

# Local Self Governance in India

## Working on Demand and Supply Sides

**PRIA, New Delhi**

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# India: Society and Economy

- **More than a Billion Population: Large Number of Billionaires and Largest Numbers of Poor Persons**
- **Federation of States: State of Uttar Pradesh, for example, could be ninth most populated country.**
- **Literacy rate is more than 65% but functional literacy could be quite lower.**
- **Conflicts between Legal and Social Orders: Constitutional Equalities versus Older system of Casteism and Patriarchy**
- **Dependency on Government is still very high and Bureaucracy is very powerful**

# Governments in India

1. **Union Government (Delhi)**
2. **State Governments/Union Territories (28 States and 7 UTs)**
3. **Local Governments (District Downwards: Rural and Urban separate)**

# Local Self Governance in India

1. Citizens Council (Gram Sabha/ Mohalla Sabha)
2. Regular Elections (conducted by independent State Election Commission) for Three Tiers of Panchayats (Rural) and 4 categories of Municipalities
3. Reservation of seats for Women and Marginalized Castes/Tribes
4. State Finance Commission to recommend for Resource Transfers between State and Local Government
5. Mandated to lead Local Economic Development with Social Justice
6. Indicative Constitutional Lists of Development Domains (Schedules XI and XII)

# India: Constitutional Governance

	National (Union)	Provincial (State)	Local (District)
<b>Legislature</b>	Parliament	Assembly	Panchayats/Municipalities
<b>(No. of members)</b>	(800)	(4000)	(3+ Million)
<b>Conduct of 5 yearly Elections</b>	Election Commission of India		State Election Commissions
<b>Subject Matter Jurisdiction</b>	Exclusive (Union List)	Shared (State List)	Shared (Schedules XI and XII)
<b>Resource Sharing/Transfer</b>	Central Finance Commission		State Finance Commission



# New Opportunities through Local Governance and Older Challenges

- More than 3 Million Elected Representatives (ERs) mandated to lead local Economic Development with social Justice in 0.25 million (3 tier) Panchayats and about 4000 Municipalities
- Out of 3 plus million ERs, 1.2 million are women and about 1 million are from marginalized castes. New to political mainstream but expected to deliver in not so favorable socio-bureaucratic environment.
- Systems of Delivery so far has been centralized and State is still having more control over delivery mechanisms: Pace of Devolution Deliberately Slow
- Civil Society Organizations striving in different pockets but synergy misses many times



# **Demands in Local Governance**

- **Informed Citizens participate in their councils (Gram Sabha/ Mohalla Samities)**
- **Participation in Free and Fair Elections Elections**
- **Capacities of Elected Representatives to play their roles effectively**
- **Capacities of Enabling Institutions (Training Institutes, Line Officials, State Finance/Election Commissions)**
- **Special emphasis on participation of Women and marginalized castes**
- **Institutionalizing Planning (for Economic Development) through District Planning Committees)**
- **Knew knowledge on structures and functions of local governance**
- **Policy advocacy on different issues including Devolution of Functions, Finance and Functionaries**

# Supply Side Actors

- **Elected Representatives of Panchayats and Municipalities: Developing Development to Citizens**
- **Civil Society Organizations: Supporting both Sides**
- **Community Based Organizations: Supporting Citizens**
- **District and sub district officials: Assisting Local Governments**
- **State Institutes for Rural Developments: Building capacities of Elected Representatives and Officials**
- **Administrative Training Institutes: Training of Officials**
- **State and National Governments: Devolution of 3Fs**
- **Citizens (proactive exercise of their rights and duties)**

# PRIA's Interventions to Strengthen Local Self Governments

## Participatory Programmatic Strategies: Election to Election Programmatic Cycle

- Capacity Building
- Knowledge Building
- Policy Advocacy
  1. *Experimentation and Model Building*
  2. *Scaling Up*

# 1a. Beginning with Election

- **Pre Election Voters Awareness Campaigns (PEVACs)**
  1. Platform of CSOs with common understanding and shared responsibilities, resources and common codes of conduct for State Level Coordination of a year long voters (and potential candidates) awareness campaigns: State Level Coordination Committee
  2. State Advisory Committee (comprising retired Civil Servants and Police-Judicial Officers, Academicians, Journalists on voluntary basis) to help and guide State level Coordination Committee and Liaison with State Election Commission and State Administration
  3. Division of Responsibilities among State level Coordination Committee to anchor district downward campaigns through similar setup : Posters, Pamphlets, Cable Networks, Vernacular Media, Street Plays, Small Group Meetings, Special Emphasis on Women and Other Marginalized Groups, Candidate-Electorate Interface, etc.

# Impacts of PEVACs

(Studied by Academic Institutions)

- **At State level:**
  1. Vibrant CSOs platform covered more than 200 million citizens during 2005-06 PEVACs in 6 states. Same platform sustained to undertake similar campaigns for Capacity Building (Initial Orientations of newly ERs at large scale, Gram Sabha Mobilization, Demand generation for Right to Information and Rural Employment Guarantee Schemes)
  2. New Institutions of State Election Commissions became vibrant and responsive and received 'public recognitions'
- **In intervened areas (about 53% of all Village Panchayats):**
  1. Voting percentage increased by 5 – 7%
  2. Percentage of invalid votes came drastically down
  3. More educated and younger citizens, specially from marginalized sections, contested elections and won
  4. Citizens-Candidates interface during PEVAC became basis for ERs accountability to deliver his/her promises



# 1b. Capacity Building of Elected Representatives and Mobilizing Citizens

- **Initial Orientation of Newly Elected Representatives**
- **Skill Building Training: Office Management, Financial Management etc**
- **Special initiatives for building capacities of women and marginalized castes**
- **Facilitation of local support structures: Local Trainers, Local Resource Centres, Network of Women and Elected Representatives**
- **Mobilizing citizens to participate in their local council meetings (Gram Sabha meetings) and Participatory Planning**



# Sub District, District and State Level Networks of Women and ERs:

- **Multi Level and Interlinked Evolution of Bottom-up Networks of Women and Elected Representatives:**
  1. **Internal Capacity Building by Sharing, exchanges and sense of Solidarity among Members**
  2. **Collective actions and effective Occupation of New Spaces: Effective voice of women in patriarchal village assemblies, Voices against caste and gender based Discriminations and Atrocities**
  3. **Pressure Group, Effective Negotiations with Powers: Campaigns against female feticides in different states, Network of ERs periodically Monitoring the Devolution of Funds, Functions and Functionaries to Local Governments**

## 2. Knowledge Building

- Participatory research on status of functioning (decision makings) of different institutions: Panchayats, Municipalities, State Finance/Election Commissions, Planning Committees, Standing Committees, etc
- Participation of marginalized sections in decision makings of local government
- Division of Responsibilities and Authorities among different tiers: Activity Mapping of Functions and Devolution of 3 Fs (Functions, Finances and Functionaries) to local governments
- Role of Local Governments in implementation of development initiatives (NREGA, RTI, etc)
- Engaging academia in Knowledge Building

## 3. Policy Advocacy

- **Citizens lead advocacy at district and sub district levels: Convening Multistakeholders Dialogues.**
- **Promoting network of Elected Representatives and working with them so that they can take up issues related to devolutions and participation**
- **Evidence based advocacy with State and National governments to address specifically identified issues of decentralization: Convening and collaborations**
- **Working at both sides: Inside Outside roles as part of different committees and taskforces on decentralization.**

# Experimentation and Scaling Up

- **PRIA experiments with different interventions to strengthen local government to catalyze large scale initiatives to influence local governments**
- **Scaling up requires working with different Civil Society Actors as well Government, Private and International Actors**
- **Initiatives should be locally owned and so, self sustaining to ensure long term sustainability of impacts of interventions**
- **Decentralization is a process and it requires varieties of actors and sectors to work together in a win-win situation.**

# Scaling Up Innovations for Institutionalization: Strategies

- **Working with the Enablers:**
  1. **Coalition of Civil Society Organizations: Convergence and Scale Up**
  2. **Engaging with Governmental Institutions: Re-energizing and Complementation**
  3. **Partnership with Academic Institutions: Knowledge Building and Future Generation**
  4. **Media Partnership : Scale Up and Advocacy**
  5. **Working with Champions of Participation inside Government**
  6. **Convening, Collaborations and Complementation: Inside-Outside Roles**

# Overall Learning

- Isolated Innovations are important but they need to be scaled up and institutionalized.
- Convergences of Ideas and Initiatives are key to visible positive impacts.
- Citizen centric initiatives could take time to pick up but that's are most effective and sustainable.
- It is important to work with different stakeholders and Well planned facilitations of Multi Stakeholders dialogues are often icebreakers to deadlied deadlocks.
- There are many champions inside the Governments who need to be supported to reform the system from inside.
- Convening and
- Resources from Government are often conditioned to influence the monitoring of governmental initiatives. So, Civil Society should be supported to sustain its freedom to play its independent and complimentary roles.

# Thank You