

Democracy and Women's  
Participation – ICT-mediated  
process for making institutions  
work for women

# Objectives

Explore promise of institutional reach and transparency through ICTs

Emerging pathways for accountable governance

Active citizen engagement by women with local governance and political processes

# Context

RTI Act 2009

Political participation: reserved seat

Direct election: 25 women were elected directly in national assembly

Major portfolios are held by women:

- Premiership
- Home Ministry
- Foreign Ministry
- Agriculture Ministry
- Industry Ministry
- Women and Child Affairs Ministry

# Context

Each local government institution has one elected Vice-Chairperson

For each three constituencies one elected women representative

Local government representatives are isolated from mainstream ICT discourse

# National Issues of Concern

Women development policy

Inherited Property Distribution

Freedom of expression

Taslima Nasreen

Separation of religion from state

Fatwa

Entitlement

Violence against women and eve teasing/ stalking

Household violence

Workplace sexual harassment

Discrimination over employment

Dress code

Enforcement of laws protecting women's rights

Gender mainstreaming of development agenda

# Local Issues of Concern

Power of action by women legislator

Violence against Women

Household violence

Eve teasing/ Stalking

Workplace sexual harassment

Discrimination over employment

Dress code

Entitlement and corruption

Enforcement of laws protecting women's rights

What kind of trends may be discerned in the shifting practices and discourse of local democracy?

Legally women participation is ensured

Development agenda seem to be politically neutral

Surfacing conflict between women development agenda and religious opportunism/fundamentalism

Women information workers are becoming “part of decision making process” in lowest local government bodies

# What are the tensions that may arise with regard to 'boundary' issues in state-civil society relationships as ICTs shape governance?

State is becoming more impatient to alternative views:

Old case: Taslima Nasreen challenging repression against women using religion and bringing women's sexuality

Case of Professor Younus and women empowerment and mobilisation of opinion through new media

Report of TIB on institutional corruption and Supreme Court verdict about validity of research findings

Surveillance: Facebook ban for publishing offensive content against current prime minister

Legislation for tapping phone conversation introduced during care taker government remains even after democratically elected government

Confusion over role of Civil Society and NGOs

NGOs are being perceived as threat to political parties

Partnership for reducing corruption in entitlement



# Premise of ICT Role

Recognition of problem, decision to make change and human engineering by various actors is more important for making ICTs work for emancipation

# Transparency and Accountability

Delivery of personalised information for claiming entitlement

Interactive system for checking corruption in health care benefits: free medicine alert and stock out alert

Doctor's attendance system vs. privacy

Mobilisation of interest groups through virtual communications