



# Decentralization and Women Empowerment

# Decentralization and Development of Women in Kerala

- Working group for women development
- Women representation in all working groups
- Grama sabha has special subject group to discuss issues of women
- Status study of women made mandatory
- Development report of PRI has separate chapter on women development
- Poor women's network - Kudumbasree

## Women Development (contd)

- Jagrata Samities(Vigilance Commitees)
- Mandatory allocation of 10% of fund as WCP
- Special consideration for women in general projects
- 50% seat reservation
- Special Training for Women Elected Representatives
- Women Development Officials

# Gender Issues Specific to Kerala

- Low Work Participation
- Low level of asset holding
- Low Political representation
- Increasing violence against women
- Mental health and suicides
- Decreasing sex ratio
- Increasing number of elderly women
- Increased women headed households



# Women Component Plan(WCP)

- Allocate 10% of fund, WCP in 1998
- Based on recognition that focusing on practical needs and economic projects alone will not change status of women
- Creation of enabling environment for increasing the status of women
- Helping women to critically think about their present status and analyse the factors that impede their empowerment
- Funds for schemes benefiting both men and women are to be met from general projects

# WCP : Purpose

- ☛ Gender mainstreaming
- ☛ Pro-women development approach
- ☛ Creation of enabling environment for increasing the status of women
- ☛ Helping women to critically think about their present status and analyse the factors that impede their empowerment

# Practical Gender Needs

Needs formulated from the concrete conditions women experience

Relate to women needs within their traditional gender roles and responsibilities

Immediate practical needs like food, water, shelter and health

General projects should have space for meeting these needs.





# Strategic Gender Needs

Broader needs of women in development process

Analysis of systemic factors that may limit women's access to resources and benefits compared to men

Measures to boost up confidence to live like men

Addressing strategic gender needs can be instrumental in reducing gender disparities

Projects for meeting these needs are to be included in WCP



# Women status study

- ☞ Learning process, obtaining disaggregated data: for effective implementation of WCP
- ☞ Methodology
  - ☞ i. Questionnaire
  - ☞ ii. Focused Group Discussion
  - ☞ iii. Gender analysis of institutions
  - ☞ iv. Study of SHG's/CBOs
  - ☞ v. Analysis of WCP
  - ☞ vi. Sectoral analysis
  - ☞ vii. Budget analysis

# Indices to measure status of women

- ☞ Women's access to and control over private assets and resources
- ☞ Women's control over own labour and income
- ☞ Women's access to and control over public resources
- ☞ Women's control over own body, fertility and sexuality
- ☞ Women's access to and control over political spaces
- ☞ Women's physical security and physical mobility
- ☞ Women's access to and control over intangible resources

# Women status study: Padyam Grama Panchayat

- ☞ 15.2% widows at young age
- ☞ Very few receiving assistance or support from husbands for domestic activities
- ☞ Lack of marketing facilities for products
- ☞ Disparity in wage rate
- ☞ Low education
- ☞ Debt Burdon on women
- ☞ Low participation/membership in social and political organization
- ☞ Low participation in decision making bodies of social and political organizations
- ☞ Increased female –centric family planning methods

# Looking back!

Local governments have better understanding of women issues

Quality of projects meant for women is improving

WCP generated a lot of discussion at the grassroots level

Participation of women in grama sabha has improved

Succeeded in addressing practical gender needs

Sensitized elected representatives

# **Pre-requisites for Women empowerment through local governments**

- i. Participation in decision - making structures : grama sabha : increasing visibility of women
- ii. Those women with leadership potential shall be given opportunities to come up
- iii. Those involved in planning be familiarized with gender mainstreaming
- iv. Community education on possible impact of women empowerment