

# RIGHTS, SHARES AND CLAIMS : REALISING WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN SOUTH ASIA

WORKING PAPER: RESOURCE MAPPING FOR  
WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS WORK IN INDIA

2011-2012

SOUTH ASIA  
WOMEN'S FUND

**SAWF**

### **About South Asia Women's Fund (SAWF):**

SAWF is a regional women's Fund, committed to supporting women-led interventions to enhance and strengthen access to women's human rights and countering violations thereof. It has worked closely with partners to support human rights in the context of conflict, identity, socio-economic deprivations and in relation to violence against women. In its present phase, it is committed to supporting the emergence of a regional human rights movement, which would address national and regional concerns. Its work is focused on developing a regional mandate that is informed by national realities, and is responsive to the rights and needs of the individual woman. The organisation, currently works in Bangladesh, Nepal, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

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**Note:** Due to the vast geographical expanse of the country, Niti Saxena (Regional Study Consultant) worked with Anuradha with data collection in phase I and Key informant interviews in Phase II.

The present publication “**RIGHTS, SHARES, AND CLAIMS: REALISING WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN SOUTH ASIA; Working Paper: Resource Mapping for women's human rights work in India**” is an edited version of the research conducted by Anuradha Rajan. For the detailed version, please contact SAWF.

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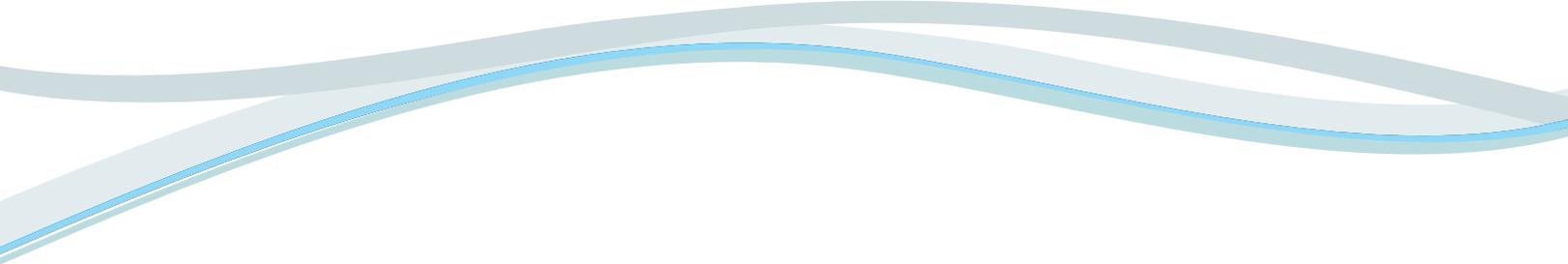
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**RIGHTS, SHARES, AND CLAIMS: REALISING  
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## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AWID</b>	:	Association of Women in Development
<b>AUSAID</b>	:	Australian Government Overseas Aid Program
<b>BPA</b>	:	Beijing Platform of Action
<b>CBO</b>	:	Community-Based Organisations
<b>CEDAW</b>	:	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
<b>CSR</b>	:	Corporate Social Responsibility
<b>DAC</b>	:	Development Assistance Committee
<b>DEA</b>	:	Department of External Affairs
<b>DFID</b>	:	Department for International Development
<b>EC</b>	:	European Commission
<b>FCRA</b>	:	Foreign Contribution Regulation Act
<b>ICPD</b>	:	International Conference on Population and Development
<b>INGO</b>	:	International Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>IPAP</b>	:	International NGO Partnership Programme
<b>RBA</b>	:	Rights Based Approach
<b>SIDA</b>	:	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
<b>USAID</b>	:	United States Agency for International Development
<b>VAW</b>	:	Violence Against Women

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

We are at a stage in human history, where the world over, there is an undeniable realisation that human development simply cannot happen without the realisation of Women's Rights. There is a plethora of research and documentation that supports this view and advocates for better resource allocation towards this goal. However, the pioneering work carried out by the Association of Women in Development (AWID) shows, that rhetoric has taken over actual resource allocation in the area of women's rights. Their study report<sup>1</sup> notes that “In 2011, over halfway through the fiscal year (in November and December 2011), only 13% of women's organisations had secured all the funding they needed for that year. This demonstrates the insecurity that the majority of women's organisations are facing in terms of financial stability.”

*Research on aid effectiveness by the DAC Network on Gender Equality<sup>2</sup> points out certain key issues related to funding for women's rights:*

- Gender mainstreaming efforts have had very limited impact.
- Long-term funding is required because the transformational agenda of women's rights groups cannot be achieved in short timelines.
- It is essential to make funding available for organisational development and sustainability for women's rights groups, so that they are not dependent on any one lender alone.
- Small organisations do not have the absorption capacity for large pools of fund and therefore, find themselves at a disadvantage to bid for large projects. Therefore, intermediary organisations that can funnel bilateral donor funds, are a good alternative.
- Evidence gathering to demonstrate the effectiveness of interventions, is a very weak link. Organisations don't often have the capacity to monitor and evaluate outcomes systematically and donors don't pay as much attention in training their partners on financial reporting, as on outcome assessments.
- Official Development Assistance is often harmonised around the MDG3 indicators of parity in education, literacy, women's employment and political representation, as well

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<sup>1</sup> Part of a paper titled Strengthening Financing for Gender Equality and Women's Organisations, presented at CSW 56th Session, 27 February – 9 March by AWID, 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Innovative funding for Women's organization, DAC Network on Gender Equality, 2008  
And Making the linkages, DAC Network on Gender Equality, 2008

as, issues such as violence against women and HIV/AIDS. Organisations report that it is becoming increasingly difficult to raise funds for activities related to women's rights that focus on awareness-raising, participation and confidence-building (Collinson *et al.*, 2008, Adeleye-Fayemi 2007).

- The Paris declaration on aid effectiveness, endorsed in March 2005, has laid out the following principles as being central in making aid more effective:
  - Ownership- ensuring that the voices of all those related to the issue, are heard and included in setting the agenda for development aid.
  - Mutual accountability – supporting CSO's and partners to play the role of holding the state accountable for its promises and also using its own presence to push for greater accountability. *However, what was unclear in this section, was about the donor's accountability to their partners, although the internal accountability of the donors is talked about as a requirement.*
  - Alignment of the donor community to national policies and commitments made by the state to international treaties and bodies.
  - Harmonisation of donor agendas and funding, so that a large programme of work can be supported which achieves gender equality, rather than project based approaches.
  - Managing for development results; that is, building systems for collection and analysis of sound data on development outcomes and impacts.

## 2. BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

South Asia and India, in particular, has witnessed serious cut backs in funding for promotion of Women's Rights. However, there are few studies which have tracked trends and developments in the arena of women's rights, in South Asia. This prompted the South Asia Women's Fund (SAWF) to conduct a resource mapping study in 2011, to map funding trends and developments, especially in the arena of women's rights. This report captures the key insights and findings from the study.

### ***Methodology:***

The mapping exercise was done in two phases. In phase I, the study reached out to approximately 300 voluntary organisations, NGOs and women's groups to gather their responses through a self administered questionnaire, on the following domains: (i) organisational objective and purpose; (ii) Strategies being used by them to achieve these objectives; (iii) Activities and programmes aimed at women; (iv) The resources they are spending on activities targeting women; (v) Significant changes brought about by the organisation; (vi) Issues on which securing funding is difficult; (vii) Reasons for the difficulties faced.

Along with the survey, the study also covered 16 key informants,<sup>3</sup> who are experts from different arenas of women's rights, such as education, livelihoods, sexuality, health, etc.

In the second phase, grant making by eighteen large and medium-size donor agencies was explored, using a combination of secondary sources and individual interviews. In this phase, follow-up interviews were also conducted with select NGO/s, Voluntary organisations and Women's Groups covered in phase I. The intent was to get back to all those respondents who had shared specific issues regarding fund-raising in the self administered questionnaires. However, it was possible to secure responses from only 26 organisations. These were largely a combination of medium and small-size NGO's and women's groups, spread across all four regions. The purpose of the follow-up interviews was to explore their experiences of fund raising in detail.

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix for names of Key Informants

**Table1: The sample size of the study is as follows**

<b>Constituency covered</b>	<b>Sample size</b>	<b>Tools employed</b>
Donor Agencies	18	Structured Interviews Review of literature
NGOs/Voluntary Agencies/Women's groups	147	Self-administered Questionnaire
Key Informants	16	Semi-structured Interviews
Follow-up with NGO respondents	26	Follow-up questions based on their responses in the self administered questionnaires and structured interviews

### 3. KEY FINDINGS AND INSIGHTS

#### *- Insights from grant making agencies and processes*

##### **THE TERRAIN**

The community of donors and grant-makers contributing to social development initiatives in India, can be broadly divided into the following categories:

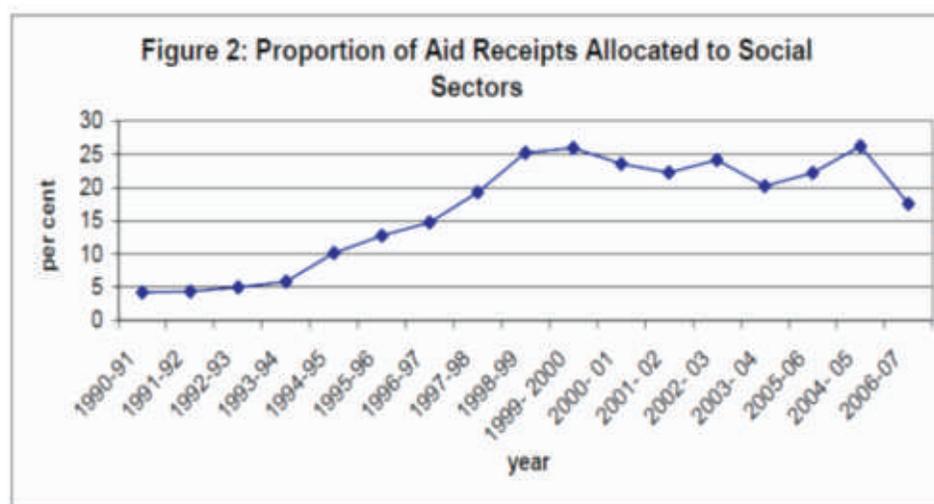
- A. Bilateral donor agencies
- B. The Indian Government
- C. International NGOs
- D. International Private Foundations
- E. Corporate companies, engaging in Corporate Social Responsibility activities
- F. National private charities and Individual givers

Improving educational status of disadvantaged communities, health outcomes of the deprived and promoting livelihood opportunities for the marginalised, are cross-cutting themes across all donor categories. However, the approach to these issues varies enormously, among both, donor and recipient communities, ranging from those which are strongly rights-based and empowerment-focussed to those, which are welfare-oriented and conciliatory. Each of these category of donors, has a very different trajectory of growth in grant-making.

**BILATERAL DONORS** have been among the oldest constituency and their presence in India is on the wane, as geo-political considerations are deeply influencing their mandate and presence in the region. And in a country like India, where the tradition of external development assistance to NGOs and voluntary organisations has been very high, it is important to lay out the context against which we need to understand current foreign donors operating in the region.

India has been a recipient of development assistance since the 1950's. The earliest form of aid took the form of food-grain under the PL- 480 programme and subsequently several donors from the Northern countries began offering assistance for promoting social development, particularly poverty alleviation. Till the 1990's India continued to be one of the largest recipients of foreign aid. In a very informative paper titled "The impact of aid on the Educational Policy of India" (RECOUP working paper no. 27, March 2010) the authors note that "Over the half century since aid to India began, not only have there been significant changes in the number of agencies and aid volumes, but there have also been major shifts in

the composition of aid. Initially the focus was on providing bilateral food aid, which accounted for about 9 per cent of aid receipts during 1966-67...and on supporting the foreign exchange requirements and investment expenditures of India's successive plans. In the 1990's however, significant portions of the aid were allocated, for the first time, to the social sectors. Such allocations rose rapidly from less than 5 per cent in 1990 to more than one-quarter of total aid by the turn of the century, since when they fell back somewhat" (see figure below). They also note that a bulk of the development aid was committed to education.



Source: GOI (1990-2007) – various years

However, the economic upswing experienced by India during the 1990's, as well as, political developments such as its decision to engage in nuclear testing and its own aspiration for a seat on the UN Security Council, meant a sharp change in the quality and quantity of development aid to India. India was also keen to change its image at this point from an aid receiver to an aid giver and hence, decided to assume a rather belligerent position on foreign funding for development assistance. In 2003, the government announced that India would discontinue accepting development assistance from all but 6 bilateral donors (DFID, USAID, Japan, Germany, The Russian federation and The European Commission. Italy and France were later added to this list). Other bilateral donors were told to route their funding through multi-lateral agencies or could continue providing bilateral development assistance to autonomous institutions, universities, NGOs etc., through a modified procedure set in place by the Department of Economic Affairs. The key reasons offered for this step were:

- To reduce transaction costs
- Enable smaller bilateral NGOs to access directly, thereby reducing time and energy

- Such collaborations would yield innovative models and offer ideas for scaling them up.

The Finance Ministry also announced that India would not accept any more 'tied' aid and that repayment of all foreign debts – except to four nations- would happen ahead of time. At the same time, the government also announced its decision to extend a debt relief package for least developed countries and a fresh scheme of credit and technical assistance to countries in need of such help.

This stand of the government took many donors by surprise and many of them began drawing up exit plans and strategies. Key among them were some European donors, such as The Government of Netherlands, Norway and Denmark, who had been supporting smaller, but very strategic grants for women's development. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) also wound up its bilateral aid operations by 2008. Although the congress-led government, which came to power subsequently, reversed the earlier policy and re-permitted donors providing more than \$25 million, many donor agencies had decided to re-allocate their resources to more needy economies of the world.

While the move to smaller bilateral agencies to access NGOs directly was welcomed by many; the mechanism put in place for routing the funds drew much criticism from several circles. According to the revised rules, even multilaterals could support only FCRA registered agencies. Each bilateral partner (other than the 6 G-8 countries, approved by the government) was to submit a list of NGOs they wished to support, to the Joint Secretary in the Department of Economic Affairs. Based on suggestions and deliberations, where the status of the project would be shared with the concerned bilateral, the list could be modified.

N C Saxena, member Planning Commission, in a paper titled “The new Government policy on bilateral assistance to India” (2003) has observed, “The new policy of routing funds of small donors to NGOs, Universities and other research organisations, would have great merit if it leads to professionalisation of the NGO sector in India... With the bilateral funds going straight to NGOs, at least the genuine NGOs will have a better chance of receiving grants on merit and on the basis of their past work and future potential. A vibrant and confident civil society is the best safeguard in a democracy against abuse of power by the executive. However, the new guidelines have not been very helpful in this respect. In fact, these make it more difficult for NGOs to access donor funds in several ways.” The devil, as they say, is in the detail and his paper elucidates the constraints smaller organisations are likely to face in accessing donor funds directly from the smaller bilateral donors.

Key challenges include diversion of funds to only larger organisations, which have FCRA registration and hence, exclusion of those, who don't possess an FCRA registration; excessive

paperwork as the DEA and other departments such as the ministry of external affairs and line departments would get involved in scrutinising proposals and projects. In the face of waning interest by the international donor community, which senses India's desire to cut loose of development assistance, the challenges faced by domestic non profit organisations in raising funds for projects are numerous.

**The new Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) 2010 has come into force with effect from May 2011. Key features include:**

- **Concept of 'permanent' registration done away with; A five-year registration is provided, so that dormant organisations do not continue. All existing registered organisations are deemed to be on five-year validity from now.**
- **Organisations of political nature' cannot receive foreign funds.**
- **A 50% ceiling on administrative expenses has been prescribed.**
- **Procedure for suspension and cancellation of registration has been prescribed.**
- **A statutory role has been provided for the banking sector in regulation of funds.**

**FOUNDATIONS AND OTHER FUNDING BODIES:** Many more International private foundations have been engaging with the voluntary sector and the government during the last decade than in the past; although, consolidated data on their contribution to the total development assistance to India is not available. However, the table below shows the financial outlays of some of the key international private foundations operating out of India.

**Table 2: Total grant amount to India (2010-2011) by key Pvt. International Foundations**

<b>Key private International foundations</b>	<b>Total grant amount to India during the last financial year (2010-2011, in US Dollars)<sup>4</sup></b>
The John D. And Catharine T. MacArthur Foundation	\$ 2.1 Million
Packard Foundation	\$ 28,40,000
Ford Foundation	Between \$ 9 and \$9.5 million
Heinrich Bohl Foundation	Euro 390,0000
Asia Foundation	Just under a million
Aga Khan Foundation	Expenditure for 2010 was Rs. 309.01 million out of which programme expenditure was Rs. 274.80 million
Avahan (an initiative of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation)	\$ 338 million committed up-to 2009. The programme will be transferred to NACO by 2014.

<sup>4</sup> The amounts have been collected through information available on websites, annual reports and other documentation collected from the foundations.

Apart from this constituency, there is a broad group of philanthropic organisations, which are either National level NGOs such as OXFAM India trust; or national philanthropic bodies such as the National Foundation for India, Dalit Foundation; or family run philanthropies such as the Ratan Tata Trust, Narottam Sekhsaria Foundation, Birla Foundation etc.; or those that fall in the category of International NGOs. such as the America India Foundation and Action Aid. These various actors together, provide substantial financial support to non profit organisations. The expenditures incurred by some of these organisations towards programme funds for the period 2010-2011 are given below.

**Table 3: Total grant amount by (2010-2011) by key Pvt. National Foundations**

<b>Key National Private Foundation</b>	<b>Total grant amount in the financial year 2010-11<sup>5</sup></b>
SDTT and Allied trusts	Rs. 310 crores
Ratan Tata Trust	Rs. 96 crores
OXFAM India Trust	Rs. 51.2 crores
National Foundation of India	Rs. 3- 5 crores annually
America India Foundation	Rs. 29.50 crores (\$ 5911871)
Dalit Foundation	Approximately Rs. 4,29,48,000 or 4 .29 crores

It may, however, be noted that philanthropies, which are independent of business houses, family run businesses or religious in nature, are very few in India.

### **GOVERNMENT SPENDING ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

In its last Union Budget, the government of India had increased its allocation for the social sector by 17%. More specifically, allocations for education and health were increased by 24% and 20%, respectively. The government of India provides grants-in-aid for social development activities to NGOs through various line ministries.

### **INDIVIDUAL GIVERS**

Individual givers are one section, which has shown enormous growth in the last 5 years. According to a study on private giving in India (BAIN& COMPANY, 2011), overall annual charitable giving in India, has increased from \$ 2 billion in 2006 to between \$5 and \$6 billion in 2010. The report states that most of this money is from private charitable institutions, while

<sup>5</sup> The amounts have been collected through information available on websites, annual reports and other documentation collected from the foundations.

individual giving stands at about 26% of the total private contributions. The contribution by private givers is focussed primarily on education followed by food/clothing and shelter.

### **CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

The government of India has now made it mandatory for private manufacturing industries in India to set aside 2% of their profits towards corporate social responsibility. However, a recent survey in 2010 by Karmayog, a portal monitoring the non-profit sector, found that while there has been a drop in the number of companies undertaking corporate social responsibility since the last four years, those who have been engaging in serious CSR work, have continued to do so.

**Table 4: Results of the Karmayog CSR Ratings of the 500 largest Indian companies-2010**

<b>Karmayog CSR Rating 2010</b>	<b>No. of cos.</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Level 5 (highest)	0	0 %
Level 4	<b>12*</b>	2 %
Level 3	66	13 %
Level 2	161	32 %
Level 1	148	30 %
Level 0 (lowest)	113	23 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100 %</b>

**\* Companies with a Level 4 rating are:** Ballarpur Industries, HDFC, Infosys Technologies, Jubilant Organosys, Kansai Nerolac, Larsen and Toubro, Mahindra and Mahindra, Moser Baer, Tata Consultancy, Tata Steel, Titan Industries and Wipro.

*The CSR activities of the top 12 companies are focussed largely on providing better health services to children and women, educational opportunities for children and many of them have set up self-help and credit groups with women, or are providing vocational training opportunities (most of this is labeled as empowerment of women). Though, they do not have an explicit transformatory agenda, there is an effort to improve access and reach.*

## **KEY TRENDS IN GRANT MAKING, EMERGING FROM THE ABOVE CONTEXT:**

- Most of the external funding agencies, which consist largely of international private foundations and bilateral agencies, are cutting back on their development assistance to India quite sharply. Their plan is for the government to take over and replicate successful models and practices.
- There is a strong perception that India is an emboldened and strong economy with little requirement for external funding.
- The desire to measure change that is quantifiable is very strong. Donor emphasis on results-based monitoring and evaluation has meant scrunching the pace and process of change, so that NGOs experience tremendous performance pressure to prove change has occurred and occurred only because of their intervention.
- Therefore, process-oriented transformatory programmes are seen as untenable, as it is seen as not demonstrating concrete results. The duration of funding cycles has become much shorter and the emphasis on results is very high.
- Most indigenous foundations (barring a handful) in India, have largely spawned off from private family businesses and industries. Their focus is almost always welfare-oriented and focussed on offering educational services, delivery of health services or livelihood promotion. They are wary of positioning themselves as promoting rights and entitlements. Therefore, most of their work is supplementary to what the state services are meant to provide.

## **DONOR ASSISTANCE TO PROMOTION OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN INDIA**

Promoting women's rights is a political process. It implies challenging power structures at various levels- from personal relationships, family, community and society to demanding state accountability for meeting its obligations enshrined in various laws and the country's constitution. Therefore, this arena of work covers contentious issues, to start with. At the same time, it works within the legal and constitutional framework of the country and hence, does not demand entitlements, which citizens (including women!) have not already been accorded (though not realised) by the state. Rights-based work raises questions of accountability from every such actor who is responsible for protecting and promoting human rights and in the case of women, this covers families, communities and the state. Therefore, by its very nature, a rights based framework not only draws its legitimacy from legally binding obligations of state and non-state actors, but by doing so, also confronts poor governance and traditional and formal structures of authority and dominance (patriarchy, caste, class, ethnicity, governments, etc.).

Quite predictably, this arena of work has greater support among those demanding their rights, such as women and other marginalised groups, than those expected to honour these rights. And because most material and non-material resources are controlled by duty-bearers (those expected to honour the rights of women and other marginalised groups), mobilising such reserves is becoming increasingly difficult. Hence, raising resources to work on promoting women's human rights, is a key challenge faced by several gender groups and organisations.

**RESOURCES TO WORK ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN INDIA ARE DECLINING:** Leading activists, researchers and feminist scholars, working on women's rights in South Asia, are of the view that undoubtedly, resources for women's rights work are on the wane. One of the obvious reasons is the withdrawal of funds by progressive donors, such as the Scandinavians, as well as, the re-positioning of portfolios by several donors. The MacArthur foundation, for example, had a pronounced focus on women's rights during the initial period of their grant making, but post ICPD and the BPA, they have focussed their attention much more on maternal health and sexual & reproductive health outcomes. This is, not to say, that they no longer support women's rights work, but it is embedded within a sectoral focus on women's health.

According to **Srilata Batliwala**, a leading feminist scholar, along with the withdrawal of funding agencies, the political climate in the countries of Europe is also changing, with more conservative governments coming to power and proposing large cuts in their development assistance. The HIVOS annual report of 2010-2011, for instance, notes that:

*"The understanding that change is a slow process, is not always reflected in development co-operation policy. Fortunately, the Rutte administration in the Netherlands is sticking to the norm of 0.7 percent of GDP for development cooperation. Unfortunately, there is no ministerial portfolio for this area of policy. The Dutch Minister for development cooperation, Knapen, embraces the thorough report submitted by the Dutch Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR), albeit selectively. The number of partner countries has been reduced, albeit not always with clear motivation. Although the Secretary of State's focus on guaranteeing world-wide 'public goods' within a public policy is laudable, it is mainly motivated by Dutch self-interest. The importance the cabinet attaches to Human Rights as a guiding principle, is also questionable; and despite the cabinet's focus on decisiveness and an aversion to excessive "rules and regulations" the bureaucracy in the new subsidy system remains high....Development cooperation has also been hard hit by government spending cuts. This means that the HIVOS Alliance now, has one-third less of the MFS funds for the period 2011-2015. As a result, we will have to make cutbacks in our programmes.... we will go ahead with all the programmes described in the application, but with scaled down objectives."*

Echoing these trends, **Gitanjali Misra**, who has worn the hat of a donor (as programme officer

at Ford Foundation), as well as, a grantee (she has founded a feminist organisation- CREA and is its current Executive Director) notes, *“From the time I was a donor to the time I set up CREA and till now, funds have massively shrunk. Women's rights work has become the domain of small donors..... What remains mostly now, is a narrow definition of women's rights by new donors, either as meaning only violence against women or HIV or trafficking etc. Human rights donors are spread thin and women's rights becomes a small piece of the work within this larger work on human rights. It's a huge struggle to look for funds. **The coherence among donors to invest on women's rights in Asia, is not there.**”*

**GOVERNMENT SPENDING ON PROGRAMMES FOR WOMEN IS NOT SHOWING AN APPRECIABLE INCREASE:** According to the 2010-2011 annual report of the Ministry of Women and Child Welfare, Rs. 230.35 crores were spent on schemes for women's development by the central government and an additional Rs.510 crores were spent on schemes sponsored by the central government and implemented by state governments. The Ministry of Women and Child Development also provides grants-in-aid to NGOs for various schemes related to women, such as setting up of short-stay homes, working women's hostels, self-help groups, income generation activities, initiating credit groups, etc. Two new schemes launched by the ministry in 2009, pertain to a nutrition programme for adolescent girls, a programme for prevention of trafficking (*Ujwala*) and another programme for compensation and service provision for rape victims. Through one of its arms called the Central Social Welfare Board, the department also supports NGOs to run family counselling centres for women in distress.

In her analysis of the union budget 2010-2011 from a gender lens, Dr. Vibhuti Patel (Nivedini-Journal of gender studies, Nov-Dec 2010) points out that while certain measures, such as an increased outlay of Rs. 2446 crores over last year's budget and the focus on nutritional supplements for adolescent girls are encouraging. The cutbacks on the budget for the National Commission for Women (from Rs. 9.06 crores to Rs. 7.75 crores) and lack of adequate outlays for working women's hostels (has been raised marginally by Rs. 5 crores only) and the reduction in the credit advancing schemes of the government (*the Ratshtriya Mahila Kosh's* budget has been reduced from Rs. 20 crores to Rs. 15 crores) are being viewed as set backs. Similarly, the scheme for relief and compensation to victims of rape saw a cutback of Rs. 16.9 crores. The union budget analysis in 2011 by the Centre for Budget Analysis and Governance, has pointed out several drawbacks in terms of promises made and their actual delivery. Key ones include:

- In 2010, while the government announced a very significant step in the form of a special scheme for women engaged in agriculture (called the *Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana*) and also allocated Rs. 100 crores for this scheme, there was

no reporting on its implementation and status in the budget of 2011-2012, raising doubts about whether such a scheme had at all been launched in reality.

- The National Mission for empowerment of Women and the *Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog yojana* (maternity benefits to women), have shown zero utilisation.
- Similarly, the nutrition scheme for adolescent girls launched in 2010-2011, showed an expenditure of only 12.4%.

The situation is the same in the case of schemes aimed at women and girls from marginalised communities. The table below quoted by the CBGA in their reports, shows dismal levels of expenditures on schemes and programmes meant for women.

**Table 5**

Scheme	00-11 BE (in Rs. Crore)	Actual Expenditure (Upto 15/1/2011 in Rs. Crore)	Percentage of expenditure over BE
Conditional Cash Transfer Scheme for the Girl Child with Insurance Cover	0	.46	14.5
Hostel for working women	5	8	8.67
STEP	5	79	15
Rashtriya Mahila Kosh	15	0	0
Swayamsidha	5	0	0
Scheme for rescue victims of trafficking	0	.26	2.5
Gender Budgeting	2	3	6.38
Swadhar	.2	24.62	.04
Relief to and rehabilitation of rape victims	0	0	0
Priyadarshini	9.79	5.88	173
Conditional Maternity Benefit scheme	390	0	0

*Source: Summary Statement of Expenditure, Ministry of Women and Child Development. Available at [www.wcd.nic.in](http://www.wcd.nic.in)*

**VERY FEW DONOR AGENCIES ADMIT TO AN EXPLICIT FOCUS ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS-**  
Action aid, OXFAM India Trust, The Dalit Foundation and the Heinrich Boell Foundation are

among the few donors, who acknowledge that gender justice and women's rights are among their key programmes and strategic thrust areas.

Many times, donors promoting women's access to justice, do not like to position their work as women's rights-oriented. As one of the newer foundations explained, *"We would not like to label our work (with women) as rights-based, but we are committed to good, accountable governance structures, that ensure the people have access to their rights and in that way rights based work is a part of the idea of good governance"*. This foundation chooses to position its work with women and justice, as falling in the realm of women's security. Yet another donor agency, which has a strong focus on public health, was categorical that it was committed to reducing disease and improving well being, and if women happened to be the most at risk, their efforts would focus on women. However, as a foundation, they did not focus on women as a special category, nor did they have a gender focus.

**Among Bilateral donors, DFID and USAID have committed a substantial part of their resources to women's rights through their support for activities to reduce VAW-** DFID through the International NGO Partnership Programme (IPAP) and USAID through support for scaling up counselling services for women in distress; supporting the start up of a lobbying and advocacy body called Women power connect and through a proposed public education campaign targeting Muslim women and men. However, these initiatives are small, compared to the resources being invested on increasing girls' enrolment in schools, promoting safe deliveries, providing vocational training etc. IPAP has a budget of 20 million GBP spread across 7 INGOs over 5 years and covers issues, such as disability, exclusion of tribals and adivasis, as well as, violence against women. It is also noteworthy that DFID's development assistance to India, has taken place in the face of heated debates in the British parliament, about the usefulness of supporting a country, which can fund its own space programme. DFID is walking "the last mile" with India, before exploring other ways of building partnerships after 2015.

The European Commission's country strategy paper 2007-2013 speaks highly of the role played by civil society in delivering effective people-centric programmes and the continued commitment of the EC to gender mainstreaming and gender as a cross cutting theme. However, the strategic focus of the EC is on poverty reduction and to this end its key financial commitments in the social sector are clearly earmarked for Education (by contributing to the sarva shiksha abhiyan) and health (through the National Rural Health Mission). AUSAID in India, had committed \$ 25 Million in 2011-2012 and is phasing out of India. Its areas of development cooperation with India include climate change initiatives, Public Sector Linkages programme, HIV/AIDS interventions in the North-East and water and sanitation programmes. SIDA is also in the process of phasing out its bilateral development cooperation

from India and is currently supporting a project on strengthening policy and programme for sexual and reproductive rights of young people, slated to end in 2012.

#### **SUMMARY:**

- What is emerging clearly, is a trend, where international development assistance for women's rights work, whether it is through private foundations or foreign governments, is declining sharply.
- The donor scan suggests that areas targeting women that are receiving funds, include savings and micro-credit programmes; self-help group activities; HIV/AIDS; reproductive and sexual health and education of girls.
- India is being perceived as a nation with sufficient resources to finance its own development agenda, including women's development. However, India's economic growth has been highly uneven, with some states (e.g. Bihar, Jharkhand, UP etc.) lagging behind significantly on poverty and gender indices, than other states. Therefore, this perception is not entirely accurate. The Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative's study on poverty in India, using a Multi-Dimensional Poverty index showed that 53.7% of Indians are living in poverty, of whom 28% are living in severe poverty and 16.4% are vulnerable to poverty. By contrast, India reportedly has 57 billionaires and a rapidly expanding base of high net worth individuals (those having assets over a million US dollars).
- Most donors are expecting the government to pitch in and take over the projects and programmes they have been supporting hitherto. However, the government's readiness and preparedness to take over is shaky, due to lack of concerted political will to bring social change and rampant corruption. NGOs and civil society organisations are also having to operate in a policy environment which is pandering to market needs, views the watch dog role of NGOs suspiciously and is making laws and rules stricter to supposedly monitor the voluntary sector.
- On the other hand, the domestic philanthropy sector is growing very rapidly, as India seems to have a growing population of "high net worth individuals" or persons with assets worth more than a million (World Wealth Report 2010, Capgemini and Merrill Lynch, quoted in study on Indian Philanthropy by BAIN and COMPANY 2011). However, this sector is not necessarily oriented to the human rights framework and therefore, more inclined to support more welfare oriented activities and programmes.

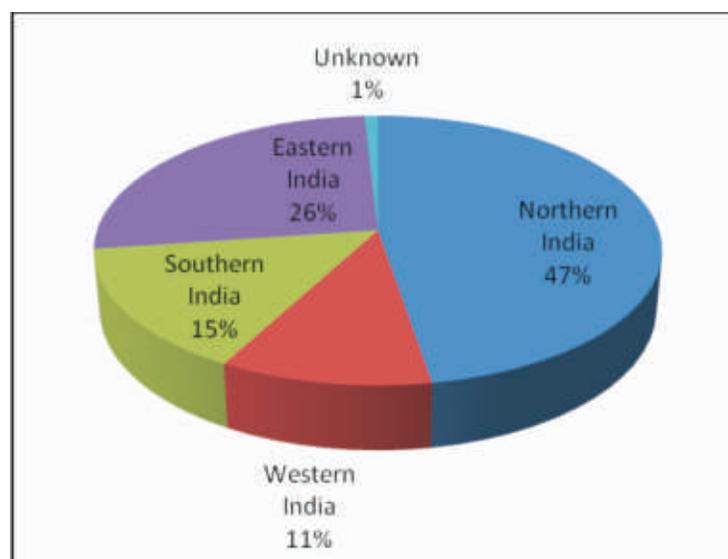
#### 4. KEY FINDINGS – *Insights from NGOs and civil society groups*

The resource mapping process has included inputs and insights on fund raising by a large number of voluntary organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Civil Society Groups and Research agencies. The study reached out to 147 organisations, of which 114 were included for analysis.

##### COVERAGE

The figure below shows that while all four geographical regions of the country were covered, the sample of organisations from the North was more.

**Figure 1: Showing Geographical Distribution of Non- profit organisations which responded to the donor mapping survey**



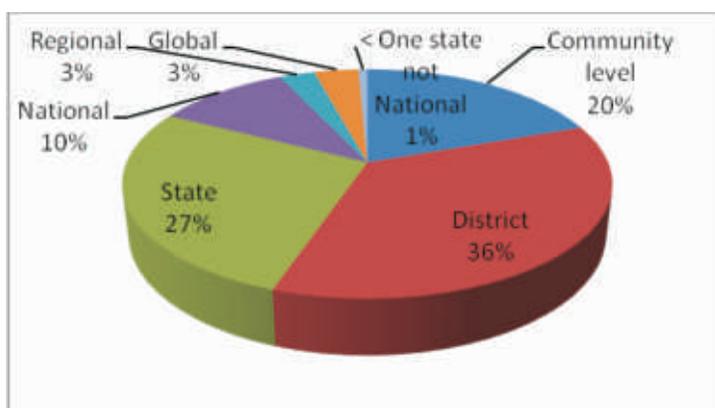
##### PROFILE OF ORGANISATIONS COVERED

Figure 2 shows that the non-profits covered by the study consist largely of medium and small organisations. A majority of them (55.3%) have reported that their areas of operation covered the immediate community and the district. Only 10 % have reported working at a national level. However, in terms of their budgetary allocations, 30.7% respondent agencies have reported budgets of over Rs. 51 lakhs for the last year, which points to fairly large organisational operations. Approximately 18.4% have an annual budget of between Rs. 26 lakhs to Rs. 50 lakhs.

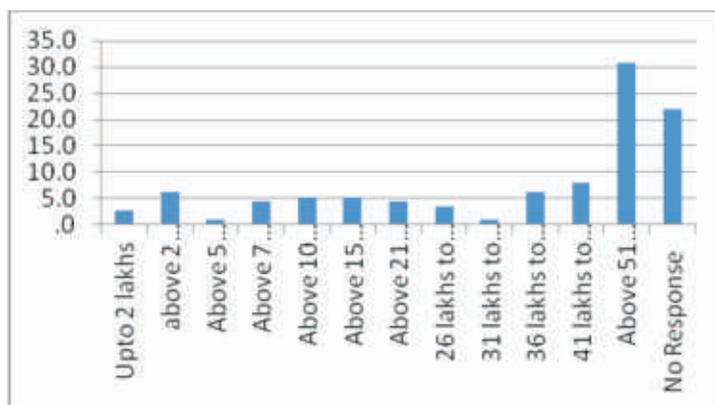
Interestingly, 40.3% of organisations are spending over 50% of their budgets on programmes

and activities focussed on women, whereas 19.3% are spending less than 50% of their budgets for programmes on women. Among the 40% which are spending more than 50% of their budgets on women's programmes, a majority of them have budgets of over 36 lakhs per annum, that is, these are moderate sized to larger organisations. Many of these organisations (organisations such as SAMA, AWAG, CREA etc.) are forerunners in the women's rights arena and while their life span may be very varied, one common factor is their strong feminist perspective that informs all of their programme work. Organisations with budgets less than 36 lakhs per annum, have reported spending far lesser money for women's programmes.

**Figure 2: Showing operational areas of respondent agencies**



**Figure 3: Showing annual budget of respondent agencies**



The organisations covered by the study were classified into five categories, based on their approach, activities, their reporting of changes they felt were most significant, and their stated aims and objectives. The organisations were then classified into:

- A. Those working with an explicitly Rights-based approach, i.e. an approach which emphasises equal rights for all human beings, participation of affected populations,

accountability of duty bearers and empowerment of marginalised communities.

- B.** Those working with explicit human rights based approach, along with a strong focus on gender equality, i.e. an approach which emphasises all of the above, along with a clear articulation of feminist principles, such as a critique of unequal power relations, analysing gender inequality and protecting and promoting women's rights and issues.
- C.** Those whose approach is rights-based, but do not choose to articulate it in that way; that is in their work and praxis, they adopt rights-based approach, with an emphasis on empowerment, entitlements and participation of the communities they work with.
- D.** Those organisations, which have some level of understanding on the approach and at best, promote access of affected populations to their entitlements but beyond this the RBA is not clearly visible in their work.
- E.** Those who have welfare oriented approach focussing on offering services but not on rights or empowerment.

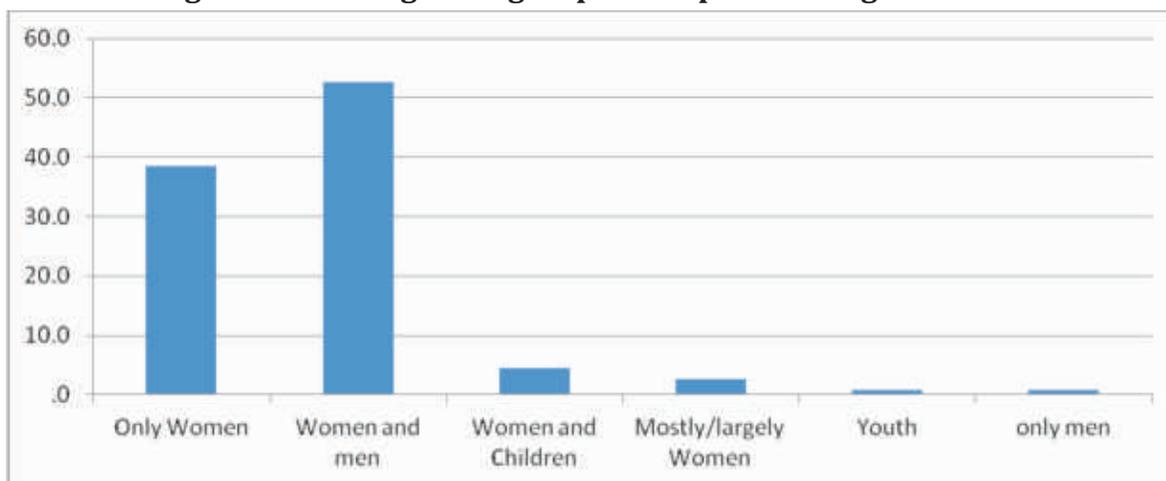
The classification showed that 78% of organisations covered by the study seem to adopt a human rights approach in their work. Those adopting a explicit human rights approach are somewhat lesser in proportion, than those adopting a strong gender equality focus along with a rights-based approach (14% and 28.9%, respectively). However, those organisations which do not claim to be following a human rights approach, but do have strong elements of it, form the largest proportion, that is, 36%. This shows, that overall the sample of organisations covered by the study consisted largely of agencies which are using a rights approach, albeit in different ways.

**Table 6: Showing the extent to which the human rights approach is reflected in the respondent organisations strategy and outcomes**

APPROACH	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Explicitly rights-based	16	14.0
Explicitly rights-based with strong focus on gender equality	33	28.9
Strongly rights-based	41	36.0
Some elements of RBA	23	20.2
Not clear/ Welfare-oriented	1	0.9
Total	114	100

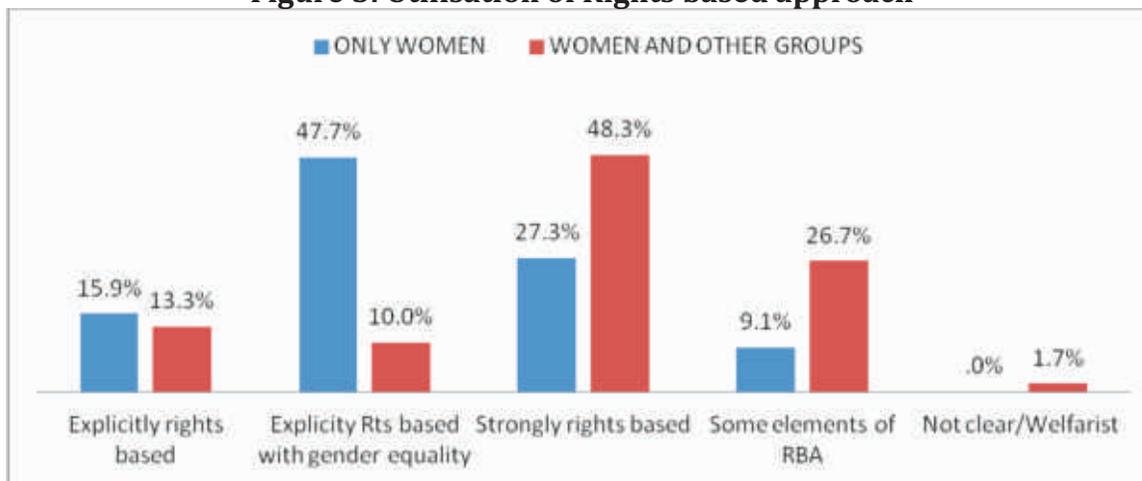
Based on activities, objectives and strategy, the focus of each organisation was also classified as being only women-focused or focussing on men, women, children, youth, etc. These results (Figure 4) show that a majority of organisations work with a focus on women, men and communities (52.6%); followed by those with women as the focus (38.6%).

**Figure 4: Showing focus groups of respondent organisations**



Among those organisations working only with women, a much larger proportion are adopting an explicit human rights framework than other organisations. Even though, the proportion of agencies working with men, women and children is the largest (52.6%), their approach may be termed as strongly rights-based, but they are not as explicit in using this approach, either in their strategy or in the kinds of activities they are engaged in. Figure 5 below highlights this trend. This shows us that the use of rights-based programming within the sample is highest among groups working with a strong focus on women, as compared to those working with other groups as well.

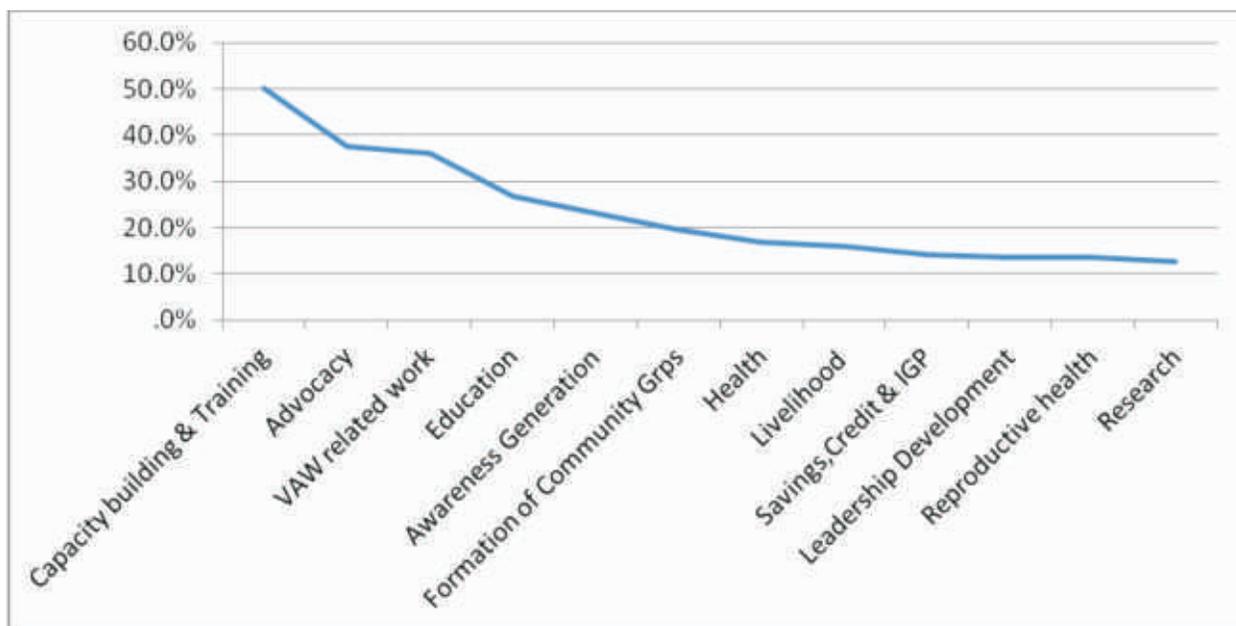
**Figure 5: Utilisation of Rights based approach**



## TRENDS WITH REGARD TO PROGRAMME AREAS

Shown below are the most common set of programme activities being implemented by the study respondent NGOs. Close to 50% of organisations are engaged in capacity building and training, followed by advocacy and VAW related work (counselling, legal aid, case work, psycho social rehabilitation etc.). General health and reproductive health together, form another major area of work, as does the work on women and economic growth, where livelihoods and savings, credit and income generation programmes taken, are being implemented by 34% of the organisations. However, only 21% of the organisations have reported work around community mobilisation and formation of community groups. Only 8.9% of NGOs have reported running services, such as shelter homes and short stay homes for women, whereas this is an area that needs urgent attention.

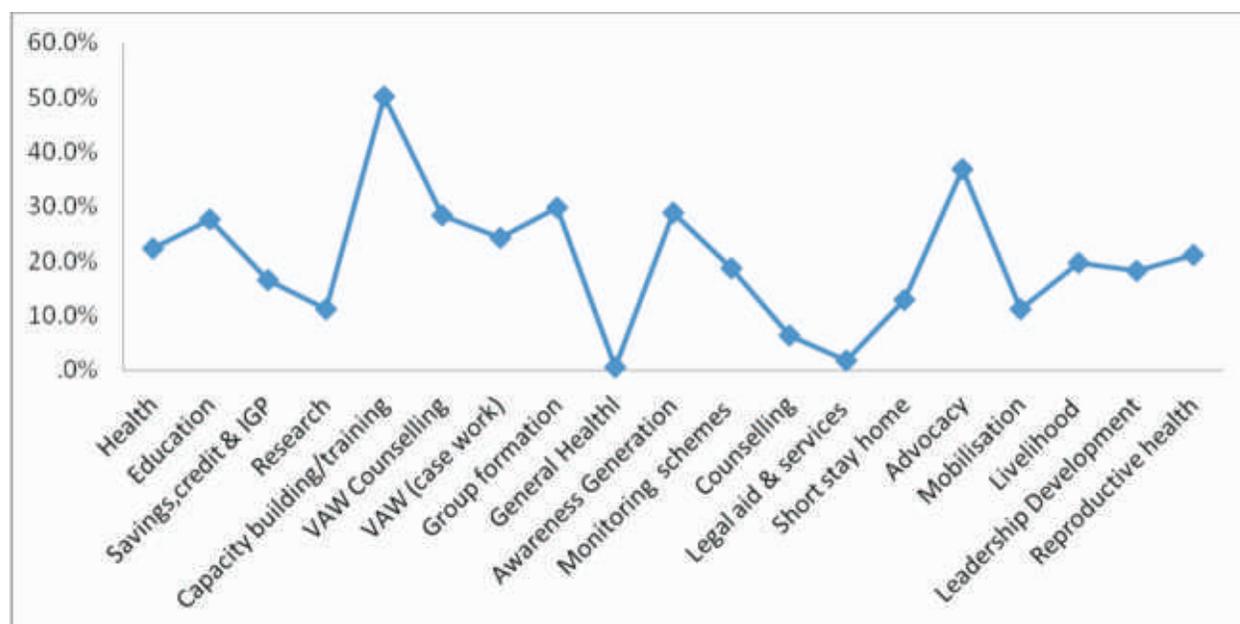
**Figure 6: Showing the most commonly reported areas of work by NGOs**



## WOMEN AS DIRECT TARGET GROUPS

Among the organisations surveyed, women form a large bulk of the direct beneficiary group (40%), followed by communities (11.4%) and men (7.2%). However, the figure below highlights which programme areas have what proportion of women as direct beneficiaries.

**Figure 7: Showing distribution of women as direct beneficiaries within different programme sectors**



If we look *within* the category of women, the programme areas for which women are being covered in largest proportions as direct programme beneficiaries, include Capacity building, Advocacy, Violence against women related work, Education, Group Formation, Awareness generation etc. According to several of our key informants, Violence against Women is one issue, on which donor support is more readily forthcoming. One of them has shared, “What remains mostly now is a narrowing definition of women's rights by new donors, either as VAW or HIV, trafficking etc.”

Interestingly, areas where women form a smaller proportion of direct beneficiaries include mobilisation, programmes on general health (as compared to reproductive health) and services for violence against women. It may be noted that mass mobilisation work in general is on the wane in the development sector with the focus being much more on advocacy, alliance building and project-based outcomes. While the data shows that awareness generation is happening in a larger proportion with women, the reality is that most of this kind of work is geared around specific project-focussed results. Process oriented empowerment programmes, where awareness generation is not driven by project outcomes, but more by the organic needs and pace of the programme, are very rare. This is partly driven by donor comfort, with quantifiable evidence and the trend to support shorter project cycles.

A women's rights expert from the regions has observed, that open-ended, process-oriented

programmes on women's rights, with a liberal dose of awareness generation, that flows organically from the issues women would like to address, would find no takers among the donor community today. This was the case 15-20 years ago, where donors were willing to allow time for change processes to unfold at the pace women were comfortable.

While formation of community groups has a higher proportion of women as direct beneficiaries (29.8%), this really amounts to formation of Self Help Groups (SHGs) that may not necessarily focus on a transformative agenda. In fact, one of the Key Informants, who has researched extensively on the SHG model, has shared its many pitfalls. Many times, SHGs work around only borrowing and lending money and do not necessarily deal with more strategic needs of women. She says, "The European (donors) definitely did not want to talk about SHGs, as they realised quite early on what the malfunctionings were, and that it was hugely dependant on the capital market. The SHG movement has paved the way for micro finance companies to step in and offer loans to the poor, which are actually at very high rates of interest. Bad debts push the poor into greater poverty and impoverishment. Human Rights groups point out that while micro credit is being positioned within a rights framework, it is supported to improve people's purchasing power in the short run "so that money can come back to the market for their products".

Agriculture, Natural Resource Management, Political Participation and building of networks are other areas, where women are being targeted as direct beneficiaries in very small proportions (between 1%- 8%). These are also areas on which donor attention has been very varied over the years. As one of our key informants has shared, "Trends in funding on women's rights, have followed the flavour of the month kind of pattern. In the late 80s and early 90s, training of women panchayat members was the big thing. Then, came the wave of women and HIV/AIDS. The nature of NGOs is also changing. While they have become more organised in their approach, the open spaces to reflect and develop a flexible agenda is gone. Most organisations have managed to push in women's rights work into their existing programmes, such as the work on governance or health."

***All Key informant interviews resonate on the following key trends about funds for promoting women's rights:***

1. The quantity and quality of funding for promoting women's rights has undergone significant changes over the last decade. While the quantum of funds have definitely declined, the quality of funding is also being driven by neo-liberal economic forces, which are being promoted by more conservative political regimes.
2. India's profile as a strong South Asian economy has led to stances both, on the part of its

own government, as well as, on the part of governments of other countries, that it is not in urgent need of donor assistance for social development.

3. At the same time, with the withdrawal of more flexible, progressive European donors from India, the culture of long-term funding is declining rapidly. This has meant project based funding with short timelines.
4. There is a growing degree of corporatisation in the development sector. There is impatience with process oriented approaches and donors have become more results oriented. Being results oriented is driven in large part, by a desire for greater accountability, which is a very laudable objective. However, securing results on women's rights is an incremental process, where the "tipping point" happens as a consequence of several changes. A process oriented approach means being watchful and appreciative of these incremental steps; it also means being realistic about changes.
5. Part of the corporatisation has also meant a change in the donor – grantee relationship, which is more deliverable oriented, than it was before. According to a senior activist from the women's movement, "One of the things that have changed significantly over the last decade, is the nature of relationship between the grantees and the donor. Earlier the programme officers placed in-charge of the grantee were more engaged; there was greater trust and a sense of involvement; they would put groups in touch with each other and play a very supportive role. Nowadays, they seem to be of the kind who ticks against activities done and deliverables achieved. The relationship is more deliverable driven."
6. On the flip side, the areas related to women, where more donors have stepped in include sexuality, sexual health and women and AIDS.

***Funding constraints from the point of view of NGOs, Voluntary Agencies and Women's Rights Groups:*** In the follow-up interviews key issues related to funding constraints raised by most grant-seeking organisations were:

- A. The shrinking spaces for working on women's rights and human rights, while calling it so. This is particularly striking in groups working in, what are considered sensitive parts of the country. For example, one group working in one such area, has shared how they had been summoned for several rounds of negotiations with state agencies, because their proposal mentioned working on CEDAW and concluding observations in the UN. When this group approached a national level funding agency, they were asked to remove the word CEDAW and finally their proposal was not approved.

- B. The absence of long-term support has hit not just process oriented programmes and projects, but has also meant lack of resources to develop organisational capacities.
- C. In the same vein, donors would rather place their resources in large agencies. The reasoning behind this is linked to accountability and efficiency, but such a context excludes small budget organisations, who are finding it very challenging to continue their work.

### **FUNDRAISING CHALLENGES:**

Voluntary agencies working on women's rights find fund raising for organisational functioning, sustainability and growth to be the most difficult. Findings from the phase I survey reveal that the issues for which funding is most difficult to obtain are Infrastructure (38.59%); Salaries (35.96%); VAW (35.08%); Capacity building of Women's Groups (34.21%); Equipment (29.82%); Administrative costs (28.07%) and Honorariums (27.19%). This highlights that the most difficult issues mentioned by the respondents, pertain to the physical sustenance and viability of organisations. Among the overhead costs mentioned most often by the respondents, infrastructure and salaries are the top two. Several groups said that paying competitive salaries and honorarium is becoming increasingly difficult as donors insist that most of the funding be spent directly on project beneficiaries. In such situation, the organisations have to opt for more part-time staff and consultants.

Among thematic issues, VAW, gender justice, livelihoods and seeking support services for survivors of VAW, have been named most frequently. When asked for specific reasons, as to why it was difficult to seek funds for these issues, the responses ranged from lack of donor interest on the issue, administrative drawbacks, inability to write good proposals to simply lack of knowledge about which donors can be approached for raising funds.

Rights of women from the minority community is another critical area, where there is a huge lacuna of funds. For example, donor presence in Gujarat has dwindled seriously due to better development indices. But these are not even and the development status of Muslim women in the state remains far below their other counterparts. In such a context, rights of Muslim women has not received any programmatic focus by any of the relevant stakeholders- the state, funding agencies and even gender and development groups working in the state.

**REASONS FOR DIFFICULTIES IN FUND-RAISING:** The table below highlights the top 11 reasons given by respondent NGOs, as to why it has been difficult to seek funding.

**Table 7: Showing range of reasons on why raising funds for specific issues is difficult**

Reasons seeking Funds is difficult	Percentage of NGO respondents
Proposal writing stage/inability to write a convincing proposal	79.6%
Issue is not recognised as important	75.7%
Reason not clear only issue has been mentioned by respondent	68.9%
Inability to reach out to donors	63.1%
Limited funds	58.3%
Funds are shrinking	41.7%
No funds	35.0%
Funds unavailable for small organisations	22.3%
Difficult to establish/explain links with other components	21.4%
No specific reason given by funder	18.4%
Require too much evidence/ pressure to produce results/organisation needs to have recommendations	16.5%

The reasons offered by the respondent NGOs can be categorised into those which are related to the quantum of funding available; quality of funds available: drawbacks and shortcomings at the end of the NGOs themselves and those which are related to the policies and functioning of the National Government.

It may however, be noted that the constraints vary, based on whether the organisation is small, medium or large (based on their annual budgets and work coverage). The survey results suggest, that for small organisations, the inability to write winning proposals and project their work adequately, are the most common constraints. 16% of such organisations have also reported that they are unable to reach out to donors, due to physical proximity and articulate their work lucidly. Such groups have shared how the skills for writing proposals and concept notes challenge them, whereas, their work on the ground is very effective. This is a pain area for medium-sized organisations also, which have also spoken of the relevance of networks in fund raising.

Among medium and larger organisations, the shrinking pool of funds and lack of resources to focus on issues of interest to them, are also larger concerns. For example, a large organisation from UP has shared, *“Now we see that funds are available on issues like water sanitation etc. but funds on women issues have deteriorated.....As we work at grassroots level, we touch many issues/matters which we come across, like at present we are working on water availability and*

*water sanitation; and funds are easily available on this. But our focus work i.e. women's issues that has been left aside."*

At the same time, inability to raise adequate funds for meeting overhead costs is an area of deep concern for medium and large organisations (mentioned by 81% and 71% of respondents respectively, from this category). Funding for long-term projects is a key constraint mentioned by many groups working on human and women's rights. At the same time, many small organisations working at the district and block level are challenged in using the internet and submitting proposals online. In this context, several key informants, who have grown their own organisations painstakingly or led large programmes for women, have pointed out that a mentoring role where the 'nuts and bolts' of organisational management can be nurtured among small women's groups, federations and collectives, can really strengthen their visibility and outreach to the donor community.

**Many grant seekers also contend that not only grant making has reduced and become more short-term, but also that the donor community's perspective on what constitutes rights based work needs re-examination.**

The demand for greater accountability from NGOs has meant a greater focus on monitoring and evaluation. Rigorous measurement is definitely desirable, especially for learning, planning and assessing the impact of one's work. However, this is also another area where grant-seekers are struggling due to limited capacities, multiple field demands and donor requirements. An NGO staff member from Orissa has stated,

*"Though we are also learning to be more systematic in monitoring, reporting and documentation but it also overloaded us with lots of paper work, affects our field work, especially, when we have small teams. At times agencies are bit suspicious/stricter, but then we Indian NGOs are to be blamed, many have not used the funds in right manner/misused funds."*

At the same time, many women's rights activities and NGOs have also shared that greater flexibility in measuring impact and outcomes is also needed.

Many of organisations also shared that concepts such as empowerment take time to measure, because they are incremental changes in attitudes, beliefs and actions. However, the constraints mentioned by all of them have two sides. **The inability of donor agencies to appreciate process oriented change is one side of the story, but the other side is also the inability of implementing agencies in presenting the impact in a compelling way.** The insight provided by one of the key informants in this context, is particularly significant. She shares that,

*"To say that such (empowerment) programmes take time to show results and are slow, is not at*

*all true. When you start an empowerment process, you are challenging structures which have oppressed women for centuries, and within a matter of a few years women have started turning those structures around and are making changes-- very fundamental ones at that – how can we ever say empowerment is a slow process? The best way to beat this argument is to make it stand on its head and question the assumptions on which it is based. We need a new terminology and a new way of articulating this change.”* This is an extremely significant point and also highlights the need to engage with measurement processes that can satisfy a range of stakeholders.

**Another trend worth taking note of in India and in the region is that of working with men and boys to address women's rights, prominently in reducing violence against women.** This trend has gained much currency in the last decade. Its roots lie in the work on male involvement for better reproductive health outcomes for women and the rising focus on men in reducing transmission of HIV/AIDS.

While there is little debate that this is a much needed area of intervention, male involvement in promoting women's rights is viewed with a mixture of unease and uncertainty among the key informants consulted in the scan. To begin with, it is a nascent area of work, which has largely taken the form of pilot projects, trainings and small scale innovations. Secondly, in India there are few compelling examples, where working with men has produced significantly impressive gains for women's rights. **What emerged clearly from the key informant interviews is that working with men and boys could be one of the many alternatives to promote women's rights, but cannot and should not happen at the cost of investing on women's rights.**

As of now, the move towards working with men does not seem to have begun, impacting resource allocations for women as such. However, what human rights activists recognise is the need to build strategic linkages with groups focussing on men and boys, without diluting the political agenda of women's rights.

During the course of the study, we also came across some innovative models of rights-based work, which are highly localised, but extremely effective in realising women's rights. These groups work at the block level largely, and represent a note-worthy face of women's rights work.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

Funding patterns the world over are being driven by geo-political considerations and market driven models than ever before. This has impacted funding considerations in India also. For example, the growing focus in India on micro-finance and credit services for women is ultimately geared towards improving markets for consumer goods and services.

Overall, in India, the availability of grants for development assistance and specifically for women's rights presents a mixed picture. On the one hand, bilateral assistance, as also funding from International private foundations is declining. On the other, Indian philanthropy, particularly from individual givers and corporate bodies is on the rise. But the funds from this sector are largely being spent on welfare based activities and services.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is mandated by the government of India for all private companies. However, the proportion of those contributing to CSR, is low, compared to the overall profits being posted by the companies.

India's positioning as a rising economic super power in South Asia is making foreign funders hesitate from offering development assistance. In fact, India is providing development assistance to South Asian countries, such as Bhutan and in Africa. Foreign government led donors such as DFID and AusAID, as well as, private Foundations such as the AIDS programme (AVAHAN) of the Gates Foundation, are in a withdrawal mode. Many of these donors are expecting the government to pitch in and take over the projects and programmes they have been supporting, hitherto. However, the government's readiness and preparedness to take over is shaky, due to lack of concerted political will to bring social change and rampant corruption.

Spending by the Indian Government on the social sector has been uneven and large sums of money allocated for women remain unspent. Many schemes and programmes launched by the government have not been implemented and remain on paper.

NGOs and civil society organisations are also operating within a rather hostile policy environment. The state is very suspicious of NGOs and is making laws and rules stricter to supposedly monitor the voluntary sector. Among many current amendments to the Foreign Contribution Regulations Act (FCRA) is one which requires every organisation no matter how large or small, to hold an FCRA registration, which is offered only for 5 years and has to be renewed. Very recently, the government cracked down on NGOs protesting against a Nuclear Power station, on grounds of misusing foreign funds and even cancelled the licenses of a couple of protesting agencies.

Quality of funding has also undergone a large shift over the last decade, wherein awareness generation and social mobilisation have taken a back seat to project based funding on issues such as HIV/AIDS, micro-credit, girls education etc.

The conscious use of a rights-based approach is higher among groups and organisations working with an exclusive focus on women, than those working with other target groups as well.

Issues on which the voluntary sector is finding it most difficult to raise funds, include overhead costs, such as infrastructure and salaries, service provision for women in situations of violence, Capacity building of women's groups and livelihood. The key reasons for difficulties centre around the organisations own inability to write convincing proposals, lack of focus on these issues by the donor, shrinking funds and limited reach of voluntary agencies.

The voluntary sector and key informants have shared a common view that finding long-term funds for women's rights programmes is very difficult. Whereas, transformational programmes which seek to empower communities and make women capable of demanding and realising their rights need a time line of at least 3-5 years of sustained inputs, before they can show results on scale. However, there is donor impatience with such models, which are perceived as too slow.

In the same vein, measurement of change is another area, where implementing organisations feel challenged. They are of the view that donor agencies overlook qualitative process oriented change, which defies quantification. Their concern is largely with numbers and deliverables. On the flip side, some of them also acknowledge that monitoring procedures instituted by donors does help them in becoming more streamlined and organised.

Donor-grantee relations are another area, where grant seeing organisations would look for a greater degree of engagement with the cause and issue; a closer partnership. Currently, most of the grantee management is done by staff members, who are very well qualified, but do not necessarily appreciate ground realities, as they have very little field experience.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

In the current scenario, where most of the progressive bilateral agencies have left India and most of the foreign government funding is drying up soon, Indian Philanthropists are emerging as a significant source of funding. It is necessary to devise ways of accessing this sector for promoting women's rights work in India. This sector consists of a range of actors- Family Foundations, Foundations set up by companies, Corporate Social Responsibility divisions of companies and Individual givers. Each of these constituencies would require a specific approach and way of framing the issue, without diluting the political edge of working on women's rights. In fact, devising ways of doing this could be a worthwhile process.

Small NGOs and agencies within the voluntary sector, require capacity building on aspects of organisation building such as proposal writing, budget preparation, financial management, human resource development, monitoring, evaluation and documentation. Among these proposal writing and M&E are key aspects, which require urgent strengthening. Donor agencies can take an active role in fostering these skills, through in-house training for their own grantees or actively promoting attendance.

Smaller organisations often lose out on fund-raising opportunities due to many reasons- sometimes they are located in remote areas, lack awareness, lack access to internet etc. A fund raising hub or Indian list serve that makes such information available on a periodic basis, could be one mechanism to channelise information on funding on a regular basis. Coordinated fund raising by collectives of similar minded agencies and NGOs or consortium-based fund raising could be one way of building greater negotiation space with funding agencies.

Fund raising and grant making are inter-dependent processes. In this context, it is an opportune time to set up forums, where donor agencies and the voluntary sector/ grant seekers can dialogue periodically to identify areas of greater coordination and cooperation. Such forums can also become joint platforms for assessing change and effectiveness of funding.

The discourse on measurement of change needs to engage closely with women's rights and broader social movements to make monitoring and evaluation more grounded and reflexive. Currently M&E is seen as an unnecessary evil, divorced from reality by implementing agencies whereas, the donor community sees this wariness as a resistance to accountability. The truth lies somewhere in between and there is an urgent need for more innovative, flexible yet rigorous methods to measure change. At the same time, donors also need to allocate sufficient funds and budgets for effective M&E, which can become a part of the ongoing planning process of implementing agencies.

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## ANNEXURE 1

KEY INFORMANTS (PHASE I & II)	
Kamla Bhasin: Leading women's rights Activist	Dr. Nandita Gandhi: Leading Feminist Scholar
Vimala Ramachandran: Leading women's rights Activist and researcher	Soma Parthasarathy: Livelihood and Land rights
Srilata Batliwala: Leading feminist scholar	Dr. Ranjani Murthy: Academic and women's rights activist
Suneeta Dhar: Mobilisation, human rights for women, policy advocacy	Dr. Revathi Narayanan: Gender and Policy analyst
Pramada Menon: Sexuality and Sexual Rights, capacity building	Jasodhra Dasgupta: Health and women's rights
Geetanjali Misra: Sexuality and Sexual Rights, Capacity building	Kalpna Sharma: Journalist
Bishakha Datta: Feminist Media advocacy and women's rights	Sophia Khan: Lawyer and minority women's rights activist
Dipta Bhog: Educations and women's rights; knowledge and resource building	Madhavi Kukreja, VAW, rural women's rights, mobilisation

## ANNEXURE 2

### *Donors Interviewed in Phase II:*

Action Aid India

American India Foundation

Dalit Foundation

Ford Foundation

National Foundation for India

UU Holdeen India Programme

Oxfam India

### ANNEXURE 3

In order to ensure parity and consistency in analysis of qualitative data, common definitions and sets of parameters were developed – for instance, while analysing the approaches being undertaken by the groups, the following definitions were referred to by all the researchers:

**Category 1:** *Explicitly rights based (with principles of equality, including gender equality):* it brings together gender, participation, and empowerment into a coherent framework, which is rooted in the norms and principles of international human rights standards and values. Focuses on, (i) Participation – inclusive, people-centred; (ii) Empowerment – leading to social transformation, for the marginalised and oppressed communities; (iii) Accountability: Identification of claim-holders and corresponding duty-holders (state and non-state); (iv) Equality and Non-discrimination- as defined by international human rights law; and (v) Justice - based on universal standards and norms; just distribution of resources and power, ensuring claims of violations.

**Category 2:** *Explicitly rights based (with feminist principles):* Along with elements of category 1, clear articulation of feminist principles – critiquing unequal power relations, analysing gender inequality and protecting and promoting women's rights and issues

**Category 3:** *Strongly rights based:* Groups that reflect a rights based approach in their praxis- which means their activities, demonstrate adoption of a rights based approach even while the articulation may be missing (responses on objectives, strategies, activities and changes in women lives include elements of RBA – participation, empowerment etc. but not seen within the framework on quality and non-discrimination. No direct reference to human rights standards, inclusion or social transformation)

**Category 4:** *Some elements of rights based:* Groups that refer to rights based approach, and there is some level of understanding within the organisations, however, the activities or strategies do not reflect the same.

**Category 5:** *RBA not clearly articulated/welfarist:* Focusing on the needs and not on rights of the communities; addressing immediate causes of problems. Programmes are entirely around the needs of the community, and there is little or no linkage between one programme line and another, as no attempt has been made to synchronise programme plan or strategic understanding. No reference to elements of RBA.



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