

# **IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF TRAINING OF WOMEN ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES**

## **Executive Summary**

The 74<sup>th</sup> Constitution Amendment Act, 1992, has given constitutional status to urban local bodies (ULBs) in India. The Act provides for reservation of one-third elected seats for women in ULBs and envisages an active role for women in local governance. This provision has given women a huge opportunity to participate in development and governance at the grass-roots level. Reservation of seats for women has brought a whole set of first timers into the political arena i.e. women with no experience of participating in political life before. In order to provide knowledge and skills to women elected representatives (WERs), training needs to be provided to them.

The Ministry of Urban Development, Government of India, provides funds to selected training institutions across the country for training of WERs. These training programmes help to build the capacity of WERs so that they can function effectively in ULBs. The training programmes cover the fields of urban development management and civic governance and topics such as municipal administration, legislation and institutional aspects, issues related to good governance, community participation etc. The duration of these training programmes vary from 2 to 5 days.

In order to evaluate the impact of these training programmes on the functioning of WERs, a study titled "Impact Assessment of Training of Women Elected Representative" was commissioned by the Ministry of Urban Development to the National Institute of Urban Affairs in March 2004.

### **Objective, Coverage and Methodology**

The main objective of the study was to assess the impact of the training imparted to women elected representatives on their functioning and on their personality. The study covered eight states i.e. Chattisgarh, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Punjab, Tripura, and Uttaranchal. The state training institutions in these states received funds

from the Ministry of Urban Development for imparting training to WERs in urban local bodies (ULBs).

A dual method of assessing the impact of training on WERs was adopted - a) direct interview of WERs; and b) conducting opinion survey of officials of local bodies. A questionnaire was prepared for the interview covering aspects such as personal background of WERs, number of terms elected, number of training programmes attended, benefits derived from the training programmes and level of utility derived. Training of elected members is vital for enhancement of skills to enable them to perform well. A total of 333 WERs were sampled for the study and the field work was carried out in the selected states in the year 2005.

### **Summary of findings**

The field study conducted in various states indicates that nearly 87 percent of women representatives got elected to ULBs for the first time and about 12 percent got elected for the second time. About two-thirds of the WERs were housewives before they entered the political arena.

The education level of the WERs indicates that almost 30 percent of them were not even educated upto 10<sup>th</sup> class while about 7 percent were completely uneducated. Over 37 percent of WERs were educated up to 10-12-class level. Nearly one-fifth of them had done their graduation while about 6 percent had post-graduate qualifications.

More than half the WERs were in the age group of 36-50 years while about one-fifth were older and one-fifth were younger. Almost 95 percent of the WERs were married and so had family responsibilities.

Most of the newly elected women councillors needed training to orient them to their roles and responsibilities. A little over one-third WERs had undergone training only once, while about one-fourth had attended training programmes twice. Most of the WERs expressed their wish to attend training programmes to enhance their knowledge and skills.

The WERs interviewed found the training received useful in their day-to-day work. Most of the WERs felt they gained from the knowledge provided in training programmes on rights and duties followed by skill related topics. Almost half the WERs wanted more knowledge imparted on Rules and Regulations while some wanted more information on Government schemes/ programmes through these training programmes. Some also wanted to learn computer skills.

The WERs, after receiving training, were able to identify and prioritize problems in their wards. While some WERs felt that they could participate better in the decision-making process after undergoing training, some others were also able to take initiatives in municipal meetings and get resolutions passed for the development of their areas.

The survey found that the WERs got support from other elected members on some issues, while on some issues they got very little or no support at all. Help from officials was, however, lacking in many ULBs.

### **General Observations**

Reservation for women in urban local bodies was made to encourage women to participate in local governance, yet the WERs seem to be reluctant to come forward and take initiatives. The WERs said that they are often influenced by the opinion of the male members. Women participants are yet to display the required level of self-confidence. Therefore, there is a need to impart training to WERs to empower them and help them in participating in municipal affairs.

In order to get good participation of WERs in training programmes they must be informed about the benefits of training and its impact on their performance, confidence level and ability to participate in local administration meaningfully.