparation of the proposal and the project design was a collaborative process that involved several rounds of discussion among the three to clarify roles and concepts, and dialogue with UN Women to arrive at project goal, objectives, strategies, outcomes, outputs, and indicators. This was a phase of building a shared ownership and leadership of the project, taking cognisance of the different organizational contexts. ANANDI, KMVS and ITfC evolved their specific field strategies and stitched it all together in the overall project design.

From the baseline, to project execution and its implementation to doing the endline study of the project, this principle of shared leadership was effectively applied by the lead agency while supporting the project implementing partners through training, and coordinating the reporting and monitoring of the project progress to UN women. This was an effective and efficient approach, with the principle of mutual accountability, and allowed for a quick response time. This kind of partnership management based on a shared understanding helped in ease of coordination between the lead agency, co-lead, other implementing partners and UN Women.

In each of the three project areas, the operationalization of the project strategies involved layered partnerships of the implementing organisations with the EWR networks and/or women's collectives and federations and the *gram/ block/ district level panchayat* members, administration and officials.

At each site the women's collectives had their own unique histories in terms of the structures and processes of engaging with their respective constituencies of women. (A brief history of the women's collectives at each of the three sites has been explained in the introductory chapter.) The location specific dynamics of partnerships, along with their respective stakes, interests and capabilities had a significant bearing on the effectiveness and sustainability of the project interventions in that location. These dimensions however haven't been examined as part of the terms of reference of the present evaluation.

ITfC played a key role in technical capacity building on ICTs, on community video production, and in supporting the conduct of GIS by the partners. They also customized the Open Source IVR software, utilized at IT for Change and trained the MSM team in using the software. These trainings were not just about transferring technological skills - they were about sharing ITfC's insights and experiences in strategically utilising these tools in their work with women on the ground. In Gujarat, ANANDI and KMVS brought their long-time working experience and competencies of undertaking sustained mobilisation and collectivization of women at the local level. In their keenness to explore how ICTs can catapult their grassroots organising work to the next level, ITfC helped these partners with their niche experience of developing ICT enabled pedagogies of women's engagement. Inputs from KMVS and ANANDI were also leveraged into the training and technical interventions for the project. A list of these trainings is provided in [Annexure 11](#).

These trainings were followed up with a process of hand-holding by ITfC to help KMVS and ANANDI appropriate these possibilities in specific campaigns. ANANDI and KMVS will continue to seek support of ITfC for continuing with their journey of using ICT for creating a stronger women's rights culture.

IT for Change undertook the responsibility for coordinating project communication efforts and maintained the website. An internal e-mail group of the teams at the 3 sites enabled regular exchange of stories and learnings from each site. These organisations have moved from being bound by the financial and time commitment of the given project to a more dynamic one to support each other's interests to capitalise on digital opportunities.

5.1 Efficacy of tools and formats used to monitor the project progress

The monitoring and reporting system included a brief narrative report with space for quantitative data as well as stories of change and the Project Monitoring Framework (attached as [Annexure 1](#)) which was structured around the project's goal, expected outcomes, outputs, activities, targets and actual achievements. For each output, the indicators developed, sources of data and achievements were recorded. This allowed space for analytical and reflexive process reporting alongside details of activities done and comparison with targets.

All data was presented with site specific information and across sites for the six monthly period. This also demanded a culture and system of rigorous record maintenance at each site- from tracking number of phone calls received by infocentres to the number of people watching a screening. The PMF is densely packed with information for each activity aggregated into outputs, and these outputs are then aggregated to outcomes. This allowed for sharp monitoring and tracking of how each activity contributed to specific outcomes. Filling this required gathering of data from each village, cluster, block at each project site and collating it according to the specified format. The fact that this was done every six months is a commendable effort as the extensive and elaborate PMF based reporting is a time consuming process. It is also cumbersome to read and crammed with information using small fonts in multiple cells that can be quite challenging to the reader. Although it has been designed to be responsive, such a format can detract from activities.

The collection of baseline data – selection of EWRs, preparation of exhaustive questionnaires, their translation, administration, data tabulation and analysis was done in an elaborate manner. However the time consumed of the project teams for a project with diverse sets of activities and expected outputs in a limited period of two years is a cause for concern.

In the endline the number of questions asked was reduced to almost half and indicates a more realistic set of needed information. The comparative analysis of baseline and endline was a useful exercise, but the big difference in sample size from 79 to 135 made comparisons limited. At the end of the day the sample being only 135 and then splitting that into sub groups on the basis of responses to questions (where N is then less than 135) indicates that drawing conclusions needs to be done with caution and with continuous acknowledgment of the small sample size.

Financial reports in the specified formats used to track budgeted expenses with actuals, though relevant, also required re-aligning accounting systems at the partners' level to the project requirements.

The size of the budget: The project has a tight budget and vast expectations. The average amount each partner and the coordinating agency received was an average of Rs. 17,00,000/- per year which is less than Rs 1,50,000 a month to meet both activity costs and overheads and personnel costs. This is on the low side as each site has a programme coordinator, Project coordinators, 6-7 community coordinators, documentation in-charge, radio and video associates, and the finance and administrative

staff. Meeting all the salaries and other activity related costs within an average of Rs 1,50,000 per month seems extremely difficult. For the coordinating agency too, the stress of accommodating project and programme management, communication and documentation, accounting, financial management, monitoring and evaluation costs within an annual budget of about Rs. 12,00,000 per annum (Rs. 8,06,128 +3,89,222) seems to be a very tight financial management exercise.

Most importantly, the budget heads used are not easy to connect to the activities undertaken except for audio and video production which is a distinct line item and a significant aspect of the community media programme related to Outcome 3. The actual costs of running an infocentre, of capacity building for EWRs, of the IVR platform are not easy to gather from this budget format.

Trainings and conferences are clubbed and does not demarcate field trainings from staff trainings, EWR network meetings and other conferences. In a project where capacity building is a core activity, an outlay of Rs. 4,40,000 per annum for training, workshop and conferences across 3 project sites, which also includes the cost for ITfC to provide technical support, does seem limiting.

In an IT enabled project spread over two years, only Rs. 80,037 was allocated across sites for IT equipment pre-supposes that partner organizations already possess the necessary equipment needed to implement the project. The reality is that even a projector for screenings was not available at some sites.

5.2 The nature and level of engagement between the partners and the state actors

Linkages with state actors at village block, district, state and national level were developed as part of the project. The extent and effectiveness of the village, block and district level linkages developed by project partners, women's collectives and EWR platforms have been reviewed in the preceding chapters covering the three areas of strategic interventions of the project.

At the state level, attempts were made to connect with senior officials in the Rural Development and *Panchayati* Raj Department and the State Resource Centres. At the national level attempts were made to relate to the Knowledge Commission, National Mission on Empowerment of Women of the Ministry of Women and Child Development, and the Department of Tele-communications. The national workshop organized by all 3 project partners in September 2014 helped NMEW draw insights from the model developed under this project for its *Poorna Shakti Kendras*.

There is surely scope for furthering the key project lessons for advocacy to inform the new policies and planning instruments being rolled out by the states and the central government from the departments and ministries of rural development, women and child development, science and technology, and PRIs.

5.3 About partnership between UN Women and implementing organizations

The FGE managed by UN Women has always been a small but a catalytic grant. MWVVC is no exception to it and has served the purpose of indicating its potential for replication in future. However, limitations in the way FGE is structured for its funding, management and reporting has impacted the project. For instance, the decision to reduce the project term from three years to two years due to budgetary constraints put a great deal of financial and work stress on the partners, even as targets were reduced through several rounds of dialogue.

As a catalytic project, the MWVVC needs more time and space to capitalize and build on the results achieved in this time period. On the whole there is a sense of haste for a process demanding attitudinal shifts in diverse groups, making institutions gender responsive and for working on social justice agenda. These processes of change in reality work in a very dynamic, complex and nonlinear manner which makes it a challenging task to be addressed in a time specific frame. The fact that EWRs change every five years, and even changed during the project in Gujarat, is not given adequate cognisance in the project management.

The team at UN women has been very engaged with the project and constantly in touch with the project partners with support, solidarity and encouragement. The project has been showcased at different platforms both nationally and internationally. The UN women team has also linked the project partners to national and state actors leveraging their influence to further the advocacy goals of the project.

One of the highlights of the project was the visit of Dr. Mlambo Phumzile, Under Secretary General and Executive Director UN Women, New York to the Info *mela* in Shihor block of Bhavnagar, Gujarat facilitated by the UN Women India Country office, in October 2014. Her visit to the project site gave immense visibility to the project. This has been a very critical contribution as outlined in Chapter 4.

5.4 Conclusion

The innovative and pioneering attempts made in the project were largely possible due to the selection of very responsive and well-established organisations as implementing partners. The implementing partners successfully complemented each other in taking up this project to break new grounds in their work of engendering a gender responsive governance system with increased women's political participation.

The ICT-enabled and face to face networking undertaken during the project has strengthened linkages with the state actors at all levels from the *gram panchayats* to the National Knowledge Commission to inform them about the unique aspects of the project. Possibilities to explore partnerships both with the government departments and with the INGOs and multilaterals for scaling up are being explored by ITfC.

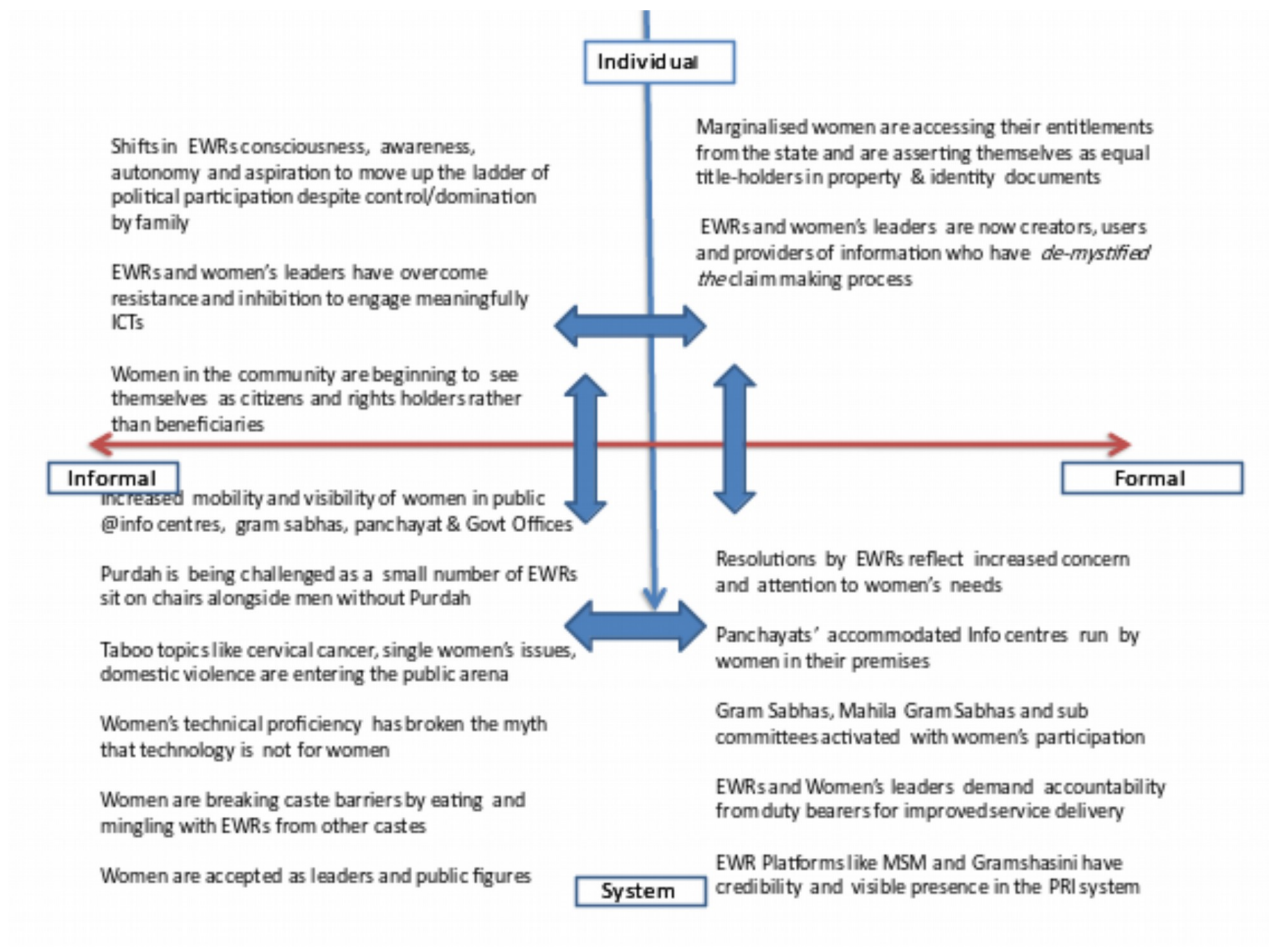
UN Women has been supportive, linked partners to state and civil society actors nationally and internationally, and monitored the project using a combination of narrative and data based documents that were rather exhaustive, structured and elaborate. On the whole project management came together quite effectively to ensure targets were achieved, and relationships and processes strengthened.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

In this chapter we will draw conclusions by first capturing the impact of the project and then examining the contextual factors mitigating against gender responsive governance. Based on these inferences and insights, recommendations to the various stakeholders are offered.

6.1 Domains of change emerging from the project

Applying the Gender at Work (G@W) framework, the diagram below provides a snap shot of the key changes that have occurred in the four domains.



6.1.1 Changes in women's consciousness: the individual- informal realm

For EWRs in the core group the most significant change is in their self-perception, self-esteem and aspiration to be effective in their political role. This change is visible in the many ways that core group of EWRs are asserting themselves. These assertions in the family, *Panchayat* bodies and community have been possible because they have freed themselves from oppressive norms related to *purdah*, restrictions on mobility, communication and association, to interact with their peers, raise issues in meetings, frame agendas and even get resolutions passed on women's concerns. These shifts are manifest in EWRs' self-perception of moving up the ladder of participation from being passive to tokenistic, and to now exercising their active

citizen power with a greater consciousness of their responsibility as representatives of women's constituency in the local government.

The EWRs and women's leaders have built a comfortable relationship with ICTs and are adept at handling devices and using technology in ways relevant to women's lives and concerns. The project has opened multiple pathways for creative use of technology by EWRs and women's leaders that have informed, motivated, supported and guided them and enhanced their perspectives on gender and governance. EWRs have also staked ownership of ICTs through powerful messages conceptualized, produced and disseminated using ICTs. There is an internalization of *rights* discourse within themselves and that's an important shift taking place.

6.1.2 Changes in women's access to resources

Women's wellbeing, health, security, nutrition, and dignity is improved through accessing basic entitlements of food, shelter, education, employment, social security, sanitation, etc. from the state. There were some instances of initiatives of women coming forward to claim their property rights to land and housing using provisions of the law to get what fathers, husbands, brothers and sons have denied women in the name of duty, culture and tradition. The support of women's collectives and federations is the key in the women's struggle to claim her right to property.

EWRs and women's leaders have become generators, users and providers of information turning the tables on men, who now have to seek information from women. For marginalized women in the community, their access to information as a right and as a resource has increased manifold. The claims-making process is demystified, empowering citizens vis-a-vis government departments

6.1.3 Changes in the formal- systemic sphere

The setting up of the information centres inside the offices of the gram and/or block *panchayat* offices is a change in the way these offices run and indicates the acceptance of a women-run, rights-oriented enterprise in a hitherto male dominated welfare oriented space.

Convening of *Mahila Gram Sabhas*, greater number of resolutions passed, including resolutions on women's entitlements, the influence of the EWRs *sabha* meetings- are important impact-level changes which have come with the informed and persistent interventions of the EWRs and women leaders. This has also led to increased accountability and transparency being demanded from state delivery mechanisms. *Gramshasini* and MSM are also being recognized as credible organizations demonstrating that EWRs are serious about their role in the promotion of gender responsive governance.

6.1.4 Changes in the informal cultural sphere

Small but significant changes have been achieved in cultural norms, beliefs and practices. The rapid increase in number of footfalls of women at the info centres, *gram sabhas*, *panchayat* offices & government departments, especially in places where women's mobility is curbed, is a sign that there is an acceptance of this and that it's being normalized.

Purdah is being challenged as a small number of EWRs sit on chairs alongside men without *Purdah*. Though the number is miniscule, for the women removing it and for those who look at her in the face, it is indeed a very big deal!

Taboo topics like cervical cancer, single women's issues, and domestic violence are entering the public arena. Health and security are beginning to be seen as rights issues.

Women EWRs as members of MSM and *Gramshasini Manch* are breaking caste barriers by eating and mingling with EWRs from other castes when they gather as women with a shared mandate, similar dilemmas and similar stresses: emphasising solidarity over differences.

Women's technical proficiency has broken the myth that technology is not for women. And women being competent as *panchayat* members has exploded the myth that politics is not for women. Women are increasingly accepted in the social domain as leaders and public figures

6.1.5 Porousness and interconnectedness of domains

The trajectories of change seem to move from individual to collective to systemic changes in a continuum. These domain boundaries are porous, reciprocal and cannot be tightly demarcated. For instance, the women's experience of being empowered with material resources accessing entitlements has created a shift in women's consciousness with an increased level of exposure to knowledge. This has in turn enhanced the social value of women successfully claiming entitlements and getting documents/title deeds in their names. Having her name as co-owner or sole owner of house or land documents or having the mother's name on a child's birth certificate, or possessing an identity card as a woman farmer are indeed precious symbols of women's citizenship.

These changes have met women's strategic needs for affirmation, dignity, self-esteem, visibility, mobility and voice. However as these needs are continuously contested and pushed back by the threats of violence, slander and vilification in the name of culture, honor and virtue, the women's journeys to individual empowerment has been a process of challenging well-entrenched patriarchal hegemonies in the informal cultural systemic domain. The power of these cultural notions lie in the beliefs that women have also internalized and acquiesced in the roles they play of a good wife, *bahu*, mother, daughter and sister. Therefore it is finally the need for a transformation in each individual's consciousness that we return to.

6.2 Key Conclusions Regarding the Project

6.2.1 Achievements

The project has been catalytic in building innovative linkages between gender, governance and technology. It holds promise in the future for further testing and refining the new pedagogies, tools for reflective praxis and generating evidence for building academic discourse at the intersections of knowledge, power and gender equality.

More engaged and involved participation of women in the political spaces at the local level has meant increased recognition, leadership and making a difference in their own lives and supporting other women to claim their rights. Increased level of women's participation in the PRIs works as a double edged sword with increased challenges and vulnerabilities in their path of political empowerment from the patriarchal forces in the family, community and other institutional spaces combined with threats of co-option from entrenched power interests.

Control over knowledge and resources is the pivot on which patriarchal power has perpetrated its public-political control, combining this of course with the threat of force and violence. The project – through the

use of ICTs – has caused a disruption in this traditional landscape, positioning women as key interlocutors in the local governance context.

Enabled by the ICTs, EWRs have widened the span of women's participation from the community in different forums under the *panchayat raj* institutions. These women have broadened the discourse of governance and created opportunities for dialogue, critical analysis and action on issues which otherwise would not find space in the *gram sabha* meetings.

6.2.2 Spaces where women have gained significantly

Empowerment through Technology: Using GPS for mapping, making Gender score cards, sending and receiving IVRS, hosting community video programmes and making short video films, operating offline and online information portals- all these have been attempted by women with a clear political and gender responsive agenda.

Awareness of her agency as a citizen and a rights holder: Women in the project area have internalized, owned and claimed rights, ranging from employment arrears under MNREGA, to widow pensions, to ensuring food supply for families from the PDS, to getting health and educational benefits for girls and young women, and some have even got housing grants sanctioned.

The historicisation of individual experience and wisdom: Through face to face interactions, meetings and trainings, women have begun a process of listening to each other and of critically reflecting on the historical question of the subjugation of women. These reflections have also been used in the media resources, forming the basis of a feminist pedagogy where “personal is political”.

6.2.3 Middling gains seem to have been made in...

Gram Sabhas and Mahila Gram Sabhas: Despite increased attendance, quality of participation by women in the forums and the project's achievement in showcasing increased instances of EWRs managing to get the resolutions concerning women's claims and entitlements and health and education in the *gram sabhas and mahila sabhas*, the thematic issues of health, education, PDS, social security entitlements are predominantly perceived and addressed as women's issues by the EWRs and the other PRI members and functionaries. The difference between *Mahila Gram Sabha* and *Gram Sabha* needs to be understood not just as a “separate space” for women, but as a “different space” with different agendas, processes and outcomes.

EWRs' efficiency and effectiveness to take up community and social welfare agendas in the PRIs need further attention and vision building. The understanding of the EWRs on the gender responsive agenda was not very clear and strong nor was their position and condition in the PRIs very conducive in building the gender responsive agenda in the *panchayat* processes and functioning.

EWRs linkages with peers: Building newer linkages and sustaining them is a time intensive process and where it has been possible to grow stronger has been where the linkages and women's associations have pre-dated the project as in MSM and *Gramshasini*.

6.2.4 Slower areas of progress...

Here one would like to put in a note of caution that the conclusions drawn below are to be understood within the broader social- political environment in which the PRIs and the EWRs are functioning. Therefore

it is hoped that the inferences drawn will not be seen only from the limited terrain of the project outcomes and results.

Though the PRIs and service providing institutions at the local level seem to address women's concerns, women's *perspectives* still rarely shape governance. There is still a long way to go in building gender responsive governance that infuses women's perspectives into all institutional policies and practices. There were not many EWRs who understood and saw themselves as women's representatives to further the political constituency of women.

There is inadequate engagement of EWRs with the financial management of the *Panchayat*. Even women *Sarpanches* were excluded from the financial dealings of the panchayats.

In Mysore, there is no forum for continuous interactions among EWRs except when they meet as Managing Committee members of the infocentres. These meetings have a specific limited agenda and are not adequate as a networking space where EWRs can share their problems, needs and concerns and build a collective platform. Some EWRs are associated with the network promoted by the Hunger Project for the EWRs but the MWVVC project has not worked strategically to form an alliance with this platform.

In terms of clarity about building a women's political constituency- most EWRs perceived their role using traditional yard sticks of "*knowing the formal rules and processes*". Very few EWRs believed that their role in PRIs is also to get women's concerns addressed. When asked if they represent **women**, apart from their overall constituencies, EWRs were not able to articulate this clearly. This is not unique to the project sites as is corroborated by Jyotsna Jha, Director of the Centre of Budget and Policy Studies, Bangalore, who has been doing a comparative study of EWRs and EMRs. Her tentative findings are that women leaders at the *Panchayat* level seemed to be taking up the same priorities as men.

However, there are also signs of hope. The endline revealed that a significant numbers of the EWRs from the core group have expressed their desire to run the *panchayats* "*differently from the way men have*". However an alternate gender responsive architecture of the PRIs needs to be laid out before them in order to translate that desire into reality.

The governance discourse of the PRIs has also been largely silent on addressing issues of gender based violence and violence against women. At best the *Nyaya Samitis* (social justice committees), if these forums are functional, seem to be playing the role of diffusing the crisis and sometimes play the mediator's role between the spouse /family members. Though EWRs cannot be expected to become "VAW activists", there is a need for them to build their perspective and skills to support women facing situations of gender based violence, which is an increasing hazard and risk facing women in today's violent, factitious and intolerant environment.

6.3 Some Issues in Project Design

Project's Duration: The realm and sustainability of changes that could be effected by the project is severely limited by the project's short time span. At baseline, identification of core group, enabling ICTs to be used and owned by women, increasing peer networking and involving collectives in decision making, etc., takes time. The project effectively had about fifteen months to introduce the ICTs, help women learn and then to generate the outputs! It is commendable that the three partner organizations and MSM (as they took

responsibility at many levels) could achieve and exceed most of the targets and expectations in this short time span.

Small size of Core Group: The fact that less than 20% of the EWRs in the project areas are now in the core group effectively meant 135 EWRs spread across 6 blocks. Though the size of the core group more than doubled due to intense and laudable efforts of the partner organizations in the short duration of the project, it is still a small number even for a pilot project. This limits the strength of conclusions one can draw.

The Changing Core Group: As EWRs change every five years, investment of attention and resources in individuals is a concern. This has been circumvented by platforms like MSM and *Gramshasini* where even ex-EWRs remain in the platform, so that one does not have to start from scratch every five years. The project design could have treated these platforms too as “primary beneficiaries” as EWRs come and go, while it is the platform that remains.

The size of the budget: The project has a tight budget and vast expectations as elaborated in the previous chapter.

Communication, documentation and reporting: The project is extremely well documented, monitored with exhaustive reports, process documents, updated websites, photographs, etc. The immense effort and time that has gone into these processes remains somewhat invisible and needs to be acknowledged. Also for a short and low cost project, this level of documentation seems a bit of an overload.

Dependence on organizations with capacities, infrastructure and investments in women's rights work: A project like this is totally dependent on organizations who have been working with women's collectives for more than a decade, relating with EWRs, focusing on governance, and possess a capacity to absorb technological inputs, having infrastructure, personnel and other sources of funds, and who are open to collaborations involving ICTs. This makes the project difficult to replicate in situations where this is missing.

6.4 The Dilemmas That Remain

The triad of gender, ICT and governance seems to have opened up exciting possibilities of moving a largely gender-blind ICT paradigm to a more evolved gender sensitive perspective. There is also an increased understanding that the digital technologies are neither value neutral nor apolitical. Deploying digital technologies for gender-just governance is therefore, an endeavor that straddles two equally political spaces – that of technology itself, and of governance. The project recognised this, and hence in each of its strategies, the focus was on creating rituals that brought together the transformative possibilities of digital and face to face strategies, for furthering the gender and governance agenda.

However, ICT enabled pedagogies need to be continuously revisited:

- for its access, control and use by, for and of the women
- for its potential for creating a script of transformative agenda for social justice and gender equality
- for it to be acknowledged as public interest goods
- for its reach and penetration in the local community
- for creating dialogic spaces on understanding and addressing local patriarchies
- for its interface with the different community mediums and their ability to influence the mainstream media

6.5 Contextual Factors Mitigating against Women's Political Participation

6.5.1 Contested Gender spaces

Despite 33-50% reservation for the women, mandatory holding of *Mahila Gram Sabhas* and formation of social justice committees, women's participation and leadership in the political arenas continues to be resisted in subtle and obtrusive ways and means. PRIs continue to be male bastions of power and largely non-accepting of women's participation beyond tokenism. At best there is a patronizing attitude shown towards women's perspectives.

If women are taking autonomous decisions, independent of men in their lives, the pressure and threats of violence and ostracism by the family and community have become greater. This has taken the form of no-confidence motions to remove active women from the PRIs, slander, malicious gossip, sexual innuendos, and even physical assaults.

Increased threat of violence and conflicts with their family; stigma of shaming the family and men's honour has made it harder for EWRs to be effective and even the stronger women's leaders feel discouraged to contest elections on their own volition. Making women's voices and votes count is an increasingly complex and challenging process! There seems to be a long drawn battle for the EWRs to break free from the entrenched control and involvement of the husband/s and other male members of the family over their bodies and minds, to be able to take independent decisions in the private and public realms. There is a more complex shadow control and hold of men (*Sarpanch Pati/ EMRs/ PDO/Talatis*) and masculine form of politics taking place.

6.5.2 Governance Issues

The mode of governance in the PRIs is largely to serve as an administrative arm of the state to implement its services at the local level. The mandate of the PRIs for decentralized governance and delivering on social justice and development agenda has only been paid lip-service with no teeth to make it stronger and hold PRIs accountable to such an agenda. In the neo-liberal political economic space, the status of functioning of the PRIs seems to indicate a reversal of gains made in the developmental discourse from being led by rights to becoming dole-centric again.

Coupled with the lack of belief in the spirit of decentralization is also an increasing centralization of power within all levels of state institutions. People's agency as citizens is being increasingly compromised by being made faceless, digitized numbers who can be tracked, inked and identified. Increasing influence of the dominant political powers and politics of majoritarianism can be witnessed in the practices such as *SAMRAS*- the practice of incentivizing unopposed candidate selection in Gujarat and purchase of members in the PRIs by influential lobbies in Karnataka has made the agenda of achieving social justice all the more challenging.

The stranglehold of party politics and identity based politics of caste and class and religion continues to hamper EWRs effective participation for contributing to a deliberative, inclusive and egalitarian functioning of the PRIs. There were scores of stories of conflicts with, and violence from the male community members faced by the EWRs from upper castes and of discrimination faced by the EWRs from the *Dalit* communities

for participation, from both men and women. At the core remained a resistance to accept women as leaders, with virtue and honor being ascribed only to women confining themselves to the domestic realm.

Increasing influence of money power on the local PRIs has also cast its shadows on women's effective participation. There were hardly any spaces where EWRs could raise their voice to address the systemic practices of corruption impacting the functioning of the PRIs. It is seen as one of the biggest obstructions to good governance, yet it seems to have become an acceptable normative practice here, the EWRs are either supposed to take it as part of their job or look the other way. This puts pressure on women to become complicit in a chain of 'kickbacks', which even earns them prestige at home.

One of the weak links of the poor and inefficient governance system of the PRIs and for the EWRs to be more assertive in making meaningful contribution is the lack of devolution of finances to the PRIs and PRIs not being given the power to raise their own resources. The bureaucratic maze through which the funds to the *gram panchayat* are channeled is a classic instance of governance paralysis. This is exacerbated by the sharp decline in allocations for social development in the recent budgetary exercise undertaken by the government of India which has meant huge cuts in allocation of budgets for rural development, women and child development, health and education and agricultural development programmes. This has further added to the overall unpredictability of the budgetary situation of *panchayats*.

The state of Karnataka has seen a 4-fold increase in the devolution of untied funds to *panchayats*. This has made the PRIs in the state as hugely contested terrains for grabbing power and resources. This in turn makes the EWRs more vulnerable to be pushed into playing secondary and tokenistic roles. To end on a slightly promising note, one could look at the schemes such as National Rural Livelihoods Mission that seek to promote in their policy pronouncements for Panchayat Raj – CBO convergences.

6.6 Recommendations

6.6.1 Sufficient and necessary conditions for the future road map

The building of women's political constituency and taking cognisance of women's rights requires nurturing a climate where a large number of women may be prepared through processes of conscientisation and collectivization. This would also mean creating an alternative power discourse which is a shift from the "power over" towards "power to", "power with" and "power within".

What we see in the project are small but crucial beginnings made, which could be drawn upon for developing the future route map. These could be translated as the sufficient and necessary conditions for future work as suggested below-

- Systematically investing in building a critical mass of politically active and gender responsive constituency of women
- Embedding the triad of gender, governance and ICT in the feminist principles of active listening, sharing, reflection, solidarity and building associational power of women
- Strengthening local level women's networks and alliance building
- The ICT enabled governance processes to be led, owned and controlled by local women by those who are inside the PRIs and by women who are part of the local women's federations/ collectives
- Strengthening human, structural and financial capabilities of the PRIs to deliver on their social justice agenda

- An ICT enabled architecture of the PRIs to effectively address the claims and entitlements of the poorest and most vulnerable sections of the society
- Ensuring the commitment of the state for a free , fair and transparent functioning of local systems of governance as decentralised and autonomous institutions of democracy
- Working concurrently in the domains of formal governance systems and cultural norms

6.6.2 For Women's Rights Organizations, Women's Collectives and Implementing Partners

- The window of the project period needs to be extended to another three- four years for scripting a transformative agenda. As Ms. Jahnvi Andharia (Executive Director, ANANDI) had mentioned from her experience that *"use of ICT had to be approached gradually and two years was a very short period for women to fully grasp the effective appropriation of technologies. It is only now do we see women becoming ready to combine the technology and governance agenda"*.
- The present model of project partnerships need to be further strengthened as the technical skills provided by ITfC was strongly augmented by the strong mobilization work done by the women's rights organizations and the local women's collectives. This partnership model could be made stronger by adding to it the experience of an advocacy based organization. Such an organization or network of organizations can support in amplifying the model building from the ground with state and national level bodies involved with science and technology, women's empowerment, rural development and PRIs.
- The project outcomes are largely based on the existing strength of the mobilisation of rural poor women by established organizations. These networks require long term commitment of time, human, technical and financial resources to continue working.
- Sustained capacity building, advocacy and networking support need to be provided to the women's collectives for them to establish their outreach, credibility and autonomy in carrying out the agenda of gender responsive governance.
- In Mysore, as there are no preexisting elected women's network, it becomes an important area of intervention for the subsequent phase to focus on creating such a platform for EWRs. This would mitigate the loss of trained human power due to high job turnover among the hired infomediaries in Mysore.
- *Mahila Swaraj Manch*, which grew considerably in capacities and stature through anchoring of the MWVVC project, needs to broad base its support among the women at the village level.
- A new digital literacy curriculum for women and youth could be created through wider dissemination of the modules for infomediary training created under this project.
- Gender responsive governance needs focused work with all sections of the local community, not just elected women. Sensitivity of the *panchayat* officials, EMRs, influential male members of the community need to be concurrently developed to overcome the stiff resistance posed by various structures and norms of a patriarchal society.
- For building better preparedness of the PRIs in developing their gender responsiveness, it is suggested to begin with tangible issues for training and engaging the interest of the PRI members. For instance 'Technology trainings' (In KMVS areas) and 'Network meetings' (in Mysore) became strategic entry points for starting this dialogue with the *Panchayats*.

- While information centres run by women's collectives in partnership with EWRs help women claim entitlements from the state, women's claiming of rights and entitlements from their families and community could also be added to the role and scope of information centres, thus helping women claim their civil, social and cultural rights.

For working with the EWRs

- Expand the base of EWRs in the project (Presently only 135 EWRs).
- Build the EWR's capacities to further their use of the ICT enabled skills to take up specific problems impacting the women of their constituencies.
- Build capacities of EWRs to track budgets and expenditure and to make such information available in the public domain
- Build capacities of the *Panchayat* officials, *Sarpanch* and EWRs in gender-budgeting
- Deepening the perspectives of the EWRs on the 'how' and 'what' of taking up gender and women's issues, especially building their capacity to take up issues concerning gender based violence, single women, and issues concerning the most vulnerable and marginalised sections of the community.

For the State Actors

For the ministries of rural development and PRIs, priorities for governance reforms on the basis of addressing women's concerns in the PRIs could include the following:

- A new training model for elected women and elected men representatives is needed that moves beyond the current supply-side, classroom based, one-off training modules of the state. Training should effectively use community-media based pedagogies, IVR-based peer learning possibilities and respond to dynamic information needs expressed by elected members on an ongoing basis, in highly contextualised ways.
- The perspective building processes in the R.D and PRI processes should strongly be informed by a social justice agenda and move beyond building role clarity and efficiency of the PRI members to strengthen/activate dormant social justice committees.
- Voter awareness campaigns undertaken by the state agencies should have qualitative assessment processes for ensuring genuineness of the candidates contesting for the PRIs to reduce proxy candidates and tokenism.
- Ministry of Women and Child Development can spearhead the building of institutional capacities of women's collectives to use ICTs for furthering their political empowerment and take the existing skills based digital literacy programmes to a completely different level. This could be done in conjunction with existing schemes for economic empowerment of women's collectives, such as NRLM. The *Kudumbashree* scheme in Kerala has demonstrated how an ICT strategy can enable economic empowerment through its *Stree Shakti* portal. ANANDI as a lead gender training organization for state NRLM in Madhya Pradesh could introduce ICT enabled pathways in trainings on gender and livelihood.

- *Mahila Gram Sabhas* must be supported by government orders and circulars and by earmarking funds for following up on the agendas evolving from them.
- The Citizen Service Centre (CSC) model of the Department of Information and Technology too can be revisited to examine what models of information and service delivery will actually work at the village level. ICT-enabled *Panchayat* help desks can be a way of re-imagining the CSC scheme.

For the multilaterals and donors:

- UN Women can develop a strategic programme plan with a longer term perspective in the domain of women's political empowerment - drawing upon the catalytic elements of this project. The strategic plan can provide the rationale for developing such short term projects from a longer term perspective and for replication of the project model.
- Provide support to develop a feminist framework of working with PRIs for ICT enabled gender responsive governance based on the key insights of the project.
- Initiate collective project designing and fund raising with the women's rights organizations to continue working on innovative and catalytic ideas in the space of women's political empowerment.

Annexure 1: Project Monitoring Framework

	GOAL/OUTCOME/OUTPUTs	Indicators	Baseline	Final Target Planned
Goal	Strengthened local women's political constituency in 3 districts of India	Number of Elected Women Representatives (EWRs) and women leaders from the community able to raise questions, set agenda and make claims	EWRs attend <i>panchayat</i> meetings and <i>gram sabhas</i> regularly. However, they did not have adequate backing from women's collectives and women community leaders which made it extremely challenging for them to raise questions, set agenda and make claims, in the local governance space. Women's collectives and women community leaders not attending local governance forums.	1000 EWRs networked under the project, will be able to raise questions, set agenda and make claims. 900 women community leaders will be able to raise questions, set agenda and make claims.
		Number of Village Panchayats engaging with gender-responsive formal and informal local governance processes.	Research and empirical evidence indicates gender biased local institutions in the 6 blocks in Karnataka and Gujarat that the project is working in.	92 Village Panchayats
Outcome 1	Outcome 1	Indicators	Baseline	Final Target Planned
	Increased networking among EWRs and active participation of EWRs and women's groups in gender responsive governance	Number of EWRs framing agendas for gender responsive governance that informs panchayat resolutions and gram sabha resolutions	Though 63 of the 79 EWRs interviewed in the baseline survey have been involved in passing Panchayat resolutions, the baseline survey and FGDS at all 3 sites revealed that EWRs find it extremely difficult to frame agendas in core areas such as grants management, that can inform Panchayat resolutions; and in areas that are seen as threatening to prevailing gender norms (such as girls' education and challenging violence against women).	122 EWRs frame agendas for gender responsive governance that informs panchayat resolutions and gram sabha resolutions. 52 such gram sabha resolutions and 52 panchayat resolutions are passed.

Output 1.1	Indicators	Baseline	Final Target Planned
Increased participation by EWRs and women's collectives/ leaders in local governance processes, especially on women's rights issues	Number of EWRs participating in Gram Sabha	73 of the 79 EWRs interviewed in the baseline frequently attend the Gram Sabha. However at all 3 sites, EWRs expressed their difficulties in using the Gram Sabha as an effective platform for foregrounding marginalised women's concerns, especially as very few women from the community explicitly supported them in Gram Sabhas.	122 EWRs participate in Gram Sabhas, and raise agendas that foreground marginalised women's concerns.
	Number of EWRs participating in Mahila Gram Sabha	No baseline; as Mahila Gram Sabhas as an idea took off in all 3 sites, only after the inception of the project.	122 EWRs in the core group participate in Mahila Gram Sabhas
	Number of women's collectives / women community leaders participating in Gram Sabha and Mahila Gram Sabha	In all 3 sites, the FGDs with EWRs and women's collectives, conducted as part of the baseline revealed that very few women leaders from the community were participating in the Gram Sabha. There is no baseline for the Mahila Gram Sabhas.	550 women community leaders and members from 52 women's collectives participate in Gram Sabha and Mahila Gram Sabha. (Note – there are no women's collectives at ANANDI site)
Output 1.2	Indicators	Baseline	Final Target Planned
EWRs in 3 project sites are networked through a platform for knowledge sharing and peer learning	Number of EWRs and women community leaders linked through IVRS	No systematic use of technology for networking in all 3 sites.	770 EWRs and 500 women from the community, across the 3 sites will be on a mobile based information and communication platform.
	Number of messages sent to EWRs and women community leaders through IVRS	No systematic use of technology for networking in all 3 sites.	Over 300 messages will be sent by the end of the project.(4 messages per month at the KMVS and IT for Change sites; and 4 messages per month per infomediary at the ANANDI site)
	Number of linkages developed by core group of EWRs – with peers, with information centre, with women's collectives at the local level	At the KMVS and ANANDI sites in Gujarat, face to face platforms / trainings have been initiated about once or twice a month to bring about awareness on gender based violence, food security, and social security enti-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 770 EWRs are linked with their peers through IVRS. – 145 EWRs are linked to the information centres.

			<p>tlements through KMVS' Panchayat Resource Cell and ANANDI's Mahila Swaraj Manch. Ongoing / daily hand-holding and scope for peer exchange very limited in all 3 sites. At the IT for Change site, there was no pre-existing EWR network linking all the EWRs in the core group. Linkages with women's collectives weak, at the start of the project, at all three sites.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 105 EWRs are linked to 77 women's collectives through community meetings.(at KMVS and IT for Change sites) – 90 EWRs and 90 key women community leaders are linked through community meetings (at ANANDI site)
Outcome 2	Outcome 2	Indicators	Baseline	Final Target Planned
	Number of applications from the village community for claims and entitlements approved	Number of entitlement claims from community successfully processed by information centres	<p>Between January-June 2013 (zero period) the monthly average of the number of entitlement claims from the community successfully processed by the information centres, were:</p> <p>29 per information centre at the KMVS site; 50 per information centre at the ANANDI site; and 8 per information centre at the IT for Change site</p>	At least 4000 claims from members of the community will be successfully processed across sites - 1800 from KMVS, 1400 from ANANDI and 800 from IT for Change.
		Proportion of women among the applicants who have successfully received their claims.	<p>The monthly average of "Proportion of women among the applicants who have successfully received their claim" during the Zero Period:</p> <p>60% of successful applicants at the KMVS site i.e. 20 women per month per centre; 34 women per month per centre at the ANANDI site; and 5 women per month per centre at the IT for Change site.</p>	60% of the 4000 claims processed and realized pertain to women
	Output 2.1	Indicators	Baseline	Final Target Planned

	4 block-level and 7 village/cluster level centres in Gujarat, and 2 block-level and 4 cluster level centres in Karnataka, with local data-bases and mobile based platforms are able to provide greater information access to women.	Number of applications made by members of the village community to different schemes and programmes	The monthly average of "Number of applications made by members of the village community to different schemes and programmes" during the Zero Period: 50 per centre at the KMVS site; 58 per centre at the ANANDI site; and 10 per centre at the IT for Change site.	8000 applications are made across the centres, over the life of the project.
		Number of daily footfalls to the information centre and daily calls received by infomediary reg. Informational queries	For aggregate number of daily footfalls: On an average, Each KMVS centre receives 40 visitors a month. Each ANANDI centre receives about 50 visitors per month. Each IT for Change centre receives about 20 visitors per month. Baseline for aggregate number of daily footfalls is thus 160 visitors per month. Daily phone calls: This is a new indicator we added, so baseline is not possible as data was maintained earlier using disparate systems, at each of the 3 sites.	Aggregate number of daily footfalls is 620 visitors per month across the 17 info centres established under the project (KMVS – 50 monthly visitors per centre for 6 centres; ANANDI – 40 monthly visitors per centre for 5 centres and IT for Change – 20 visitors per month for 6 centres). Phone calls received (KMVS -- 50 calls per month per infomediary, ANANDI – 20 calls per month per infomediary, IT for Change – 15 calls per month per infomediary)
Outcome 3	Outcome 3	Indicators	Baseline	Final Target Planned
	Advocacy and campaigns at local and institutional level enable a shift in local public discourse towards gender equality.	Number of panchayats and male elite - from panchayats, government departments and the village community- supporting the women leaders.		650 men from the community, including male officials and EMRs, support the women leaders in media content creation, public screening and campaigns.
		Number of gender sensitive resolutions passed as a result of advocacy	0	52 gram sabha resolutions and 52 panchayat resolutions are passed, in the area of gendering local governance.
	Output 3.1	Indicators	Baseline	Final Target Planned
	Gender sensitive local media products and	Number of women leaders en-	0	About 200 women leaders will be actively en-

	processes are created and circulated in the local public sphere	gaged in local media processes.		gaged in ideational processes with the project team, around community media strategies.
		Number of media outputs created with engagement of women leaders (EWRs and from community).	0	30 video products across all 3 sites. 104 Weekly radio programmes in 2 sites
	Output 3.2	Indicators	Baseline	Final Target Planned
	Advocacy on gender-mainstreaming in local governance is carried out across project sites (such as a gender score card exercise for select panchayats/villages in the project area, social audits, campaigns on local governance issues and GIS based discussions at the community level)	Number of campaigns, events around the gender score card initiative, social audits and GIS based discussions at the community level.	0	Campaigns, including ones that utilise GIS possibilities – 6 Social Audits – 3 Gender Score Card proposal to be tabled before 37 panchayats
	Output 3.3	Indicators	Baseline	Final Target Planned
	Gender-responsive, local governance models are developed and tested in 3 project sites so that key elements of the model can be institutionalised	Number of gender-responsive local governance tools and processes adopted at the local level.	0	Gender responsive local governance tools adopted: - GIS-enabled participatory mapping, - Public information outreach IVRS to women leaders and women's collectives Gender responsive local governance processes adopted: – Mahila Gram Sabha, – meeting between elected women and women's collectives to identify women's priorities in local governance

				<p>processes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – meetings between infomediaries and panchayat members. – Community media in local governance campaigns
--	--	--	--	--

Annexure 2: Evaluators' Response to Endline Survey Tool

On the whole the endline survey tool is well conceptualised and linked to tracking the outcomes of the project. At this juncture it is important to reiterate that the endline survey, the FGDs and process documentation will be used together while making comparisons with the baseline survey and its findings.

With its comprehensive coverage of 135 EWRs, the endline survey is going to be the most crucial learning tool for deriving lessons and measuring impact against the stated objectives and expected outcomes. The endline survey will be of immense interest and significance to all the important project stakeholders. For the evaluators, this survey will provide a reference point for the triangulation of findings and insights gained from the FGDs and qualitative tools.

The suggestions made below emerge from a feminist belief and political stance that the binary between “quantitative” “target oriented” “measurable” methods of enquiry and “abstract”, “qualitative”, “process oriented” methods can be dissolved.

Schema of Questionnaire:

The endline sample of 135 is larger than base line sample of 79. While this is a positive move to collect data from all the key direct project beneficiaries, the increase in sample size means that comparisons to track changes i.e. before and after the project can only be made for those who are covered in both surveys. Otherwise, use of data will be limited to comparing between **percentages** of baseline sample and endline sample with regard to common/identical questions.

In comparison to the baseline data, there are also changes in number of questions. The baseline survey had about 60 questions (with slight variations across sites). However the endline survey now planned has only 35 questions. While a reduction in number of questions is in principle and methodologically a positive step to filter out data overload and focus on core issues, some key concerns seem to have fallen off the radar and could be included at this juncture.

The questionnaire has five sections with clear scope for each. However, we find that the first section on background also includes questions (7-12) which focus on the EWRS entry into the PRI, her autonomy, participation and motivation. These questions can therefore be moved to the section III where participation is being examined.

The demographic detail related questions are significant as a separate category as background related information can be used to cross tabulate and explore relationships between demographic dimensions and the EWRS performance, efficiency, perspectives, networks, proclivity to use of ICTs, decision making etc.

The schema of the questionnaire also locates the EWR's involvement in community media processes and patterns of use of ICTs as a separate domain in section V. Instead, this section could be partially merged with sections II, III and IV. Within the scope of these sections, questions could be added to explore the extent to which the ICTs, media resources and the information centres have helped strengthen the EWRs awareness, participation, networking, linkages, knowledge sharing, peer learning, realization of claims and entitlements, advocacy and campaigns and changing discourses on women's rights issues.

Design of questions: The three types of questions – A, B and C are well delineated with clear instructions for recording responses and therefore amenable to tabulation. However open ended questions (type D) are best avoided and attempts can be made for classification of responses as far as possible. We suggest that open ended responses for question 12, 15b, 17, 22, 25,26,27,28, 30 can be avoided by changing into multi-response questions

For example: What did the resolution(s) pertain to? (Question 17)

The resolutions could be related to specific themes which can be offered as possible responses like it has been done in question 15

1. health/sanitation
2. education
3. infrastructure
4. women's welfare
5. land
6. NREGA
7. PDS
8. any other

Responses to some other open ended questions can also be classified. For instance in Question 30

“How many times have you recorded for community radio? (*Please write down the details as specified by the respondent*) _____”

A key on the frequency could be provided – Never, 1-3 times, 3-5 times and More than 5 times

This would make tabulation easier and the questionnaire more user friendly.

Scope of Enquiry

In **section II** where the EWRs *awareness about Gram/taluk panchayat* functioning is being investigated, there is only ONE question about her self-perception of her awareness levels regarding procedural aspects of the panchayat. The fact that this question probes only her levels of information of procedures is limiting. It would be useful to help her reflect on governance in a broader and deeper manner. Few additional questions could be added to elicit her understanding of decentralised democratic governance and of gender responsive governance at the panchayat level. Further her understanding of the role of EWRs as distinct/different from that of male ERs and the extent to which this gendered understanding has been facilitated through ICTs could be an important area of enquiry at this juncture.

Section III probes questions about her *participation levels in local governance processes*. In this section the response code for Question 18 could be modified to reflect frequency of visits to the institutions listed.

The two questions in this section on the EWRs participation underscore her access to village/block level programme delivery institutions and initiative to raise concerns pertaining to community and/or women. However, participation in local governance processes is much more than participating during *panchayat* meetings or during visits to the institutions listed in an episodic manner. An understanding of multiple levels of her participation could be enriched manifold if her leadership, influence, her decision making space, abilities, autonomy in decision making processes were to be examined. Lastly, how the use of ICTs and media resources has changed public perception of her leadership credibility and power could be probed.

Section IV *examines linkages of the core group of EWRs with peers and with women's collectives* at the village level, and with information centres. In this section question 20 is more about the type of interaction **spaces, and** not about **nature /extent** of engagement... this question could give insight into whether new spaces have been created, but not how they been used. It is important to introduce a question on the increase in the number of EWRS she is now in contact with, the extent and content of those interactions, peer learning processes and a question on how they have helped her as an EWR. Question 21 is about nature of engagement with women's collectives, but extent and intensity of interactions is excluded in the Yes/No format. Possibilities of expanding the response options could be explored.

Questions about EWRS' role in facilitation of individual women's claims are covered in 19.7 and 19.8. However her perception of the information centre or her relationship with the infomediary are not addressed. More importantly, the extent to which ICTs have been able to strengthen linkages across EWRS and between EWRs and local women's collectives is not adequately explored. Addressing these

could strengthen the endline survey process and its use. Instead of an open ended question (22) more structured questions could be posed.

In section V which focuses on EWRs and community media processes, the questions focus on use of phone, use of IVR and production of radio/video question. Question 34 does not include the possibility of receiving IVR messages about women's concerns and adding this could be considered. Finally, her perception of changes in public discourse on gender/women's rights as a result of these technologies being deployed is not addressed. Therefore a question on perceived impact of the media resources could be added.

Annexure 3: List of Documents Studied

1. Project Management Framework
2. Narrative Reports for Jan-June 2013, July-December 2013, Jan-June 2014 and July-December 2014 and PMF reports.
3. Process documentation submitted by IT for Change, KMVS and ANANDI
4. Project Proposal
5. Baseline Report

Annexure 4: Broad Reference Group Members

Ms. Srilatha Batliwala	feminist activist-scholar and Board member, IT for Change
Dr. Anuradha Prasad	Board member, Kutch Mahila Vikas Sanghathan
Ms. Chinmayi Arakali	Adviser, Prakriye Centre for Community Informatics and Development, Mysore
Ms. Rohini Lakshane	Research Scholar, Centre for Internet and Society
Ms. Tara Sabavala	Sir Dorab Tata Trust, Mumbai
Ms. Kavita Ramdas	Ford Foundation, New Delhi
Ms. Sarada Murleedharan	Joint Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, GOI, New Delhi
Ms. Sarada Ali Khan	Joint Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development, GOI, New Delhi
Shri. T M Vijay Bhaskar	Additional Chief Secretary, Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Government of Karnataka
Ms. Lakshmi Krishnamurthy	Senior artiste, Bengaluru
Ms. Laxmi Murthy	Associate Editor, Himal South Asian
Dr. Jyothsna Jha	Director, Centre for Budget and Policy Studies, Bengaluru
Prof. Maithreyi Krishnaraj	Former Director, Research Centre for Women's Studies, SNDT University, Mumbai
Ms. Ammu Joseph	Senior Journalist, Bengaluru
Ms. Cynthia Stephen	Consultant, International Justice Mission, Bengaluru

Evaluation Report of Making Women's Voices and Votes Count

Ms. Soma Parthasarathy	Researcher on Gender and Sustainable Development, New Delhi
Mr. Gurumurthy Kasinathan	Director, Education and Public Software, IT for Change, Bengaluru
Mr. Parminder Jeet Singh	Executive Director, IT for Change, leading the work on Internet Governance

Annexure 5: Schedule of field visits

5a. Schedule for the field visit at the IT for Change site on 04th and 05th March 2015

Day I – 04/03/2015

Sl. No.	Time	Event	Description
1	09.30 am	Arrival at railway station	Office driver cum admin support, Tilakraj, will pick up evaluators from the railway station, drop them for breakfast at Mylari hotel. Note – as we will be in the field, we can pack lunch at this hotel or alternatively, we can eat at a hotel on the way recommended by Anupama).
2	10:00 to 11:00 am	Travel to Jakkalli	Jakkalli is around 45 Kms from Mysore. It is part of Thumbasoge panchayat of HD Kote block.
3	11:00 to 12:00 pm	Observing the <i>Mahila Gram Sabha</i> at Jakkalli	Prakriye is playing a key role in ensuring that <i>panchayats</i> organize exclusive village assemblies for women (<i>Mahila Gram Sabhas</i>). On this day, a <i>Mahila Gram Sabha</i> has been organised in Jakkalli village by elected women representatives Chinnama and Manjula (who is also working as ASHA), to bring up women's issues with the <i>panchayat</i> . <i>Panchayat</i> President and other elected representatives and <i>Panchayat</i> Development Officer (PDO) will be part of the discussion. (Duration of stop-over here, for observation can be decided by Evaluators)
4	12:00 to 01:00 pm	Discussion with Management Committee (MC) members at Thumbasoge	Prakriye initiated the setting up of an information centre for women, in collaboration with Thumbasoge <i>panchayat</i> in August 2014. Work of the information centre is planned and monitored by a Management Committee (MC), which comprises of elected male and female representatives, ASHA, <i>anganwadi</i> workers, <i>sangha</i> women and members of School Development and Management Committee.
5	01:00 to 01:30 pm	Discussion with ex- Panchayat Development Officer of Thumbasoge	Mr. Santosh was the former secretary and Panchayat Development Officer of Thumbasoge village and he supported the project initiatives. He used GIS tools in collaboration with us, to address the needs of the women in the

Evaluation Report of Making Women's Voices and Votes Count

			village.
6	01:30 to 02:30 pm	Lunch break	Parcel/ hotel in H.D.Kote
7	02:30 to 03:30 pm	CDPO interview at HD Kote	In collaboration with the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), Prakriye initiated an information centre in Kalihundi village recently. This is the third model we have experimented with, other than <i>sangha</i> -owned and <i>panchayat</i> -owned models.
8	03:30 to 04:00 pm	Travel to Bharatwadi	Bharatwadi is around 12 kms from Hunsur block located in the border of Nagarhole forest which is surrounded by tribal settlements.
9	04:00 to 05:00 pm	Discussion with <i>Sangha</i> women and EWRs	Manchamma, elected women representative who was elected under SC category participates in the village development initiatives and is closely associated with women's <i>sanghas</i> and information centres.
10	05:00 to 06:00 pm	Travel back to Mysore and check-in at Casa Meridien	Mysore is around 55 Kms from Bharathawadi.

Day II – 05/03/2015

Sl. No.	Time	Event	Description
1	08.00 to 08.15 am	Hotel logistics	Check out from the hotel
2	08:30 to 09.30 am	Discussion with Prakriye staff	Field and technical staff will be available at once. We can continue some part of the discussion during the journey to the field, as well.
3	09:30 to 11:00 am	Travel to Uyigondanahalli	60 Kms from Mysore. <i>Panchayat</i> has nine villages. One of the information centres is operational in Hosavaranchi village, which is part of this <i>panchayat</i> area.
4	11:00 to 12:00 pm	Discussion with Elected Male	Capacity building on digicam, tablet PC and video screen-

Evaluation Report of Making Women's Voices and Votes Count

		Representative, Elected Women Representatives and <i>Panchayat</i> Development Officer.	ings was organized for all elected representatives. <i>Panchayat</i> development officer facilitated two <i>Mahila Gram Sabhas</i> and played an active role in addressing the needs of marginalised women. Elected representatives participated in four 'network' meetings to jointly prioritise the needs of women and carry these agenda into the main <i>Gram Sabha</i> . Elected Male Representatives also encouraged and supported women's participation in governance. <i>Panchayat</i> Development Officer was one of the faculty in our community radio program.
5	12:00 to 01:00 pm	Discussion at Hosavaranchi information center	Hosavaranchi belongs to Uyigondanahalli panchayat, 4 kms from <i>panchayat</i> H.Q. One of the oldest information centers of Prakriye, MSK groups of the village, which are over two decades old, have played a key role in establishing the information centre and working on women's issues. We can look at the MIS system used by the infomediaries to systematically track the work of the information centres.
6	01:00 to 02:00 pm	Lunch break	Lunch will be arranged.
7	02:00 to 03:00 pm	Discussion with <i>Sakhis</i> of all information centers at Block information center	Discussion with all infomediaries about their capacity building calendar, field strategies and challenges.
8	03:00 to 03:30 pm	Discussion with Arathi, ex-JRP of <i>Mahila Samakya</i> at Block Information center	Information centre is housed in the <i>sangha</i> federation promoted by <i>Mahila Samakhya</i> , Karnataka. Arathi is the coordinator of the federation. Infomediary and the coordinator work closely in processing the entitlements, and work on women's issues at the block level.
9	03:30 to 04:30 pm	Travel to Mysore	Which is 40 Kms from Hunsur
10	04:30 to 05:00 pm	Discussion with Director of State Resource Center, state Ministry of RDPR	Dr. Tukaram, Director of State Resource Centre, is one of the key faculty for state-led SIRD trainings. He was closely associated with Prakriye in the community video program.
11	05.45 pm	Departure to Bangalore	By Tuticorin express

5b. Schedule for field visit at the Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan (KMVS) on 18th and 19th March 2015

Date	Time	Discussion areas	People present
18.3	10.30-12	Brief on project	Lata, Preeti, Kruti, Ketel, Dilip, infomediary team
	12-2.30	Discussion with <i>Gramshasini</i> federation	Urmila, Vanita, Aayshu, Krishna (<i>Gramshasini</i> members)
	3.30-5.00	Individual interactions on: Collective- EWR linkages Audio medium Video Medium Information center and journey of infomediaries <i>Panjo Haq</i> portal and its impact IVRS and its impact	Hakima, Nanduba, Aamad, Sharifa, Sushilaben, Sagar, Jayshree, Sitaben, Memuna, Mohanba, Hiruben
	5.30-8	FGD with collective members- SJS	Collective leaders – Ravapar, Kotda, Nakhtrana, Anad-sar villages
19.3	9.30-11.30	Visit to information center- Mundra	Sagar, Vinkal, infomediary
	12-2.30	FGD with collective members- UMS	Javjiba, Rajanba, Kunwarben, Chagbai, Kanakba and 50 other members
	2.45-4	FGD with EMRs	Sarpanch of Bhadreshwar, Sadau and member of Vaghura village

5c. Schedule for the field visit to ANANDI site on 16th and 17th March 2015

16 th March	From	To	Details of interaction
	Bangalore	6.30 or 7.00 A.M Ahmedabad	Received by car hired by ANANDI
	7.00 a.m. Ahmedabad	11.00 Shihor	Travel with Jahnvi and sharing overview and background
Shihor	11.00	11.30	Check in to hotel and come to MSM office
	11.30	12.00	Presentation by MSM on the key milestones of their journey till they got the project
	12.00	1.30	Journey and key milestones of the project and specific questions/exploration with <i>Mahiti Sakhis</i>
	2.15	3.30	Open Discussion and Reflections
Sanosara Mahiti Kendra	3.30	4.00	Interact with the <i>Mahiti Sakhis</i> at the Sanosara Centre and if possible with the <i>Panchayat</i> officials
Padapan Village	4.30	5.30	Meeting with Elaben <i>Sarpanch</i> and walk around the village with her to understand her role – interact with the school teacher on her role in SMC
Return to Shi-	7.00	8.00	Travel

Evaluation Report of Making Women's Voices and Votes Count

hor			
Dinner at Shi- hor	8.00 p.m.	9.00 p.m.	Retire for the day
17th March	From	To	Details of interaction
Shihor	8.00 a.m	9.00	Complete Breakfast – Check out
	9.00	9.30	MSM office and screening of some films/Listening to the IVRS messages as a sample
	9.30	10.30	Open discussions
	10.30	1.30 p.m.	Understanding women participants' perspectives on governance, technology and challenges to the women's movement
	1.30	2.15	Lunch
	2.15	3.00	Debriefing
Leave for Ahmedabad	3.00	7.00	Travel with Jahnvi
	7.30	9.30	Dinner meeting with Nimmi Chauhan

Annexure 6: Inception Report

This inception report lays out the purpose, approach, methodology and work plan for conducting the final evaluation of the project entitled “Making Women's Voices And Votes Count” that has been supported by the UN Women Fund for Gender Equality (FGE). The report is based on guidelines provided by UN Women FGE and the Terms of Reference (ToR) provided to the evaluation team after consultations with the project partners. While the ToR defines the scope of the evaluation, the inception report clarifies the theoretical framework, conceptual underpinnings and the practical steps that the evaluation entails.

Context of the Project

Making Women's Voices And Votes Count is an aspirational project that seeks to deepen democracy at the base, by strengthening elected women’s representatives at the village level. The project is significant because elected women representatives (EWRs) across the country are struggling to participate meaningfully in governance, to be accepted as leaders, to truly represent women, to develop a women’s constituency and to challenge current discourses on governance and gender. Women's rights focused organizations across India have recognized this and have made concerted attempts to empower EWRs. Most often these efforts have been in the form of training to help them understand their functions, to improve literacy and to equip them to carry out specific tasks.

While such interventions are vital, it is equally important to address the institutionalized exclusion, subordination and marginalization of women which thwarts the EWRs agency at every stage. There is a growing acknowledgement that historical and embedded hegemonies cannot be addressed adequately through task and skill oriented training. This requires a deeper engagement with patriarchal and feudal structures norms and practices that intersect discursively and subtly to relegate EWRs to the periphery, despite their sincere and diligent efforts to claim their rightful space. Women’s lack of income, education, status, information, authority, mobility, autonomy, property, networks and support systems all cumulatively make it almost impossible for EWRs to participate meaningfully in governance.

Adding to the complex web of factors hindering social justice, gender equity and enjoyment of full scale of socio-political rights by women, are the concerns of digital divide and last mile connectivity. This has further created obstacles in the path of society to become a truly global village despite being a highly digitised and networked society.

In a culture where gender based violence, sectarian identity politics, increasing withdrawal of the state and resultant lack of accountability of state actors and duty bearers, alternative strategies for strengthening governance that include new approaches to empowering EWRs and pedagogies for creating critical consciousness in the EWRs and women’s collectives, is the need of the hour.

The project, Making Women's Voices And Votes Count, is a pioneering attempt to strengthen EWRs by enhancing their horizontal linkages with each other, developing vertical level associations and net-working linkages between EWRs and women's collectives, establishing women's information centres, creating infomediaries to facilitate claim making processes and by creating information, communication, media resources and peer learning pedagogies that can help women act, while also changing the discourse of gender and governance.

The project has been implemented in partnership with organisations who have worked with EWRs over a period of long time with dedication and vision. The implementing partners have taken on this project to break new ground and also to deepen their long term efforts in supporting gender responsive governance and promoting women's political participation for her to play an influencing and active citizenship role. This has been attempted in the project by deploying information and communication technologies to strengthen EWRs with information, networks and media resources.

Programme In Brief

Under the Women's Political Empowerment area, IT for Change was awarded a grant under the multi-donor UN Women Fund for Gender Equality (FGE) for a period of two years for implementing the project entitled "Making Women's Voices and Votes Count" in Gujarat and Karnataka states in India. It commenced on 01 January 2013 and is scheduled for completion on 30 June 2015. Its overall budget is USD 2,80,000. The lead organisation in the project is IT for Change and the co-lead is Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan; and ANANDI is a project partner. These 3 organisations are implementing the project, in the following districts: Mysore (IT for Change), Kutch (Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan) and Bhavnagar (ANANDI).

The project aims to strengthen local women's political constituencies in 3 districts of India, to meet the following outcomes:

- Increased networking among EWRs and active participation of EWRs and women's groups for gender-responsive governance;
- Increased realisation of claims and entitlements by women in the 3 project sites;
- Advocacy and campaigns at local and institutional levels for a shift in local public discourse towards gender equality.

The theory of change for the project "Making Women's Voices and Votes Count"

The project seeks to capitalise upon the digital opportunity, by adopting the following key strategic directions:

- Strengthening linkages between EWRs and marginalised women's collectives, by organising face to face meetings, as well as utilising the potential of Interactive Voice Response System technology for the trans-local networking of geographically dispersed women.
- Setting up and operating women-owned community information centres at the sub-district (block) and village level, with the close involvement of EWRs and women community leaders, in order to enable marginalised sections of the community to successfully exert claims and effectively access their entitlements.
- Using community media for solidarity-building and citizenship education of EWRs and women's collectives, and use of community monitoring tools for carving out an alternative discourse on gender and governance in the local public sphere. Also using local and national spaces for advocacy to recommend ICT-enabled local governance models that are gender responsive.

In brief, the project supports the use of ICTs to enable horizontal networking among elected women in local panchayats, connect EWRs to local leaders from marginalized women's groups, support them to represent marginalized women's concerns in local governance processes and claim local media spaces to legitimise women's perspectives on governance. Use of Mobile-based SMS and voice services to build a strong, peer-to-peer networking platform to support women leaders is an important project intervention. Setting up of simple information systems facilitated by trained women infomediaries to usher in a rights-based entitlements culture is also a crucial part of the ICT enabled intervention. The video and radio components of the project aim at creating women-owned community media spaces for a new local discourse on gender and to support learning processes of the EWR networks.

Working with local women leaders whose vision will guide the project, the three partnering organizations hope to present new insights on how women's wisdoms, backed by new knowledge and skills, can help in re-envisioning national level policy and programmatic efforts that are aimed at political inclusion, creating systems of socio-economic security and guiding the gender justice and equity agendas.

Purpose of the Final Evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation, as given in the ToR, is to capture the change at the individual, community and organizational level. Since one of the outcomes of the project is to build and strengthen the horizontal linkages between EWRs, the evaluation would also like to look at the possibilities and challenges of creating and strengthening solidarity, collective power / networking mechanisms of EWRs that empower them and build their collective power. More specifically the evaluation aims to:

- Assess the impact of the project through the realisation of planned outcomes and outputs using the Standard Evaluation Framework – Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability and Impact.

- Draw from the documentation of the lessons learned and capture best practices emerging from the current phase of the project.
- Suggest Recommendations for future programming, replication and scaling up – with emphasis on distilling specific insights for each stakeholder associated with the project - NGOs implementing the programme, duty bearers, the donors.

Relevance of the evaluation

In the context of the pioneering and innovative dimensions of this project, the evaluation is an exercise for assessing the robustness of project design, its viability and appropriateness towards reaching the goal of gender responsive governance, backed by a strong vision and concrete initiatives.

The insights and perspectives that emerge will throw light on how a critical mass of women leaders can provide responsive and more efficient models of governance and contribute to women's needs, rights and struggles, when provided with enabling opportunities through ICTs. The evaluation hopes to provide learning and insights from the bottom up experiences of networking, communication and mobilization by women's groups and women's rights organisations at the local and national levels.

An assessment of the project design at this stage is imperative for pointing to the next steps that could be taken by the implementing organisations, the women's collectives, the information centres and EWR networks. It will also inform state actors, replicators, lead agency and donors about what works and what doesn't work in terms of the main project components, while providing recommendations for modifications and/or scaling up.

What is being evaluated

Each of project strategies will be evaluated separately in terms of their relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impacts. The intersectional dynamics of the three key strategies will also be examined for their impact in altering gender power relationships at the individual, community and institutional level.

As the project feeds into all the partners' long term engagement with EWRs and women's collectives, the evaluation will focus on how and to what extent the specific and time bound interventions of the project have added to their advocacy and knowledge building processes of changing discourse of gender responsive governance.

For the **first** project strategy of facilitating networking among EWRs and active participation of EWRs and women's groups in gender-responsive governance, the evaluation will assess:-

- shifts in self-perception and perception of the associational power gained by women through the networking and linkages created and/or strengthened by the project (echoing the associational power dimension as mentioned under the Second Strategy).

- its efficacy in amplifying women's voices through horizontal and vertical networking,

- its potential, relevance and impact in opening spaces for peer dialogue, learning and collective action.

The **second** project strategy of creating new information and communication capabilities through information centres owned and run by women, will be assessed in terms of:-

- new skills and capacities related to informational, communicative and mobilisation skills, including digital skills, of women/ infomediaries

- efficacy in increasing awareness of entitlements;

- institutionalization of information support;

- demystification of the claim making process;

- impact of realisation of claims by marginalised women.

The review of the above mentioned processes will also help in understanding the associational power that women are expected to gain through access to and control and use of information facilitated by technology.

The **third** strategy of promoting advocacy and campaigns at local and institutional levels for a shift in local public discourse towards gender equality through creation and dissemination of media resources will be assessed in terms of

- relevance of the ICT based messages created by women

- effectiveness and efficacy of breaking of silence around women's issues in the community and PRIs

- impact of increase in visibility of women's concerns in the community and PRIs

- changing perceptions of gender equity among concerned state actors and community, especially among men

- effectiveness of advocacy and campaigns for impacting the policy and institutional reforms for social inclusion and women's rights in the PRIs and other services providing structures and programmes at the local level in a sustainable manner

These criteria will be explored as movements from a gender blind/insensitive public discourse to a gender responsive one, where every small step and building block in this direction of redefining politics and power dynamics is significant.

Apart from assessing the three key strategies as per the standard OECD-DAC evaluation criteria, the evaluation will also review project management and partnership management using the same criteria.

Project Management will be assessed for:

- relevance of structures, processes and systems used to manage the project by the lead agency and the project implementing partners
- efficacy of tools and formats used to monitor the projects progress

In a project involving multi-layered partnerships, the review of partnership management will be to assess:

- level of coordination between the partners, between the lead agency and the other implementing agencies, and UN women
- the nature and level of engagement between the partners, the state actors and other key stakeholders at different levels
- the building blocks of partnership management applied in the project
- Relevance and effectiveness of leveraging partnerships in furthering the advocacy agenda of democratic and gender responsive governance, and for skill building and capacity enhancement

A broad set of questions which will be used to make the above assessments are included in the annexure. These questions are drawn from the ToR and have been contextualised to guide the evaluation process. The list of questions is going to be indicative and comprehensive enough to cover the full scope of inquiry as per the ToR. However the questionnaire guide is not going to be prepared as an exhaustive schedule. This is being done keeping in mind the constraints of time available for the field interactions with a gamut of stakeholders. More importantly, it is for allowing flexibility and for providing space for intuitive responsiveness in the evaluation process.

Framework of Analysis

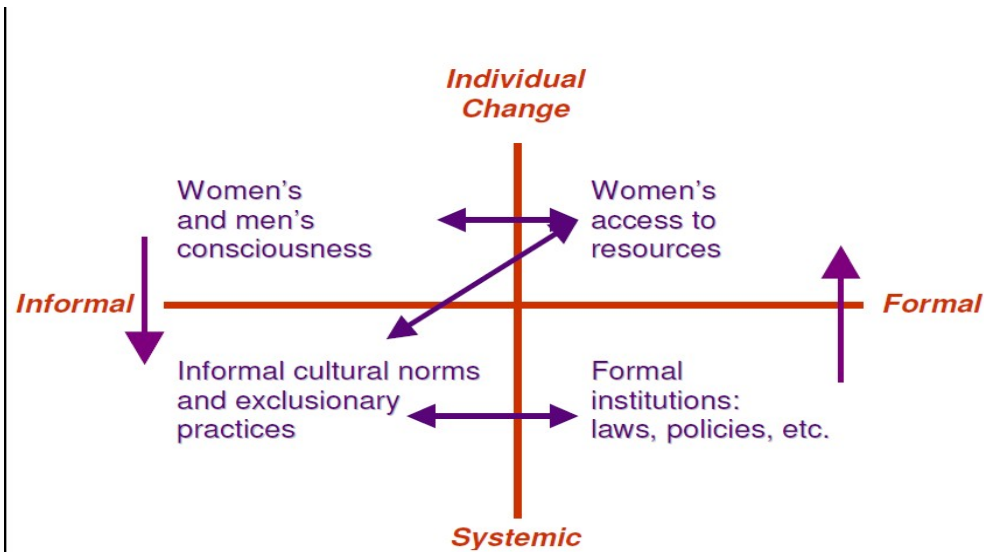
The proposed framework of analysis is located in an alternative approach to development that foregrounds justice, equity, democratisation and well-being, which overcomes the limitations of managerial M & E approaches that emphasise the linear tracing of cause-and-effect linkages.

The evaluation is an inquiry into how far ICT has enabled active representation, collectivisation and participation and claiming of their full rights and entitlements by the poor rural women, especially those from the marginalised sections of the society. The focus will be to examine how ICT has been a medium to promote an alternative framework and process of development that foregrounds processes in ensuring dignity, justice and fairness.

The evaluation will attempt to answer these questions, using the 'Gender at Work analytical framework' adapted by Aruna Rao and David Kelleher for Gender at Work. This framework has emerged from the myriad feminist initiatives and women's empowerment models. It focuses on looking at the RESULTS of processes of conscientisation for change in personal and collective self and identity, along with changes at the institutional and systemic level to shift the access, control and use of resources by women. It provides an excellent way of locating the changes that have occurred from the informal to the formal and from individual to systemic. Indirect changes in individual awareness and in the socio-cultural landscapes, and direct changes brought in formal institutions through advocacy, policy and legal reform could be plotted in the framework. The framework does not argue for any particular intervention - such as advocacy. Rather it shows WHY interventions in a single domain do not necessarily create changes in others, and hence provides a sharp diagnostic tool for helping us see which domains our interventions are impacting and which they are not.

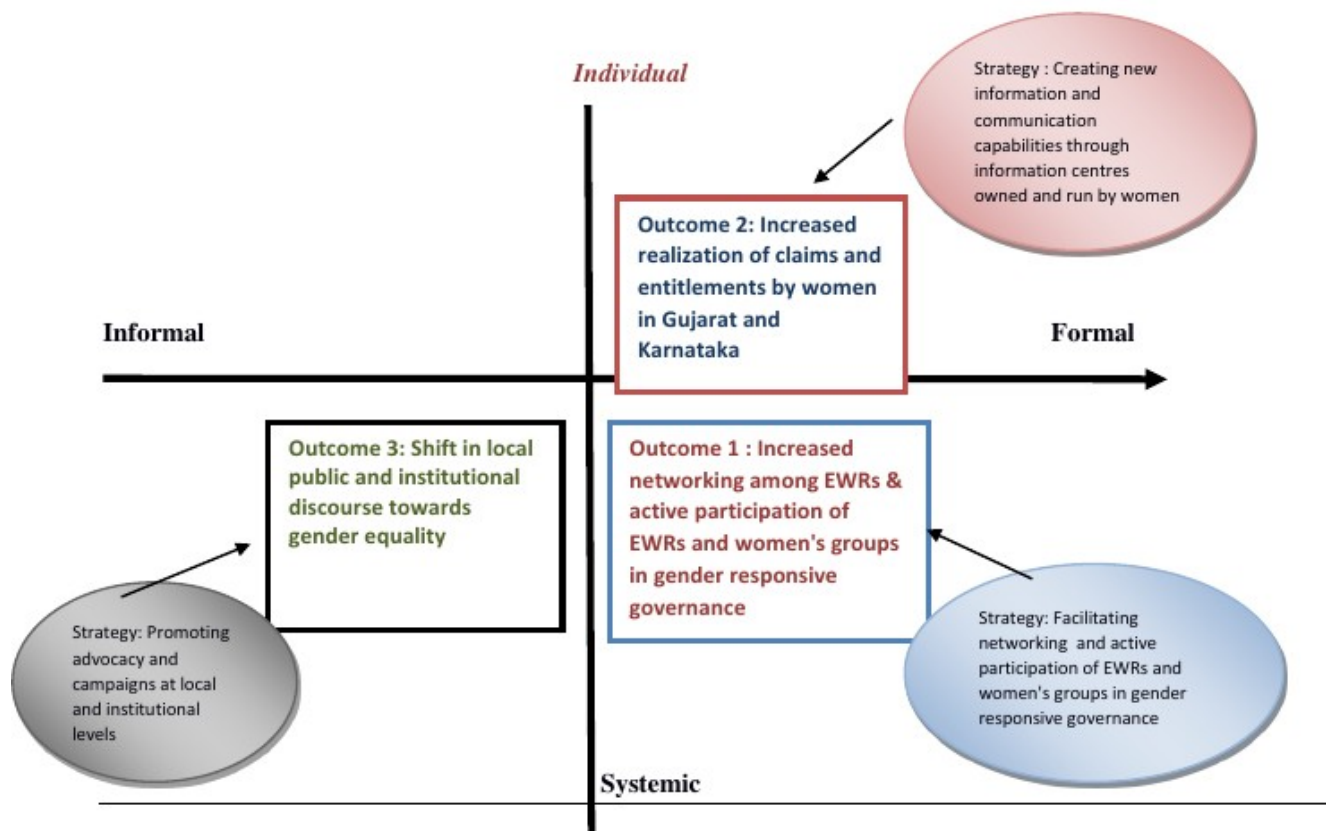
In the evaluation of the MWVVC project, the Gender at Work analytical framework will provide a window of opportunity for locating the changes along the four domains and exploring the porousness of the boundaries in the framework. The framework will be used to measure the impact and change at the informal level in the awareness and consciousness of her personal well-being, self-confidence, self-reliance and assertion of her positive and empowered identity by the EWRs and women leaders in the community. It will also measure the qualitative change in terms of satisfaction, solidarity, social security, public recognition of women through the strength of peer support and lateral linkages of women's collectives. At the other end of looking at changes in the formal spheres, the framework will help the evaluation team to assess the "how and what" of deepening of democratic values and principles in the functioning of local institutions of governance and community institutions led by women. Using the Gender at Work analytical framework, the evaluation will also raise key questions for further exploration, including the role of the state, civil society and community based institutions and organisations, relationship between individuals and the collective, and the criticality of enhancing the political agency of women for achieving the transition to a gender just and equitable society. women's empowerment and struggles for achieving an equal position in society. The framework has been contextualised in the following page.

The Gender at Work Analytical Framework



<http://www.genderatwork.org/gender-work-framework>; Rao and Kelleher (2002) *Unravelling Institutionalised Gender Inequality*- Adaptation of Ken Wilber (2000) *Theory of Everything*

Applying the Framework to the MWVVC Project



Approach to the evaluation

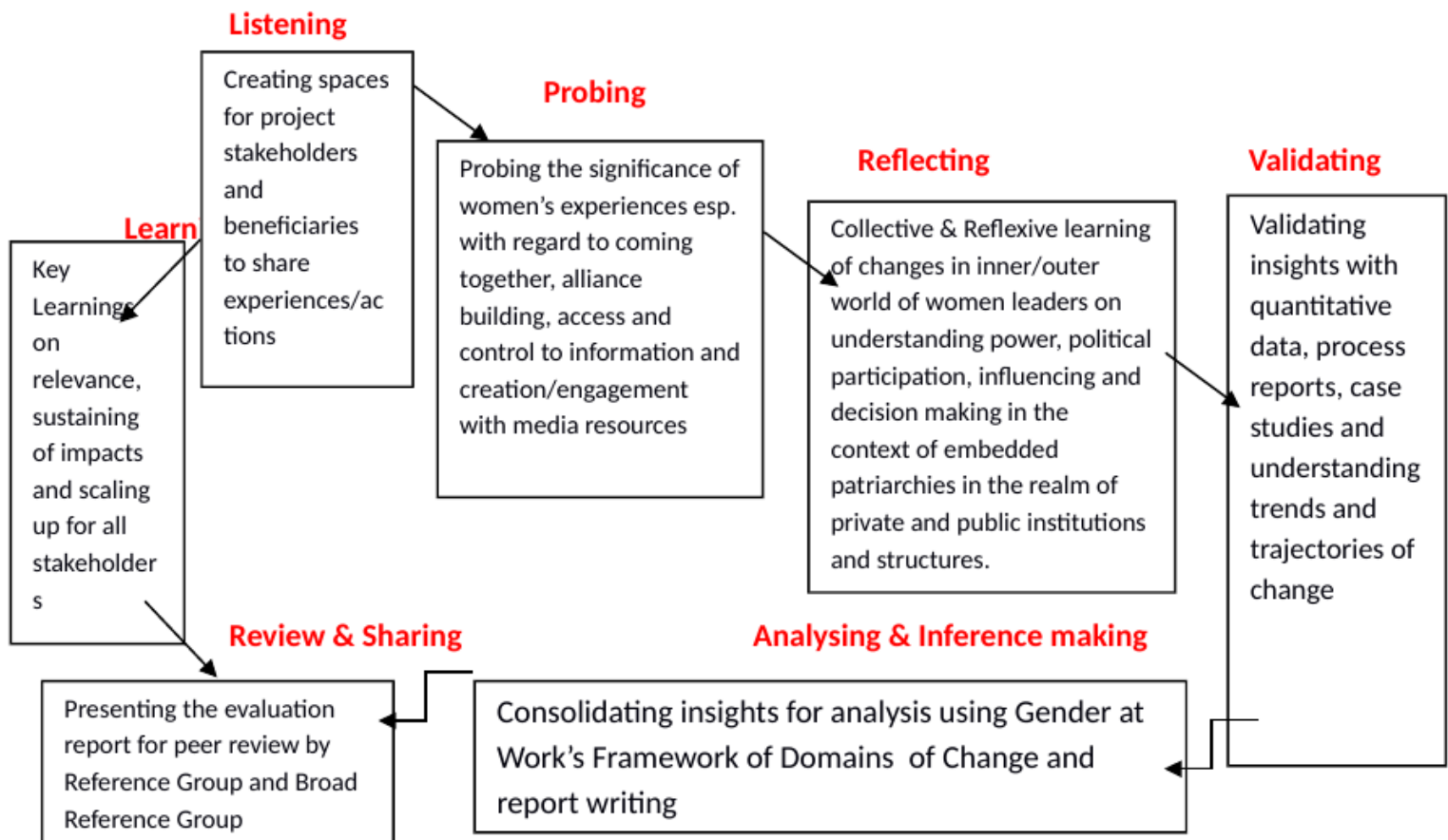
The underlying approach is based on certain beliefs about what constitutes effective performance, impact, and change, and how to measure it.

Following the feminist approach that prioritises learning objectives over performance rating, the evaluation is designed to ***aid learning*** rather than one that ***evaluates performance***. This is crucial to avoid distortions.

In an AWID report of Srilatha Batliwala, titled, “Capturing change in women’s realities- A critical overview of current monitoring & evaluation frameworks and approaches”, (2010, p8) there are five principles underlying the learning approach :

- *To learn how change happens- what strategies and interventions worked and did not, in order to refine our policies, strategies, and interventions for more effective and impactful change— most of all, to grapple with both progress and reversals and build more effective change strategies as a result;*
- *To analyze our role in the change process— i.e., either to attribute credit or locate our contribution to change and to identify cause-effect relationships;*
- *To empower our constituencies – to engage stakeholders in analyzing change processes so that they are also empowered and strengthened to sustain, extend, and expand change;*
- *To practice accountability and build credibility – to our donors, constituencies, other activists, and the public at large, and to build our legitimacy, credibility, and transparency; and finally,*
- *To advance our advocacy for social justice – to demonstrate how change has advanced social justice goals and mobilize support for a social change agenda by showing how successful particular approaches or interventions have been.*

The Evaluation Process



Data Collection Methods and Tools

A preliminary review of reports and documents provided by ITfC has been undertaken for the preparation of the inception report. The evaluating team will draw upon the literature review of the materials and documents provided by the lead and co lead agencies during the field visits for getting the background information about the processes and approaches that were followed by the partners in executing the project strategies.

For the evaluation a range of appropriate methods will be used primarily to understand the shifts and changes and for drawing the learning from the project. In the field, data collection will be largely drawn from the repertoire of qualitative methods to measure the extent and nature of changes.

However, the assessment done by the use of qualitative tools will be substantiated, expanded and deepened with the survey reports of the base line and end line studies so that the reflexive, feminist approach based on a theoretically rigorous framework will be validated and informed by evidence

through the findings of the base line and end line surveys and other sources of data from the PMF, progress and review reports, secondary data, media resources and case studies. A judicious use of this bouquet approach will help in drawing lessons and in locating the changes and shifts taking place through the project. The endline survey, FGDs, process documentation will be used together while making comparisons with the baseline survey and its findings.

Questions asked in each FGD will flow organically with the conversations and will be based on the probe areas listed out in Annexure 1 of the inception report. Question guides and tools have been prepared for EWRs, EMRs, infomediaries and other stakeholders. These will guide our discussions within the limited time available for interactions. The list of questions asked and tools/exercises used will be included in the final evaluation report.

A direct comparative study between baseline and end line cannot be done as sample size and scope of inquiry differ significantly. The baseline covered 79 EWRs and the end line will be covering 135 EWRs. The baseline had about 60 questions, whereas the end line will have about 35 questions.

We suggest that ItfC takes up a comparative analysis from the two survey reports based on **questions that are common** in both the surveys and percentages can be used for capturing shifts and emerging trends at the collective level. Where possible competency and awareness levels can be cross tabulated with demographic background to explore linkages between socio-economic background, region, years of experience and participation/knowledge levels. Such tabulated data, cross tabulated data and comparative analysis will be used in the backdrop of the gender@work analytical framework to focus on the three project outcomes.

The matrix given below provides a quick check list of the data sets and the tools used for assessing each of the seven criteria.

The case studies and good practices will be used to reflect on sustainability and championing for mainstreaming the key learning of the project.

The evaluation team will meet the following key stakeholders:

- ItfC team (lead agency)
- KMVS and ANANDI team (co lead agencies)
- Women: EWRs, leaders and representatives of women's collectives, federation members
- PRI representatives and officials from the G.P, Block/district administration

- Infomediaries at the Information centres
- Concerned technical and training resource persons and any other government officials and CSOs at the state and national level
- Project Focal points at the UN Women office (for off-site interview)

(The number of respondents to be reached and their selection criteria is mentioned below)

The methods would include the following

- Desk review of documents
- Focus group discussions: With lead and co lead agencies, EWRs, leaders and representatives of women's collectives, federation members, Infomediaries (A set of comprehensive list of questions has been provided in annex 1)
- Use of (adapted) Domains of change framework to map the trends, shifts and changes with the three project teams
- In-depth individual Interviews (Implementing team): With Project leads at ITfC, ANANDI and KMVS, Focal points at UN women
- In-depth individual Interviews with PRI officials, elected male representatives
- In-depth interview with key ICT Technical Resource persons
- Review of the media resources created for the project
- Budget and cost analysis
- Comparative analysis between the base line and end line survey results

In line with the Human Rights Based and Gender Based standards the final evaluation will be participatory and guided by the use of interactive set of exercises and activities to allow for greater listening, sharing and collective reflection with the concerned constituencies of women.

Sources of Information

1. Project documents- concept notes, proposals, progress reports, base line report and endline survey report, case studies, media clippings
2. Records and registers maintained by implementing organisations, women's collectives, EWRs platforms and information centres
3. Financial Reports
4. Training modules and reports and any other knowledge products produced during the course of the programme.
5. Partner reports
6. Media resources

Table 1: Sources and tools of data collection and analysis and stakeholders involved

Evaluation Criteria (the detailed questions under each criteria are provided in annexure)	Sources of data	Tools of Data collection	Stakeholder involved
Relevance	Base line report, Project proposal, six monthly progress reports, national policy documents and reports re. to women's participation in PRIs, CEDAW and Beijing plus 20, Policy and programmatic reviews of women's access and use of ICT in governance	Desk review; discussions and meetings	Key stakeholders
Effectiveness	Comparative between base line and end line, Progress monitoring reports, Media resources created, campaigns in the project; Training modules developed in the project,	FGDs and stakeholders, review of the media resources, case studies, one to one interviews	direct beneficiaries, indirect beneficiaries and key stakeholders

Evaluation Report of Making Women's Voices and Votes Count

Efficiency	Review of the PMF , six monthly progress reports, budget and financial reports, data maintained at the information centres,	FGDs, review of the media resources, case studies, one to one interviews, presentations, exhibition	direct beneficiaries, indirect beneficiaries and key stakeholders, project team implementing and executing NGOs, the field staff
Sustainability	Policy documents, and project review report, end line report, cumulative (final)PMF report, organisational financial statements	FGDs, Interviews	project leaders; project staff, concerned government officials at the block, district and state level
Impact	Records of the <i>gram sabha</i> and <i>mahila gram sabha</i> maintained at the <i>panchayat</i> level; gender and social audits reports conducted as part of the project; government orders,	FGDs with, review of the media resources, case studies, one to one interviews	direct beneficiaries Indirect beneficiaries; Key stakeholders, project leaders; project staff
Project Management	Programme and monitoring formats and reports	Interviews	focal points of UN women Lead and co lead agencies

Partnership management	MoUs signed, partner reports of the lead agency, sample field reports, meeting minutes	-Do-	-Do-
------------------------	--	------	------

Direct beneficiaries and staff teams will be met in FGDs while other block level and district level stake holders will be met individually. Interactions with UN women, national and state level stake holders will be held via mail, skype or in person, depending on availability and convenience.

Sample size and selection

The evaluation will cover a sample of 40% of the core group of EWRs who are the direct beneficiaries.

100% of infomediaries will be met and a selective random sample of 150 indirect beneficiaries and key stakeholders chosen by the implementing organisations will be covered. In the selection of the sample, care will be taken to ensure representation from all blocks/locations and diversity of communities as represented in the project.

Risks and Limitations of the Evaluation

As the suggested methodology is fairly intense, participatory and multi levelled, effectiveness of the approach will depend on conducive and supportive conditions at the local level which are complex and difficult to predict. There are risks pertaining to interplay of socio-political factors existing in each of the locations which are again difficult to ascertain as to how these will impact the project evaluation processes.

Varying maturity levels of the women's networks and collectives in the three locations could also influence the scope, quality and depth of inquiry of the evaluation study.

The dynamics of different layers of partnership existing in the project along with their respective stakes and interests need to be weighed in to ensure objectivity and keeping a nuanced and balanced perspective during the evaluation study which could be a challenging task.

Finding the time to complete all the proposed activities will require that the visits are well-planned and the team manages its time well. The time period of the field visits is going to be short and very hectic for some of the qualitative discussions and reflections by the women's groups to be allowed adequate time and space.

In some of the districts, being not conversant with the local dialect and language could be an obstacle for the evaluation team. Due support from the local project teams will be required in this regard.

The two year time duration of the project lends the evaluation to the risk of being ambitious in looking at outcome, impact and qualitative changes in women's lives and positions and in systemic changes as well which are shaped out of long and complex social-political mediation factors and processes. The evaluation need to be clear and cautious by not going for any analysis based on inquiry into the cause-effect framework so as to avoid the pitfalls of making false attributions to the project.

The final evaluation may be seen as an opportunity to bring to light the fact that we cannot ignore the huge value of the long-term relationship building and investments that organisations make to achieve the results from the short-term projects.

ANNEXURE I

Key Questions for FGDs and key informant interviews- covering the PMF indicators

The evaluation team will carry out Focus Group Discussions and/or key informant interviews with the following stakeholders, at each of the 3 sites:

- a. Elected Women Representatives who participated in the project
- b. Women's collectives/women community leaders associated with the project
- c. Elected Men Representatives and husbands of elected women leaders
- d. Key government officials associated with the project
- e. Infomediary team members
- f. Members of implementation team

Through stakeholder specific question guides that will be designed as part of preparations for field visits, the main probe areas highlighted below will be explored:

a. Relevance:

- To what extent do the programme's goals, outcomes, strategies, methods and activities respond to beneficiaries' needs, problems, socio-economic and gender contexts and country policies? Do the activities address the problems identified?
- Are the project outcomes addressing identified rights and needs of the target group(s) in national and regional contexts? How much does the project contribute to shaping women's rights priorities?
- How and which of the women's rights does the project advance under CEDAW, Beijing plus 20, and other international development commitments? What are the rights debates around ICTs and the internet that the project design responds to?
- Does the project recognise and address women EWRs' vulnerabilities and challenges, especially of poverty, exclusion, gender division of labour and internalised values and attitudes towards self and others in society?

- Does the project perceive and address gender sensitive governance as distinct from women's representation and participation in the institutions of governance?

b. Effectiveness: How effective has the programme been in terms of content, design and implementation of activities in reaching its goals, outcomes and outputs?

- Has the participation of EWRs in panchayat meetings, sub- committee meetings, *gram sabhas* and *mahila sabhas* increased in terms of numbers and levels of participation?
- How effective have EWRs been in framing gender focused agendas and which areas have been challenging? How have these challenges been addressed?
- Have EWRs initiated linkages with local women's groups? What has been the thrust and purpose of these linkages? How have local women's groups responded to such initiation and leveraged these relationships in furthering their agendas?
- How have the trainings conducted helped EWRs change perceptions of gender and governance and about the use of technology for enhancing communication and decision making?
- How have the gender audits and social audits helped create awareness of women's situation? How have they led to collective actions by women or actions by the PRIs?
- How have creation and use of ICT resources, SMS, video and voice based networking, helped EWRs to build horizontal and vertical linkages and to design and run joint campaigns?
- What is the mechanism to track viewership/listener-ship of media resources and to get feedback?
- How have the networking platforms helped women to share learnings and build solidarity to transcend situations of exclusion, diffidence and powerlessness?
- How have information centres owned and controlled by women, with access to ICTS, helped women access their entitlements as women and as citizens vis a vis the state? How effectively have the project's strategies been able to facilitate women's access and claim their entitlements?
- How has the project been able to build upon the individual and collective agency of EWRs and women in the community to claim their rights and entitlements? What is the role of the intermediary, of women's collectives and of the EWR in this process of helping women access entitlements? Is their interface one of complementarity and co-creation?

- Whether and how the ICTs and media resources created and broadcasted/screened have helped create a public discourse on gender equity with a culture of women's issues/agency being foregrounded? How effective have these been as pedagogic tools for learning?
- Whether and how male family members, male elected representatives, men in governance, state and community institutions are responding with increasing sensitivity, compassion and accountability to women's concerns, needs and rights?
- How has the project responded to address the policy and programmatic frameworks for women's empowerment and political representation and participation at the local, state and national level?
- How and what difference has been made in the women's lives (especially those who are covered under the project as direct and indirect beneficiaries) in changing gender discriminatory norms at home, community and organizations as a result of the project? How have additional vulnerabilities arising from poverty, caste, disability, ethnicity or religion been addressed?
- What is the underlying understanding for the achievement, under-achievement or non-achievement in the project? Have there been unexpected results /unintended effects (negative or positive)?

c. Efficiency: How efficient has the programme been so far in converting available resources (funds/resource person/time etc.) into results? While cost in terms of material and human resources will be assessed, it is clear that the benefits are long term and social returns cannot always be easily measured in terms of their cost benefit analysis. The questions to assess project efficiency will be:

- How cost effective are the investments and expenses, both human and financial, in terms of outcomes and outputs?
- What measures have been taken during planning and implementation to ensure that human, financial and knowledge resources were efficiently used? Have the potentials and strengths of EWRs, women leaders and project staff been fully utilized to realise the outcomes?
- Have ICTS and media outputs been deployed efficiently to reach maximum numbers of the relevant target groups for whom the message/medium is intended?
- Were expected outcomes and planned outputs and impact of the project realistic in the given time frame? Were the outputs delivered in a timely manner? Review the efficiency of the expected outcomes and outputs in the present context of women's access to social and political entitlements and their political representation and participation?

- Could the outcomes and expected results be achieved through adopting a different approach and/or using alternative delivery mechanisms? To what extent are the inputs and outputs equally distributed between different groups of women?
- What proportion footfalls at the information centres translated into claims, what proportion of entitlement claims processed by the information centres have been successfully received by women? What is the cost effectiveness of the information centre in creating databases and facilitating claims?
- How does the project harness and utilise existing local capacities of right-bearers and duty-holders to achieve its outcomes?

d. Sustainability: The evaluation will assess how the seedlings sown through this project could survive, grow, deepen and expand in the challenging socio- cultural environment.

- What is the perceived understanding of the project staff and the women themselves of the changes (explicit and implicit) at individual, collective, institutional and organizational level that have taken place? What are the positive and potential advantages they see as, well as the challenges in sustaining, up-scaling and replicating these changes?
- What steps have been taken for institutionalization and mainstreaming of the change processes within the organization, women's collectives (federations) mandate?
- What are strategies that have been envisaged to sustain individual changes amongst the staff and the concerned constituency of women?
- To what extent have capacities of duty-bearers (including in local government), and rights-holders been strengthened as a result of the project?
- What advocacy strategies have been undertaken to bring about policy level changes and to sustain them over a longer period of time?
- Did the project establish linkages with the Community-based organizations and the Government at different levels in order to sustain the momentum and benefits (implicit and explicit) of the project interventions? What has been the outcome of the scaling up workshop co-hosted with NMEW?
- What operational capacities of the lead agency and other implementing partners, (also known as capacity resources, such as technology, finance, and staffing) have been strengthened to sustain the change processes initiated?

- What adaptive or management capacities of the lead agency and other implementing partners, such as learning, leadership, project and process management, networking and linkages have been supported? In what way can these enhance the sustainability of project impacts?
- What is the financial capacity of the grantees to sustain the work beyond the project time frame?
- What are the important contextual factors in sustaining good practices and replicating key learnings made from the project?
- What could be an estimation of the scope, extent, nature of resources required to consolidate and scale up some of the good practices and processes in the project areas? What would be the key strategies and approach for consolidation and replication of the project take away?

e. Impact:

- What has been the impact of EWRs' and women leaders' participation in *panchayat* meetings, *Gram sabhas* and *Mahila Gram sabhas* in the community?
- What has been the impact of gender focussed agendas framed by EWRs and of resolutions passed in changing women's conditions and power relations?
- What has been the impact of women's claims to rights and entitlements in terms of their socio-economic status and condition?
- How have the skill sets and perspectives built under the project enhanced women's capacities to advance the women's rights agenda in the personal, family, community and institutional domains?
- What are the visible manifestations of increased access, control and use of economic, social and political rights by women under the project?
- Have project processes had an influence on duty-holders to perform their duties with more responsiveness?
- To what extent has the programme led to the strengthening of women's community organisations, especially in raising gender related issues and fostering gender sensitive governance?
- To what extent have the lessons learnt through this project begun to be institutionalised in programme and planning of the organizations which were partners in the project?

- To what extent has the project contributed to bridging the digital divide for different groups of marginalized sections (directly or indirectly)?
- Is there an increased awareness of and sensitivity to women's issues among male EWRs and village/block level duty bearers?
- Has the project contributed towards building a women's political constituency? What has been its manifestations and impact?
- How have the reporting systems in the project been used to capture impact and building advocacy agendas around it?

f. Project Management

- What were technical, administrative and advocacy skills and capacities developed of the project partners to deliver the project objectives?
- How have the project structures and processes adopted for the project impacted the implementation and delivery of the outputs and outcome?
- Does the project have effective monitoring mechanisms in place to measure progress towards results?
- Are the M & E frameworks, reporting systems and processes used in the project effective, easy, flexible to use and relevant to monitor and document project progress, qualitative change and delivery on the stated goals, outputs and outcomes?
- Has the M& E framework helped in critically assessing progress, in introducing corrective measures and in enhancing internal organisational learning?

g. Partnership Management: To assess the level of engagement between the Partners and key Stakeholders at all levels and the ability of the partnership processes to leverage and inform the desired change.

- What are the strengths of partnership between the lead agency and the other implementing agencies? What were the unique learning experiences of this multi layered partnership model? Were there any challenges in terms of coordination processes, financial processes, reporting processes and learning processes? How can the partnership be further strengthened?
- What has been the experience of partnership management vis-a-vis block/ district level federations, networks, organizations, and re-granting organizations?

- How has the partnership with Government entities at district, state and national level worked so far and how can they be strengthened?
- What has been the value of partnership with UN Women in terms of the perspective building, resources, oversight and technical support in the implementation and achieving the outcomes and outputs of the project?
- How useful has the partnership model in furthering the advocacy agenda on issues of democratic and gender responsive governance, in facilitating new partnerships, associations and participation in local, state level, national and international networks?

ANNEXURE II

Time Schedule for the Final Evaluation of Making Women's Voices and Votes Count

Evaluators Deliverables and Schedules

	Action	Timelines for Evaluation team	Delivery done/ delayed
1	Desk Review of secondary Documents Begins	11 th February 2015	On time
2	Feedback on draft endline survey tool	19 ^h Feb 2015	On time
3	Inception Report	24 th Feb 2015	Delayed by a day
4	Telephone/skype conversations with Reference Group	25 th Feb to 1st March	Scheduled
4	Evaluators Visit to Mysore	4 th and 5 th March 2015	Scheduled
5	Mail/Skype based interviews with state and national stakeholders	6 th to 14 th March 2015	Scheduled
6	Evaluators Visit to Gujarat Sites	16 th to 20 th March 2015	Scheduled

Evaluation Report of Making Women's Voices and Votes Count

7	Consolidation of findings and report preparation including endline survey, case studies and process documentation	21 st March to 6 th April	Scheduled
8	Presentation of Draft Report to Reference and Broad Reference Group	10th April 2015	Scheduled
9	Finalization of Report incorporating feedback from Reference and Broad Reference Group	15h May 2015	Scheduled

Annexure 7: Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference for final evaluation of “Making Women's Voices and Votes Count”, a project led by IT for Change, supported by UN Women Fund for Gender Equality.

Type of Contract: Consultancy

Based in: India

Consulting days: 30 days

Time period: 11th February to 11th May 2015

1. Background

The multi-donor Fund for Gender Equality (FGE) of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) was launched in 2009 to fast-track commitments to gender equality focused on women's economic and political empowerment at local, national and regional levels. The Fund provides multi-year grants ranging from US \$200,000 – US \$1 million directly to women's organisations and governmental agencies in developing countries; it is dedicated to advancing the economic and political empowerment of women around the world.

The Fund provides grants on a competitive basis directly to government agencies and civil society organisations to transform legal commitments into tangible actions that have a positive impact on the lives of women and girls around the world.

Across these grants, the Fund advances two major inter-related project priority areas:

- Grants awarded for women's economic empowerment seek to substantially increase women's access to and control over economic decision-making, land, labor, livelihoods and other means of production and social protection, especially for women in situations of marginalisation.
- Programmes focused on women's political empowerment that aim to increase women's political participation and good governance to ensure that decision-making processes are participatory, responsive, equitable and inclusive, increasing women's leadership and influence over decision-making in all spheres of life, and transforming gender equality policies into concrete systems for implementation to advance gender justice.

2. Description of the Intervention

Under the Women's Political Empowerment area, the FGE was granted to IT for Change for implementing the project entitled *"Making Women's Voices and Votes Count"* in Gujarat and Karnataka states in India. It commenced on 01 January 2013 and is scheduled for completion on 30 June 2015. Its overall budget is USD 2,80,000.

"Making Women's Voices and Votes Count" has sought to leverage the potential of digital technologies for strengthening the capacities of Elected Women Representatives (EWRs) and building a peer network, strengthening their linkages with their women's constituencies, and creating an alternative local discourse on gender and governance, across 3 sites: Kutch and Bhavnagar (Gujarat) and Mysore (Karnataka). The project is being implemented by a consortium of organisations (hereinafter referred to as Partners). IT for Change is the project leader, and is also spearheading the Mysore intervention. The effort at the Kutch site is led by the co-lead – Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan (KMVS); while that in Bhavnagar is led by ANANDI.

The project aims to strengthen local women's political constituencies in 3 districts of India, to meet the following outcomes:

- Increased networking among EWRs and active participation of EWRs and women's groups in gender-responsive governance;
- 1. Increased realisation of claims and entitlements, by women, in the 3 project sites;
- 2. Advocacy and campaigns at local and institutional levels for a shift in local public discourse towards gender equality.

3. Theory of Change

In the two decades following the constitutional amendment granting political reservation to women in local government bodies, considerable ground has been covered by capacity building efforts undertaken by various agencies in the Indian context, in enabling EWRs to meet the demands of their public-political roles. However, the odds continue to remain stacked heavily against women in local politics, and they remain overwhelmed by the everyday manifestations of institutional patriarchy. For the spirit and intent of the law to be realised fully, a women's political constituency needs to be anchored at the local level. But this is possible only if the huge disconnect – among elected women and their peers, and between EWRs and grassroots women's collectives engaged in struggles for gender justice – is addressed headlong. The information society context seems to offer a point of social discontinuity for a new politics of gender justice. By providing the space for horizontal connection, exchange, collaboration and community building, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) can help redefine capacity building through processes of ongoing, peer-supported pedagogy, strengthening trans-local linkages and opening up new spaces for political voice and expression. *"Making Women's Voices and Votes Count"* seeks to capitalise upon this digital opportunity, by adopting the following key strategic directions:

- Strengthening linkages between EWRs and marginalised women's collectives, by organising face to face meetings, as well as utilising the potential of Interactive Voice Response System technology for the trans-local networking of geographically dispersed women.
- Setting up and operating women-owned community information centres at the sub-district (block) and village level, with the close involvement of EWRs and women community leaders, in order to enable marginalised sections of the community to successfully exert claims and effectively access their entitlements.
- Using community media for solidarity-building and citizenship education of EWRs and women's collectives, and use of community monitoring tools for carving out an alternative discourse on gender and governance in the local public sphere. Also using local and national spaces for advocacy to recommend ICT-enabled local governance models that are gender responsive.

The detailed Project Management Framework explaining the Outcomes-Outputs-activities rationale guiding the project, is enclosed at ***Annexure 2***.

4. Purpose and Use of the Evaluation

FGE sets forth its mandate to track, assess, and widely share the lessons learned from this pioneering grant project and to contribute to global know-how in the field of gender equality. The project which started in January 2013 ends in June 2014; and therefore, it is critical to carry out a final evaluation to assess the impact of the project and capture the lessons for future programming and scaling up. The main purposes of the Final Evaluation are outlined below:

- To assess the impact of the project through the outcomes and outputs set out during the conceptualisation of the project using the Standard Evaluation Framework – Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability and Impact.
- To document the lessons learned and capture best practices emerging from the current phase of the project.
- Suggest Recommendations for future programming, replication and scaling up.

5. Use of the Evaluation Report

The Evaluation findings will help to feed into building the portfolio of UN Women India MCO Strategic Plan (2014 – 2017).

- The report will be used by the implementing organisations (IT for Change, Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan and ANANDI) and UN Women to make strategic decisions on the future direction and design of the project and its Annual Work Plan.
- The National Mission for Empowerment of Women, Government of India; and the Ministry of *Panchayati Raj* has shown keen interest in scaling up some of the ICT-enabled strategies the project has demonstrated. The report will help to deepen the partnership and build on the existing work.
- The evaluator will provide inputs for the Reference Group (see section 7 for more information) to design a complete dissemination plan of the evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations; with the aim of advocating for sustainability, scaling up, or sharing good practices and lessons learnt at local, national or/and international levels.

6. The Scope of the Evaluation

a. Geographical Scope:

The direct beneficiaries of the project include a core group of 122 elected women representatives, across 92 *panchayats* in the project area (Mundra and Nakhatrana blocks of Kutch district; Sihor and Umralla blocks of Bhavnagar district; and Hunsur and H.D. Kote blocks of Mysore district). The wider group of beneficiaries comprise 1000 elected women and 900 women community leaders across these *panchayats*. Other key stakeholders the project has interacted with, and influenced, include – elected men representatives and officials from these 92 *panchayats*, key departmental officials at the block level, community members who are part of *panchayat* standing committees, and government field workers such as ASHA and *anganwadi* workers. In addition, the project has created a new set of community institutions – the ICT-enabled information centres operated by young women infomediaries and managed by women's collectives/federation of elected women representatives. The evaluation will cover a sample of the primary and secondary beneficiaries, from select *panchayats* in the project area, and it will necessitate travel to the three project sites.

A Baseline Survey for the project was carried out in 2013, by the implementing organisations, with inputs from the UN Women Fund for Gender Equality. The baseline survey sample is detailed in the table below:

State	Block/District	<i>Panchayats</i>	EWRs (Survey)	EWRs (Focus groups)	Women's collectives (Focus groups)	Male elected members and family members of	Info mediaries (Focus groups)

Evaluation Report of Making Women's Voices and Votes Count

						EWRs (Focus groups)	
Gujarat (KMVS)	Mundra and Nakhatrana blocks of Kutch district	35	41	16	12	5	6
Gujarat (ANANDI)	Sihor and Um- rala blocks of Bhavnagar dis- trict	50	23	24	44	6	
Karnataka (ITfC)	Hunsur and H.D.Kote blocks of Mysore dis- trict	7	15	8	20	5	4
Total		92	79	48	76	16	10

b. Stakeholder Coverage:

The evaluation will cover the following key Stakeholders both at State and National level. This is an indicative listing, and will be finalised when the evaluation begins:

National level	Team from UNWOMEN India; Ex-director of NMEW.
State level	Members of the Karnataka <i>Panchayat</i> Raj Act Amendment Committee, the implementation team, Reference group constituted for the purpose of this eval-

	uation.
District level	Officials and elected members who have supported the project.
Block level	Line department authorities at the block, block <i>Panchayat</i> authorities who have been associated with the project, representatives of the SHG federation partnering the project.
<i>Panchayat</i> level	Elected women who the project has directly worked with, elected male representatives, extension workers, community leaders, infomediaries, <i>Panchayat</i> level officials – former and currently serving, members of women's collectives/ women leaders in the community.

c. Substantive Scope:

The evaluation will analyse the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact of the project objectives in terms of results achieved against objectives, change on human rights and gender equality, ownership of stakeholders, sustainability of the action, both financial and organisational. It should consider the nature of the joint project, exploring its efficacy and the extent to which it has allowed the partners and UNWOMEN to work in a coordinated manner.

7. Evaluation Questions

The Consultant should be guided but not limited to the scope of the evaluation questions listed below which will need to be contextualised to the specific project during the Inception Report. The Consultant should raise and address any other relevant issues that may emerge during the evaluation.

a. Relevance:

- Are the project outcomes addressing identified rights and needs of the target group(s) in national and regional contexts? How much does the project contribute to shaping women's rights priorities?
- Do the activities address the problems identified?

- What rights does the project advance under CEDAW, the Millennium Development Goals and other international development commitments? What are the rights debates around ICTs and the Internet that the project design responds to?

b. Effectiveness:

- What has been the progress made towards achievement of the expected outcomes and expected results? What are the results achieved?
- Were there any unexpected results /unintended effects (negative or positive)?
- What are the reasons for the achievement or non-achievement?
- To what extent are the intended beneficiaries participating in and benefiting from the project?
- Does the project have effective monitoring mechanisms in place to measure progress towards results?
- To what extent have the objectives been achieved, and do the intended and unintended benefits meet the needs of disadvantaged women?
- To what extent have capacities of duty-bearers (including in local government), and rights-holders been strengthened as a result of the project?
- What are the changes produced by the project on legal and policy frameworks at the local, national and/or regional level?

c. Efficiency:

- Is the project cost-effective, i.e. could the outcomes and expected results have been achieved at lower cost through adopting a different approach and/or using alternative delivery mechanisms?
- Assess the level of investment, both human and financial resources, committed for implementing the project. Analyse the Budget and Expenditure over the two year period.
- What measures have been taken during planning and implementation to ensure that resources were efficiently used?
- Have the outputs been delivered in a timely manner?

- Have UN Women's organisational structure, managerial support and coordination mechanisms effectively supported the delivery of the project?
- How has the partnership between the three organisations involved in the project contributed to efficiency and its advocacy potential?
- To what extent are the inputs and outputs equally distributed between different groups of women, and have the potentials of disadvantaged women (poor, racial, ethnic, sexual, ethnic, and disabled groups) been fully utilised to realise the outcomes?
- How does the project utilise existing local capacities of right-bearers and duty-holders to achieve its outcomes?

d. Sustainability:

- What is the likelihood that the benefits from the project will be maintained for a reasonably long period of time if the project were to cease?
- Did the project establish linkages with the Community-based Organisations and the Government at all levels in order to sustain the interventions? Do these institutions demonstrate leadership commitment and technical capacity to continue to work with the project or replicate it?
- What operational capacity of the lead agency and other implementing partners, also known as capacity resources, such as technology, finance, and staffing, has been strengthened?
- What adaptive or management capacities of the lead agency and other implementing partners, such as learning, leadership, project and process management, networking and linkages have been supported?
- Do grantees have the financial capacity to maintain the benefits from the programme?
- Review the contextual factors which are important in the sustaining and replicating the project interventions and its impact.
- Assess the extent to which the Partners have been able to institutionalise or link with the Government/Non-Government Partners/CSOs.
- Assess the factors required to scale up initiatives in each of the two project areas and strategy to do so if required.

e. Impact:

- What are the intended and unintended, positive and negative, long term effects of the project?
- To what extent can the changes that have occurred as a result of the project be identified and measured?
- To what extent can the identified changes be attributed to the project? What are the positive and negative changes produced directly or indirectly by the project on the opportunities of different groups of women, and on the socio-economic conditions of their localities?
- What is the evidence that the project enabled the rights-holders to claim their rights more successfully and the duty-holders to perform their duties more efficiently?
- To what extent efforts have been successful to stop harmful and discriminatory practices against women?

f. Project Management

- Review the capacities (technical, administrative and advocacy skills) of the Partners to deliver the project objectives and how they can be strengthened to improve impact
- Review the project management and implementation structures and processes, and the lead agency's role in the overall design.
- Review the M&E Framework including log frame indicators, tools and processes the Partners use to monitor and report their activities. Review the processes used to systematically document any advocacy initiatives that were undertaken?

g. Partnership Management

- Assess the level of engagement between the Partners and key Stakeholders at all levels and the ability to leverage the partnership process to inform the advocacy strategy.
- Assess the value of addition of UN Women in terms of the resources, oversight and technical support

8. Existing Information Sources

- Concept note
- Project documents

- Partner Progress Reports
- Published documents
- Consultation Reports
- Financial Reports
- UN Women Reports to FGE

9. Methodology

The Final Evaluation is intended to be a systematic learning exercise for Project Partners and UN Women Project Managers. The exercise is therefore structured to generate and share experiences and practical knowledge gained from the implementation of the Project activities. To achieve this, the evaluation will take place in a consultative and participatory manner. It is important to emphasise that the final evaluation is not conducted for the purpose of measuring individual or institutional performance but for validating the Project design and its effectiveness towards achieving the results as set forth in the Project document.

The Consultant will have the following responsibilities:

- An initial meeting of the Consultant with the Partners and UN Women (through phone /skype) shall be organised to get a briefing on the project, determine the scope and methods, and develop a feasible work plan.
- The Consultant will conduct a desk review of relevant documents to feed into the Inception Report with detailed scope of work and methodology, including a data collection and analysis framework, with tools. The Inception Report should detail the evaluators' understanding of what is being evaluated and why, contextualise the Framework of Evaluation Questions listed above, showing how each evaluation question will be answered by way of: proposed methods; proposed sources of data; and data collection procedures. The Inception Report should also include a proposed schedule of tasks, activities and deliverables. The Inception Report should be about 8 to 10 pages in length.
- A Reference Group will be set up by the Partner agencies in consultation with UN Women for quality assurance of the Evaluation process. The Reference group is expected to provide inputs on the Methodology and Tools.
- The Consultant will review the draft quantitative/qualitative tools for the endline shared by the Lead Agency and guide its finalisation.

- The Consultant will orient the team of surveyors and provide guidance on collection of endline data. The consultant will also be responsible for quality check of completed survey forms.
- The Consultant will orient and guide the data entry process to be undertaken by project staff, against the results framework indicators (as identified in the baseline survey). The data will be used to review the progress against the project outputs and outcomes. Additionally, the data will also inform the future activities, targets and recommendations.
- The Consultant will use the compiled data for analyses and reporting.
- The Consultant will use Qualitative Tools to seek feedback from the beneficiaries, key Stakeholders, Partners and UN Women staff based in Delhi.
- The Consultant will collect Case Studies from Partners to reflect best practices from the project areas.
- Based on the findings using quantitative and qualitative methods, the consultant will use the data to validate and triangulate the information to review the impact of the project against the Evaluation Framework mentioned above.
- The Consultant will share the Draft Report and make a presentation on the key findings to the Reference Group.
- Based on the feedback from the Reference Group, the Consultant will finalise the draft report.

10. Tentative Timeline

The Consultancy will commence on 11th February 2015. The first draft of the Evaluation Report will be submitted by 7th April 2015, and the revised, final Report by 15th May 2015. The Consultant will be expected to provide 30 days of inputs over a period of 3 months, from 11th February to 11th April, 2015.

Action	By When	Number of Days (30)
Signing of Consultancy Contract	17 th February 2015	-

Briefing and Desk Review of secondary documents	11 th February - 23 rd February 2015	5
Finalisation of Inception Report (Including tools)	By 23 rd February 2015	4
Undertake interviews and field trips to project sites – including in-depth interviews and focus group meetings – covering Gujarat, Karnataka, New Delhi; and survey trainings	23 rd February -20 th March 2015	9
Data Analyses + Drafting the Report	10 th March to 7 th April 2015	10
Presentation of draft report before Reference and Broad Reference Groups	9 th April to 15 th April 2015	1
Finalisation of evaluation report	By 15 th May 2015	1

11. Deliverables

Expected key outputs will include:

- An agreed evaluation inception report by 23rd February 2015. The inception report should detail the evaluators' understanding of what is being evaluated and why, showing how each evaluation question will be answered by way of: proposed methods; proposed sources of data; and data collection procedures. The inception report should also include a proposed schedule of tasks, activities and deliverables.
- A Draft Report, summarising key findings and recommendations to be shared with the Reference Group and Broad Reference Group by 7th April 2015.
- A presentation on the initial evaluation findings and recommendations to the Reference Group and Broad Reference Group by 15th April 2015.

- A final, comprehensive Evaluation Report, not exceeding 30 pages in hard and soft copy to be submitted to the Partners by 15th May 2015

12. Skills and Competencies

The Consultant will be India-based and should have the following qualifications and experience:

- Master's degree in gender studies, social sciences, or other relevant disciplines.
- Over 10 years of professional work experience in international development with specialisation in Programme Evaluation in the development sector.
- Demonstrated knowledge of and experience in Governance and Women's Empowerment programmes.
- Expertise in project planning and monitoring, including in logical frameworks and indicators.
- Excellent analytical skills and prior experience of both quantitative and qualitative data analysis.
- Experience in using statistical packages and in gender related data analysis.
- Excellent writing skills and the ability to explain technical terms in a non-technical language.
- Fluency in English (both writing and oral).
- Working knowledge of Hindi and familiarity with at least one South Indian language.

Annexure 8: Report of the draft evaluation presentation

1. Introduction:

The *Making Women's Voices and Votes Count* project (January 2013-June 2015) is a joint effort of IT for Change, *Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan* and ANANDI, that has aimed at exploring the potential of digital technologies for building a vibrant women's political constituency and strengthening gender-responsive local governance, across 3 sites – Mysore (Karnataka), Kutch and Bhavnagar (Gujarat).

In specific, the project has adopted the following strategies, to realise its vision:

- Strengthening elected women's leadership, and enhancing their understanding of gender and governance issues, through the design and implementation of an innovative, community media-based capacity-building model.
- Enhancing the linkages of elected women with their peers, and with women community leaders and women's collectives in their constituencies, through a combination of face-to-face forums, and the creation of a mobile-based IVR network for peer interaction and dialogue.
- Opening up opportunities for elected women and women from the community to jointly construct a shared women's agenda for local governance, by convening women-only village assemblies (*Mahila gram sabhas*).
- Enhancing marginalised women's access to entitlements by setting up a network of ICT-enabled information centres.
- Creating an alternative discourse on gender and governance, through local advocacy efforts such as community media-based campaigns, GIS-enabled participatory mapping, social audits etc.

This project has been supported by UN Women Fund for Gender Equality and endorsed by National Mission for Empowerment of Women. IT for Change has provided conceptual leadership to the project, and its field centre *Prakriye* has spearheaded the efforts of the project at the Mysore site. *Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan* (KMVS) and ANANDI have led the efforts at Kutch and Bhavnagar sites, respectively.

An external evaluation of this project was commissioned in February 2015, by the partnering organisations and UN Women, to a 2-member evaluation team comprising two senior feminist scholar-practitioners, Ms. Anita Ratnam and Ms. Vandana Mahajan. Additionally, a Broad Reference Group consisting of senior academicians, journalists, activists, policy makers and other important stakeholders in

the discourses of women's empowerment, gender-justice, decentralisation and governance, was set up, to provide overall guidance and support to the evaluation process.

Between February-March 2015, the evaluators finalised the evaluation design, and completed their initial round of field visits, and perusal of project documents, and interviews with key stakeholders. The draft findings compiled at the end of this exercise were shared with the partnering organisations and Broad Reference Group members, for their comments and feedback, at a meeting convened by the three partnering organisations on April 10, 2015, in Bangalore.

This report presents the key highlights of the presentation of the draft findings made by the evaluators, and also summarises the discussions that followed.

2. Draft findings of the project evaluation:

The presentation from the evaluation team, on their draft findings, focused on the following two dimensions:

- revisiting the project's theory of change and its underlying assumptions.
- reviewing the shifts in gender power enabled by the project, analysed through the Domains of Change framework of Gender at Work.

The evaluators opened the presentation by sharing the assumptions underlying the project's theory of change, as perceived by them. In their view, the key assumptions of the project were as follows:

1. ICTs offer the potential for creating a culture of claims-making at the local level.
2. ICTs enable the strengthening of women's participation and political role in *Panchayat Raj* Institutions.
3. ICTs can be harnessed for creating new pedagogic tools and media resources, for shaping an alternative discourse on gender and governance.
4. Enhancing the associational power of women's networks and collectives leads to women's constituency-building.
5. For elected women representatives and women's collective leaders, being a woman is an overarching identity subsuming other identities based on caste, class, gender, religion and political affiliation.

The evaluators then went on to unpack each of the assumptions, based on their field research and interviews with key stakeholders.

Assumption 1: The information centres at the village level have certainly played a huge role in shifting the local culture of claims-making, by recasting applicants of welfare schemes as “citizens with rights” and not just beneficiaries. Over the life of the project, 6000+ claims have been processed, with over 60% of claimants being women. Digitised information portals and a MIS for tracking applications to closure have been effective practices adopted at the information centres.

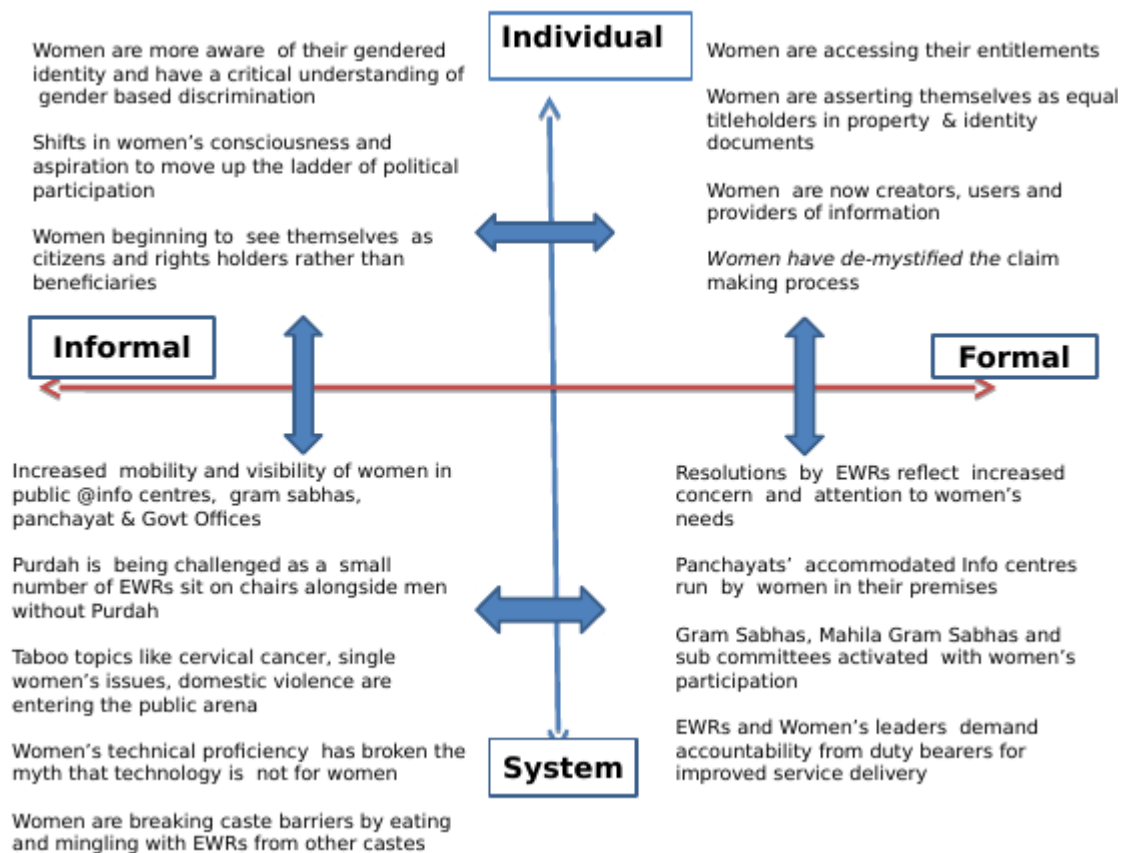
Assumption 2: Though the project explored a number of digital pathways for strengthening women's political role in *Panchayats* – such as GIS-enabled participatory mapping efforts and IVR-based networking for encouraging peer learning of elected women – it is face to face interactions that have proved most crucial in sharing, peer learning and exchange. Also, more than lack of information and networking opportunities, what obstructs women from playing their role in PRIs are the attitudes towards women in politics.

Assumption 3: The project has created new pedagogic possibilities in various ways – such as utilising community media production processes as spaces for reflexive learning, and not as mere forums for transacting technical expertise to the participants; the use of community media strategies to break the culture of silence around women's issues; and vesting the ownership of community media processes with women. In fact, the falling costs of community radio and community video production is an opportunity that the project has effectively harnessed, to open up a dialogue on the operation of local patriarchies.

Assumption 4: Under the project, women have experienced the networks and associations as spaces for caring. These spaces are well aware of the numerous pressures that women face in political life – especially “the strangle-hold of patriarchal ideology” on the spaces of governance and public institutions; but they have demanded that elected women place the shared interests of women, above all other considerations, in their actions.

Assumption 5: Though there are numerous stories from the field, of women reaching out to support one another across caste, class and communal lines; there is still tremendous pressure from entrenched power-elite factions on “evoking primordial identities and replicating inequalities”. Also, the time window of the project has not been sufficient enough to test the assumption of whether the culture of divisive politics can be challenged through a new feminist politics enabled by technology.

The evaluators then went on to detail the key shifts facilitated by the project, in gender power, using the Domains of Change framework of Gender at Work, as detailed in the figure below.



In short, the evaluators' key comments about the project's transformative potential, were as follows:

Areas where significant gains have been made:

- Opening up the empowering potential of ICTs to elected women and women in the community.
- Enhancing marginalised women's awareness of themselves as citizens and as rights-holders, and their power of claims-making in the space of the public and the private.

Areas where middling gains have been made:

- Strengthening elected women's linkages with their peers.
- Improving women's participation in politics.
- Improving women's influence in local governance processes.

Slower areas of progress:

- Elected women's effectiveness and efficiency in taking up community agendas and social welfare issues, in *Panchayat* spaces.
- Overcoming the control of elected women by their husbands.
- Enabling elected women assert greater control over *Panchayat* finances.

Reversal of gains:

- Reduced incidence of elected women taking up gender-based violence issues, at the *Panchayat* level, in two of the three sites (Bhavnagar and Mysore districts).

3. Discussion:

The presentation was followed by deep and engaged discussion on the project experience, the larger questions of power and subversion under which rubric the project can be theorised, and broader reflections on the domain of technology and development. Specific comments, questions and insights expressed by the Broad Reference Group members and other participants, are shared below.

3.1 Response from Ms. Sarada Muraleedharan, Joint Secretary, Ministry of *Panchayati Raj*, Government of India:

Ms. Muraleedharan's specific response to the project was a reflection on the transformative potential of ICTs. She reflected, "*ICTs may certainly be powerful tools in enabling struggles for furthering the gender in governance agenda move ahead, but can ICTs in and of themselves, be transformative?*" She also reflected on the broader question of the challenges of furthering the agenda of women's inclusion in local governance processes, in the current hyper-politicised scenario. She first commented on the flip side of *Mahila gram sabhas* – and observed that though they have succeeded in opening up a new route for women to dialogue with their elected representatives, they have been used in many areas as an excuse to "*keep women out of the main gram sabhas*".

Then, she moved on to the question of identity – in the current scenario where party politics holds sway over *Panchayats*, can an elected women representative let her identity as a woman transcend party loyalty? Is this possible? Often times, one observes that due to hyper-politicisation, the "*intra-equity*" (referring to women's relationship with one another, transcending caste, class and party lines) gets compromised in the workings of *Panchayat Raj*.

She then went on to reflect on the status of *Panchayat Raj* Institutions in general. In the current budget, the allocation to the Ministry of *Panchayati Raj* has come under the axe – with the sum total of funds for *Panchayats* being slashed to a mere 94.75 crores for the fiscal year 2015-16, from 3400.69 crores the previous year¹⁵. And the worth that the upper tiers of government associate with the *Pan-*

¹⁵ <http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-axe-on-social-sector-to-adjust-fiscal-deficit-2065212>

chayats can be assessed from the provisions for political reservation for women – there is talk of raising 33% reservation for women in *Panchayat Raj* to 50%; an idea that is completely vetoed when it is proposed for the upper tiers of government. (Clearly, *Panchayats* are not seen as critical seats of political power, considering the lack of opposition to the question of women's reservation).

She concluded by highlighting that the picture is not entirely bleak. For instance, there has been a 4-fold increase in the devolution of untied funds to *Panchayats*; and there are schemes such as National Rural Livelihoods Mission that seek to actively promote *Panchayat Raj* – CBO convergences, that must be effectively leveraged.

3.2 Response from Dr. M.R. Ekanthappa, Additional Chief (Operations), Gram Swaraj Project, Rural Development and Panchayath Raj Department, Government of Karnataka

Dr. Ekanthappa took off from Ms. Muraleedharan's observations on the status of *Panchayat Raj* Institutions in general – especially the status of devolution of funds to *Panchayats*. He said that over the years, fund availability at the *Panchayat* level has increased, but this could be effectively harnessed only if accountability at the local governance level was improved. For this, the processes of *gram sabhas* and *mahila gram sabhas* needed to be strengthened. He said that this has been one of the areas the *Gram Swaraj* project and the Department of Rural Development and *Panchayath Raj*, Government of Karnataka, has been working on. However, there is much more that needs to be done in this area.

For example, last year, 400 *Mahila gram sabhas* were held in the state of Karnataka. In these forums, a number of issues pertaining to health and nutrition were raised; and related resolutions were passed. However, in many cases, no follow-up action could be taken on the ground, as funds were not available on the ground. Hence, *Mahila gram sabhas* must be supported by government orders and circulars earmarking funds for following up on the agendas evolving from them, in order to be effective.

3.3 Response from Ms. Madhulika Singh, Monitoring, Evaluation and Research Associate, UN Women Office for India, Bhutan, Maldives and Sri Lanka

Ms. Madhulika Singh focused on project-specific aspects, in her feedback. First, she highlighted two issues for which it may be useful to contrast baseline-endline findings.

1. The baseline report has a section on '*the extent of support for gendering the local governance agenda in the public sphere, among elected male representatives and the husbands of elected women representatives*'. It would be useful to have this section, in the final evaluation report, as well.
2. The baseline report observes that there may be a difference in self-perception of their political roles, among elected women who are first-time members of *Panchayats*, and those who are in their second term. It may be useful to discuss this issue again, in the final evaluation report.

She then suggested that in the recommendations section of the final evaluation report, it may be useful to highlight some of the innovative ideas explored under the project that may be scalable and replicable. Some specific dimensions she highlighted in this regard, were:

“Processes of community media and products that are rooted in the community; Common user group for sharing of messages (in the context of mobile technologies), which provides for community-owned and back-end control of technology by the community-based organisations (CBOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs); A comprehensive digital management information system (MIS)-developed to track the data being collected at the information centres, including about access to schemes, pending applications, etc. which can become a useful template for future programmes; An information portal established at the local level in the local language; effective use of Geographic information system (GIS) as a tool to map resources and access to rights and entitlements; Gender Score Card that could be up-scaled to other areas, and could become citizen reports that form the basis of gender-based campaigns at the local level.”

Ms. Madhulika Singh then suggested that the project findings could inform many tangible advocacy efforts, especially in the area of influencing the curriculum of efforts for capacity-building of elected women, that are currently undertaken by various training institutes associated with the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Ministry of Women and Child Development and Department of Telecommunications, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology.

In conclusion, Ms. Madhulika Singh provided some specific inputs on the evaluation design:

1. As the evaluation has adopted the Domains of Change framework of Gender at Work, it is important to also flag the limitations of this framework.
2. Where possible, the final evaluation report must supplement qualitative insights with quantitative findings.
3. When elaborating upon the pathways of change, the challenges as well as the enabling factors should be highlighted.
4. The project's engagement with government officials at the block and district level must be highlighted.
5. It may be useful to separate the analysis of the IVR network as a sharing platform from the broader analysis of the multiple ICT strategies adopted for triggering learning processes.

3.4 Response from Ms. Cynthia Stephen, Consultant, International Justice Mission, Bengaluru

Ms. Cynthia Stephen brought to the table, insights from her experiences of being a feminist activist, and of being a part of the High Power Committee constituted by the state government of Karnataka, to examine amendments to the Karnataka *Panchayat* Raj Act, 1993. She observed that recently, a lot of lip service has been paid to the 3rd tier of governance in mainstream debates on strengthening *Panchayat* Raj Institutions. However, these discussions have tended to focus on the question of increasing the devolution of funds to *Panchayats*, without devoting adequate thought to the concomitant issue of creating checks and balances on making this system accountable. This is a gap that is crucial to address – especially in the current context where sudden eruptions of patriarchal power impede transformative practice on the ground. To illustrate her point in greater detail, Ms. Stephen brought up the examples of the persecution of RTI activists and women who go against prevailing gender norms – such as the recent case of a woman *sarpanch* in Madhya Pradesh being killed by her own brother for lighting the pyre of her mother (traditionally, an exclusive male prerogative – 'a son's right!'). Countering such feudal forms of thinking and this patriarchal backlash must be seen as a challenge that feminist interventions have to rise up to, she concluded.

3.5 Response from Ms. Jahnvi Andharia, Executive Director, ANANDI, Bhavnagar

Ms. Jahnvi Andharia reflected upon the evaluation presentation, bringing in her insights from the project implementation experience at the Bhavnagar site. She observed that at Bhavnagar and the other 2 sites, the project strategy had been that of enabling elected women to come together, foregrounding their shared identity as 'women', in a manner that helped them transcend other differences. It was clear that this was an uphill struggle, and of course combining platform-building with the mandate of exploring the transformative potential of digital technologies made this harder.

Ms. Andharia went on to reflect specifically upon the challenges that had to be addressed:

“(At our site in Bhavnagar), it took elected women almost six months to get the women to utter the word 'technology' correctly. It had to be approached gradually... the initial few months were spent in collecting mobile phone numbers, building a rapport and gaining people's trust. But for the elected women we work, to fully grasp the effective appropriation of technologies in furthering the governance agenda, it has taken longer. Two years was a very short period for this, and only now do we see women becoming ready to combine the technology and governance agenda”.

Ms. Andharia then went on to reflect upon the role of men in the project. Although women were the proposed 'agents' of the project, men weren't excluded. Most men thought they had done their bit by permitting women to participate in the project, and the ANANDI team thought it wise to work with this sentiment. This was because allowing men this initial self-gratification, was seen as a nuanced strategy to push for more crucial changes with respect to gender justice issues, down the road.

Finally, Ms. Andharia addressed the issue of the fall in the number of gender based violence cases being addressed by elected women representatives at the *Panchayat* level, that had been brought up by the evaluators in their presentation. She observed that the project has not aimed at making elected

women the single point of contact for all issues in the village. On the other hand, it has sought to bring about changes in popular perceptions about women leaders, and also build their leadership capacities – so that they are no longer proxies, but leaders in their own right who can build solidarities with women in their constituencies (countering caste norms where required), and effectively address the shared issues/concerns of women.

Another reason for the fall in the number of cases of violence coming to the *Panchayat* could be that there are other forums such as the *Nyay Samiti* (also set up by the *Mahila Swaraj Manch* at the ANANDI site), which focus on this issue – so women may be directly taking their problems to this dedicated forum rather than coming to the *Panchayat*.

3.6 Response from Ms. Laxmi Murthy, Associate Editor, *Himal Southasian*

Ms. Laxmi Murthy concurred with Ms. Jahnvi Andharia's comments on the time limitations of the project, and added that it was important to take forward the learnings from the 2 years to developing future interventions in this areas. In her words, it is important to “*use the project as a diving board for larger things*”. She also appreciated the politics of naming that the project has paid close attention to, as reflected in the choice of its title. “*It is heartening to see the word 'women' in the project title, which is a refreshing change from the euphemisms that seem to be the current rage (such as substituting 'project' language for 'activist' language' and obliquely referring to 'gender sensitisation' instead of talking about addressing violence)*”.

3.7 Response from Dr. Jyotsna Jha, Director, Centre for Budget and Policy Studies, Bengaluru

Dr. Jyotsna Jha had some specific reflections on the evaluation, as well as some insights on connecting the insights emerging from the project experiences, to wider debates on women's participation in *Panchayat Raj* Institutions.

Firstly, Dr. Jha observed that it may be interesting, across the 3 sites, to compare the differences between those elected women participants with a prior history of being associated with collectives, and those elected women participants whose first exposure to collectives coincided with this project – in terms of their ease in appropriating technologies. This could shed some light on the relationship between meaningful appropriation of technologies and solidarity-building efforts at the grassroots, and in what order gender, governance and technology interventions ought to sequence their activities on the ground. This also requires a careful retracing of the pathways adopted by the project, to realise each of its outcomes, to assess their effectiveness; and also a careful documentation of the challenges faced by the project – as that can be extremely useful in framing policy recommendations.

Secondly, Dr. Jha brought in some insights from a recent research study conducted by CBPS, in order to illustrate the immensity of the task the project has attempted to tackle in a short 2 year time-frame. This research study that aimed at assessing community perception about elected women and elected men representatives' leadership found that except for ASHAS and *anganwadi* workers who reported

enhanced responsiveness and cooperation from the *Panchayat* after women had come to power, other members in the wider community did not report any difference in *Panchayat* performance, after women had been elected to power. In fact, women leaders at the *Panchayat* level seemed to be taking up the same priorities as men leaders.

3.8 Response from Ms. Anita Gurumurthy, Executive Director, IT for Change

Ms. Anita Gurumurthy first picked up a common thread on technology and transformation that had underpinned the discussion – Is technology merely an instrument/a tool or is it something more? She commented that there was a critical need for a paradigmatic shift in the way we understand digital technologies. In the current social context we inhabit, digital technologies are transforming social relationships, and restructuring underlying social norms, and thus are co-constituting society. So, we can no longer ask the question – Is technology necessary for politics? This is because technology is implicated in the very construction of the political field today.

She then addressed the logical question emanating from this explanation – if technology is everywhere, what should be the approach that one takes to pinpoint the specifics of change the project has facilitated? For this, she suggested that it would be extremely useful to use a counter-factual approach, which involves examining the following dimension – if not for the project, what would be the nature of technology appropriation by elected women? Certainly, technological diffusion, especially of the mobile phone, would have ensured that elected women would have received some IVR messages; and they would have viewed films and listened to the radio. But the IVT messages would mostly likely have been commercial/advertising/ political propagandist material, and the CDs they would have viewed and the radio programmes they would have listened to, would have been restricted to 'popular entertainment' churned out by mainstream production houses. A far cry from the transformatory IVR network, community video and community radio efforts that they have been a part of, because of the project. What makes the same technological affordance so different is the politics of signification deployed through it – and thus it is important to recognise that digital technologies are neither value-neutral nor apolitical. Deploying digital technologies for gender-just governance is therefore, an endeavor that straddles two equally political spaces – that of technology itself, and that of governance itself (which of course is no longer the same, recast as it is by the forces of the digital). The project recognised this, and hence in each of its strategies, the focus was on creating rituals that brought together the transformative possibilities of digital and face to face strategies, for furthering the gender and governance agenda.

She then added to Ms. Andharia's point on the reduction in the number of cases of violence being handled by elected women representatives by agreeing that one must not place the burden of resolving every single issue on the shoulders of elected women, and observed that it may be erroneous to over-read this point, considering that the endline survey sample was quite small.

3.9 Response from Ms. Preeti Soni, Executive Director, Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan and Ms. Kruti Laheru, Programme Executive, Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan

Ms. Preeti Soni reflected on the challenges faced during the implementation of the project. Her comments were related to Ms. Cynthia Stephen's remarks on the difficulties of translating visions for transformative change, into real gains on the ground. Many a time, for feminist practitioners, talking about 'value-based governance' to women dis-empowered by the various structures of patriarchal society (*ghar, gaav, samaj*/ family, village and society) is an extremely difficult proposition – as all these structures pose a stiff barrier to women's substantive public-political participation.

Cognisant of this, while implementing the *Making Women's Voices and Votes Count* project, the KMVS team had consciously focused on working with all sections of the local community – and not just elected women, in order to generate a local dialogue on gender and governance. The success of this strategy lies in the small, unanticipated transformations the project has enabled at the KMVS site. Ms. Preeti Soni then went on to share an example of one such instance, of two infomediaries (one Muslim, and one from the Darbar community that is traditionally considered to be a caste that has a high status) bridging prevailing caste and religious divides, and forging a strong linkage with each other, with the express intention of enhancing the effectiveness of claims-making in the information centres they are in charge of. In fact, recently, motivated by her success in handling the information centre, one of them came up to the KMVS team and shared her ambition of setting up a woman's political party, someday.

Ms. Kruti Laheru from KMVS added some more specific insights on the successes the project has enabled – such as elected women participants of the project effectively addressing the issues/concerns emerging in the *Mahila Gram Sabhas*, in other *Panchayat* forums; and ensuring that *Panchayat* resolutions adopted in the *Mahila Gram Sabhas* translate into concrete action on the ground. Strengthening the solidarities of elected women with their peers, seems to be another area, where a lot of change has been witnessed. For example, recently, in one of the *panchayats* in the project area, a woman *sarpanch* was threatened by the traditional power elite in the *panchayat* body with a no-confidence motion. Rather than back down, she decided to fight for her rights, strengthened by the backing of 50 of her peers from the elected women's federation!

3.10 Other comments and observations

– Ms. Anupama Suresh, Senior Project Associate at IT for Change, reflected on the challenges of project implementation at the IT for Change site. She observed that in Mysore, where there was no pre-existing elected women's federation, and it was difficult to directly start talking to *Panchayats* about gender and governance issues, 'technology trainings' became a strategic point of entry into the *Panchayats*, and a way for subtly initiating strategic discussions at the *Panchayat* level, on gender issues.

– Ms. Jeevika Shiv of ANANDI, added another critical point about the power of ICTs – their ability to counter the 'invisibilisation' of discrimination (through their propensities to amplify voice).

– Mr. Parminder Singh, Executive Director of IT for Change, re-emphasised the need to move beyond the approach of viewing ICTs as mere 'tools'. He opined that the most important change that ICTs are ushering in, is the reconstitution of the social, and that in this particular project, this means that the triad of 'gender-governance-technology' that is being analysed, must be analysed in its entirety and the question of technology cannot be decoupled from that of gender and governance (cautioning against an analytical view that tries to separate the 'technical' from the 'social'). On a lighter note, he commented,

“when you don't understand it, its technology, when you begin to understand it, its social!”

– To the larger discussions on the role of technology in recasting the social, Prof. Maithreyi Krishnaraj, Former Director, Research Centre for Women's Studies, SNDT University, Mumbai, responded by drawing a parallel to Marshall McLuhan's work on the symbiotic relationship between the medium and the message.

4. Concluding Remarks from the Chair

Ms. Srilatha Batliwala, in her concluding remarks, brought together all the arguments and observations that emerged during the discussion. She said that everything that was spoken about – technology, gender, knowledge etc. – would be subsumed under the question of 'power'; while we are involved in dealing with the nitty-gritty of the process, it is important not to lose sight of 'power'. We must always keep thinking of ways to transform what we find unacceptable.

Ms. Batliwala opined that *Making Women's Voices and Votes Count* has demonstrated that the triad of gender-governance-technology is a potent intersection to target, if one seeks to challenge entrenched power structures. She also commented that in such endeavours, the ideal should be of *“women transforming power and not power transforming women”*. In conclusion, she highlighted the need to acknowledge the historical continuity of the struggles for women's political participation and transformation in patriarchal structures, and the imperative to constantly identify new points of vulnerability in these entrenched structures, in order to challenge them (*“...it's like guerrilla warfare”*). This is a task none can shy away, in the current context where we are surrounded by mainstream developments that seek to transform *“nations of citizens into nations of consumers”*.

Annexure 9: Presentation from Evaluators



Flow of today's presentation

- Revisiting project's theory of change and its underlying assumptions for insights from the evaluation;
- A review of shifts in gender power enabled by the project & connections between the different domains of change
- A look at contextual factors mitigating AGAINST Elected Women's Representatives (EWRs) and women's collectives to build a strong women's political constituency
- The larger questions the evaluation raises and encountered and factors over which no particular project or NGO has control.

Introduction

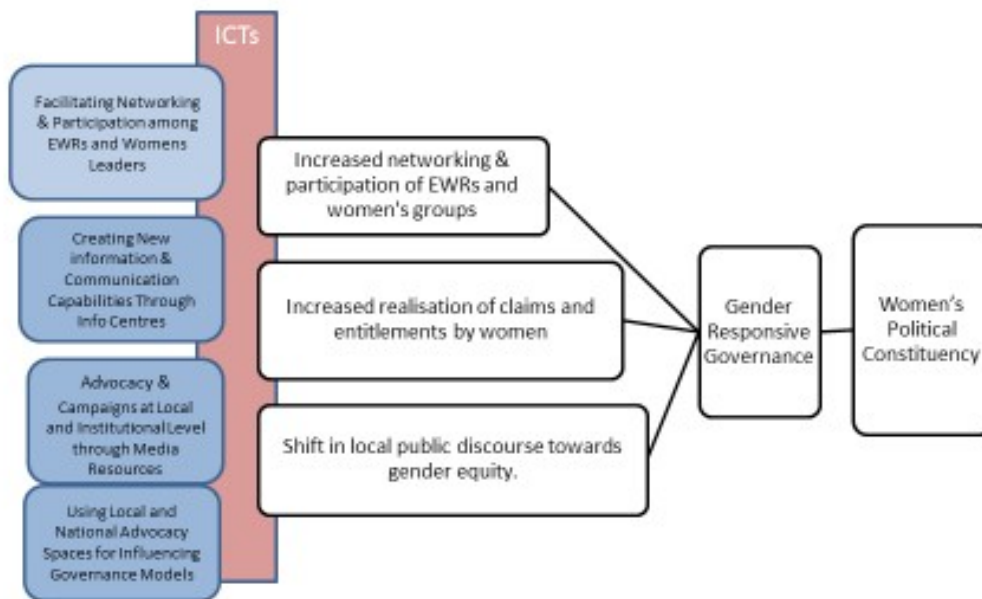
The purpose of evaluation

- To capture change at the individual, community, and organizational level
- To assess impact of the project and the realisation of planned outcomes and outputs using the Standard Evaluation Framework
- To look at the possibilities and challenges of leveraging associational power and solidarity among women to push for gender responsive governance through PRIs
- To suggest recommendations for future programming, replication and scaling up

Approach, Process and Methodology

- A feminist approach to evaluation
- A process based on listening, probing, reflecting, validating, analysis and inference making, review and sharing to aid reflective and reflexive learning
- The framework of analysis is drawn from Gender@Work's model of domains of change
- Methods included FGDs/interviews with stakeholders, review of project reports, process documents and study of best practices
- Analysis of responses to elicit relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact, along with programme and partnership management of the project
- Comparative analysis of base-line and endline surveys and PMF data

Theory of Change of The Project



ToC Assumptions as Perceived by Evaluators

- There is a digital opportunity available to all women
- ICT will enable women to play their political role at the local level in PRIs more effectively
- ICTs can usher in a culture of demanding and claiming one's entitlements and rights
- Associational power of women's networks and collectives will lead to building the political constituency of women
- For EWRs and women's collective leaders, being a woman is an overarching identity subsuming other identities based on class, class, gender, religion and political affiliation
- ICTs can be harnessed for creating new pedagogic tools and media resources for shaping an alternative discourse on gender equity

Is digital opportunity available to all women?

- Women seem to be no exception in wanting to be an active and engaged part of the network society.
- Women referred to are living in rural areas and belong to marginalized communities where phones, computers, cameras cannot be taken for granted. Despite limited literacy, lack of prior exposure to ICTs and inhibitions, they have learnt to adeptly handle/use a range of devices and experienced the power of ICTs to voice their concerns.
- Targeted and staggered learning opportunities, continuous affirmation and encouragement, the notion of technology as a public good and information as a right, taking ICTs to where they are, and helping women use ICTS in ways relevant to their lives- have been underpinnings of the project to help make the digital opportunity available to all women
- Currently 47% of EWRs in the core group have their own phones, 40% share with the household and 13% have no access.

Is digital opportunity available to all women? (cont'd)

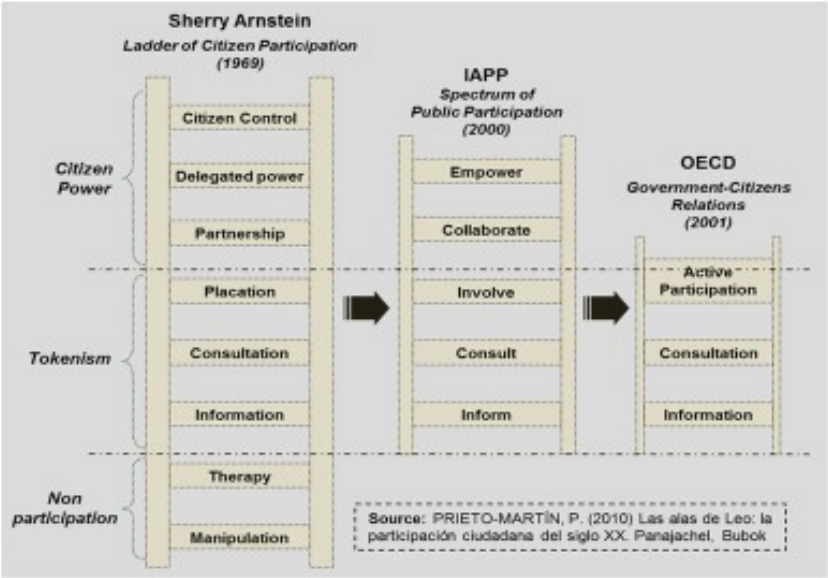
- Though women's access to phones has been increasing, the assumption of universal phone access for now remains a theoretical possibility,
- Owning /having access to a phone is no guarantee that women can use it for their work. Today 50% of EWRs have phone conversations with peers. Among those who have phones at the household level , 31% do NOT use it for communication with peers
- Access and use of ICTs continues to be mediated by women's limited purchasing power; poor infrastructure, ability to exercise autonomy as "gate keepers" ask " but... why do you need a phone?"
- The digital opportunity can be availed by women, only IF these hindrances are addressed and women's systematic uptake, control and use of ICTs is made possible by providing enabling environment.

Assumption 2: ICTs will enable women to play their political role at the local level in the PRIs more effectively

During the Baseline 79 EWRs were considered the core group which has increased to 135 by the of the project- a significant achievement. Yet there is a long way to go as this represents a small portion of the EWRs in the project areas. How have ICTs helped EWRs?

- 825 EWRs received succinct, relevant and timely information about entitlements, panchayat proceedings, health and panchayat events through IVRS. A total of 266 messages have been sent. EWRs in the core group acted on the information received to raise concerns and participate in panchayat meetings.
- EWRs have used photography skills for documenting the situation in their villages and have used photos as evidence when needed
- About 40% of EWRs in the core group have either given video interviews or been part of the ideating/ video production team/ disseminating processes. Video based learning helped build critical understanding of gender & women's role in governance.
- The 238 EWRs linked to information centres have become users, developers and providers of information.
- They engaged with digitized systems for accessing information like (Panjo Haq), used the MIS for tracking claims and took charge of surveys & GIS Mappings which brought them in touch with women and their realities.
- ICTs have helped women overcome isolation to connect across physical distances and social barriers.
- Digital networks for peer learning and horizontal linkages among EWRs have been limited by less than 50% of phone ownership . Face too face interactions during meeting and trainings have been the most important avenue for sharing, peer learning and exchange.
- AS IVRS is basically a one way process, training on using SMS was introduced for decentralised communication However lack of personal phones and low literacy levels are a deterrent.
- The routes used for lobbying and pushing concerns within the panchayat (see Table 6) reveal that it is *face to face* interactions with peers and officials that have played a crucial role
- More than lack of information and networking opportunities, what obstructs women from playing their role in PRIs are the attitudes towards women in politics

Women’s climb up the ladder of participation and empowerment



3. ICTs can usher in a culture of demanding and claiming one's entitlements and rights

- 6147 claims were processed successfully during the project with 66% of claimants being women
- Shift in the entitlement discourse from seeking individual claims to pushing for greater effectiveness and accountability of the system to deliver
- Women have gained much greater access to information about their entitlements as a result of the transition from obfuscation to demystification of the claim making process.
- There is a shift from being a "beneficiary" to being a citizen with rights.
- Information centres have come to symbolise the institutionalisation of information support. Panchayats are requesting for help to set up and have set up 7 such centres.
- Women's access to employment, housing, food security, forest rights, health, housing, social security, water, sanitation etc have improved health and wellbeing.
- Women as information providers have gained new capabilities and power, and in a subversive way ICTs have helped turned the tables on men- who now seek information from women!
- Information centres are now being run in collaboration with panchayats and along with their legitimisation there is scope for cooption of the centres. When centres are operating from tables/corners of the panchayat offices women cannot speak freely about their issues or share anxieties, problems and dilemmas.
- As there is a focus on entitlements from state schemes, rights in the family and in civil society need to be addressed through separate spaces like the Lok Adhikar Kendras, Nyaya samiti, social justice committees etc ,

4. Associational power of women's networks and collectives will help in building the political constituency of women.

- The project has demonstrated that associational power of women's networks especially when the organizations' historical achievements have established prestige, credibility and influence.
- The networks have attempted to convey to EWRs that each of them is supported by and represents the larger political constituency of women at block/ district level – as a group with a common goal
- These networks have become launching pads for women to enter the political arena without being dummies used by family/community or being tokens used by parties whose credibility and electoral successes fluctuate with every electoral cycle.
- Women have also experienced the power of such associational networks and platforms as spaces for caring and being protected
- While the networks/forums are well aware of the pressures that women face, they also have demanded that EWRs place women's interest above all other considerations.
- Solidarity building through women's networks is a long drawn process of inclusion and synergy building, fraught with high voltage tensions of dealing with issues of inter and intra group dynamics of power, influence, authority, competitiveness and vested interests. Despite women's growing associational power, the strangulating influence of patriarchal ideology and increasing intrusion of private and "for profit" interests in the functioning of public institutions involved in governance, administration and in service delivery is a serious hindrance.

5. For EWRs and women's leaders, being a woman is the overarching identity, subsuming other identities based on class, class, gender, religion & political affiliation

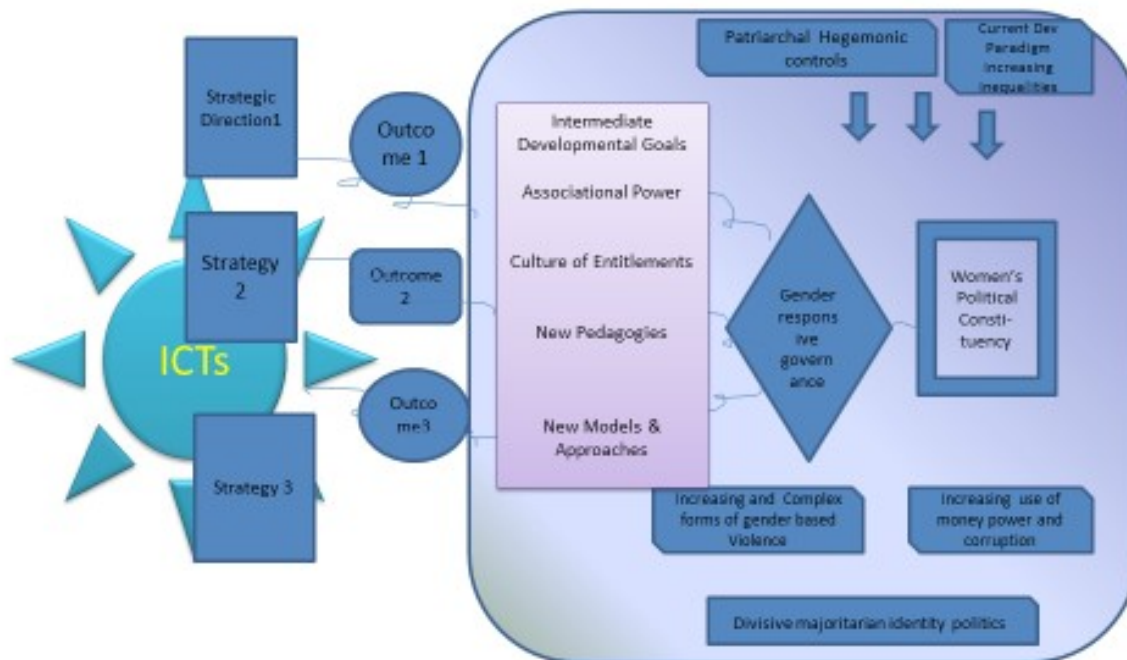
- The project experience is replete with inspirational and heart warming stories of women reaching out to each other across community, **embracing the intersections of gender with caste, class and religion as resources.**
- Narratives of personal change recounted by women reflected struggles with their own beliefs / practices with regard to caste, religion and ethnicity in their journey to overcoming superiority/inferiority and becoming more inclusive.
- The EWR networks have shifted from their stance of not welcoming women affiliated to political parties to now accepting that this is a reality they have to contend with, though party affiliation comes with male control and party diktats. As one of the Ex EWRs put it, "we remind them that they are women first, and party members second And then we hope that they keep their political interests separate from being women's representatives"
- The project had a limited window of time to meaningfully test this assumption of whether divisive politics can be challenged through a new feminist politics enabled by technology.
- **The immense pressure from powerful traditional interests is to maintain hierarchies, evoke primordial loyalties and replicate inequalities.**
- **Despite their increased political representation, despite women exercising their agency to participate meaningfully without being instrumentalised, their struggles to overcome divisions of caste, class, party and religion, continues.**

6. ICTs can be harnessed for creating new pedagogic tools and media resources for shaping an alternative discourse on gender equity

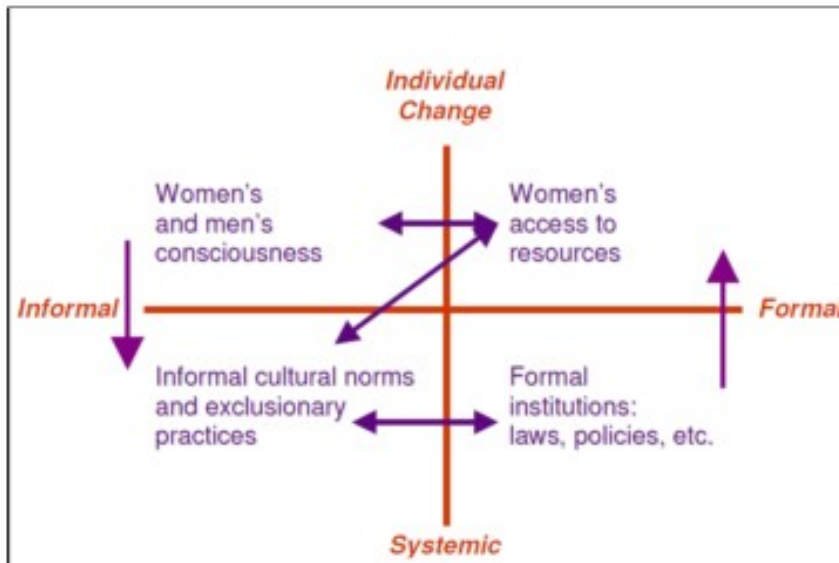
The project has created new pedagogic possibilities in multiple ways-

- Through the process of creating new media audio and video resources ie the process of ideation, story boarding, production, editing and broadcasting have become pedagogic tools for reflexive learning, more than the acquisition of technical expertise.
- Through the use of these resources as campaign material, learning tools and inspirational resources for other women has helped to break the culture of silence around women's issues, to challenge subordination and oppression and become powerful voices of change.
- By taking of these resources to where women are, and engaging in dialogues with them around the issues raised, and also using them to sensitise men and public servants
- By vesting ownership of these resources in women
- Across the three sites women have embraced the opportunity to create, learn from, own and disseminate media resources. 266 IVRS messages and 16 films have been made during the project on a range of women centric issues.
- At KMVS and ITFC radio broadcasts have reached more than 10,000 community members and in kutch 1656 women members of 34 villages have been part of narrowcasting sessions. At Anandi 9 films have been made and each screened several times.
- The collective ownership of media resources by marginalized women has enabled a dialogue on *local* patriarchies and has recognized the value of knowledge possessed by women. They have also affirmed local dialects, cultural forms, folk music and challenged the homogenising influences of mainstream media
- The shrinking size of equipment, decreasing costs and reducing complexity of making and broadcasting audio and video resources is an opportunity that the project has harnessed. Today ideas, footage, enthusiasm and capabilities exist to take this process forward. While promising beginnings have been made, there is a need to ensure that it's marginalised women's voices, not their technical expertise, that remains the critical element of the new discourse being created for gender equity.

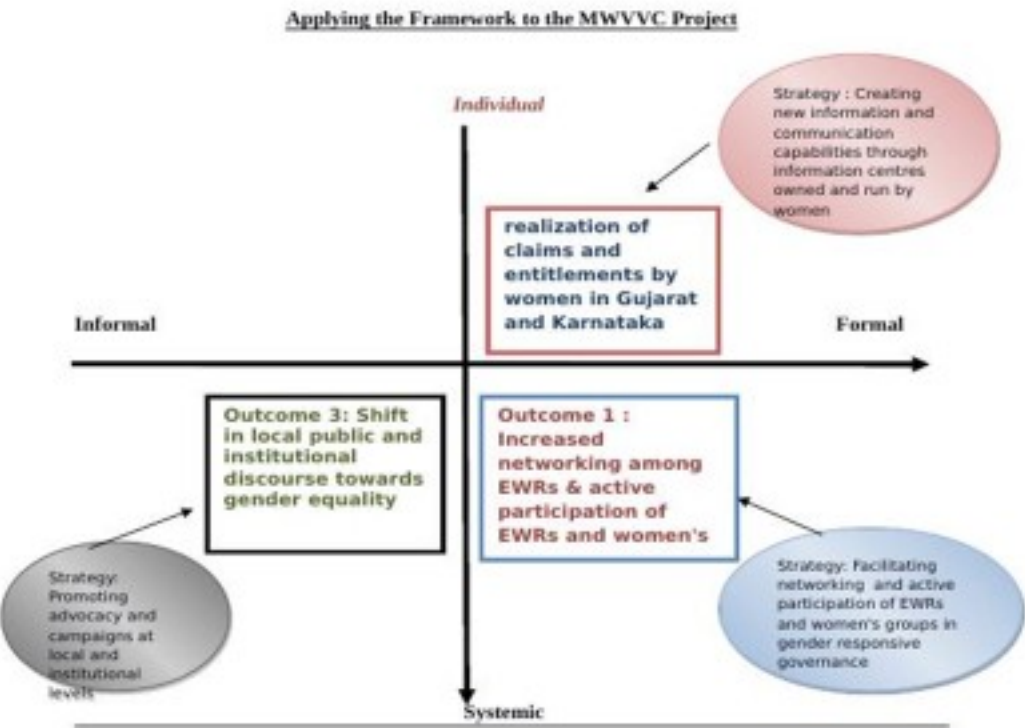
Pathways of Change



Gender@work- Domains of change framework



Applying the Framework to the MWVVC project plan

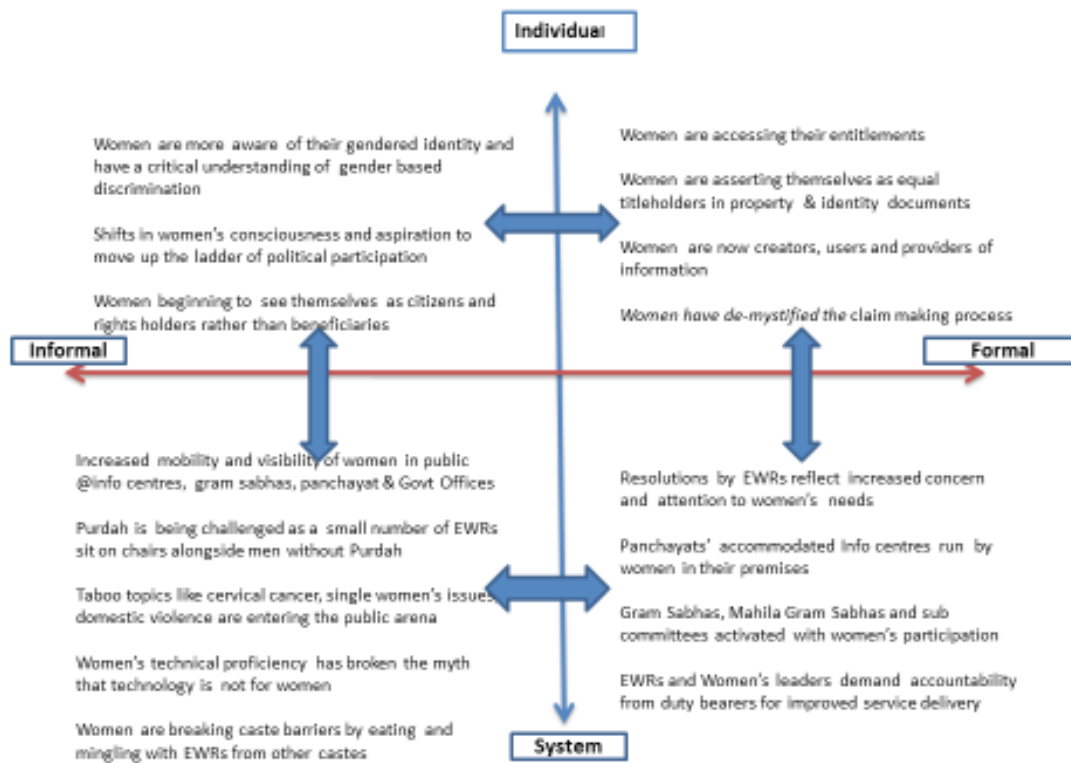


The Questions

- Applying the G@W framework we have examined the changes the project has led to and the relationship between these changes.
- Has the project led to *systemic* changes in *formal* institutions, policies and practices?
- Has the project led to *systemic* change in *informal* discourse, cultural norms and exclusionary practices towards gender equity?
- Has the project led to changes in *individual* women's access to resources from *formal* spaces?
- How has the project led to changes at the individual and collective level for women to build their agency?
- What is the interplay between the changes in the four domains, how porous are the domain boundaries-The move from individual to collective to systemic; changes in a continuum between informal to formal



Evaluation Report of Making Women's Voices and Votes Count



Porousness and Interconnectedness of Domains

Porousness and Interconnectedness of Domains

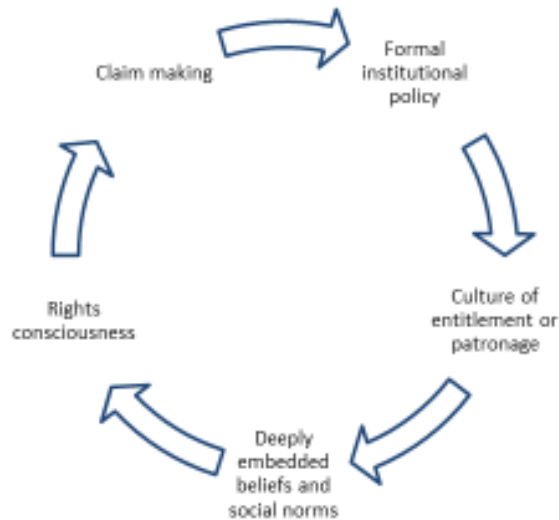
Plotting changes that have occurred in the Four Domains of change is complicated by the interconnectedness of domains.

For instance the experience of being empowered with information, staking claim and accessing entitlements has also created a shift in women's consciousness of their rights.

At the same time it can be said that it is not information, awareness and support mechanisms that lead to claim making i.e. that the **impetus** that drives the claim making process lies in a shift in women's consciousness and an internalisation of their rights in their emotional universe.

And these are engineered and controlled by deeply entrenched customs, norms, beliefs and practices in the informal system

which also permeate formal institutions -their methods, systems, unstated norms and ways of functioning.





Conclusions

Insights and Reflections

Key conclusions

- The project is **catalytic and innovative** in building dynamic linkages between gender, governance and technology
- It is unique in testing out **new pedagogies of praxis**, academic knowledge and the discourse on intersections of knowledge, power and gender equality.
- EWRs, women's collective's leaders and the women's rights organisations have enthusiastically taken up the unique **opportunity offered by the project to break their inhibitions** around technology and challenged the stereotype that 'women don't have a political sense therefore can't be politically inclined'
- The opportunities for dialogue, critical analysis and peer learning, including those enabled by the ICTs, have strengthened **EWRs self-perception as formal representatives of local government** and public interest.
- Entry into the political arena seems like a double edged sword for women.. For some it is a path **to recognition, leadership**, making a difference in other's women's livesand for others it's a path full of **challenges**, lure of power, threats of cooption and conflict with the patriarchal forces in the family, community and other institutional spaces.

conclusions contd..

Spaces where women have gained significantly are

- Empowerment through Technology
- Increased awareness of her agency as a citizen and a rights holder;
- Enhanced self perception of her power for claims making in the spheres of private and public resources

Middling gains seem to have been made in the sphere

- Improving women's participation
- Improving influence in governance at the local level
- Strengthening linkages of EWRs with their peers

Slower areas of progress

- EWRs' efficiency and effectiveness to take up community and social welfare agendas in the PRIs
- Husband's continued control and involvement in women's work in the panchayats
- Involvement in Panchayat finances;

Reversal of gains!!

Yes.. It was observed in reduced numbers of issues of violence being taken up by the EWRs (*mirrors the epidemic of GBV prevalent in the larger society!!*)

Building Criticality of Women's Collective Power for Changing Gender Relations

For effectiveness and sustainability of such a project :

- It is crucial to cultivate a substantively **significant mass** of critically conscious women mobilized through active and thriving solidarity based networks
- A groundswell for women's rights issues and building of individual and collective women's political constituency requires a **wider climate** where women's collectives are vibrant.
- Women's associational power is nurtured , deepened and guided by **the feminist principles and philosophy.**
- **The power discourse should shift towards "power to", "power with" and "power within to challenge"**

Dialectical dilemmas

- The triad of gender, ICT and governance seems to have opened up exciting possibilities of moving a largely gender blind or harmful ICT discourse to a more evolved gender sensitive perspective
- **HOWEVER** ICT enabled pedagogies need to be analysed
 - in terms of meaning making by a critical mass of women,
 - in terms of its potential for creating a script of transformative agenda,
 - in terms of reach and sensitivity of local media public interest goods
- Though the PRIs and local service delivery institutions seem to be addressing women's **concerns**, women's **perspectives** still do not shape governance
- Women have climbed up the ladder of political participation **BUT** are they managing the change in the political discourse? The results from the project paint a mixed picture ... as change seem to be largely managed by the Sarpanch Pati/ EMRs/ PDO/Talatidaar!!
- More women are entering PRIs, **BUT** there is a more complex shadow control by men to encourage their wives to contest elections through reserved seats (SAMRAS in Gujrat and purchase of seats by influential lobbies in Karnataka)

The Push back/ Contextual Factors Mitigating against GENDER RESPONSIVE GOVERNANCE

Women in Governance

- Despite the 33-50% reservation, holding of Mahila sabhas and having social justice agenda, men and the associated hegemonic mindset controlling the PRIs have largely been non accepting of women's participation and leadership beyond tokenism.
- At best there is a benevolent patriarch's attitude towards addressing women's concerns.
- Women's leadership is resisted by subtle and violent ways. No confidence motions used to remove active women from the PRIs, violence, conflicts with family; stigma of shaming the family and men's honour discourages even brave women's leaders to contest.

Governance Issues

- **Governance at PRI level seems to be serving a largely scheme/services delivery narrow agenda** as an administrative clearing house or a "power hoarding place", rather than steering pro people's development agenda
- There seems to be **a reversal of gains made in the developmental discourse** from being led by rights to becoming dole-centric.
- People's agency as citizens is being increasingly compromised by being made faceless, digitized numbers who can be tracked, inked and identified

Contested Gender spaces

- Raising issues like VAW has become highly contentious in the prevailing factitious and intolerant environment
- Increasing de-politicisation of women's space... in health, sexuality, education, livelihood, financial inclusion
- Entrenched corruption in the PRIs puts pressure on women to become complicit in a chain of "returns" and their "kickbacks" earn them prestige at home.
- Women's mobilization for their socio-political and economic empowerment has been weakened by the large scale government programmes which are taking over women's networks for service delivery of government programmes

Mitigating factors against GRG (Contd.)

- **Deep levels of corruption** and influence of money power on the local PRIs and its casting shadows on women to either play along or be ostracized
- **Majoritarian politics and increasing intrusion of the private and for profit interests** in the functioning of the public institutions breeding exclusion, power grabbing ambitions of male, upper / influential caste- class which has led to greater but more insidious forms of resistance of wresting control away from poor and women..
- Coupled with lack of belief in the spirit of decentralization is also an increasing **centralization of power** within all levels of state institutions
- The unpredictability about the overall budgetary situation in *panchayats* linked with *real* devolution of finances to the PRIs renders the chances of women's participation becoming pedantic
- The intensification of political party influence in local *panchayat* elections and the integration of *panchayats* into mainstream political culture which is deeply divisive and identify politics driven



***Sufficient and necessary conditions for
the future road map***

RECOMMENDATIONS

Sufficient and necessary conditions for the future road map

What we see in the project are small but crucial beginnings helpful in developing the future route map. These are-

1. The triad of gender, governance and ICT need to be embedded in the feminist principles of women's leadership, active listening, sharing, reflection and solidarity
2. Strengthening women's networks and alliance building will be the crucial catalytic factor for building a critical mass of women's political constituency at the local level
3. The e-governance processes need to be contextualized to address the local concerns, especially of the marginalized communities and vulnerable sections of men and women.

Sufficient and necessary conditions for the future road map

4. The e- and/ or ICT enabled governance processes have to be led , owned and controlled by local women whether those who are inside the PRIs or those who are part of the local women's federations/ collectives
5. Systemic changes as one of the key pathways of change in the policies and practices of the formal institution of PRIs will be guided by the social justice
6. Bringing systemic change in the domain of cultural norms and exclusionary practices will be the second key pathways of change
7. The domains of change in women's access to resources and enhancing women's individual and collective agency would be guided by the principles of substantive equality to ensuring meaningful women's participation in the PRIs

Non- negotiable principles

- Immense trust and investment in partnership building and management by key stakeholders (donors, programme developers, implementing partners, government, non government , multilateral and civil society organisations) is needed to make to reach intermediate outcomes and long term goals of women's' empowerment and gender equality
- Any short term project will be guided and informed by the needs and concerns of the women's rights organisations
- Initiating changes in the formal and informal institutional and cultural domains is a dynamic and a multilayered process that needs to be situated in the continuum of work of women's rights organisations and collectives
- An inter- generational and a non- linear systemic approach will inform the resource and programme planning processes to factor in alterations in responses to the mitigating factors.

Broad contours of suggested course of action

- For KMVS, Mahila Samakhya Karnataka, Anandi, ITfC as the women's rights organisations, it is desirable to build a long term commitment of time, human, technical and financial resources for the women's networks to become strong, autonomous and mature.
- Transformative change in the functioning of the PRIs or other government departments could take place by a multi modal process of engagement involving institutional reforms.
- Capacity building, advocacy and networking support is required for women's networks to mobilize the subalterns of the society.
- Support to PRIs through the intermediation of ICTs and building their perspective on gender and its intersectionalities with concerns of class, caste, religion, ethnic, disability, and sexuality issues for building their true potential of decentralisation and devolution of power

Contd.

- Support capacities of women EWRs to track budgets and expenditure and make available information and data in the public domain
- Build capacities of the EWRs in gender-budgeting with EWRs and build perspectives of the PRI members on the importance of engaging with Panchayat finances
- Deepening the work on building perspectives of elected women on gender and governance issues, and on the critical importance of women's political participation in formal governance processes.
- Expand women's access and use to move to the next level of having greater control over the use of informational, communication and digital technologies
- Expanding the poor, rural women's potential access and use of the ICT
- Deepen the leadership potential of EWRs to use different tools and approaches to ICTs in context-appropriate ways for sharpening their perspectives on gender and women's rights in governance.

for the state actors

A partial list of priorities for governance reforms on the basis of addressing the gender and women's concerns in the PRIs could include the following:

- The first set is sustained effort for PRI functionary preparation and development.
- For continual improvement of PRIs; jettison the training-based approach and implement a district-owned curriculum with context specific perspectives around the social justice agenda of the PRIs
- The likelihood of such approach resisted is very high, given the deep and vested interests and will require all the political capital that can be mustered.
- PVAC campaigns should address the matter of quality of intake of male and female candidates contesting for the PRIs using a rigorous assessment process.
- Advocacy for broader cross systemic governance reforms to make women's participation more meaningful in terms of substantive equality

For multilaterals and donors to explore:

- Improving governance by making it gender responsive is only addressing one part of the problem, - sustained advocacy efforts are needed by the multilaterals like UN women and other agencies to the larger range of concerned stakeholders.
- A strategic plan with a systemic approach could be developed by UN women in the domain of political empowerment of women drawing upon the catalytic elements of this project for influencing diverse actors from the state and civil society
- Share the key reflexive elements (so as not to reduce it to be seen as only a good/ best practice !!) from the project to build the feminist praxis on gender responsive governance.
- Develop a comprehensive women and ICT policy framework
- What needs to be done should be done, rather than grandstanding on the naturally emotive matter of governance. They don't need to have the ring of grand governance reforms of popular imagination. Each of these matters would need to be suited to the specific situation at the local level.

Annexure 10: Compiled feedback document

Comments on the Draft Evaluation Report of *Making Women's Voices and Votes Count*

1. Comments from ANANDI

"Dear Anita and Vandana,

Let me first say that given the short time, you have put together a lot in the document.

I do feel that there is scope for reducing the size of the report as it was getting very difficult to keep it all together towards the end of the report. While the logic of the assumptions with which you have undertaken the evaluation is a plausible - in reading - the sections tends to become confusing and repetitive. May be shortening it or putting all the assumptions up front will help.

I would be happy to do a skype if required as it will help to explain my observations better - if you think it is necessary.

(P.S the godbharai ceremony in Gujarati is called "shreemant" not "shreekanth" - I could not remember it while reading the document - have marked it though)

I am sorry the feedback is coming in a bit a late - had finished the two sections early - but then got caught up in other things.

Best,
Jahnvi"

2. Comments from IT for Change

"We value and appreciate the enormous effort put in by the evaluation team to move beyond mainstream M & E dogmas and bring in a feminist perspective which recognises the complex interplay between macro-contextual forces and micro-level strategies, in shaping outcomes of any time-bound and project-bound process. We also value the conversations with the evaluators and insights obtained during the process of the evaluation.

Our team had some reflections and we wish to share this with you for your consideration.

A. On substantive aspects:

1. The evaluation report makes very astute points on the broad nature of the social changes the project has facilitated. However, it has not focused adequately on the nuances and specifics attributable to the project that created different strategic pathways towards change. To put this differently, though the report recognises that *"... the focus (of the project) was on creating rituals that brought together the transformative possibilities of digital and face to face strategies, for furthering the gender and governance agenda"* (Page 89), evidence about the concrete specifics of what these rituals (or innovative techno-social processes) com-

prised of, and the sequence of changes they triggered on the ground, needs to be bolstered. The reader will require this, or else the generalisations will not convey the project story. Adding voices and case studies, and using boxes would help in this regard. The process documents can help in this regard.

2. In the chapter that analyses assumption b. – *“ICTs will enable women to play their political role at the local level in PRIs more effectively & Associational power of women’s networks and collectives will lead to building the political constituency of women”* – we do not agree with the statement that *“Though the project explored a number of digital pathways for strengthening women’s political role in Panchayats, it is face to face interactions that have proved most crucial in sharing, peer learning and exchange”* (Page 49). Our view of the journey towards change is that changes came about across all sites owing to both ICT-based and ICT-facilitated processes. Digital technologies were deployed in the project for enhancing sharing, peer learning and exchange, in two ways. ICT-based methods such as IVRS and ICT-facilitated social processes (such as networking meetings, other community media-based dialogues etc. where videos and audio recordings, as well as data from the MIS were used to trigger and facilitate discussion). The latter are innovative hybrid strategies – where connectivity is yet to reach people – for building peer learning and peer exchange spaces that cannot be considered equivalent to face to face spaces of the pre-digital era. We feel these innovations in the project have not been adequately explored by the report, as it currently stands. The effort to build a network – and lay the foundations of a shared identity, in the form of an “imagined community” as it was in the case of Karnataka, are hence not captured. That ICTs can strengthen existing networks if deployed strategically is a well-known axiom. It would have been useful to explore if ICTs can catalyse a collectivity where none exists, even though a connectivity based network architecture may not yet be present.

In the examination of the project's exploration of the digital opportunity for enhancing women's political role and their networking, ICT-facilitated social processes could be analysed in greater detail. To illustrate with an example: The report could expand the observation on how the partnering organisations have enabled *“the creation of a ripple effect through the effective use of video-taped sessions of Mahila Gram Sabhas to inspire other Gram Panchayats and EWRs”*(Page 32), to discussing how the use of video-based learning processes helps women see themselves as part of a larger struggle in which feminist principles are implicated, plays a role in the creation of peer solidarities, and thus opens up a new space for peer learning at the local level.

3. There needs to be more space devoted to the specifics of the ICT-based capacity building efforts undertaken by the project (with elected women and with infomediaries). The work involved here was considerable.

4. In the discussion on the information centres, the analysis of the 2 models (*Panchayat* centres vs centres housed in the building of women's collectives) seems to be biased in favour of the latter and hence critical of the *Panchayat* model. The attempt of the project was to make institutions responsive to women, and this in some ways requires women to claim and occupy institutional spaces. Even in the *Panchayat* centres, we have seen that there is room to resist the status quo and fight entrenched patriarchy and institutional inefficiencies (though in unorthodox ways, which depart from textbook cases of 'resistance') – such as what has

been experienced in Thumbasoge *panchayat* in Mysore. Approaches to transformation – from outside and inside – can be seen for their relative merits and demerits.

5. We think that in the critique of the community media strategy, a narrow definition of 'feminist content' has been adopted, against which video content produced at the 3 sites, has been evaluated. In specific, the *Prakriye* team and the video strategy advisers of *Prakriye* want to highlight that where there is no preexisting vocabulary of women's right to participate in governance, it may be crucial to use prevailing cultural tropes about women's and men's roles and spheres of engagement, to first make space for the issue. To achieve women's participation, *en route*, we may have to adopt a language and vocabulary that is from the dominant culture, and which, at first glance, does not seem feminist. The *Prakriye* team has worked on different projects and used various scripts to broach questions of power and gender. Some have captured women's stories of caste and gender based struggle and others have questioned gender based norms. In this project, the rationale employed was different and the team would like to share the following:

Evaluators' comment:

"The film made at ITfC on What I Think Is My Role As An Elected Representative had a lot of space to Dr. Thukaram who speaks about women as scientists because they cook, as managers cause they rear children, as people who know life's difficulties and therefore are qualified to serve people. Their right to participate in governance is barely there. On the other hand, Sakkama who has been a panchayat leader for than 2 years spoke that she was selected to discharge responsibilities and she is clear that her role is that of a leader or Yajmana..! More powerful voices from EWRs could be added. In a similar vein the film 'Should women participate in the Panchayat?' A woman PDO and State Resource Centre director speak about women participating as a duty- not a right, a duty to village and family! "(Page 69)

Prakriye team's Response: "The video strategy of *Prakriye* is a dynamic process of building dialogue through collective viewing which leads to forming conceptual as well as contextual understanding of the issue and many times leads to direct action. The concept of a right when unpacked for a clearer understanding, is contextualised based on the target audience. One of the many stumbling blocks for women from villages to think of political arena is the notion that 'what do I know about politics? How will I be able to do that?' Patriarchy has clearly established the male privilege and direct association of power with men. To unravel that notion or belief, analogies of their own lives help. That is the reason why it makes Sakamma happy to say that her role is of Yajmana. Instead of getting lost in the meaning of words used, it is important to listen deeply to the articulation which uses different words to mean rights".

Evaluators' comment:

"In the film on Sunanda Jayrama who is a farmer's movement leader and member of Zilla Panchayat, she speaks about women needing support from family and community---to play their public role. She stresses that this gives them the courage to grow and with such support their public speaking will move from stuttering to giving speeches, even if illiterate. However for women who do not get support from family or community there is no mention of women's inner strength or strength that can be drawn from a network of EWRs. Therefore the message is confusing...not very empowering and is not a feminist perspective as family

and community can also be sites of control and oppression".(Page 69)

Prakriye team's Response: "It is a well-known fact that patriarchy operates through family first and community next and as a result both are sites of control and oppression. So what should the strategy be? In a real sense? EWRs or aspiring EWRs do not exist in vacuum, there are layers and layers of patriarchal control shrouding them. The first one being 'patriarchy in the mind'. How do these layers - when put together become unsurmountable walls, become porous? The process which empowers women to examine patriarchy in the mind first and then identify the layers of it is based on the feminist approaches like,

- Exclusive collective space is needed for gaining the voice
- Disarm the primary sites of control and oppression by clear negotiation and so on.

Women have inner strength and a network of EWRs can draw them out. That is ideal and becomes conceptual only keeping the field realities in mind. Each EWR is one link in the network of EWRs and each is equally bound by the layers. The network is a concept and it becomes concrete only when each woman is strengthened".

We must add that we do value the analysis undertaken and think that multiple ways of representation and a solid debate on positioning content is indeed a cornerstone requirement in any video-based feminist process. Your comments will therefore stay with us and we will revisit them.

6. You mention that at the IT for Change site, *"The Infomediaries have also been provided android smart phones for continuous net access" (Page 53)*. We want to clarify that they only use broadband Internet and/or dongles to access the net; and use the phone only for recording.

B. In terms of the presentation and structure, our feedback is as follows:

1. An executive summary is important.
2. The report must be shortened, and as there is some repetition of arguments, across the chapters, editorially revisiting these will certainly add to the reading experience.
3. The report needs to include more information from the Process Documentation and more voices from the Focus Group Discussions (a point we made earlier). For example, in statements such as the following, women's voices and stories from process documentation should be included:

"Women have moved several notches up the ladder of participation, from tokenistic inclusion to being engaged, active and influential leaders with a strong reckoning of their political identity"(Page 30).

"Video-based learning has helped build critical understanding of gender & women's role in governance" (Page 33).

" The EWRs reported that access to information enabled quick decision making and shared that they had begun to use information as power, with a sense of responsibility and ownership".(Page 34).

– In places where specific project experiences are referred to, such as the reference to Mera Haq Mera Pehchan and the audit of the food distribution process in the anganwadi in Attiguppe on page 54, more background details should be provided. They can be elaborated based on information from the process documents.

– The reference to instances where Public Service Delivery was improved by project participants in Page 30, can also be bolstered by specific anecdotes.

4. In places where endline tables are referred to, it is important to include the table in the same paragraph rather than refer to the endline as an Annexure. Specifically:

– the reference to endline tables 20, 11, and 15 (pages 23-24 of the doc)

– the reference on page 30 that states: “EWRs have been contributing to broadening the scope of community development and social welfare issues in the GP agenda. (Please refer to the endline findings given in the annex for more specific statistical details)”.

– the reference on Page 39 that states “ The comparative study of the baseline and endline figures indicated a relatively small decline in the number of cases of gender-based violence being taken up by the Gram Panchayats in two of the three project sites. In the current scheme of things, having PRIs that take up gender-responsive and social justice-oriented agendas looks like a distant goal”.

3. Comments from KMVS

“Dear Anitaji and Vandana ji,

Greetings!!

Firstly, let me congratulate both of you for extremely rich, insightful and in depth evaluation report. The current format where you have examined each of the assumptions in back drop of the project design and activities is really commendable and generates a lot of scope to derive the learning.

Many of the inferences with overall political scenario ridden against gendered governance concept makes it a great read for us and we were very happy with the efforts that were put in.

Following are few comments:

In theory of change segment (Pg.6) under new information & communication capabilities through info center- can we also look at generating dialogue/ discourse at community level as added insight?

In the strategy for building linkages- forum of phone calls to info mediaries by EWRs should also be logged in as it generated space for information seeking.

On page 64, the 'Rakshak sangh' in Mundra should be replaced with 'Machimar Adhikar Sangahrsh sangathan (MASS)'

Thank you again for this great report,

Warmly,

Preeti, Kruti”

4. Comments from UN Women

“Many thanks for sharing the draft evaluation report. It has done a good job of highlighting crucial insights about the project activities on ground and results. We, Caro, Subu and I have gone through the report and I would like to share our consolidated inputs for your consideration.

Formatting: We feel that the report needs to be substantially formatted:

- Need table of contents
- Need Executive Summary
- Need page numbers
- Words in local language such as sarpanch, panchayat, godbharai, gram sabha, mahila gram sabha, nirbhaya crisis , mahiti sakhis, sanghas, sangathans, panjo haq, mela, dai , gyanwani FM, pooja room etc need to be in italics and explained in English
- Abbreviations used such as LS, PRI, GIS, GPS, MIS, SNP, PDO, TDO etc need to be expanded with full forms and need to be explained. An international audience will not be able to comprehend with LS, PRIs etc.
- Use of simple language to be able to communicate the message in phrases such as “women have literally encashed their greater consciousness...” in Key Conclusions section 6th para
- At many places names of women are mentioned, for eg Chapter 4- Maimuna, without any reference. Need to have some context setting/background information about women whose names are mentioned at numerous places in the report
- At many places names of villages are mentioned such as Tana in chapter 4, without mentioning district/project site. Need to insert the information about the project sites.
- While reference has been made to the tables in the report, these tables are not included in the report as of now.
- The report is quite lengthy. Let’s please stick to the requirement of 60 pages or less as mentioned in the TOR.

Structure/Presentation and Content:

- Introduction: need more coherent introduction on the programme and why and how it was evaluated, approach, methodology, tools for data collection, limitation etc.
- Chapters: –Though the substance within is very interesting needs to be structured in a clearer way so that the reader can understand as right now the structure of each chapter sub-headings is not very coherent. Within each chapter, certain assumptions are analyzed and evaluated. Considering the fact that this is an evaluation report where the audience will be interested to know what worked and what not, we request you to present the analysis in terms of evaluating/ analyzing project strategies and project logic, of course these strategies are based on certain assumptions that are rightly highlighted in the report, findings should need to be cognizant of these assumptions. To make the presentation more coherent we request you to structure the report as per enclosed UNEG Checklist, with findings clearly analyzed in response to the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact question set out in the TOR, which are missing right now. Each of the assumptions that have been evaluated may be presented as corresponding to/addressing specific outcomes as defined in the PMF. This will make it more aligned with the evaluation TOR.
- There are many instances, in almost all chapters, where generic result statements are made for eg, “women’s increased participation in gram sabhas”, “ FGDs with women leaders, EWRs and ex-EWRs in the Mahila Swaraj Manch----- showed that intensive, perspective building on gender, caste and class issues had helped in having a positive influence” (Chapter 3), these should be substantiated with evidence from quantitative data from endline, quotes, small case study boxes from qualitative FGDs and wherever possible, comparisons should be made for every such claim. Also a lot of information is still at the level of completion of activities, which is fine but it should be analysed in terms of broader outcome results.
- In last chapter – subsection – ‘some issues in project design’- size of the budget- there is a generic statement that says average amount of less than Rs 150,000 a month for partner is on the low side but no basis/evidence/analysis is presented to support the claim. In the same subsection on communication the report says that “immense effort and time gone into processes remains invisible and needs to be acknowledged”. Request to please explain and substantiate with specific suggestions.
- In the Project and Partnership Management Section – the role of UN Women should be identified at the level of support in advocacy, resource mobilization, showcasing of the project at various platforms as communicated with the evaluators in the interview. A table of such events such as one mentioned in the report about enabling and supporting ItFC and ANANDI’s participation as expert, evaluators under Sanchar Shakti Programme, participation in national and international platforms to show case the project and resource mobilization efforts, all of which were facilitated by UN Women, would be useful.
- Conclusion and Recommendations: It’s great to have specific recommendations per stakeholder as a tool to advocate for further funds etc. Request you to please present the information in nice table or boxes so these stand out too.

·Regarding reduction in targets as mentioned in the partnership chapter that “targets were not proportionately reduced”, would like to understand that whether three rounds of modification/reduction in outcomes/output/indicators and targets have been taken into consideration while arriving at this conclusion, first at the initial stages of the project (please see attachment) PMF and Budget; second at the time of submission of the first six monthly narrative report in 2013 **(please see attached MCO assessment with table showing revised targets that were approved by UN Women- Point 4)** and finally around June 2014 where certain outcome level targets were retained as the grantee is not fully responsible for but contribute to outcome level results **(please see attachment Final PMF Changes)**. If these have been taken into consideration to conclude that targets were not proportionately reduced, would request the evaluators to please provide the reasoning behind it and necessary recommendations.

· Also enclosing the report with specific inputs for consideration.

Will be happy to go over the inputs, in case of any clarification.

Many thanks and Kind regards

Suhela”

5. Comments from Srilatha

Dear ITfC team:

I have now had an opportunity to review the entire report and can offer the following comments:

- I found the report exhaustive and fascinating at many levels, and was frankly awestruck at the intense and elaborate way the evaluators have laid out their analysis and findings. However, the length of the report - as a result of this exhaustive analysis - can be bewildering, so I think a short, pithy executive summary, of the project’s key strategies / pathways to change, and the evidence of the changes / results observed by the evaluators, and the key conclusions and recommendations, would be really useful, especially to leverage the findings to secure further funding for this work. For a report of this length and complexity, a 3 - 5 page executive summary would be extremely valuable.
- As someone who has done a lot of work on the challenges of feminist monitoring and evaluation, I have to say that this was an extremely complex project to evaluate, and I applaud the framework and the approach used by the evaluators in the face of this complexity. Some of the project’s goals are really difficult to pin down in terms of concrete indicators - e.g., harnessing ICTs to create media resources for a shift in public discourse. The way the evaluators have gone about it is really exemplary.

- However, because of this very challenge, it might be useful for the boundaries they created to be more explicitly put down. In the above example, for instance, it was not clear to me whether the evaluation sought to establish any observable *shift in public discourse* or *successful harnessing of ICTs to create media resources* for this purpose.
 - Therefore, it might be useful for each chapter to begin with a summary of what the evaluators tried to look for in terms of evidence (applying the G@W framework, for instance), in each of the specific dimensions of the project - e.g., using ICTs to build women's associational power, assertion and procurement of their entitlements, promoting gender-responsive governance, etc. etc.
 - While some concrete examples of women's experiences and actions are provided throughout the report, I believe a little more detail would be useful in the report, and that these could be organised and highlighted in some way to strengthen findings and conclusions. For example, if early in each section, a text box could be provided with multiple pieces of evidence from different locations, from their interviews, observations, and the documentation provided by the implementing partners, it would provide the "data base", as it were, for the conclusions drawn - and for the analysis in the concluding section. I am attaching the report of the AWID evaluation of the MDG3 Fund, where we used this method with some success (**see P. 32, Box 3, for example**).
 - I found the context-setting in a number of the sections very useful, since it helps place the project's achievements against a larger socio-political and digital backdrop. It is rare to find such nuancing in evaluation reports! I believe this helps to highlight and emphasise the project's achievements in a way that is unusual in evaluation exercises, which tend to look at project results and impacts in isolation of the larger environment in which they have occurred.
 - Having said this, though, I am worried that some of this effort at contextualising the findings will be viewed as projecting the political analysis of the evaluators, and irrelevant to the evaluation. It may be worth making it more explicit, therefore, that these sections of the analysis are intended to locate the project's goals, processes, and impacts in a larger context, or to establish the rationale for why they are significant.
 - The entire report would benefit from some formatting (including applying some of the formatting suggestions sent by UN Women, which the evaluators shared with me) to make it more reader-friendly and less daunting (because of its length and complexity). I hope this is something that ITfC can assist with, since I know that Vandana and Anitha have already spent more than their budgeted time on this. For example, each section might benefit from being structured along the following lines:
1. Project goal or hypothesis (being focused on in that section / Chapter)

2. Relevance of this goal or hypothesis (larger political and social context and significance of the goal or hypothesis in relation to this) to the larger agenda of women's empowerment / feminist transformation / social justice & equity (this is always stated, I find, by the evaluators, and is really important) - in other words, "why this goal matters"
 3. Strategies used or pathways to change of the project in different sites (or not, if you want a more composite view)
 4. Evidence of change or impact (organised in some appropriate way, and including examples from the field visits, endline survey, other documentation)
 5. Challenges faced or "fuzzy" areas (already there)
 6. Conclusions (already there)
- Having said all this, let me hasten to add that given the huge amount of time and effort that has already been put in, this next iteration of the report could possibly be achieved with some professional assistance at a little additional cost, if Vandana and Anitha are unable to take it on. I recently met a wonderful young woman, Soumya Shekar, who does exactly this - taking complex documents and ideas and paring them down to the core points, without losing the nuance and meaning. Let me know if you would like her contact info.

I hope these comments are helpful.

Warm regards

Srilatha"

6. Comments from Lakshmi Krishnamurthy

"A commendable and exhaustive report; not exhausting, as it puts forward some interesting points and telling comments!

Looking at and analysing the assumptions underlying the strategies and expected outcomes of the project, adds a new dimension to the business of evaluating socially-oriented projects; and also enables a deeper understanding of the processes involved in bringing the project to a successful conclusion. E.g. family dynamics and financial implications determine the extent to which the woman has access to the phone in her home. This applies to the use of the radio as well. Again, acquiring the new skill of making videos can be exhilarating, but viewing videos - especially those made by others - can be boring and therefore, not paid attention to. Because something is provided, it does not mean that it will be put to use according to project expectations. Tradition, custom, individual preferences, can all be spoilers.

In this context, it is interesting and rewarding to note that the report also takes a critical look at the project document. I am not sure that the report explicitly suggests it, but it can certainly be inferred that 'assumptions' need to be looked into, before finalising the project.

The two diagrams on change are made contextually relevant and understandable, by the addition of project data.

A telling comment on the process is the fact that even in the *mahila gram sabhas*, women do not concentrate on women-specific issues, but on matters that affect the whole village.

For a project which aims at change in behaviour and attitudes, not only in individuals, but in the community as well, one and a half years is woefully inadequate. In any arena of life, it is very difficult to visualise men giving up/sharing power, without getting some concrete benefit in exchange. (Debatable?)

Pointers from the field are encouraging for the initial phase of an innovative project of this sort - if one concedes that the one and a half years are just that.....data and processes so far are positive enough, that, with some course corrections, the project be carried forward for another 3 to 5 years. The report provides enough suggestions for a serious think regarding future direction.

And finally, it does not seem viable for this to be a stand-alone project. The three locations where it is currently functioning, are with reputed organisations which have been working with women for over two decades. Without the considerable ground-work put in by these organisations, the project, as it stands now, would not have been able to take off. IT provides a new impetus for carrying forward and maybe, even accelerating already existing processes”.

7. Comments from Sonali Srivastava

- Background

The project “Making Women’s Voices and Votes Count” is highly relevant in the today’s context, where on one hand, the law is becoming progressive, at least at the grass roots, panchayat level, but the implementation of law, in spirit, is far from ideal. Additionally, while ICT may seem rather non-intrusive method of influencing gender issues in governance and politics, as the paper acknowledges, digital technologies are neither value neutral nor apolitical. Presumably, if the end goal is to effect significant change, which upsets traditional balance, the tools of change cannot remain value neutral or apolitical. Once recognized, the need is to understand core issues hindering the change process and use ICT to address them.

Some additional comments on the report:

- The paper posits that ‘the mode of governance in the PRIs serves a largely scheme based service delivery agenda. It remains an administrative clearing- house at the local level’ (Page 87). I would argue that PRI’s service delivery agenda is not restricted to that of a clearinghouse. The core principles of PRI functioning - participative in decision making, ensuring access of services to poor and influencing demand side through developing citizen norms, need to be reflected in the way services are delivered by panchayats. Participation of EWRs in service delivery, which can affect these criteria is critical and need not be undermined.

- I agree with the “Porousness and interconnectedness of domains from individual to collective to systemic” (page 80). We have witnessed significant changes in women’s decision-making abilities through movements such as Self Help Groups (SHGs), which improved their economic status. Similarly, multiple tools and methods of to be used towards the larger change agenda. ICT can facilitate access to information on rights, budgets, programmes etc. Additionally, there is need to build skills which may need more face to face interaction, hand-holding and counseling.
- The report rightly points out the “stranglehold of identity politics of caste and class and religion continues to hamper EWRs effective participation for contributing to a deliberative, inclusive and egalitarian functioning of the PRIs” (Page 88). With the understanding that we have gained through working with Gram panchayats over the last 5 years, I believe this statement holds true for most elected representatives, irrespective of gender. Majority of members are held at ransom by a few powerful and politically connected elected. Our collective goal has to be to ensure PRIs especially Gram panchayats understand and deliver constitutional rights to citizens.

8. Comments from Laxmi Murthy

“Apologies for the delay – I’ve been really caught up. I’ve managed to have only a very quick skim through – I have not been able to engage with it in-depth. It seems very comprehensive and captures the process of the project very effectively. One small comment - the ‘Theory of Change’ diagram – does not seem to reflect the non-linear and synergistic process described. The ‘expanded’ theory even after inputting other factors, depicts a more linear factors-change-outcome type process. i.e. the ‘outcome’, ‘target’ out gender responsive governance is depicted as an end, not as one of the outcomes that might influence and change the pathways of other inputs/factors. Every small step towards gender sensitive governance must have had some impact on the other factors, perhaps a circular rather than a linear flow might depict this more realistically?

Regards,

Laxmi ”

Annexure 11: Trainings and capacity-building efforts

(Note: The trainings and capacity building efforts at the intersection of gender, governance and technology, organised as part of the project -- across the 3 sites -- primarily targeted elected women, women from the community and infomediaries. Trainings were organised at block and village level, and sometimes at the info-centres and the premises of the Panchayat. We present here 2 tables – the first details the reach of the training programmes and capacity-building efforts across the three sites; and the second provides an overview of the content of the training modules deployed at each site, with the 3 main target groups)

A. Details of the coverage of the trainings and capacity-building activities, at the 3 sites:

Time period	KMVS	ANANDI	IT for Change
Jan-June 2013 (Note: Infocentres were still being set up during this period)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 70 elected women 216 women leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 83 elected women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 70 women leaders <p>(Note: the core group of elected women was yet to be identified here)</p>
July-December 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 41 elected women (the core group) and 16 other elected members who are in Social Justice Committees, of 3 panchayats 6 infomediaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25 elected women (the core group) and 39 other elected women. 165 women from the community 6 infomediaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 56 elected women (the core group) 175 members of women's collectives 6 infomediaries
Jan-June 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 elected women (from the core group of 41) 380 leaders from women's collectives 6 infomediaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 elected women (from the core group of 25) and 40 other elected women. 400 women from the community 6 infomediaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 40 elected women (from the core group of 56) 15 elected women and 200 women community leaders 5 infomediaries

B. Overview of the content of the trainings:**B1. KMVS**

Training	Details of what trainings covered
Basic trainings for elected women and members of women's collectives	Objectives, types and causes of gender discrimination, Critical assessment of gender sensitivity of Panchayats through a community-media based training module; Integrating ICTs into the work of the Panchayat
Advanced training for core group members	Dealing with gender issues at the Panchayat (building capacities through a case study exercise); 'Action orientation' for dealing with gender agendas (examining education, health and other village level priorities through a gender lens)
Infomediary trainings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Enskilling infomediaries in facilitating dialogues in the Panchayat and wider community on women's issues by supporting <i>Mahila Gramsabhas</i>, and dialoguing with EWRs to provide them the confidence in assuming their roles; working strategically with Panchayat members to address key issues that concern the community. – Effective information outreach on governmental schemes, entitlements and educating Panchayats and community members about new government resolutions and orders. – Skills of community reporting (developing concepts of communication, media, voice recording, taking interviews, rules and non-negotiables for a reporter, writing scripts for community radio) – Using Panjo Haq and maintaining the Digital MIS

B2. IT for Change

Training	Details of what trainings covered
Capacity building for elected women in the core group (Note: male members from the 7 panchayats in the project area were also present during these trainings)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A Technical skills component to familiarise Panchayat members (both women and men) with the digital camera and Tablet PC. – A photo-shoot exercise to enable elected women to articulate their perspectives on their village. – Screening video resources and narrow-casting audio clips that highlighted critical concerns around women's participation in local governance, jointly, to elected women and elected men representatives.
Meetings for networking and dialogue between elected women and women's collectives at the ward level	<p>Narrow-casting/ Screening audio-video content highlighting key gender and governance issues (such as the importance of women's participation in Panchayat processes, information about schemes of line departments, girls' education, the importance of girls' and women's autonomy in making personal choices etc.) for facilitating free sharing of concerns and issues between women's collectives and their female elected member; and enabling the identification of shared priorities that need to be highlighted in Panchayat forums, and motivating women to participate in the Gram Sabha, Ward Sabha and Mahila Gram Sabha.</p>
Infomediary trainings	Monthly residential programmes bringing together all infomediaries for 2 days at the Prakriye office in Mysore were organised during the project period, and these trainings focused on the following dimensions:

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enhancing infomediary capacity to source public information from various sources (by giving case study assignments etc.) 2. Enabling the infomediaries acquire critical perspectives on gender and governance issues using community radio and community video clips as learning resources. 3. Helping infomediaries use the MIS for entitlements tracking developed under the project – not just for recording, but also for analytically reading key trends from the monthly data. The MIS consists of simple 'registers' to track their own work and undertake planning, based on analysis of trends. 4. Facilitating peer learning process among infomediaries (allocating a session for infomediaries to discuss the everyday challenges of their work – dealing with rude and patronising remarks from officials, and even women's collectives; lack of support from Managing Committee members to carry out outreach visits, etc.) 5. Technical skills (sessions on Internet browsing, voice recording and editing audio content, shooting video footage and editing the same, using the MIS and the Open Source IVR software.)
Capacity building of partnering organisations (KMVS and ANANDI) in utilising digital technologies in their work	<p>For the project partners, IT for Change carried out a series of trainings on the following aspects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Community video (Familiarisation with basic features of handy-cams, Editing Software and the skills of creating effective digital stories) b. Wiki (using Wikimedia software for curating and archiving organisational / <i>panchayat</i> documents, in the local language) c. GIS-enabled participatory mapping (How to use GPS devices, How to do Points-mapping, How to export / download GPX to system, How to edit maps in JSOM application, How to Upload maps on-line, and effective use-cases) d. Using the Open Source IVR platform for information outreach (only for the ANANDI team, since KMVS adopted a paid service model).

B3. ANANDI

Training	Details of what trainings covered
Trainings for elected women and women from the community	<p>Understanding Community Media and Democracy, Politics of Representation and Communication Process</p> <p>(Political history, local governance structure, Understanding Mainstream Media in the context of India, session on Politics of Representation, Different Types of Media (strength & weakness), Role of Media, Process of Communication, Media Ownership, Making Our Own Media, Framing UN Women Project in our context of Community Media)</p> <p>2. Mera Haq Mere Pehchan Patra based training (What is the key right being addressed by that particular pehchan patra/ The key use of the identity card/ The particular scheme or law related to it/Other purposes and needs addressed by that identity card/Who can get it made/Where can it be made/What are the documents needed to get it made and challenges faced with respect to each)</p> <p>3. Gender and violence training in the village using community media-based and other learning exercises (what is violence, types of violence, what are the strategies to prevent the violence) and Media trainings for elected women and sarpanches</p> <p>4. Training in GIS-enabled points of infrastructure mapping</p>
Infomediary trainings	<p>1. Gender and violence trainings, gender, governance and community media trainings and Mera Haq Mera Pehchan as detailed above. Infomediaries themselves played the role of trainers at the village level in some of these trainings.</p> <p>2. Making video films (training where IT for Change and DRISHTI were also involved in different phases)</p> <p>3. IVR content production and IVR broadcast</p>

Annexure 12: Biodatas of evaluation team

12.1 Anita Ratnam CV

Date of Birth: 23rd July 1962

Address: I Honey Garden, Mallasandra, Talghatpura Post, Bangalore, India 560062

Email: ratnam.anita@gmail.com Telephone: 0091 9886736339

After 30 years of working on programme and institutional development processes, I now offer consultancy services to civil society organisations engaged with gender equity and social justice. I believe that the knowledge and insights gained from my innovative and pioneering work with young people over the last 3 decades can help strengthen organisations who are seeking new directions, new institutional frameworks and new approaches to gender justice and social change.

As founder and director of Samvada, I have been instrumental in shaping the organisation's growth into a dynamic and independent entity with a unique pedagogy for youth sensitisation and women's empowerment. Today Samvada (See www.samvadabaduku.org) is a collective of vibrant Youth Resource Centres, Baduku Community college and a Youth Work Resource & Consulting Unit that complement each other through a well-structured programme pathway. These are backed by a robust institution, competent staff, healthy governance, knowledge management systems and planning & monitoring mechanisms.

I also led a network of 22 youth work organisations which later became the National Youth Foundation (NYF) and I built synergies across member organisations till 2008.

My skills include programme design, institutional leadership, strategic planning, programme review and evaluation, human resource management, financial management, curriculum development, training and facilitation, research, networking, and programme management. Institutional leadership of Samvada and NYF also taught me to handle conflicts and crisis with equanimity, to provide conceptual, ethical and ideological frameworks when needed, build consensus through dialogue and to boost morale in the face of insecurity or opposition.

Communication with clarity and sensitivity has been my asset, be it speaking in public, chairing a team meeting, facilitating a small group discussion or just listening to a troubled individual. An ability to focus on embedded paradigms and critical issues in complex situations has been my strength. Living in India, challenging patriarchal and feudal values, surviving a range of personal crisis as woman, wife, mother, daughter and step mother has also taught me compassion, resilience, grace and courage that words cannot describe. I am recognised as a domain expert on youth and youth work by civil society organisations and academic bodies. Donor organisations have consulted me to evaluate a wide range programmes related to women's empowerment and social justice. I have also addressed international seminars and conferences and have led research, written newspaper columns, book chapters and academic papers about social issues. Published work is listed in my CV and unpublished stories and poetry are on my blog.

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

MA In Development Studies, University Of East Anglia, U.K. 1996-1997

Post Graduate Diploma in Rural Management, Institute of Rural Management Anand (1981-83)

Bachelor of Commerce, Madras Christian College, 1978-81

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Fiction and Creative Non-Fiction Writing Workshop: Bangalore Writers Workshop, Classic, 2013

Coaching from a Systems Perspective: Society for Organisational Learning (SoL) South Foundation, Bangalore 2013

Non Violent Communication Introductory Workshop by 2012

Curriculum Design Workshop: Samvada Staff Training 2010

Conflict and Peace Studies, Aman Trust, New Delhi, Sept-Oct 2003

Social Movements and Ideologies of Social Change: Samvada, Staff Training 1998

Video Production Workshop, Media Centre, 1998

Development Journalism, Ecumenical Christian Centre, Bangalore, May 1988

Training of Trainers, Staff Development Programme, SEARCH, Bangalore 1986

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Executive Director, SAMVADA Youth Resource Centres and Baduku Community College, Bangalore: 1992 to date

Programme Coordinator, Bangalore SMILE Centre of Indo German Social Service Society (IGSSS) 1989-1992

Asst. Manager, Operational Programmes SMILE Cell, (IGSSS), New Delhi, 1988-89

Faculty Member, SEARCH, Bangalore, 1984-1988

Assistant Executive, National Dairy Development Board, 1983-1984

SKILLS AND KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Feminist scholarship and writing

- Studied and documented the ***Incidence and Impact of Childhood Sexual Abuse of Girls*** - the first study in India into the issue of CSA along with Dr. Shekar Seshadri (NIMHANS). The research involved an interactive workshop series in 12 colleges, covering 348 girls in the age group of 15-21, in and around the city of Bangalore, Samvada (1994). Papers on themes around **Child Sexual Abuse** have been presented at numerous conferences and seminars for teachers, student, parents, lawyers, judges and activists between 1994 and 2014.
- Coordinated and researched the Karnataka part of a study on ***"Gender and the Judiciary"*** published by SAKSHI, New Delhi (1997) which involved detailed interviews with judges, lawyers, litigants,

court officials, witnesses and women victims of violence to investigate institutionalized and hidden gender bias in the justice system.

- **Mainstreaming Gender Issues in Higher Education** : Presented at Conference of German Ecumenical Scholarship Programme Partners in Changmai, July 1999
- **Women's Labour, Agency and Technology- Case Studies from The Textile Industry**, Presented at Seminar on Empowerment of Women organised by Centre for Social Research, Christ College, Bangalore, September 2000
- **Women in Hindutva Agenda: Construction of womanhood and issues of women's co-optation/empowerment** at Seminar on Politics of Location: Issues of Gender and Identities in Contemporary India, organised by Hengasara Hakkina Sangha, Bangalore November 2005
- Modi, Taslima and the roots of Fundamentalism, An article on fundamentalism and gender <http://archive.deccanherald.com/content/Dec102007/panorama2007120940397.asp>
- It's Immoral to Say No to Sex Education, An argument for sex education <http://archive.deccanherald.com/Content/May292007/panorama200705284289.asp>
- Ammus Death Strips Garment Industry of Halo, An expose of institutionalised anti -women practices in the garment industry <http://archive.deccanherald.com/Deccanherald/mar82007/panorama0519200738.asp>
- A Dark Side to the Night Work Ban, An argument against curbing women's mobility for work <http://archive.deccanherald.com/Deccanherald/may62007/editpage215952200755.asp>
- **Gender, Identity and Power:** Paper presented at Consultation organised by United Theological College, on the occasion of International Women's Day 2008
- **Land Rights For Women:** Paper presented at Regional Consultation organised by Indo German Social Service Society on January 21st 2008

Feminist Training

- Designed dozens of training programmes/ workshops and delivered modules and sessions on themes of feminism, gender equity, healthy sexuality and women's empowerment for youth, teachers and social activists (1984 -2014)
- Conceptualized and Co-facilitated a course for Barefoot Counselors on "**Facilitating Women's Wellness and Justice**" focusing on understanding women's lives and wellness, societal structures and women's agency, and working with women through counseling, mediation and guidance (2009, 2011, 2012 and 2013).
- Designed and co-facilitated a workshop for women leaders of Tibetan settlements in South and Central India, on request from SARD, Central Tibetan Authority.

Evaluations of programmes aimed at women's empowerment and gender equity

- **Assessed impact of organisational expansion** on staff motivation, capacities and effectiveness at Sangama, an NGO that works to empower sexuality minorities, funded by Bill Gates Foundation through Karnataka Health Promotion Trust (2006). Studied organisational strengths, contradictions, programmatic relevance, risks and positioning vis-à-vis external environment, community and other stakeholders.
- ***Studied the outcomes of training programmes*** conducted by Hengasira Hakkena Sangha, Bangalore (HHS) for Women's Federation Leaders on issues of violence against women, funded by KIOS Sweden (2006).
- ***Evaluated the relevance and coherence of the curriculum*** developed by Doosra Dashak- for adolescent education in the desert regions of western Rajasthan, funded by Sir Ratan Tata Trust (2006).
- ***Evaluated the impact and relevance of youth and civil society*** programmes of Jagori Trust aimed at addressed skewed sex ratios Kangra Valley, funded by Sir Ratan Tata Trust (2008).
- Evaluated ***programmes and organisational processes in*** Asmita Resource Centre for Women, funded by HIVOs Bangalore in 1993

Program Design and Institutional Development

- Developed organisational vision, mission, policy and strategic plans through dialogue with stakeholders, guided by a theoretical understanding of youthhood as a site of personal and societal change, and youth work as a way of building a just and sustainable world.
- Demonstrated ability to develop programme approaches for various sections of youth based on geo-political analysis of emerging forms of marginalisation, violence and polarisation in society, of the structures as well as hegemonies which cause them, and analysis of the implications of these on young peoples' aspirations and predicaments.
- Translated policies, strategic plans and programme approach into thematic and geographic programme areas, and further concretised these into a matrix of activity levels and activity clusters from outreach & initial dialogues with youth to intense sensitisation, mentoring for youth leadership and livelihood training.
- Created specific instruments and methods of youth work with appropriate content to effectively engage with different youth constituencies like university students, young teachers, youth in farming, artisan youth, youth workers, youth group leaders, and young people from marginalised castes, indigenous groups, religious minorities, with specific attention to young women across all these categories .

- Developed actionable plans using a theory of change framework to define specific short term objectives with measurable outputs and expected outcomes in consonance with long term goals and desired impacts.
- Diverse programmes at multiple locations have been woven together to equip youth with new values and foster their commitment to live and work towards a socially just, humane, sustainable and democratic society.
- Designed an impact assessment system for key programmes through identification of indicators, development of tools and instruments for monitoring and impact assessment and deployment of the same for continual improvement.

Institution Leadership, Development and Governance

- Founded and built an organization (Samvada) from a 2 member informal team to an institution with 21 full time staff and several associates working in multiple programme domains in multiple locations, supported by centralized finance, accounting, human resources and administrative units.
- Steered the growth path of the organization based on long term goals and strategic objectives at various stages of institutional maturity, providing an interface between governing body members and staff of the organization.
- Developed an institutional identity as a youth centric and youth sensitive organization that went beyond serving youth, even when youth work, youth sensitization, mobilization, empowerment and youth rights remained largely unknown as an area of work.
- Developed and periodically refined organizational structure in keeping with programme pathways to maximize impacts, clarify roles and responsibilities, enhance accountability of individuals and teams, ensuring collective ownership of the organisational vision alongside individual ownership of specific tasks.
- Nurtured an organisational culture based on principles of social justice and affirmative action, gender sensitivity and cultural diversity at the workplace with space for personal healing and growth of all staff members.
- Fostered and maintained an ethos of transparency, dialogue, democracy, integrity and collective ownership of the organization along with accountability to the public, to young people, and to donors.
- Designed policies and created systems and processes for human resource management, financial management, general administration, and governance to ensure cost efficiency, collegiality, statutory compliances and donor requirements.

- Created and led an Organizational Management team with departmental heads to collectively address pan-organizational matters and build collective leadership.
- Steered the process of Organisational Development and re-structuring at Samvada, anchoring the interface between the OD consultants, the OD task force and the general body of the organisation based on competencies/ aspirations of staff and strategic plans of the organization.
- Helped build small youth work organisations by mentoring individuals in the process of organization building, setting up systems, designing organizational structures, programme pathways, governance mechanisms, work cultures, management and monitoring systems. Sakhi in Hospet, for example.

Training Design, Curriculum Development and Facilitation

- Designed training programmes/ workshops and delivered modules and sessions on themes of social inclusion, pluralism, youth rights, sustainable development, identity politics, tradition and modernity, cultural diversity, nationality struggles, democratization etc. for youth associated with Samvada Youth Resource Centres
- Designed and co-facilitated a series of workshops for staff of Greenpeace India on “Diversity and Inclusion at the Workplace” 2013
- Facilitated internalization of learning through a creative engagement with concepts and issues, provoking attitude and value change, integrating thoughts and emotions, and developing learner’s critical and analytical faculties.
- Conceptualized and designed a course for youth from most excluded communities to enter the media as professionals equipped with perspectives, skills, integrity and vision <http://www.deccanherald.com/content/172462/rethinking-journalism.html>
- Conceptualized and designed training modules on “children and childhood in India” and “Evolution of a teacher” for Early Childhood Care and Education professionals (2011).
- Conceptualized and Co-facilitated a course on **“Youth work for Sustainable and Inclusive Development”** focusing on understanding youth and youth-hood, perspectives on development and skills of youth work (2010).
- Conceptualized and Co-facilitated a refresher course for College Lecturers titled **“Education for Social Change”** focusing on understanding youth-hood, creative approaches to teaching, career counseling and life-skills education, 2008.
- Conceptualized and designed the **Waterlenses** course for Rooftop Rain Water Harvesting Entrepreneurs 2006.

- Guided the Designing and Curriculum Development of courses on ***Sustainable Agriculture, Community Based Eco Tourism and Child Care Management***, 2006 onwards.
- Co-anchored the ***Youth Studies Course*** of the National Youth Foundation , with modules on (i) Youth-hood and identities of caste, class, gender and sexuality, (ii) Nationalisms of Religion, Culture and Ethnicity; (iii) Re-thinking Globalisation & Governance and (iv) Youth in New Social Movements, 2004.
- Structured and Facilitated a 3 week course on ***Caste as Conflict*** as part of Peace/Conflict Module for Earlham College Study Abroad Programme 2005.
- Planned and Conducted a Workshop *on Peace Building Prospects and Opportunities* for Partners of DFID and BHC In India (2004).
- Designed and facilitated ***workshops to help youth reflect on values and perspectives*** on human rights, caste issues, North-South relations and the need for an alternative development paradigm based on equity, sustainable development, pluralism and secular spirituality.
- Designed and conducted training workshops for the staff of Samvada and other NGOs focusing on **identity politics, ideologies of social change and social movements**.
- Co-Facilitated ***Trainers Training Courses (1987 & 1988), Community Organisers Courses (1984-88)*** at SEARCH, Bangalore.

Project and Programme Management

- Have designed and introduced systems, and processes for programme and project monitoring based on goals, objectives, programme calendars, expected outcomes and milestones.
- Have trained, guided and supervised project staff on the use and value of monitoring tools, indicators and process documentation to assess impacts, enhance quality and accountability.
- Monitored and managed complex projects with several actors and interlinked processes with a result oriented approach to achieve set goals.

Organisational Impact Assessments and Programme Evaluations

- Framed ToR (Terms of Reference) for programme evaluations, designed assessment methodologies, analysed findings and presented workable recommendations to strengthen organisational performance and effectiveness. Lead and anchored impact assessment teams and pre-funding assessments as consultant to Sir Ratan Tata Trust, HIVOS, Stitching Kinderpostzegels, Bread for the World, AGEG, NESAI for assessment of organisational capacities and relevance of proposed projects.

- Evaluated and assessed a diverse range of programme interventions from provision of basic services, mobilisation of communities, curriculum design, training delivery, advocacy initiatives, income generation programmes to leadership development processes.
- Evaluated NGOs for *impact assessment of programmes and organisational processes*– including Krushi- dalit focused NGO funded by Bread for the World, Germany 1998 and 2001
- *Assessed impact of Samvada training and curriculum* through studies of attitudinal change, value, perspective and aspiration changes by analysis of data and of narratives.

Budgeting, Financial Management & Liaison with Donors

- Prepared project proposals in consultation with staff teams for submission to donors based on strategic planning, organisational goals, plans and budgets.
- Negotiated with donors and support organisations to arrive at project contracts for support to specific projects, programmes and institutional development processes.
- Maintained long term partnerships with donors through regular, transparent and credible communication and sharp process documentation. (Samvada's core donors have supported the organisation since inception)
- Projected financial requirements, prepared budgets, coordinated financial planning and monitoring, and managed cash flows.
- Prepared evidence based project reports for donors, linking project outcomes with overall programme goals, and presented project achievements in tune with donor priorities and portfolios.
- Managed financial accounting, statutory compliances and financial reporting to donors across multiple projects within a programme area, with transparency and credibility.

Networking and Alliance Building

- Chaired a network of 22 youth organizations for a decade, bringing partners from different parts of the region together to foster synergies, learn from each other and forge collective strategies.
- Promoted and strengthened institutional strategic external linkages for solidarity with women's groups, dalit organisations, environmental groups and social movements for rights of religious, sexual, ethnic minorities and other identity/class based struggles.
- Planned and participated in campaigns with network partners on issues of communal violence, industrial pollution, corporate crime, displacement, dowry harassment, youth issues and sexual abuse of women and children.

- Liaison with Donors, Trustees, Network Partners, Colleges, Media, and other stakeholders.

Mentoring and Counseling

- Mentored young colleagues from disadvantaged/privileged backgrounds, helping them discover their potentials and grooming them into agents of change as youth work professionals.
- Worked with young activists and youth leaders helping them translate dreams and ideas for social change and alternatives into concrete and strategic plans.
- Helped about a dozen adult survivors of child-hood sexual abuse with their healing processes through individual counseling sessions.

Research

- Commissioned by AMAN Trust Delhi, to work on background papers and methodology for a nation-wide study into **Caste Bias in the Judiciary**. This comprised papers on review of Judicial Bias Research and Caste Bias Research, Methodology and Questionnaires. (2005)
- Researched ***The Implications of Structural Adjustment for Small Farmers in India*** as Master's dissertation submitted to the University of East Anglia, UK. 1997
- Conceptualized and guided a study on ***Illegal and Unethical practices of Pawn Brokers vis a vis the Urban Poor in Bangalore***, Samvada 1998.

Guidance to Research Teams:

- Guided a team of Samvada Staff studying the linkages between **Call Centres and Changing Perceptions and Experiences of Youth-hood** (2006).
- Guided a team of students to document **Dying Sports And Indigenous Games** in Bangalore Rural District, 2005.
- Commissioned and guided a study into **Youth and Social Movements** on behalf of National Youth Foundations and coordinated with the Researcher at various stages of the study 2002-2004.
- Guided an inquiry into the **Situation of Textile Artisans** in different parts of India and presented this as a photo-exhibition: ***Threadbare-People and Politics behind Clothes*** (1999).
- Guided students' fact-finding into land sales in the wake of liberalisation, and the situation of workers in the floriculture units around Bangalore (1998).

Policy Analysis and Formulation

- Critiqued India's National Youth Policy 2003 and 2012 for several workshops with youth and other stake holders

- Studied and critiqued Karnataka State Youth 2012 for workshops and consultations with youth
- Prepared ICCO policy paper on strategic interventions for youth in the South Asia Region in 2009. (ICCO is the Inter church organization for development cooperation, Netherlands)

Papers Presented

- **Vocational Training and Inclusion of Marginalized Youth in the context of Globalisation and Industrialization in India.** Paper presented at German Platform for Dalit Solidarity, Annual Seminar 2013. Bad Boll, Germany
- **Career Guidance for Scheduled Castes and Muslims in India: Challenges and Prospects for addressing social exclusion,** International Conference for Educational and Vocational Guidance, October 2011, Cape town
- [Traditional occupations in a modern world: implications for career guidance and livelihood planning](#), International Conference for Educational and Vocational Guidance, October 2010, Bangalore
- **Political Economy of Small Farmers in India : A Historical overview from Independence to the Present,** at the workshop on “ Genetically Engineered Crops in India-Myths and Realities” organised by Greenpeace and IGSSS, May 2006, Bangalore
- **Introduction at a Workshop on Human Rights, Sports and Youth:** _at the National Youth Festival by National Youth Foundation, Nagpur, 2005
- **Communalism and Law: A Comparison of Draft Bills that seek to address Communal Crimes:** at Seminar on Communalism and Law organised by Social Action Committee, Bangalore, June 2005
- **Social responsibility, Sustainability and Justice issues in Mining:** Keynote address at Seminar on Environment, Development and Mining organized by Sakhi, Samvada and Mines, Minerals and People Network, Hospet, January 2005
- **Challenges and Transitions faced by Societal Initiatives in Changing Contexts:** at Conference on Networks and Collaborations organized by Sarai, Delhi and Alternative Law Forum, Bangalore 27-28 November 2004
- **Facilitators Opening Remarks and Introduction at Seminar-Workshop on Peace Building Prospects and Communities** Organized by British High Commission and DIFID, August 2004, New Delhi
- **Voices of Youth: Social difference and multiple identities as resources for pluralism- Responding to Globalisation,** Paper presented at Plenary of Asian Youth Camp, Asia Social Forum, Hyderabad, January 2003

Publications

- [Traditional occupations in a modern world: implications for career guidance and livelihood planning](#), International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance (15 June 2011), pp. 1-15. DOI: 10.1007/s10775-011-9200-9
- **Traditional Occupations in a Modern World: Career Guidance, Livelihood Planning, and Crafts in the Context of Globalization**, Chapter in *Handbook of Career Development: International Perspectives* (Springer 2014)
- Dalit, Devanahalli and some Difficult Questions
<http://archive.deccanherald.com/deccanherald/feb192007/panorama2252442007218.asp>
- Review of the feature film **Parzania** on the Gujarat genocide of Muslims, *published in Deep Focus 2007 and in countercurrents* <http://www.countercurrents.org/arts-ratnam280207.htm>
- **Defining Youth – A Challenging Task**, VOICES, Madhyam Communications, Vol 2 No.1 1998.
- **Dalit Art as Liberation** : Foreword in Varna: Questions in Colour- Catalogue/Brochure for the Colours of Liberation Dalit Art Festival organized by Samvada and Dalit Resource Centre, Madurai
- **Introductory Notes for exposure reports**; A report of the German Exposure Dialogue Programme in India, published by the Justice & Peace Commission of W.Germany, Dec. 1988.
- Contributed to **Training Manual for intervenors working on Child Sexual Abuse** published by SAKSHI, Delhi 1996.
- **Different Sides, Same Coin : The issues of water and community health**; Health for the Millions, Voluntary Health Association of India, New Delhi, Volume XIV No.3 June 1988.
- **Playing to Learn, Learning to Play**; *Health for the Millions*, Voluntary Health Association of India, New Delhi, Volume XIV No.2 April 1988.

HONORARY POSITIONS HELD

Member, *Indian Association for Career & Livelihood Planning*, May 2011 –June 2011

Chairperson and Managing Trustee, **National Youth Foundation**, 1999 - 2008

Managing Trustee, **Samvada**, 1992-94, 1997-2012

Member, Board of Trustees, **Centre For Social Education**, Trissur, 2003-2008

Member, Board of Trustees, **Sakhi Trust**, Hospet, 2006 onwards

Acting Director, **National Youth Foundation**, 2004-2005

Member, Board of Trustees, **Centre for World Solidarity**, Hyderabad, 2001- 2003

National Committee member, *Pakistan India Peoples Forum for Peace and Democracy* 1999-2001

Chairperson, *SMILE Outreach Network*, 1997-1999

Member, Board of Trustees, *Women's Liberation and Rehabilitation Society, Madhugiri*, 1991-1994

Languages & Computer Proficiency

Spoken Languages : English, Hindi, Tamil, Kannada

Write : English

Computers : MS Office& internet based communications and research

* * * * *

12.2 VANDANA MAHAJAN C.V

House No.1531, 17 Main, 2A Cross

J.P Nagar Phase II, Bangalore-560078, India

Tel: +919845805292, E-mail: vmahajan65@gmail.com,

DOB: 14 February 1965

Summary of Experience

Presently based in Bangalore. Worked in South Asia, especially in India, Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka with UN women, South Asia office in New Delhi; Currently associated as a Gender Equality resource person with the FGE project of Jagori – Pradan of gender mainstreaming and in advisory role with a host of programmes and institutions. Experience of consulting assignments with UNAIDS, Pakistan and UN Women, Pakistan, DfID, UNDP, ICRW, FHI, Jagori, Pradan, Women Power Connect, Azim Prem ji Foundation .

Core competency

- Training, Knowledge management, Partnership development to facilitate, design and implement Gender equality, women's empowerment and innovative education programmes.
- Monitoring and evaluation of projects
- Process based, qualitative programme review and documentation
- Policy advocacy, policy analysis and review.
- Programme Management in children's education, HIV and women's empowerment

Educational Qualifications:

1985.87 M.A (Social Work); Delhi University; India; First division, Gold Medallist

1982.85 B.Sc Home Science (Honours in Child Development); Delhi University, First Division

Nomination on the NGO and Government Committees:

Member of The National Resource Group of the Mahila Samakhya Programme (Education for women's Equality), Department of Education, Ministry of human resource development, Government of India. (Since 2010)

Governing Board Member of The Best Practice Foundation, Bangalore (2013- continuing)

Governing body Member of Alarippu, an educational training and resource organisation (working in Delhi, Uttarakhand and Rajasthan) (Since 2006)

Ex-Member, Regional advisory group of CARE project, EMPHASIS for addressing gender and HIV -based risks and vulnerabilities in Migration between Bangladesh, Nepal and India. (2011-2014)

Ex-Advisory board of Asia Pacific office of International Committee of women living with HIV (ICW). (2010-12)

Consulting Experience:

2013 -14

Consultant with Azim Premji foundation with the Education Leadership and Management Function

Gender resource person for Pradan – Jagori programme under UN Women's Global fund for gender equality. (2009-13) and BMGF supported institutionalising gender processes for Pradan by Jagori (2014& continuing)

2011

Advisor, Leveraging & Knowledge management for USAID supported INGO, Counterpart International and IFES;

UNAIDS, Pakistan office for Gender and HIV mainstreaming in the Joint UN programme under the Spanish Fund for Gender Equality;

Consultant with Family Health International, India (FHI) for design and coordinating of the national consultation on Gender and HIV for National AIDS Control Organisation;

Qualitative review and documentation of the lessons learnt in UNFPA supported WPC advocacy and sensitization project for addressing sex selection

2010

Consultant for monitoring, review and documentation under the Safe City Project by Jagori in one of Delhi's urban poor community settlements, MadanPurKhadar;

Consultant to International Council for Research on Women (ICRW) for its action research project to improve Universal access to HIV prevention, care and support for girls and women in India.

2009

UNDP Consultant for Gender and Social inclusion policy analysis of The National AIDS Control Programme, phase III of National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO), India (October- December 2009).

Member of the Joint review mission of the Mahila Samakhya (Education for Women's Equality) programme (November 2009).

Consultant for UNIFEM, Pakistan for technical support to develop its gender and HIV programme strategy (December 2009)

Employment Experience:

2003-09 UNIFEM, South Asia office, Delhi

2003-05 Consultant, Gender and HIV, UNIFEM

2006-09 Programme officer, Gender and HIV, UNIFEM **for** supporting country specific gender and HIV strategies for India, Nepal, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Support gender and HIV policy review, analysis and advocacy with relevant Ministries in India

2002-3 UNICEF India Country Office, Delhi, Consultant with Education Section for developing the modules on life skill education on HIV for adolescent and young people.

2002-2000 Action research coordinator, Elementary Education Teacher's Research Network Project, India, a national education project of Homerton College, Cambridge, U.K

1993-94 Consultant, Training, Mahila Samakhya Programme, Ministry of the human resource development, Government of India

1999 Member of the National evaluation mission of The Mahila Samakhya Programme, Government of India

1989-2000 Education Programme Coordinator, Alarippu, Delhi, a gender and education resource agency

Writing and Publication experience

2013 Lessons learnt publication of UNFPA- WPC project for addressing sex selection

2010 Position Paper for the Institute of social sciences, Delhi on women's empowerment under the Panchayati Raj amendment act

2011 Advocacy and resource compendium for Counterpart International project on legislative framework and their provisions for protection of women against domestic violence, prevention of child marriage and prevention of sex selection.

2003-07 Technical oversight for production of training and IEC tools, reports and publications related to gender, women's human rights and HIV by UNIFEM, South Asia office.

2005 Technical support in tool kit development on Life Skill Education for HIV/AIDS for adolescents, UNICEF, India office, (*acknowledged in the UNICEF, India office publication of the tool kit, 2005*)

2002 Action Research based advocacy publication for Delhi, FORCES secretariat on the socio- economic issues related to sibling care and its impact in the urban slums of Delhi (*Printed by Delhi FORCES secretariat*).

2001-2 Evaluation report for FORCES, a network for advocacy for early child care services and rights of the working women in the unorganised sector (written jointly with Ms. Lakshmi Krishnamurthy) - *prepared for donors of FORCES*.

2001 Case study of a village panchayat in Haryana for Gender and Equity assessment of DPEP interventions (*published in the edited volume of Sage India 2005*).

2000 Contribution to the Evaluation report of the Balika Shikshan Shivirs under Lok Jumbish Programme in Rajasthan,

2001 Wrote a Paper, "Becoming a reflective teacher- Experiences from the Night School Programme of Alarippu in Rajasthan" for a conference in Homerton College of Education, Cambridge, U.K - *Presented in the Cambridge seminar*.

2000 Developed a prototype of Diary as self-monitoring and documentation tool for the community workers under Primary Education Enhancement Project, Delhi, UNICEF

1992 Organisational evaluation report for OXFAM, India for Disha Social organisation, Saharanpur (jointly written with Lakshmi Krishnamurthy)

Language proficiency: Oral and written proficiency in Hindi, Punjabi and English.

Computer Proficiency: Well versed with the usage of word and power point

Annexure 13: Endline Tables referred to in the document

(Note: The tables are in the order they appear in the text)

Table 8. Awareness of EWRs about local governance functioning

Area of local governance functioning	I need a lot of information in this area as I have very limited understanding of this.	I have some information about this, but more inputs would help.	I am very clear about this, and am satisfied about my understanding	No response	Total number of EWRs (N)
Quorum and procedure for convening <i>panchayat</i> meetings					
Consolidated endline	57 (42.22%)	33 (24.44%)	45 (33.34%)	-	135 (100%)
Consolidated baseline	39 (50.64%)	24 (31.16%)	14 (18.20%)	2	79 (Valid N=77)
Percentage shift	-8.42%	-6.72%	+15.14%		
Functioning of the Standing Committees of the <i>panchayat</i>					
Consolidated endline	73 (54.07%)	42 (31.11%)	20 (14.82%)	-	135
Consolidated baseline	39 (50.64%)	25 (32.46)	13 (16.90%)	2	79 (Valid N=77)
Percentage shift	+3.43	-1.35	-2.08%		
Mahila gram sabha					
Consolidated endline	70 (51.86%)	44 (32.60%)	21 (15.54%)		135
Consolidated baseline	41 (52.56%)	16 (20.51%)	21 (26.93%)	1	79 (Valid N=78)

Area of local governance functioning	I need a lot of information in this area as I have very limited understanding of this.	I have some information about this, but more inputs would help.	I am very clear about this, and am satisfied about my understanding	No response	Total number of EWRs (N)
Percentage shift	-0.7%	+12.09%	-11.39%		
Budget					
Consolidated endline	75 (55.55%)	38 (28.15%)	22 (16.30%)		135
Consolidated baseline	39 (50%)	24 (30.77%)	15 (19.23%)	1	79 (Valid N=78)
Percentage shift	+5.55%	-2.62%	-2.93%		

Table 12. EWRs' responses on the information they gain from IVR messages

Nature of information received from IVR	Number of times this response was stated	Percentage of respondents
Information on entitlements	70	59.32%
Information on local governance functioning and <i>panchayat</i> processes	34	28.82%
Event announcements	54	45.76%
Health-related information	56	47.46%
Agriculture related information	19	16.11%
Total number of respondents who reported that they had access to a mobile phone (own/shared), at the time of the survey		118

Table 5. Endline data on EWR engagement in Panchayat finances

What is the extent to which you participate in the management of finances of your Panchayat?	Consolidated endline
I am consulted in all decisions	45 (33.33%)
Male members take decisions, but keep me abreast	39 (28.89%)
I am in the dark about it	51 (37.78%)
Total	135 (100%)

Table 2. Involvement of EWRs in issues/concerns pertaining to community development and social welfare & engagement in Panchayat decision-making

Q. Have you worked on any issues of community development/social welfare, in your role as an elected woman?	Yes	No	Total
Consolidated endline results (IT for Change, KMVS and ANANDI)	126 (93.33%)	9 (6.67%)	135 (100%)
Consolidated baseline results (IT for Change, KMVS and ANANDI)	70 (88.61%)	9 (11.39%)	79 (100%)
Percentage shift	+ 4.72%	-4.72%	
Q. Have you played an active role in getting a Gram Sabha/Panchayat resolution passed?	Yes	No	Total
Consolidated endline results (IT for Change, KMVS and ANANDI)	116 (85.93%)	19 (14.07%)	135 (100%)
Consolidated baseline results (IT for Change, KMVS and ANANDI)	63 (79.75%)	16 (20.25)	79 (100%)

Q. Have you worked on any issues of community development/social welfare, in your role as an elected woman?	Yes	No	Total
Percentage shift	+ 6.18%	- 6.18%	

Table 3. Scope of EWR engagement on community development and social issues that EWRs engage with, in their official role as elected members: Tracing shifts from the baseline to the endline

Site	Heath	Education	Livelihoods and Employment	VAW and violations against women and marginalised groups	Village infra structure (Roads, Buildings and Streetlights)	Drinking water	Sanitation	PDS	Entitlement claims of women and marginalised	Total number of EWRs who have engaged with issues of community development and social welfare (N)
Consolidated endline (IT for Change, KMVS and ANANDI)	67 (53.17%)	69 (54.76%)	30 (23.80%)	32 (25.39%)	82 (65.07%)	95 (75.40%)	90 (71.42%)	45 (35.71%)	38 (30.16%)	126 (100%)
Consolidated baseline	19 (27.14%)	20 (28.58%)	1 (1.43%)	23 (32.85%)	42 (60%)	35 (50%)	35 (50%)	0	0	70 (100%)
Percentage shift	+26.03	+26.18	+22.37	-7.46	+5.07	+25.40	+21.42	+35.71%	+30.16%	
IT for Change endline	10 (25.6%)	9 (23.1%)	4 (10.3%)	1 (2.6%)	35 (89.8%)	32 (82.1%)	36 (92.3%)	5 (12.8%)	1 (2.6%)	39 (100%)
IT for Change baseline	1 (7.7%)	2 (15.4%)	1 (7.7%)	3 (23.1%)	5 (38.5%)	5 (38.5%)	5 (38.5%)	0	0	13 (100%)
Percentage shift	+ 17.9%	+7.7%	+ 2.6%	-20.5%	+51.3%	+43.6%	+53.8%	0	0	
KMVS endline	36 (83.7%)	36 (83.7%)	18 (41.9%)	19 (44.2%)	17 (39.5%)	32 (74.5%)	23 (53.5%)	19 (44.2%)	20 (46.5%)	43 (100%)
KMVS baseline	0	0	0	2 (5.89%)	18 (52.3%)	9 (26.5%)	9 (26.5%)	0	0	34 (100%)
Percentage shift	+83.7%	+ 83.7%	+ 41.9%	+ 38.31%	-12.8%	+ 48%	+27%	+ 44.2%	+46.5%	
ANANDI endline	21 (47.72%)	24 (54.54%)	8 (18.18%)	12 (27.27%)	30 (68.18%)	31 (70.45%)	31 (70.45%)	21 (47.73%)	17 (38.63%)	44 (100%)
ANANDI baseline	18 (78.3%)	18 (78.3%)	0	18 (78.3%)	19 (82.6%)	21 (91.3%)	21 (91.3%)	0	0	23

Site	Heath	Education	Livelihoods and Employment	VAW and violations against women and marginalised groups	Village infra structure (Roads, Buildings and Streetlights)	Drinking water	Sanitation	PDS	Entitlement claims of women and marginalised	Total number of EWRs who have engaged with issues of community development and social welfare (N)
Percentage shift	-30.58%	-23.76%	+18.18%	-51.03%	-14.42%	-20.85%	-20.85%	+47.73%	+38.63%	

Table 6. The multiple routes that EWRs have adopted to push issues/concerns of community development and social welfare, within Panchayats: Findings from the endline

Details of strategy adopted by EWRs	Number of times this response was given	Percentage of respondents
1 Informal dialogues with women's collectives/sangathan members/women leaders on key issues/concerns	60	47.62%
2 Discussions in the <i>Mahila Gram Sabha</i>	60	47.62%
3 Discussions with infomediaries to strategise further actions	24	40%
4 Discussions with other <i>Panchayat</i> members during general body meetings, to persuade them to take action on these issues	54	42.86%
5 Using the <i>Ward Sabha/Gram Sabha</i> as a platform to respond to key issues/concerns	39	30.96%
6 Bringing key issues/concerns to the attention of block authorities and /or district authorities	36	28.58%
7 Following up through the Standing Committee mechanism of Panchayats	35	27.78%
8 Initiating community level campaigns	14	11.11%
9 Working with a small sub-set of <i>Panchayat</i> members	4	10.25%
10 Following the directions of one's husband	1	2.56%

11 Discussions in the Block level coordination committee of the <i>Mahila Swaraj Manch</i>	13	10.32%
12 Linking issues to state/national level platforms that can take them forward	8	13.33%
Total number of respondents (EWRs who have raised issues/concerns of community development in their Panchayat)		126 (100%)

Table 9. EWR perspectives on why women should be a part of electoral politics

Why should women be a part of electoral politics?	Number of times this response was stated	Percentage of respondents
1 Women should also get a chance to learn about governance matters and other public affairs	92	68.14%
2 It is a high time that we show men a different way to run the Panchayat	60	44.44%
3 Only if there are women leaders will women's concerns get addressed through local government	43	31.85%
Total		135 (100%)

Table 10. How can the panchayat respond to women's needs and concerns?

Reasons given by respondents	Number of times this response was stated	Percentage of respondents
1 Ensuring special emphasis on reaching out to vulnerable women, during beneficiary selection processes	67	49.62%
2 Ensuring women's safety and security is addressed	63	46.67%
3 Ensuring that maternal health services of the government are up to the mark	64	47.41%
4 Holding <i>Mahila gram sabhas</i> to hear women's needs and priorities	54	40%
5 Ensuring women are given place in <i>Gram Sabha</i> proceedings are not shouted down by the men	34	25.19%
6 Ensuring that women's perspectives are brought into the panchayat committees	9	6.67%
Total		135 (100%)

Table 11. EWRs' perceptions of the relevance of IVR, community video and community radio to their work in the panchayat

Q. Do you receive information that is relevant to your work as an EWR from the following media?	Consolidated endline		Consolidated baseline		Percentage shift
	Number of respondents who answered 'Yes'	Percentage of respondents	Number of respondents who answered 'Yes'	Percentage of respondents	
IVR ⁷	97	82.21% (N=118 ¹⁶)	11 ¹⁷	26.82% (N=41)	+ 55.39%
Community video	48	35.56% (N=135)	14	17.72%(N=79)	+17.84%
Community radio ¹⁸	24	28.24% (N=85)	11	19.64% (N=56)	+8.6%

Table 22. Nature of peer interactions with other EWRs

Nature of peer interactions with other EWRs	Number of times this response was mentioned	Percentage of respondents who stated this response
Interactions (Conversations) at trainings and other events	97	71.85%
Personal contacts with some EWRs and wishing them on social occasions	55	40.75%
Regularly swap notes on issues of concern and/or challenges that come up	83	61.48%
Working with other EWRs in managing the work of the info-centres and planning their future directions	31	22.96%
Total		135 (100%)

¹⁶ Number of respondents who reported access to a mobile phone, at the time of the endline survey

¹⁷ KMVS had an IVR-based legal helpline prior to the start of the project, which also reached out to EWRs.

¹⁸ Community radio strategy has been adopted only by IT for Change and KMVS, and in both sites, community radio had been in existence prior to this project.

Table 7. The extent of involvement of husbands of EWRs in their official role: Baseline-endline comparision

Is your husband involved in <i>Panchayat</i> decision-making processes, and in assisting you with problems you face in the <i>Panchayat</i> ?	Consolidated data from the endline survey	Consolidated data from the baseline survey	Percentage shift
Yes	95 (87.15%%)	66 (89.18%)	-2.03%
No	14 (12.85%)	8 (10.82)	+ 2.03%
Total number of EWRs who reported that their husbands are involved in their work in the <i>Panchayat</i>	109 (100%)	74 (100%)	

Table 24. Nature of EWR engagement with women's collectives

Nature of EWR engagement with women's collectives	Number of times this response was mentioned	Percentage of respondents who stated this response
Addressing women's agendas through <i>Mahila gram sabhas</i> (forums where EWRs engage with women's collectives, women community leaders and marginalised women from the community)	65	48.15%
Informal dialogue with women's collectives through periodic meetings	65	48.15%
Support to <i>sanghas</i> in raising women's rights related issues at <i>Gram sabha</i> meetings.	49	36.29%
Supporting members of women's collectives in processing claims for entitlements	48	35.56%
Supporting members of women's collectives in organising campaigns on public issues	43	31.85%
Total	135	100%

Table 25. How the information centres are used by EWRs to support their women's constituencies in claims-making processes

Nature of EWR engagement with information centres	Number of times this response was mentioned	Percentage of respondents who stated this response
Infomediaries and I jointly strategise on addressing key issues/concerns faced by women in my Panchayat	40	39.21%
I accompany women who have entitlement claims to be processed, to the information centres	41	40.19%
I am part of Managing Committee	20	19.60%
I go periodically to meet infomediaries to ask for updates on circulars, G.R.s etc. (Panchayat information)	40	39.21%
I phone infomediaries to get updates on circulars, G.R.s etc. (Panchayat information)	37	36.27%
Total (Number of EWRs who are connected to the info-centres)		102 (100%)

Table 23. The relationship between EWR engagement with their peers and their perspectives on gender-responsiveness in Panchayats

Whether EWRs who regularly swap notes with their peers emphasise the need for the <i>Panchayat</i> to reach out to vulnerable women	N=83	Whether EWRs who do not regularly swap notes with their peers, emphasise the need for the <i>Panchayat</i> to reach out to vulnerable women	N=52
Yes, emphasise	45 (54.22%)	Yes, emphasise	22 (42.31%)
Dont emphasise	38 (45.78%)	Don't emphasise	30 (57.69%)
Total number of EWRs who swap notes with their peers	N=83 (100%)	Total Number of EWRs who do not swap notes with their peers	N=52 (100%)