

## 1. Promoting gender equality within urban development sector:

The current trends of rapid urbanisation in India indicate that over half of the country's population will live in cities by 2050, which will further increase the challenges of urban local bodies (ULBs) in providing basic services for its citizens and further increase the risk from disasters due to climate change. The Government of India has responded to these challenges by initiating and implementing various reforms, programmes and missions such as Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation 2.0 (AMRUT 2.0), Smart Cities Mission (SCM) and Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0 (SBM-Urban 2.0). However, the provisions for mainstreaming gender in the above programs are relatively lesser, when compared to the priority areas or sectors being addressed by them. Nevertheless, a few programs have attempted to cater to the gendered needs, with an indirect impact on women and vulnerable populations.

At the state level, nodal departments for women and child development take up programmes and initiatives for women's rights and empowerment across the state. However, there exist challenges in the integration of such programmes and schemes in the state departments responsible for urban development. Nevertheless, a few states and cities have made several attempts in integrating gender approaches by initiating missions, programmes and schemes specifically for the empowerment of women and other genders. For instance, under state missions, the women's self-help groups (SHGs) were created in Odisha and Kerala (Kudumbashree) and have since been very active. Bhubaneswar city (Odisha) has linked a partnership with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in order to bring to life its goal of a smart city with a special focus on the needs of young people, girls and women. Likewise, Kochi city (Kerala) has integrated gender and inclusion into their annual budgeting and allocated funds for such programmes and initiatives. However, most of the urban development departments including the ULBs lack the technical skills and capacities to facilitate the process of mainstreaming and implementing gender-responsive approaches.

Complementing to and further strengthening their efforts, the BMZ funded Sustainable Urban Development- Smart Cities II (SUDSC II) project is supporting the states and cities in building capacities of women self-help groups and local communities in cross-sectoral skills and development measures enabling them to apply their knowledge in selected areas of risk-informed, resilient and sustainable urban development in their work. Three such support activities are presented here: first, the capacity development program for the 'Jalasathis' women (members of Women SHGs working in the area), who are the backbone of the 24X7 Drink from Tap Mission (SUJAL) in Urban Odisha; second, the capacity development program for the Slum Dwellers Associations (SDA), comprising at least 50% women; and third, the platform outlined for the women entrepreneurs in the city of Kochi and subsequent training and mentorship program for the Community Kitchen, led by Kudumbashree (women SHG) members.

### a. Promoting gender equality through the 'Jalasathis' (transl. water friends) Capacity development program, Odisha:

The Government of Odisha has prioritized the achievement of universal piped water supply coverage, emphasizing quality and sustainability along with ensuring inclusive and equitable service delivery. The state introduced the "[WATCOM-Jalasathi model](#)" in 2019, which fosters a community partnership approach to address the last mile delivery and connectivity challenges. This innovative model involves the engagement of women cadre as service providers and encourages community involvement, thereby promoting participatory governance.

Under the SUDSC II project, GIZ is supporting the capacity development (CD) of women SHG members to act as 'Jalasathis'. They are now responsible for ensuring water supply, billing and collection of payment through POS devices, checking of water quality as well as ensuring new metered connections. The Housing and Urban Development Department (HUDD) of Govt. of Odisha has announced the scaling up of the Mission to all the 115 urban local bodies of the state for which GIZ India is involved in capacity development initiatives of 1000 'Jalasathis' across the state.

In addition to generating livelihood opportunities for women and thereby empowering them socially and economically, this CD measure envisages to address the patriarchal and systemic norms as well. For instance, the otherwise male majority-oriented formal and women majority-oriented informal sector is being transformed by training and capacitating more women to actively participate and contribute to the sector and thereby transforming their sectoral contribution from informal to formal.



Fig 1 |Jalasathis in the field ©GIZ.



**b. Promoting gender equality through the Capacity Development of Slum Dwellers Associations (SDA) towards representation of women as 4th Tier of Governance (Odisha):**

The Odisha Liveable Habitat Mission (OLHM)- 'JAGA' of the state government aims at transforming the slums into liveable habitats with quality civic infrastructure, continuously improving their standards and access to livelihood opportunities. One of the key activities focuses on inclusion of slum communities through participatory planning and governance which aims to build capacities of the [Slum Dweller Associations \(SDA\)](#) to actively participate and partner with the city administration in preparing development plans for their own settlements and other city works.



Fig 2 Training session- SDA members ©GIZ

Under the SUDSC II project, GIZ India is heavily engaged in supporting the strengthening of the capacities of SDAs as the 4th tier of governance, aiming at empowering the slum dwellers by providing skills, knowledge and resources necessary for personal and community development, thereby improving their livelihoods and overall well-being at large. The CD program intends to cover all slums across the state twice during the project duration (2022-2024). The program will improve capacities of about 8,000 SDA members out of which at least 50% are women, from all the 2919 slums across 115 ULBs in the state.

In addition to providing livelihood opportunities and upgrading their quality of life, this CD program addresses the patriarchal and systemic norms by not only including women as target group or beneficiaries, but also as co-owners, developers, planners and active engagement of their voices in decision making and governance. At the same time, this program intends to tackle the issues faced by the socially, educationally and economically disadvantaged women. This program will further strengthen the political participation and representation of women as 4<sup>th</sup> Tier of Governance.

**c. Promoting gender equality through building an integrated support platform for women entrepreneurship in Kochi (Kerala) and training and mentorship program for the Community Kitchen led by Kudumbashree women:**

"[Samridhi@Kochi](#)" is an initiative under the Hunger-Free Kochi project, set up as part of the Janakeeya hotel(s) (Community Kitchen) project implemented by the Government of Kerala under the leadership of Kudumbashree. Under this initiative, the city of Kochi has been offering noon meals to around 3000 persons per day at ₹10 a meal. Kudumbashree is a poverty eradication mission programme set up by the Government of Kerala which works closely with the urban and rural local governments through a network of community-based organisations working with women, focusing its activities under three main components: economic empowerment, community empowerment and women empowerment.



Fig 3 Kudumbashree members in front of their Community Kitchen ©GIZ/Fathim

Under SUDSC, GIZ supported the "[Samridhi@Kochi](#)" initiative by introducing a gender responsive approach via its training and mentorship program to the women entrepreneurs. The approach focused on inspiring, introducing and initiating the entrepreneurial initiative. This pilot training and mentorship program was conducted as part of the GIZ supported '[Integrated Platform for Women Entrepreneurship \(IPWE\)](#)', designed and developed to promote economic empowerment of women ensuring livelihood support. The IPWE intends to reach out to around 10,000 women beneficiaries every year, envisaging supporting or creation of women-led ventures in the city. Further, upscaling of the IPWE is planned by SUDSC II to create a "[Digital Space for Women Entrepreneurs](#)"- a one-stop-shop for all public services for women citizens of Kochi.

**2. Gender as a quality feature of our work**

**a. Gender responsive measures: Women-led 'Jalasathis' contributing to the formal drinking water sector (Odisha):**

The key objective of the 'Jalasathis' CD program is to strengthen the individual and systemic capacity for effective implementation of the WATCOM-Jalsathi model towards achieving the objectives of ensuring universal coverage of piped water connections to all households. The 'Jalasathis' are the backbone of the 24X7 Drink from Tap Mission (SUJAL) in Urban Odisha. Before this Mission, collection of potable water from standposts at a particular time was the social practice and responsibility of the women, particularly the urban poor slum dwellers. With this innovative initiative of having the 'Jalasathis' as the primary interface between the citizens and government, the SUJAL Mission



has been possible. Improving their technical capacities creates an opportunity for women to actively participate and contribute to the formal drinking water sector.

Similarly, the state government continues to have a standard operating procedure for the 'Jalasathis'. The focal point in this regard has been engineers and technical persons at WATCO, Odisha. This ensures **engaging men** to actively participate towards implementing the Mission. The capacity needs assessment activities are designed to capture the differential gendered needs and identify their challenges and capacity gaps. Furthermore, a specific web-portal is being developed under this initiative to collect **gender disaggregated data**, which would ensure sustainable monitoring of the activity even beyond the project duration.

#### **b. Gender responsive measures: Women-led development initiative- Representation of women as 4th Tier of Governance (Odisha)**

Approximately 50% of the Slum Dwellers Association (SDA) members are women. This ensures targeted gender-based outcomes for the CD program. Further, it improves the development of social infrastructure in the slums. 169 training programs have been conducted as first phase focusing on 2 modules- institution building and organizing of SDAs and maintenance of assets of the slum by the SDAs. A total of 6,500 SDA members have been trained out of which 53% are women. India has a 3-tier governance structure with the central and state governments at the national and state levels and ULBs at the city level. JAGA Mission envisages the SDAs to function as the 4th tier of governance to work at the slum level. The state government has also taken a policy decision to earmark 25% of the total budget of a ULB for slum development. The inclusion of community women in local governance is a remarkable initiative. Further, the CD measures are also designed to develop leadership and communication aspects for the unemployed and socially disadvantaged women slum dwellers.

#### **c. Gender responsive measures: Empowering women through entrepreneurship for sustainable development of the city. (Kochi, Kerala)**

The IPWE is envisaged to contribute to the city development by way of citizen participation through entrepreneurship (SDG 8, SDG 9 & SDG 11) and by empowering women (SDG 5). The centre's approach and focus is towards empowering women and providing for equal opportunity, which would contribute significantly towards the city's goals of inclusivity and vibrancy of the community.

IPWE Kochi is proposed to be an independent society governed by a governing council of a diverse set of stakeholders represented by women leaders and entrepreneurs. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) (preferably a woman) and a small team manage the platform activities with the light organization with at least 50% representation of women, with a ratio of 2:1 in managerial roles. Most of the core human resources for the programs and activities are empanelled to build a network of partners through various ad-hoc engagement models. This strategy ensures that the platform is led and run by the women for the women. However, it also ensures engaging men in the governance and execution of the platform.

### **3. Implementing feminist core principles**

Germany's Feminist Development Policy aims to eliminate structural inequalities, unequal treatment and discrimination in the long term. Acknowledging social inequalities as a product of discriminatory power structures, the policy pursues a human rights-based, inter-sectional and gender-transformative approach, which is guided by the 3Rs- Rights, Resources and Representation. Further, BMZ also discusses a feminist approach to climate policy, recognising gender justice as a key to an effective climate policy. It states the crucial role of gender equitable structures in reducing a country's greenhouse gas emissions and building resilience.

The Indian G20 Presidency positions gender equality of fundamental importance for sustainable development. Further to this, the G20 Varanasi Development Ministerial reaffirmed the importance of collecting, analysing and disseminating gender disaggregated data for women to develop and strengthen evidence-based public policies and programmes in order to 'leave no one behind', which is also in line with the program objective of SUDSC II.

Gender responsive aspects are included in the project cycle by integrating the dimension in the project module and output indicators and planning for gender responsive approaches and methods. In addition, it is proposed to adopt gender disaggregated data methods and approaches for evidence-based inclusive decision making. The concept of allowing for data to be specific to Data Feminism is also currently being explored at this stage.

Further, **the project attempts to align its activities as well with the feminist core principles**. Few examples are given below:



- It attempts to address the structural inequalities- for instance, by systematic formalizing the participation and technical and economic contribution of women in the originally male majority-oriented drinking water sector.
- The approaches adopted in the activities are human rights-based and intersectional- for instance, upgrading and improving the quality of living and livelihood opportunities of socially and economically disadvantaged groups of women living in the slums.
- It ensures equal access of women to resources- for example, providing improved access to quality trainings including upgrading of technical skills and development measures, among others.
- It promotes equal representation of women in decision making- for example, enhancing the participation and representation of women as the 4<sup>th</sup> Tier of Governance.
- Engaging positive masculinity is one of the key highlights of all activities- for example, the contribution of male engineers and technical persons in the ‘Jalasathi’ trainings, representation of male slum dwellers in the 4<sup>th</sup> tier of governance and engagement of male members in the governance and execution of the IPWE.
- It adopts gender disaggregated data methods and approaches for evidence-based inclusive decision making.

#### 4. Cooperation

##### a. ‘Jalasathis’ Capacity development program:

The Jalasathi program was launched in December 2019 by the Hon. Chief Minister of Odisha. Till March 2023, the state has been able to collect a revenue of INR 1080.9 million, conduct water tests for 0.21 million households, pay INR 70.5 million to the Jalasathis and connect 55,000 households with new water connections. (*Source: WATCO, Government of Odisha as of March 2023*). The Urban Management Centre (UMC) is implementing this activity under a grant support in partnership with the Housing and Urban Development Department (HUDD), Govt. of Odisha. As of May 31, 2023, a dedicated team of 750 Jalsathis has actively contributed to various aspects of this initiative. The government intends to add 250 more SHG members to take the total Jalasathis across the state to 1000.

##### b. Capacity Development of Slum Dwellers Associations (SDA) in Odisha to Develop as 4th Tier of Governance

JAGA Mission was launched in May 2018 by the Hon. Chief Minister of Odisha. Till date, 170,000 slum households have been provided land rights and 1342 slums out of the 2919 slums have been upgraded to Biju Adarsh Colony and have been delisted as slums. Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy is implementing the capacity development of SDAs under a grant support in partnership with the HUDD, Govt. of Odisha.

##### c. Integrated Support Platform for Women Entrepreneurship in Kochi and training and mentorship program for the Community Kitchen led by Kudumbashree women:

The IPWE framework, including the design, operating and financial model was successfully handed over to the city of Kochi. This has been included in the Kochi Municipal Corporation (KMC) budget for implementation. As a way forward, KMC is further planning to seek the support of the state for the upscaling the project to address the challenges of women entrepreneurs. The city intends to digitize the IPWE to enhance global opportunities for collaboration by leveraging the Digital India Mission.

In this regard, GIZ supported SUDSC II project activity to create a ‘Digital Space for Women’- a one-stop-shop for all public services for women citizens of Kochi, is in the pipeline. This initiative will be first of its kind in the country, wherein the Urban Local Bodies play a major role in bringing the small-scale ventures, which are otherwise underrated and undervalued, into the mainstream of socio-economic development and public policy.

#### Conclusion and way forward:

Although the above approaches focus mainly on empowerment of women, the project intends to further strengthen the involvement of men, all genders and diverse communities. In India, most community-led initiatives that are supported by the Govt of India, would focus on women and youth. The project further intends to consider gender responsive measures that tackle intersectionality in the context of India. This shall also include marginalised communities divided by caste, class, religion, ethnicity and other identity factors. The project is in the midst of also understanding how to ensure a more sustainable gender responsive and also partially gender transformative approach, where in diverse communities contribute, participate and engage in an environment whereby urban development can truly be termed as ‘sustainable’.

