MAKING THE MAHILA SABHA WORK: A STUDY IN THE KUTCH DISTRICT OF GUJARAT

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Abstract

Women’s participation in Gram Sabhas may, potentially, augment the efficacy of Panchayats. It is another matter that women rarely participate in Gram Sabhas impeded, largely, by social customs and traditions. In order to give voice to women at the level of grassroots’ democracy, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj has urged state governments to convene separate Mahila Sabhas or female assemblies for the female electorate. The objective is to include women’s issues in Gram Sabha resolutions- issues affecting the women. In this study we explore the nature of Mahila Sabhas, factors behind women’s participation, the process of deliberative democracy at the village level, and the steps and processes required for strengthening the Mahila Sabha. The study uses a mixed method approach (capturing and analysing both numbers and words). Numbers were captured through a survey in the context of dates and timings of the Mahila Sabha, attendance during meetings, the presence of elected Gram Panchayat members, basic amenities in the village, difficulty levels while accessing different services provided by the Gram Panchayat, satisfaction of women members with the basic amenities, among other things. Words were captured with the help of in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) with government and Panchayat officials and women electorates. The study data was conducted in 67 villages of all the ten talukas of Gujarat’s Kutch district. The results suggest that low attendance notwithstanding the women electorate has been increasingly acknowledging the importance of Mahila Sabhas. Appropriate timing, register maintenance, presence of government officials, inclusion of Mahila Sabha resolutions in the Gram Sabha, venue, availability of basic amenities and the satisfaction level of women involving the latter emerged as major impediments to the participation of women in Mahila Sabhas. The qualitative results suggest that issues raised in the Mahila Sabha are qualitatively different from those raised in the Gram Sabha. The former tend to focus on women-related issues including the safety and security of women, girl child education, water, sanitation and cleanliness issues, health of women, medical facilities, domestic violence, education of children – especially girls –and women-related livelihood issues. It is understood that issues of importance to women in the village are markedly different from those discussed in the Gram Sabha. The results also suggest that the Mahila Sabhas

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have boosted their self-concept while helping them in other spheres of life (i.e., tackling 
domestic violence). Thus, the FGDs reveal that Mahila Sabhas have the potential to 
transform society in positive ways while empowering women. Based on the above 
findings the paper makes several suggestions regarding increasing women electorates’ 
participation in Mahila Sabhas and, through them, bringing about social and cultural 
changes enabling women to participate fully in the Gram Sabhas.
1. INTRODUCTION

The introduction of the 73rd amendment to the constitution in 1993 tagged a revolutionary step towards bringing political power to women. According to the Ministry of Panchayat Raj, there are about 1.2 million elected women representatives in Gram Panchayats across India (Annual Report: Ministry of Panchayat Raj 2014-2015). In the context of women’s participation in local governance, this is one of the biggest achievements anywhere in the world. This augmented figure, however, does not represent a proportionate increase in the mainstreaming of gender issues. Gender pertinent power inequality runs abysmally high in rural India. A fundamental change in the basic power structure is warranted for introducing equity and justice to a disadvantaged section of society. Having been subjugated for centuries women have managed to find ways of gaining equal access to political processes at the local level through reservation under the Panchayat Raj amendment Act 1992. Some researchers suggest that the presence of women elected representatives in the Gram Panchayats has eased the introduction of issues related to poverty, inequality, and gender injustice (Jain, 1996) to the public domain. Decentralisation of power embraces the notion of equality. However, equality in terms of having one’s say in the decision-making process is one of the greatest challenges that women continue to face in rural India today. In the context of PRIs, it had been envisaged that granting legal rights of participation and positive discrimination would enable women to compete with men on an equal footing.

It has been more than two decades since the introduction of PRIs wherein positive discrimination had been enshrined through a constitutional amendment. Whether women feel empowered having become effective participants at local-level democratic institutions or whether they still feel subjugated and deprived is something that needs to be assessed. A recent path-breaking study – concerning reserved Panchayats – investigated the effects of female reservation in Panchayats on certain outcome variables and concluded that both the quality and quantity of participation had increased (Deininger, Nagarajan, and Xia 2015). However, gender discrimination remains a dominant reality for the rural women. This has hindered the exercise of power on the part of women representatives diminishing, thereby, their effectiveness as elected representatives (Vijayalakshmi, and Chandrashekar, 2002). Reservations notwithstanding, social inequities pertaining to gender and caste have inhibited a more involved and effective participation on the part of women (Jayal, 2006). Evidence across the world suggests that wherever female participation has not been mandated by law women have held fewer positions in the elected bodies of local governments. Positive discrimination, on its own, does not empower elected women representatives. Even when they hold one-third of the positions they either remain silent spectators or follow the dictates of their husbands (Blair 2000).

Several reasons have been cited for the lack of female involvement in Gram Panchayats including the conservative structure of rural areas, lack of education, restricted media access, the patriarchal nature of the family, and economic dependency. All this deprives rural women of requisite skills and, consequently, the power to effectively participate in
local governance (Nandal, 2003). Discrimination occurs despite their wielding the same legal sanctions as their male counterparts. It has been reported that social taboos prevent elected women members from speaking at Gram Panchayat meetings. However, it has also been observed that such inhibitions or implicit sanctions on the part of men often get reduced with women members attending meetings regularly. A Tamil Nadu based case study revealed that women do not get invited to meetings in male-dominated Panchayats (Palanithuri, 1997) usually. A study in Odisha suggests that women rarely participate in the electoral process or in the affairs of the Panchayat (Gochhayat, 2013). Discrimination is rampant and covertly disliked by the women members of Panchayats who, by and large, take refutation of their points during meetings without any form of protest.

However, there are wide variations across states as well as across regions within the state. It has been observed that most women in Gujarat are only nominal members of the Panchayat with the actual responsibilities being executed by male family members. In Gujarat, the common term used for the husband of the Woman Sarpanch is 'Sarpanch Pati' who wields the actual power. Similarly, another study in Gujarat on dalit women Sarpanchs discovered that the dominant caste men controlled Panchayat resources and also dictated terms. Most women were proxies and faced strong opposition from dominant caste males while implementing decisions that could stand to benefit their community (Jayshree Mangubhai, Aloysius Irudayam sj and Emma Sydenham, 2009). Interestingly, despite efforts to sideline elected representatives on the part of dominant caste male members in collusion with village-level workers and government functionaries women members succeeded in learning the procedural details and rules of the game within a couple of months. Women leaders of Gram Panchayats have succeeded in conducting meetings, securing the support of some members, and in having a say in the decision-making process (Nandal, 2003). Buch (2009) witnessed, while conducting case studies in Madhya Pradesh, a transformation with women slowly yet decisively realising their new role in terms of asserting their identity, respect, and status. They have now started questioning the male dominance while marked attitudinal shifts are being observed in terms of enhanced status, confidence levels, and increased political aspirations (Buch 2009).

Data from West Bengal suggests that the women representatives in Grama Panchayats are dominated by men because of having joined the Panchayats on the urgings of the male members of their families and having performed their duties according to the latter’s instructions. The author observed that the provision of positive discrimination by the Constitution notwithstanding dominant male members found new ways of keeping the women in traditional patriarchy as puppets (Adhikari, 2012). When elected women members of a Gram Panchayat continue to face discrimination the plight of women members of the Gram Sabha, who have not been part of the electoral politics, may be easily understood.

A study conducted in Karnataka found that women associated with some form of collective, SHGs, or NGOs are likelier to participate in political processes at the
grassroots level compared to women who are not associated with such organisations. This is partly because such organisations motivate their members while organising various political awareness activities and highlighting the importance of voting and participation in Gram Sabha meetings, among other things. Encouragement on the part of women-oriented social and economic organisations is likely to stimulate higher participation in women in local-level politics (Mohan, & Rao, 2013). Another comparative study conducted in Karnataka found that women in villages that had an NGO working were likelier to have greater awareness regarding the timings and agendas of Panchayat meetings, the powers of the Panchayat, and its sources of income. Female attendance at Grama Sabha meetings would be significantly higher compared to villages bereft of NGOs. Villages with no NGOs were also witness to a significantly lowered female participation at meetings. Those who did attend these meetings never raised an issue specifically related to women. The ones that they did were related to drinking water availability in the village and personal issues (Kumar, & Mahesh 2014).

The Gram Sabha is a forum for all eligible voters of a Panchayat to participate in, discuss, and deliberate issues affecting their lives. It is an integral part of the village government. The Gram Sabha is also an institution of direct democracy. It gives voice to ordinary people in terms of determining both their individual and collective well-being. Studies focussing on women’s role in Gram Sabhas are few and far between. Attendance of different sections of society and voicing of concerns differ widely across most Gram Sabhas. For instance, people from economically and socially disadvantaged groups feel alienated and do not attend Gram Sabhas. Reportedly, women and illiterates are unlikely to attend Gram Sabhas for fear of being slighted or for opportunity deficits regarding voicing their concerns. Many believe that Gram Sabhas are no forums for women in their current form. Women respondents are around 20% less likely to attend a Gram Sabha compared to men (Besley, Pande, & Rao, 2005).

It has been observed by researchers that women's participation has a positive and highly significant effect on local development; the findings suggest that women’s participation in Gram Sabhas can make Panchayat institutions matter for development outcomes (Gibson 2012). Kaul and Sahni (2009) observed that women do not participate because of several inhibitors including an inability to motivate colleagues. Besides, the frustration of not being heard is likely to discourage participation. Because of the perpetuating nature of male dominance and control women members remain unaware of the Panchayat’s agenda. Plus, the fear of being ridiculed by male members and the belief that it is only they who can take decisions act as inhibitors. On many occasions female members attend meetings at the diktat of their male family members or male significant others even as male members conduct the meetings on behalf of female elected representatives (Kaul & Sahani 2009). While active participation on the part of female members in Gram Panchayats is not palpably evident it cannot be dismissed altogether as several female members have started playing a crucial role in redefining the process. While performing their regular duties of housekeeping, animal husbandry, and farm-related work rural women have been contributing to the development of their village alongside. However,
structural changes are required to bring about greater participation in the running of Gram Panchayats. The Mahila Sabha is one such step in this direction.

The Ministry of Panchayat Raj, understanding the difficulties faced by women, wanted to give voice to their concerns during Gram Sabha meetings. Firstly, issues like women and child care, health, sanitation, drinking water, PDS, education, mid-day meal, etc. rarely get discussed in these meetings. In many parts of the country women do not speak in the presence of men and are prevented by husbands and relatives from attending meetings where men are present. This limits the Gram Sabha’s involvement with issues affecting most people, particularly women whose participation then gets restricted. In order to encourage women’s participation the Ministry of Panchayat Raj urged the state governments to set up Special Gram Sabha and Mahila Sabha meetings to discuss gender-related issues. It has been observed that women exhibit great enthusiasm towards attending Mahila Gram Sabha meetings in some parts of the country where their participation has been negligible (Panda, 2013).

The present research focuses on understanding the nature of the Mahila Sabha, the process of deliberative democracy practised at the village level through the concerns raised in Mahila Sabhas, and their treatment in the Gram Sabha. Specifically, the study aims to understand the concerns raised by women members in Mahila Sabhas, the types of issues/concerns raised in the Gram Sabha, and the extent to which the Gram Sabha integrates the resolutions passed in the Mahila Sabha. Additionally, the study looks into the factors behind women’s participation in Mahila Sabhas along with the perception of government officials, elected members of the Panchayat, and women members relevant to the utility of Mahila Sabhas. The study also focuses on basic services provided by the Gram Panchayat and the extent of satisfaction of women of the Panchayat. This study is a result of the collaboration between the Centre of Public Policy and local Governance and the Empowering Panchayati Women (Suhasini) cell of KMVS. KMVS members have been involved in all stages of the study, particularly in the designing and collecting of data from the field.

2. KUTCH MAHILA VIKAS SANGATHAN (KMVS)

Established in 1989, the Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan (KMVS), a grassroots organisation of women in Kutch, has been engaged in creating facilitative conditions for the empowerment of rural women in Kutch through awareness building and through creating institutions so that women of the region develop the capability of addressing independently gender inequities prevalent in the rural areas of Kutch. The organisation also supports women in accessing alternative livelihoods as well as in addressing the issues of violence against women. From a single organisation it has grown into a network of seven grassroots women's organisations comprising more than 20,000 women leaders/managers. It has six knowledge cells including Reproductive and Child Health, Development Communication, Access to Social Justice, Capacity Building, Empowering Panchayati Women (Suhashini), and Improving Lives of Urban Poor. KMVS has brought about visible social change in the rural areas of Kutch that are largely feudal in character.
and, consequently, high on gender discrimination and inequality. KMVS' work has not only changed the economic, social, and political lives of women in the district, it has also brought about deep psychological changes in terms of enhanced self-esteem and self-efficacy. KMVS has been involved with the capacity development of elected women representatives. Objectives of the capacity building initiative include building both knowledge and skills in the area of local governance and ensuring that the women representatives are aware of the rights and duties due to their positions. Secondly, the objective is to properly equip them to deal with the obstacles hindering them while enabling them to work towards village development with a gender perspective. The women representatives are part of the collective created by KMVS' Panchayat (local government) Knowledge Centre. This centre, aided by members of the collective, also plays a decisive role in the advocacy of issues concerning the Panchayat along with other developmental issues (Gouthami, and Rajgor 2008). The present study is a result of a collaborative effort between the Centre for Public Policy and Local Government at the Institute of Rural Management and the Panchayat Knowledge Centre of KMVS.

2.1 Kutch

Kutch is the largest district in India in terms of area (45,674 Sq. KM). It is a semi arid region with an average annual rainfall varying between 300mm and 400 mm. It is home to over 2 million people. It has a very low population density (46/sq km.) compared to the all India figure (382/sq. km.). Sex ratio in Kutch is abysmally low (908 females per 1000 of males) compared to the all India figure (940 females per 1000 of males). Kutch has a lower literacy rate (70.59%) compared to the all India average (74.04%). The female literacy rate (60.87) of Kutch is much lower than that of the national average (65.46%). Thus, on dimensions of gender gap Kutch figures very high.

3. METHODOLOGY

Understanding the level and nature of participation of women in Mahila Sabhas calls for plurality in method as it hinges both on quantitative and qualitative aspects. The study embraces the use of both qualitative (capturing and analysing words) and quantitative approaches (capturing and analysing numbers) with the aim of understanding the issue of women’s participation and leadership role in the political and social sphere of the community in an essentially patriarchic socio-cultural milieu. The aim of the mixed method approach was to overcome the limitations of both methods (see Greene, Caracelli, and Graham 1989). The study was conducted during the month of July, 2015 in the Kutch district of Gujarat. 67 villages were covered from all the 10 talukas of Kutch including Bhuj (9), Mandavi (8), Nakhatrana (6), Mundra (14), Abdasa (6), Rapar (7), Bachau (7), Anjar (4), Gandhidham (2), and Lakhpat (4).

Quantitative data (capturing numbers) were collected through a survey questionnaire capturing information on several aspects concerning the Mahila Sabha. The questionnaire comprised items pertinent to the date and timing of the Mahila Sabha, attendance at Mahila Sabha meetings, the presence of elected Gram Panchayat members, basic
amenities of the village, difficulty level while accessing different services provided by the Gram Panchayat, satisfaction of women members with basic amenities and so on. Difficulties in accessing the services provided by the Gram Panchayat and the satisfaction of women members with basic amenities and services provided by the Gram Panchayat were measured on a five-point Likert type scale. The items regarding difficulty in accessing services were rated on a scale measuring ‘1’ as extremely difficult and ‘5’ as extremely easy. Similarly, the items on the satisfaction scale were measured using ‘1’ as extremely dissatisfied and ‘5’ as extremely satisfied. For these two cases the index of difficulty in accessing the services and satisfaction with basic amenities and services was constructed by summatting the ratings on both the variables.

The qualitative data (capturing words) was compiled through in-depth interviews with government officials (taluka development officers, and talatis), Panchayats’ Sarpanch, and other elected members. Interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with women members of the Gram Sabha. The researchers also obtained inputs from trained observers who had made a note of the discussions in the Gram Sabhas and the conduct of Mahila Sabhas in sampled villages. In-depth interviews of talatis and taluka development officers were based on their knowledge and understanding of the government resolution (GR) pertinent to the Mahila Sabha, action taken by them in line with the government resolution, their own views of Mahila Sabhas regarding their usefulness, etc. Discussions also focused on the difficulties faced by them in implementing Mahila Sabhas at the village level and suggestions were taken relevant to the effective implementation of Mahila Sabha.

Focus Group Discussions provided a major source of data from the female members of the Gram Sabha. FGDs have an advantage over interviews, as far as women are concerned. They are seen as less threatening with the women drawing strength from each other’s presence. Secondly, in many rural areas women are used to spending a lot of time working and talking to one another on matters ranging from household chores to fetching water or working on agricultural land. The comfort provided by the presence of other women during discussions helps them open up more easily. During focus group discussions the role of the initiator, who helps to keep the group focused on the issue, was deemed important. This is because of the tendency to veer off to issues of little concern during discussions. During the FGDs the groups focused on topics that were significantly related to the women and affected their lives. They also focused on issues like government programmes or schemes affecting them, the importance of the Mahila Sabha, and the likely changes it could bring to the lives of the women. They also discussed their present problems and forums on which they discuss these problems, the support they receive from others, their attendance in Gram Sabha meetings and the topics discussed there, and their personal experiences (positive and negative) while attending these meetings. Additionally, observers also reported the issues discussed in the Gram Sabhas by male members.
4. RESULTS

4.1 Attendance in Mahila Sabha meetings

The first step towards involvement in the political process or social life is attending meetings. Non-attendance symbolises apathy and alienation. We analysed Mahila Sabha attendance figures for all the 58 villages (in nine villages Mahila Sabhas had not been organised). The results showed that attendance in Mahila Sabhas is far lower compared to the number of female voters in the villages. It was only in 11 villages that the attendance percentage of female members exceeded 10%. Overall, the attendance of female members, compared to the total female voters in the 58 villages, stood at about 3.67%. A break-up of attendance shows that the attendance was lower than 1% in 5 villages, between 1% to 5% in 24 villages, and more than 5% but lower than 10% in 8 villages. The average size of attendance across villages was 28 (SD = 15.43), the minimum attendance was 3 and the maximum 62. A one-way analysis of variance test showed that there was no statistically significant difference across the ten talukas ($F = .667; \ p < 0.734$). Percentages of female members participating in the Mahila Sabha are presented in Figure 1. It is evident that the lack of participation in Mahila Sabhas occurs with similar frequencies across talukas.

4.2 Timing of Mahila Sabha meetings and attendance

In traditional rural societies, women have to shoulder household responsibilities in addition to their livelihood related activities. Certain stretches of time during the day being their peak working period may not be conducive to attending meetings. Thus, the timing of the Mahila Sabha is an important determinant in the context of attendance. Rural women have very little leisure time burdened, as they are, with daily household chores. In order to gauge the time of day best suited to attracting the maximum number of female members of the Gram Sabha to Mahila Sabha meetings we conducted a one-way analysis of variance test. The results suggest a significant difference in attendance because of the timings of Mahila Sabhas ($F = 6.782; \ p < .001$). The post-hoc test revealed that average attendance in Mahila Sabhas had the highest occurrence when the meeting was convened between 4 pm and 6 pm (Mean = 43.09, SD = 12.079) and the lowest between 12 and 2 pm (Mean = 18.20, SD = 9.908). Attendance in Mahila Sabha meetings held before 12 noon (mean = 34.20, SD = 21.534) was also significantly higher than when they were held between 2 pm and 4 pm (Mean = 25.71, SD = 13.738). Figure 2 presents the timing of Mahila Sabha meetings and the attendance on average. Overall, the results suggest that meetings between 12 noon and 4 pm should be avoided as this time zone could cut into household chores and livelihood-related work. The most suitable time for convening meeting seems to be between 4 pm and 6 pm. We needed to consider that these meetings were conducted in the month of July. The same time zone may not be applicable during winters when the days are shorter.
4.3 Attendance of female members in different venues

The venue of the meeting is also an important determinant for attendance related decisions with women are likely to face restrictions or may be inconvenienced while moving to certain areas within the village. The Mahila Sabha meetings are held at different places depending on availability and other considerations. We found that meetings in different villages (numbers are presented in parentheses) were scheduled at Home (2), Mahila Kendra (2), Panchayat Office (21), Community Hall (3), School (9), Chawk (7), and Anganwadi (11). Wishing to know which venue attracted the maximum number of women we conducted a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test. The results suggested no significant difference in attendance across venues. Figure 3 presents the distribution of female members across different venues. It seems that the Panchayat office attracts a higher number of women members compared to other venues, although this result is not statistically significant.

4.4 Officials present at Mahila Sabha meetings

The presence of government officials and elected representatives is a functional requirement in terms of maintaining meeting records and notifying members. This also has a symbolic value in terms of assigning importance to the Mahila Sabha meetings. It has been conjectured that the presence of government officials gives a boost to the Mahila Sabha. It sends out a message to the members of the Mahila Sabha that the latter is taken seriously at decision-makers’ meetings. Of the 58 villages studied, each one enjoyed the presence of government officials barring six. 37 villages had the talati present during meetings. Figure 4 presents the attendance of different elected representatives and government officials during the Mahila Sabha meetings.

4.5 Circulation of agenda item, past meetings, and attendance in the present meeting

Circulation of the agenda item is an important signal to the women as it represents the seriousness of the meeting. In about 58% of the sampled villages the agenda items were circulated and in about 42% villages they were not. To understand the impact of the circulation of agenda items with regard to the attendance of female members in the Mahila Sabha we conducted a ‘t’ test. The results suggest a significant difference (t = 3.10, p < .01) in attendance between villages where the agenda was known in advance (Mean attendance = 33.21, SD = 14.46) and where it was not (Mean attendance = 21.17, SD = 14.46). We also wanted to understand if a past meeting of the Mahila Sabha made a difference to the attendance. The ‘t’ test results suggest a significant difference (t = 3.09, p < .01) between attendance in the villages where a Mahila Sabha meeting had been organised in the past (Mean attendance = 34.84, SD = 17.08) and where it was not (Mean attendance = 22.91, SD = 12.07). This is, perhaps, because village women take time getting used to attending meetings and appreciating their importance and potential in the context of impacting their lives. Thus, one can infer that as Mahila Sabhas get organised over certain intervals attendance will rise automatically.
4.6 Maintenance of registers in the Mahila Sabha and attendance

We observed that Mahila Sabha meeting registers were maintained in 39 villages but not in the rest. We wanted to understand whether something like maintaining a register made a difference to attendance in the Mahila Sabha. The results suggest a significant difference ($t = 4.15$, $p < .01$) in attendance between villages maintaining registers at Mahila Sabha meetings (Mean attendance = 33.51, SD = 14.90) compared to those that don’t (Mean attendance = 17.29, SD = 9.07). Thus, the register serves an important functional and symbolic value for women in the villages as knowledge of its existence is likely to send out a subtle message regarding the importance of the Mahila Sabha meetings.

4.7 Reasons for not attending Mahila Sabha

During discussions women in the villages were asked for reasons of non-attendance. Interestingly, most women did not forward any reason (67.24%). However, lack of information about the Mahila Sabha (17.20%) emerged as the second most important reason followed by social customs (8.50%), religious reasons – during the month of 'Ramadan' women from the Muslim community remain absent (3.42%) – death in the village (1.72%), and the sowing season during which the women go to work in the fields (1.72 %). The results suggest that, apart from motivating women to attend meetings, the season and timing of meetings is very crucial.

4.8 Basic amenities available in the villages

The Panchayats are supposed to provide certain basic services and amenities to the villages. All the villages under study had ICDS workers (ASHA workers/ANM/AWW/Nurse). The mid-day meal scheme was active in all the villages except one. Primary schools existed in all villages except two. Similar was the case with tap water supply in the villages (96.6%). Waste management was available in 23 villages (39.7%) while only 8 villages had Higher Secondary Schools. The availability of Basic Amenities is presented in Table 1.

4.9 Satisfaction with the services and amenities provided by the Panchayat

Members of the Mahila Sabha expressed a very high level of satisfaction over issues related to birth, death, and income certificates by the Panchayat. No harassment or issues related to corruption were reported. The women reported satisfaction with the ICDS and ASHA workers, tap water supply to households, the midday-meal scheme, paved (pukka) roads, behaviour of Panchayat members, primary school, and bus stands in the village (average satisfaction score on these items was greater than 3.50 on a 5 point scale). However, they reported high dissatisfaction with sewage management, public health centre (PHC), road cleanliness, waste management, issues regarding adding names to the BPL list, availability of work under the MNREGA scheme, stand posts, and the presence of secondary and higher secondary schools as well as public toilets in the
village. The average scores on all these items were lower than 3.00 on a 5 point scale. The results are presented in Figure 5.

**4.10 Issues raised in the Mahila Sabha and Gram Sabha meetings**

One of the major objectives of this project was to understand the issues raised by female members of the Gram Sabha at the Mahila Sabha and the issues raised by male members in the in the Gram Sabha. Were these issues similar or different? We recorded the topics discussed by women at the Mahila Sabha and the issues raised by male members at the Gram Sabha. The responses were coded under different categories. The broad categories that emerged included Health, Hygiene, Water & Sanitation, General Safety and Security of women, PDS and Foodrelated issues, Education, Livelihoods, General Welfare, and Construction related issues. The frequency of occurrence of these different issues raised in both the Mahila Sabha and Gram Sabha is presented in Table 2. The sewage system and Water related issues dominated discussions in both the Gram Sabha and Mahila Sabha. The women also raised hygiene-related issues in the villages and demanded hospital and medical facilities. In the Mahila Sabha, the category of issues ranked as second in importance was the general safety and security of women in the villages. The women demanded installation of street lights along with other relevant issues (frequency = 30). In the Gram Sabhas, on the other hand, fewer issues were discussed with reference to the general safety and security of women (Frequency = 11).

Providing food for the household emerged as an important issue for women. Since PDS shops provide food cheaply in villages the women appeared more interested in the issuing of ration cards, correction of BPL lists, and inclusion of the poor and widows on BPL lists. On the other hand, while BPL lists and ration card related issues did figure during Gram Sabha meetings the inclusion of poor women and widows were not discussed.

Female members evinced interest in the education of girls in the village; they also raised issues concerning both the paucity of teachers and bad teachers in village schools. Interestingly, many women wanted the girls to learn English and computers. Training in tailoring also figured during discussions. During Gram Sabha meetings, on the other hand, the frequency of discussion on education was very low (frequency = 2) and it was related to lack of teachers in the village. Like education, livelihood-related issues, too, were raised at the meetings. The Mahila Sabha emphasised livelihood issues relevant to women whereas the Gram Sabha held no specific discussions on the same.

General welfare issues covered similar topics in both Mahila Sabha and Gram Sabha meetings (e.g., taxation, encroachment, etc.) although the former discussed issues related to absenteeism or absence of nurses additionally. Most Gram Sabhas discussed construction-related issues more frequently while the reverse was true for Mahila Sabhas where construction-related issues cropped up only nine times out of a total of 193. When the subject did emerge it concerned health, hygiene, and water-related issues.
5. RESULTS OF THE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

5.1 Usefulness of the Mahila Sabha

One of the major objectives of conducting the FGDs with the women members was to understand the usefulness of Mahila Sabha from their perspective. The discussions also threw up many interesting dimensions regarding the usefulness of Mahila Sabha. We have categorised the responses into four broad dimensions: Mahila Sabha builds awareness among women, it provides a platform for freedom of expression without the fear of reprisal, it builds a sense of empowerment among women, and it provides opportunities to women for highlighting specific women-related issues in the public sphere. From discussions it emerged that the existence of Mahila Sabhas has enabled women to participate in meetings. Presently, more women are able to come to the Panchayat office and get their official work done on a timely basis. However, in many villages the Mahila Sabha meetings are not given due publicity because of ignorance or unconcern on the part of the Panchayat and local-level officials. Women become aware of their village Mahila Sabhas due to KMVS efforts. In some villages, women belonging to certain communities do not participate (e.g., in Kokila village women from the Darbar community did not participate in Mahila Sabhas). The reason for this non-participation is mostly rooted in social customs and mores. In some villages (e.g., Lakhod), female apathy towards Mahila Sabhas was clearly discernible. This may be partly explained by information deficit and partly by the stronghold of men in the public sphere. Panchayat members too, seemed to lack knowledge with regard to Mahila Sabhas and had hence, not taken any steps towards informing the women of the Panchayat. Another reason for the women’s apathy has to do with the Mahila Sabhas’ lack of practical utility in the context of issues raised by them and follow up action on the part of the Grama Panchayat. However, most women did admit that Mahila Sabhas provide a unique opportunity for expressing their views, something that is otherwise not available (In village gram sabha we either don’t attend or if we attend we don’t talk as the elders and other men are present in there – village Kanya) to them. They also said that this forum not only provides space for self-expression but also boosts the equality and participation of women from different communities (inclusiveness) in developmental activities.

5.2 Views of other government officials

Government officials seem to hold the belief that the Mahila Sabha is an important platform as it gives voice to women’s issues, boosts interest, and enhances their participation in decision-making processes. But they also believe that proper notification of the meeting place, time and date needs to be conveyed. Some BDOs attribute the lack of participation to social and local customs (avoiding the issue of information dissemination and creating proper enabling conditions of participation). In many cases the government officials believe that an association (SHGs or NGOs) could collect women in large numbers to ensure greater participation. According to the BDOs, getting them assembled is a major challenge. Enhancement in education is crucial. One BDO who had
organised a Mahila Sabha for the first time observed after its success that a Mahila Sabha should be organised once in every two months.

5.3 Knowledge about government resolution and action taken

Most officials seem to have known about the government resolution regarding Mahila Sabhas barring a few (three, to be precise), which is an intriguing fact in itself. Those with the knowledge of the resolution seem to have taken some positive steps towards organising Mahila Sabhas. Some officials, however, appeared completely ignorant of the implementation process. One TDO, for instance, having known about Mahila Sabhas, did not know how to proceed. The process of communication varied from one taluka to the next. In some talukas the talatis were asked to canvas Mahila Sabha related information by going door-to-door while in others notifications appeared on public notice boards. Interestingly, in most talukas, the preferred mode of communication was displays over the notice board of the Panchayat office with scant regard for its outreach to the intended audience. Female literacy level, too, was discounted given that many women could have been illiterate and unable, thereby, to understand a written document.

5.4 Importance of the Mahila Sabha according to government Officials

Confronted with a question regarding the importance of Mahila Sabhas most officials observed that they gave voice to women`s issues. They also underscored the latter`s importance given that most women are not able to attend Gram Sabha meetings because of social customs and taboos. The Mahila Sabha gives them a platform on which they can share their issues. They also observed that while the Mahila Sabha boosts women`s interest and enhances their participation in decision-making processes, it is also a good forum for availing information on different government schemes for women that help resolve issues while allowing them to use their power at the same time. Apart from raising important issues on behalf of the community the women are also able to share their personal problems including those related to health and domestic violence in a fear-free environment. Their grievances can be taken up in Gram Sabha meetings later.

A few officers indicated that participating in the Mahila Sabha serves to boost women`s self-esteem and confidence encouraging them to participate in general meetings of the Gram Sabha later. One officer observed, “Women are not aware and that is the reason I support the idea of holding regular Mahila Sabhas”. He observed that Mahila Sabhas had enabled access to various types of information including development of the village. This means that positive developmental steps can be taken.

When queried about non participation the women cited social taboos including the veil system, community customs, household and other engagements, seasons earmarked for agricultural activities, and lack of interest and awareness. They also said that women avoid gathering for such meetings and are loath to speak up in the presence of elders while most do not see any personal benefit in a male dominant society. On analysing the statements some major themes emerged underscoring the participation deficit. These are:
(a) lack of information, (b) timing of the Mahila Sabha, (c) male dominance and social customs, and (d) utility for women.

5.5 Suggestions by government officials for effective implementation of Mahila Sabha

Major issues related to the effective implementation of Mahila Sabha included advance notice and proper timing and place. The significance of a door-to-door campaign 15-20 days in advance was stressed. The talati needs to take the lead in canvassing and disseminating information about the Mahila Sabha. The timing of the Mahila Sabha should be conducive to the maximum number of women. Notably, many women do not attend Mahila Sabha meetings because of unsuitable timings. The timing of a succeeding meeting could be discussed during a previous Mahila Sabha meeting. It was generally agreed that the date and timing should be accurate without being subject to frequent changes. The importance of the Sarpanch’s involvement in the Mahila Sabha was deemed important as it is the Sarpanch who can make the Mahila Sabha vibrant.

Since NGO influence over the women is seen as strong organisations like KMVS could take it upon themselves to collect women in large numbers and enhance the worth of meetings. Among the reasons cited for the women’s non participation is the perception that issues raised by them will fall on deaf ears. Therefore, efforts should be made to address these issues and solutions to the problems raised during Mahila Sabha meetings should be sought as soon as possible. The government’s and Panchayat officials’ adopting this policy will stimulate trust in both the Mahila Sabha and Gram Sabha. Livelihood is an important issue for women who can get to work from home through skill building activities. The women should be made aware of different schemes of the government. Women need to be given a fair chance to express their views during Mahila Sabha meetings. Mobilisation and awareness building are two extremely important activities for making Mahila Sabhas vibrant. Women-related committees should be formed in the village.

5.6 Views of Sarpanch and Panchayat Members

The Panchayat’s knowledge deficit regarding Mahila Sabhas has been indicated as a glaring gap through the FGDs. While many Panchayat members expressed concern for the deprived sections they had little knowledge of Mahila Sabhas. Some Panchayat members expressed the view that Mahila Sabhas provide a good platform for women to share their problems and present them in general meetings collectively. Their resolution has been integrated with support extended at the same time. Such a move is likely to instill equality while opening up new avenues for human development. No step has been taken by the Panchayat in this direction yet.

Elected members of Panchayats appeared conspicuously ignorant of the Government Resolution in the context of Mahila Sabhas. The elected members of Panchayats had no knowledge of the GR in about 39% of the villages surveyed. This year, about 60% villages witnessed some form of female participation in the Gram Sabhas; this was
largely attributed to the Mahila Sabhas organised in different villages prior to Gram Sabha meetings

5.7 Steps taken by Panchayats for women and deprived people of the village

In most Panchayats the elected representatives observed that support had been extended towards availing different facilities including water, education, and the sewage-system, all of which were important issues raised in the Mahila Sabhas. The elected members of Panchayats assured them of implementing all government schemes (widow pension, handicapped pension and old-aged pension scheme to the right beneficiaries). The elected representatives also wanted to update and modify the existing BPL list but no action has been taken yet on any resolution at any Gram Sabha meeting. Panchayats have also striven to make water facilities available at the household level. A few Panchayats have made efforts to contact deprived women so that they can avail of the benefits provided through government schemes. However, in 12 Panchayats it was reported that no such steps had been taken. One can understand from the foregoing discussion that elected members of Panchayats often make promises in Mahila Sabhas that never get fulfilled causing mistrust regarding the workings of the Panchayat and Gram Sabha among female voters. This could be another reason for the feeling of helplessness among women.

5.8 Topics significant to women

During the FGDs the women were asked to discuss topics significant to them. The discussion threw up insights on the typical problems faced by women in the district. For example, alcoholism and domestic violence were the main source of problems for women in the Kutch district. They expressed concern for the education of their children, specifically for girl children. Water and sanitation dominated the topics, these being intrinsically related to women’s health. Employment of women, livelihoods, and provisioning of food were other important issues to affect the lives of women in rural Kutch. The most important issues that came up during the focus group discussion were: Women’s health and medical facilities, domestic violence, safety and security of women, education of children especially girls, water and sanitation, employment of women, and livelihood related issues of women in the village. One can understand that issues important to women in the village were markedly different from those discussed in the Gram Sabha.

5.9 Why is the Mahila Sabha important for women?

During the focussed group discussion women made observations regarding why the Mahila Sabha was important for them. Most of them were of the opinion that Mahila Sabhas helped foster gender equality while enabling the participation of women from different communities in developmental activities. They also enrich the knowledge of women with regard to the external world. Many of them suggested that Mahila Sabhas had boosted their self-esteem. They believed that it was important for women to share and present their problems. Since the Mahila Sabha provides room for expression to women it emits a positive feeling and a sense of satisfaction. Through the Mahila Sabha women
can share their issues without any fear and this could be the first step towards motivating women to participate in Gram Sabhas. Participation of this sort can help solve many women-related problems while instilling confidence in the women. The Mahila Sabha is also seen as instrumental in fighting domestic violence and aiding female empowerment.

Many women members interviewed during the study believed that they were happy for the first time in their lives for being heard and for being made to feel like an important segment of society. The women also said that by getting together they could change the scenario in their village completely. This could help villagers do better and find sustainable solutions to their problems. It was felt that Mahila Sabhas could empower them in every sphere of life. Thus, the FGDs revealed that Mahila Sabhas have the potential to transform society in a positive way while empowering women at the same time.

6. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Importance of the Mahila Sabha in women’s empowerment

Social change is a difficult and slow process. Societies do not change because of changes in legal provisions. Legal provisions create enabling conditions that need to be leveraged to accelerate the process. While one-third reservations for women in Panchayats did create enabling conditions they could not make a dent in strong cultural norms. Setting up Mahila Sabhas is, undoubtedly, a step in the right direction as it helps create an enabling environment for the empowerment of rural women. However, in order to create a new social order of equality between men and women in an essentially patriarchic society, a lot of effort has to go into building a gender sensitive society.

6.2 Sensitisation of government officials and elected representatives of the Gram Panchayat

Our discussions and interviews with the government officials centered around a strong need for gender sensitization - particularly on issues emphasising the importance of Mahila Sabhas in the context of the region’s overall development. We found that the talatis exert tremendous influence over the process. They also play a major executive role during meetings. Most talatis hail from the same local cultural units and, being mostly male, they reflect the values of a patriarchal society. Therefore, the talatis need to be sensitised properly in terms of regarding women as equal partners in the path of development. Elected representatives of the Gram Panchayats, too, need to be gender sensitised. In most Mahila Sabhas the Sarpanchs are also the Adhyakshas of the Mahila Sabha. Their presence is important. However, the Sarpanchs need to be sensitised to the issues affecting women. Non-governmental organisations, too, should be involved in the sensitisation process. The gender sensitisation process needs to focus on the differential needs of men and women. Gender sensitivity does not involve a battle of the sexes but an understanding of their specific needs so that planning process at the village level is not biased and follows a course of even development. Gender sensitisation of elected members is likely to reduce the tendency of male members of dominant caste groups to
dissuade or bar women from attending public meetings, whether they are held in the Mahila Sabha or Gram Sabha.

### 6.3 Strengthening communication

While conducting the present research we found that women’s voices get suppressed through numerous mechanisms. We discovered that one of the ways to keep the women away from the decision-making process is by not communicating well in advance the date, time, and venue of the Mahila Sabha. Small group meetings need to be organised with women to arrive at a suitable time, venue, and date for the Mahila Sabha on a prior basis. Meetings need to be scheduled during religious festivals (e.g., Ramadan for Muslims, Diwali for Hindus) to ensure the maximum participation of women. These small group meetings could be co-ordinated by NGOs or SHGs. During the summer season meeting timings between 4 pm to 6 pm have been deemed as most suitable for women. However, during winter months these timings need to be checked with women in advance. There is also a need for door-to-door canvassing for the first few Mahila Sabhas. The talati, ASHA workers, ANMs, and Anganwadi workers need to play a crucial role in this kind of canvassing. An advance notice of 10 to 15 days is required for ensuring maximum participation on the part of women members. Once the women start attending Mahila Sabha meetings they will be in a position to decide on the time, venue, and dates for subsequent meetings while the Mahila Sabha attendees could be motivated to become ambassadors who will motivate others to participate. As suggested by some government officials, it seems worthwhile to hold Mahila Sabha meetings more frequently during the initial phases. Women attending these meetings and discovering their usefulness will be able to strengthen their belief in collective effort. This could motivate them to participate in the Mahila Sabha to a greater extent. One needs to understand that Mahila Sabhas are required as long as women are de-motivated and dissuaded from attending the Gram Sabha meetings. The objective of having a Mahila Sabha is not to dissuade women from attending Gram Sabha meetings. Mahila Sabhas can, instead, encourage women to participate in the Gram Sabha and, consequently, change the existing gender equation in the village. It is envisaged that a time will come when a rising number of women will be attending Gram Sabha meetings and a separate Mahila Sabha may no longer be required. That will be the true test of the efficacy of the Mahila Sabha.

### 6.4 Mahila Sabha resolutions to be part of Gram Sabha

A major concern expressed in the Mahila Sabha had to do with resolutions that did not get included in the Gram Sabha agendas or were simply diluted and ignored. Consequently, the women felt neglected and alienated from the public sphere. This realisation has dealt a lethal blow to women’s participation in public affairs. This alienation also feeds into the existing male argument that women are not interested in public affairs, which is farthest from the truth. The truth is that the women would like to participate in public affairs as much as the men but because of being systematically alienated from public affairs they do not exhibit the willingness to participate. One of the more direct forms of suppression is the power exerted by male members of the family who want the women to conform to the
existing power structures of the village. This has a direct impact on the self-esteem of the women. However, these forms of power exertion are often countered by certain process and systemic changes. For example, if the Mahila Sabha is viewed as having a legal status and women get organised through NGOs or SHGs the women, finding strength in numbers, feel emboldened to give expression to their feelings in the Mahila Sabha. Therefore, provisions will have to be made through which the resolutions passed in the Mahila Sabha get included in the Gram Sabha agenda. Non inclusion of Mahila Sabha resolutions in the Gram Sabha agenda should render the Gram Sabhas unacceptable. Until such strong steps are taken women’s participation in Mahila Sabha cannot be ensured.

6.5 Mobilisation of women by NGOs and SHGs

Results of the present study are in line with past findings regarding the presence of NGOs and SHGs enhancing Mahila Sabha participation. Therefore, NGOs and SHGs working in the area should be involved in sensitising women to gender issues and motivating them to attend Mahila Sabha meetings. It is clear from our results that priorities of women and men are different, both having different needs. For the planning of the Gram Sabha to be balanced women’s voices need to be heard. At the same time, however, the women need to mobilise for their collective good. NGOs, with their long experience in mobilising women for different issues, may be consulted for their knowledge and skills.

7. CONCLUSION

The present Kutch-based study happens to be one of its kind relevant to the workings of Mahila Sabhas in the country. It contributes to our knowledge of the workings of Mahila Sabhas in a traditional rural society with high gender inequality. The study highlights three major issues related to the functioning of the Mahila Sabha. Firstly, it highlights the importance of the Mahila Sabha in the context of an overall balanced development of the village as topics discussed and resolutions made in the Mahila Sabha are qualitatively different from those of male members in the Gram Sabha. Secondly, it underlines the reasons for women members’ not attending Mahila Sabha meetings as well as factors contributing to their attending these meetings. Thirdly, it uncovers the systemic level obstacles hindering women’s participation in the Mahila Sabha meetings and the role government officials can play in removing these obstacles.
### Table 1: Availability of Basic Amenities and services in the villages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Amenities</th>
<th>Freq</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ICDS</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midday Meal</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>98.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary School</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>96.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household level water taps</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>96.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus stand in the village</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>94.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pukka Roads in the village</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>84.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street light</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>65.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sewage Management</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>60.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paved (Pukka) streets within village</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>58.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street cleaning</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>55.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Waste Management</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>39.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secondary School</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Toilets</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>32.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stand post</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Health Centre (PHC)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Secondary School</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2: Frequency of Topics discussed in Mahila Sabha and Gram Sabha</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mahila Sabha</strong></td>
<td><strong>Fre</strong></td>
<td><strong>Gram Sabha</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health, Hygiene, Water, and Sanitation</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>Health, Hygiene, Water, and</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sewage System</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Sanitation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anganwadi</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Anganwadi (construction of</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>boundary wall)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demanding construction of toilets</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Demanding construction of</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>toilets</td>
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<td>Cleanliness and removal of Garbage</td>
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<td>Cleanliness in the village</td>
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<td>Hygiene issues in village</td>
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<td>ICDS facilities</td>
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<td>Hospital and Medical Facilities</td>
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<td><strong>General Safety and Security of women</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>of women</td>
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<tr>
<td>Installation of Street lights</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Bus Stand for women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widow relief</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Light in community hall</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bus Transport in Village</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Installation of Street Lights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old age Relief/pension</td>
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<td><strong>PDS related Issues</strong></td>
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<td><strong>PDS related issues</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>PDS shop in the village &amp; Ration Card issue</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>BPL List</td>
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<tr>
<td>Correction in BPL List</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ration Card</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inclusion of poor women &amp; widows in BPL list</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>PDS shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education related Issues</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of teachers in school or bad teachers</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Lack of Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training for Girls in Computers, English, &amp; Tailoring</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Bus facility for students</td>
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<td><strong>Livelihoods related Issues</strong></td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>Livelihood Issues of women</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Livelihood of Men and youth</td>
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<td>Fodder for livestock</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Demand for MGNREGA work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Job opportunities in local companies</td>
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<td>Livestock, fodder and grazing land</td>
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<td><strong>Issues related to General Welfare</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Issues related to General Welfare</strong></td>
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<td>Tax Collection</td>
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<td>Sand robbery</td>
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<td>Indira Awas Yojana</td>
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<td>Pollution</td>
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<td>Absenteeism of Nurse/Demand for nurse</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>BSNL tower</td>
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<td>Construction of a meeting room for women.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tax Collection</td>
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<tr>
<td>Excess Electricity bills/ Electricity Demand</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Irregularity of Talati</td>
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<td>Adhaar Card issue</td>
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<td>Panchayat does not open</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Electricity Demand</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Construction related activities</strong></td>
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<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Construction related activities</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Construction of CC Roads</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1: Percentage of Female Voters Present in Mahila Sabha Meeting

Figure 2: Average attendance in Mahila Sabha meetings at different time
Figure 3: Members present across different venues

Figure 4: Officials present in Mahila Sabha meetings

- None
- Sarpanch
- TDO
- Mamlatdar
- Doctor
- Teachers
- Gramsevak
- ICDS Workers (ASHA/ANM/AWW/Nurse)
- Talati
Figure 5: Average Satisfaction score on the Services and amenities provided by the Panchayat

Higher Secondary School | Average Score, 1.50
Public Toilets
Secondary School
Stand post
Wok under MNREGA scheme
Add names in BPL list
Waste Management
Road cleanliness
Public Heath Centre (PHC)
Sewage Management
Road light
Pukka street roads
Ration card for PDS
Land related works (Transformation, Entries, Red...)
Time taken by Gram Panchayat on facilitating any...
Form-filling of different Government schemes
Ahsa Worker
Source of water in case water provided by pipeline
Bus stand in the village
Primary School
Behavior of Members associated with Panchayat
Pukka Roads since establishment of the village
Miday Meal
Household level water taps by Panchayat
Income Certificate
ICDS
Birth Certificate
Death Certificate

Axis Titl

1.00 1.50 2.00 2.50 3.00 3.50 4.00 4.50
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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