

Baseline Study: Common Matrix of Parameters-Indicators-Research Methods

IT for Change

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1. Introduction

The Women-gov project started in mid-April 2012. It is an action research intervention, located in Brazil, India and South Africa, to study how the contextual use of digital technologies can make local governance work for women.

2. Core Objectives of the Research project

- a. To test out contextual models in the field of participatory governance that use digital technologies in a guided manner to deepen local democracy and make local institutions accountable, especially from the standpoint of marginalised women.
- b. To contribute to grounded theory and field building by exploring the conditions under which digital technologies can enable marginalised women to gain active citizenship in terms of informational, communicative and associational power, vis-a-vis local governance processes.

3. Mother Hypothesis

Digital technologies enable marginalised women to gain active citizenship at the local level, democratizing formal and informal institutions and systems, particularly in the sphere of local governance, by creating empowering ecologies constituted by:

- New Information & learning processes
- New Communication processes
- New Associational processes; and
- Expanded possibilities for Collective action

Core question pertaining to Mother Hypothesis

What are the conditions under which digital technologies can enable marginalised women gain active citizenship in local governance?

Note that it is only through the specific hypotheses and sub-questions that the mother hypothesis and the core question can be addressed.

4. Specific Hypotheses and the research questions, pertaining to objective 'a'

Hypothesis 1: The appropriate / guided use of digital technologies creates a new behaviour / culture around information and enhances the capacity of marginalized women to negotiate (and challenge) existing information hierarchies.

- How can local info-centres managed by women impact the local information ecology and culture? How are processes of governance shaped in this emerging techno-social ecology? What social and institutional factors influence these processes?

Hypothesis 2: The appropriate / guided use of digital technologies facilitates women's ability to understand and respond critically to different institutions and power relations, and positively influence their relations with local governance structures.

- How does the relationship of marginalised women with public institutions change with enhanced informational, communicative and associational power?

- How do new spaces and relationships mediated by digital technologies impact women's status in relation to informal structures of social and political power in the local context?

Hypothesis 3: The appropriate / guided use of digital technologies enables women to emerge as an effective counter-public to 'trouble the status quo' and negotiate with (and challenge) patriarchal discourses.

- How and under what conditions can the democratisation of local communicative spaces /public sphere enable marginalised women to articulate their interests and shape the agenda of local governance?

- What new collective actions mediated by digital technologies have occurred, and how have these shifted public & institutional perceptions about marginalised women and their rights?

Hypothesis 4: The appropriate / guided use of digital technologies enhances the capacity of marginalised women to visualise and forge gender-based solidarities through local and trans-local networks that transcend social and spatial boundaries.

- How do the emerging possibilities for marginalised women to link horizontally, including across geographies, enable new associational forms that are rooted in local needs and interests? How do these associations relate to current forms of political mobilisation and organisation?

- How do these new associational forms re-shape and shift women's individual and collective identities (perceptions about women in the community)?

5. Specific research questions pertaining to objective ' b' (of field building):

- a. What kind of policies in governance reform, development, and new media and digital technologies will provide the enabling conditions for making possible institutional innovations which can make local governance work for women?
- b. What insights about gendering technology may be gleaned through the specific technological platforms and tools deployed in local contexts?

6. Baseline Study

1. The research teams will undertake a baseline assessment, over June-July 2012. Across each of the three project sites in Brazil, South Africa and India, the Baseline Study will cover an assessment of the following core issues /parameters:
 - a. Nature of local governance systems and institutions (both formal and informal) and local democracy
 - b. Nature of women's marginalisation at the community level; and
 - c. Access and use of digital technologies, and technology regimes
2. The project seeks to bring about transformative change in the lives of marginalised women by intervening in, and digitally reshaping/ mediating local - Information processes, Communication processes, Associational process and Possibilities for collective action. Therefore, in trying to understand and unpack the core issues, the indicators that will measure the baseline are focussed on these areas.
3. The core issues or parameters sought to be impacted will be researched through multiple methods. The table below details out the indicators, the sample questions/probe areas and research methods that will be useful for developing each indicator, for the three parameters.
4. While the project will work closely with a core group of women, who will be the primary protagonists for the action research, the baseline will study a secondary group through the survey, to have a statistically significant number for a quantitative analysis.
5. A secondary literature review would be essential to build the overall analysis, especially for -
 - a. The historical backdrop of women's public-political roles in the context of the study
 - b. Institutional analysis to map the role of various governance regimes in women's everyday lives, and women's location vis-a-vis /exclusions from public information, public services, entitlements and democratic structures and processes.
 - c. Discourse analysis to understand the operations of hegemonic (gender) ideologies in the media, particularly, the local public sphere, as well as formal and informal governance institutions, to understand women's differential experience of citizenship

6. Five methods are being contemplated at this stage – Survey (with core and extended/ secondary group), In-depth interviews (with core group), Focus group discussions, Mapping (including, as appropriate, a. Body mapping, b. Social mapping of relationships and knowledge processes c. Civic mapping of public information and services) and Video (not discussed in this note)

7. Table showing Parameters-Indicators-Research Methods

Core issues/ Parameters	Indicators	Sample Questions and Probe Areas for women respondents' perceptions/ opinions/ views	Methods
1. Nature of local governance systems and institutions (both formal and informal) and local democracy	Formal spaces of governance (mandated and convened by the State), where issues of public interest are deliberated This would include: State sponsored spaces. (Eg. Elected local government, Sub-committees, Empowered committees) Spaces for State-citizen interaction (Committees such as school development committees, health audit committees, public consultations) Spaces such as the 'town hall' (or any such formalised space for state-citizen engagement, like the gram <i>sabha</i> , in India)	To probe : 1. Awareness about such spaces, including awareness of the law 2. Perceptions about such spaces (on functionality, transparency, accountability to community, impact on everyday life) 3. Relationship with officials / authorities 4. Relationship with women in positions of authority	Survey, Mapping , Interviews
	Semi-formal spaces of governance (which may or may not have state support), where issues of public interest are deliberated This would include: NGO initiated forums <i>Community collectives that have evolved structures and processes (Eg. Neighbourhood association, community policing groups, community watchdogs)</i>	To probe : 1. Awareness about such spaces 2. Perceptions about such spaces (on functionality, transparency, accountability to community, impact on everyday life) 3. Relationship with officials / authorities 4. Relationship with women in positions of authority	Survey, Mapping , Interviews
	Informal spaces in the community where issues of public interest are deliberated This would include: Religious groups <i>Spaces convened and controlled by traditional authorities (Eg. Church group meetings, Caste leader convened meetings)</i>	To probe : 1. Awareness about such spaces 2. Perceptions about such spaces (on functionality, transparency, accountability to community, impact on everyday life) 3. Relationship with officials / authorities 4. Relationship with women in positions of authority	Survey, Mapping , Interviews
	Existing channels for public information	We will ask a few place-holder questions to assess what the channels	Survey,

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		through which community members receive information about schemes and entitlements, legal rights, local government functioning, health services, livelihoods are. We will probe for: Channels available for public information access, Capacity to access these channels Responsiveness of these channels to women's concerns.	Mapping , Interviews
	Power hierarchies that operate across formal, semi-formal and informal spaces	Dominant Groups in the communities Alignments	Mapping
	Recent progressive institutional changes and the formal spaces they have opened up for participation, especially of women, in local governance		Focus group discussions (and literature review)
	Extent to which women participate in formal spaces of governance where issues of public interest are deliberated	Are you informed? Do you attend? Do you participate? Do you raise issues for discussion? What kind? Do you participate in your individual capacity or as member of a collective? Do women participate in their individual capacities or as members of a collective? Do you have the backing of anyone when you participate? If yes, whose? Cultural acceptability of women's participation in public life of the community (Are you allowed to participate? Where are you allowed to participate? To what extent? With whose permission?) Perception of barriers (illiteracy, race, caste, religious diktats, age hierarchies, lack of legitimacy, lack of identification with political leaders, lack of capacity, work burden, mobility, language, financial resources, influence) Extent to which women's rights issues are considered by such spaces	Survey, Mapping ,

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	Extent to which women participate in semi-formal spaces of governance where issues of public interest are deliberated	<p>Existence of a culture of dialogue</p> <p>Are you informed? Do you attend? Do you participate? Do you raise issues for discussion? What kind? Do you participate in your individual capacity or as member of a collective? Do women participate in their individual capacities or as members of a collective? Do you have the backing of anyone when you participate? If yes, whose?</p> <p>Cultural acceptability of women's participation in public life of the community (Are you allowed to participate? Where are you allowed to participate? To what extent? With whose permission?)</p> <p>Perception of barriers (illiteracy, race, caste, religious diktats, age hierarchies, lack of legitimacy, lack of identification with political leaders, lack of capacity, work burden, mobility, language, financial resources, influence)</p> <p>Extent to which women's rights issues are considered by such spaces</p> <p>Existence of a culture of dialogue</p>	Survey, Mapping,
	Extent to which women participate in informal spaces of governance where issues of public interest are deliberated	<p>Do you participate? Do you raise issues for discussion? What kind? Do you participate in your individual capacity or as member of a collective? Do women participate in their individual capacities or as members of a collective? Do you have the backing of anyone when you participate? If yes, whose?</p> <p>Cultural acceptability of women's participation in public life of the community (Are you allowed to participate? Where are you allowed to participate? To what extent? With whose permission?)</p>	Survey, Mapping

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		<p>Perception of barriers (illiteracy, race, caste, religious diktats, age hierarchies, lack of legitimacy, lack of identification with political leaders, lack of capacity, work burden, mobility, language, financial resources, influence)</p> <p>Extent to which women's rights issues are considered by such spaces</p> <p>Existence of a culture of dialogue</p>	
	Existence of spaces of association and networks at the community level, which are exclusively for women	<p>Formal, Semi-formal, Informal spaces to be mapped</p> <p>Are you aware? What do these spaces do? Do they act on public interest issues?</p> <p>Do you participate? How?</p> <p>What do you discuss? Do you deliberate issues of public interest?</p> <p>What activities do you do in these spaces?</p> <p>Extent to which women's rights issues are considered by such spaces</p>	Survey, Mapping
	Existence of spaces and opportunities for citizenship education	<p>Citizenship education refers to spaces enabling women to understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Civil and political rights b. Social and economic rights c. Entitlements d. Local government systems and institutions and workings of local democracy e. Grievance redressal mechanisms 	Survey, Mapping
2. Nature of women's marginalisation at the community level	Self-esteem, experience of discrimination and self-recognition as political actors	<p>A. Influence of intersecting identities in women's marginalisation at the community level :</p> <p>Do you feel members of <i>your community</i>¹ are treated differently by the wider community?</p> <p>How are women from <i>your community</i> treated by the wider community?</p> <p>B. Do you feel it is important for you to think about issues</p>	A. Survey, B. Interviews, C. Focus group discussions (can also be filmed) and Literature

¹ *Your community* refers to the specific group to which the woman claims ethnic/kinship/racial affiliation. The community refers to the larger community the woman is a part of. This distinction would be helpful to assess marginality.

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		<p>concerning a. your community b. women of <i>your community</i>?</p> <p>Has women's collectivisation and consequent demand making impacted formal and informal spaces of local governance ? How?</p> <p>How do local governance systems work? How can you make these systems responsive to you?</p> <p>C. Explore media consumption behaviour, likes and dislikes to develop an analysis of the extent of women's critical awareness of how the public sphere is gendered, hyper-visibility, commodification, and critical attitude to media content</p>	review
	Inclusion in household level discussions on issues pertaining to household's involvement in the public life of the community	<p>Are you included in household level decision making? Which ones are you included in, and which ones you are not? Do you have discussions with the men in your households on community politics?</p>	Interview
	Perception on the kinds of knowledge that are legitimate	<p>Who is knowledgeable? What is considered knowledge? How knowledgeable do you think you are?</p>	Mapping
	Perception about the legitimacy of women's knowledge	<p>According to you, what are the kinds of knowledge that women in <i>your community</i> have? Do you think this knowledge is valued by others in the wider community, <i>your community</i> and in the household?</p>	Mapping
	Existence of a community support system (whether formal or informal) for women (both for the role of women's collectives and traditional authorities)	<p>Where do you turn to for normal help? Where do you go in times of distress and in times of crises? Where can women in <i>your community</i> go for help in times of distress and in times of crises?</p>	Survey Interview focus group discussions
Access, diffusion and use of digital technologies, and technology regimes	Access to technologies (including internet, mobiles,computers, T.V and radio according to your context)	<p>Do you access the internet? Where? How often? Do you use the mobile? How often? Do you use computers? How often? Where? Do you listen to radio? How often? Where? Do you watch TV? How often? Where?</p>	Survey

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	Ownership of technologies	(Along with above, in a logical flow: Does your Household own a computer? Since when? If yes, are you allowed to freely use it ? If not, why not? Does your household have an internet connection? Since when? If yes, are you allowed to freely use it ? If not, why not? Does your household own a mobile phone? Since when? If yes, are you allowed to freely use it? If not, why not? Does your household own a TV? Since when? If yes, are you allowed to freely use it? If not why not? Does your household own a radio? Since when? If yes, are you allowed to freely use it ? If not, why not?	Survey, literature review
	Costs of technologies	For the technologies owned by the household, find out a. Costs of purchase b. Costs of maintenance (Monthly expenditure in case of mobile phones, net and cable TV connection)	Survey, interviews
	Use of digital technologies – digital literacy and comfort	After respondents have specified the technologies they use and the regularity of use, probe for the following aspects. Internet : What sites do you browse regularly? What social networking sites do you belong to? What kinds of content do you download? What difference has the internet made to your daily life? Computers: Apart from surfing the net, what else do you use the computer for? What difference has the computer made to your daily life? Mobiles: What do you use the mobile for other than calls? Do you play games? Do you use it as a radio or as a camera? What are the applications you use? What difference has the mobile made to your daily life? TV: What channels do you watch? What programmes do you watch? What programmes are your favourite ones? What difference has TV made to your life? Radio: What stations do you listen to? Which programmes? What are your favourite ones? What difference has radio made to your life?	Survey, interviews
	Content production capacity	Can you make a radio clip? Have you? For what?	Survey,

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		<p>Can you make a video? Have you? For what? If you are trained, do you think you could do these things? If you could, what kind of radio clip would you make? If you could, what kind of video would you make? Can you shoot pictures? With a mobile or with a still camera? What kind of pictures would you like to shoot?</p>	interviews
	Types of tools and software used	<p>Probe for the: Operating system used. Office software used Willingness to move across software platforms.</p>	Interviews
	Perception about use of technology (meaning associated to use)	<p>How relevant is technology (probe for the contextually relevant ones) to women's daily lives for women from <i>your community</i>? How relevant is technology to people's daily lives in the wider community? Who has the capacities for using technology? Do you think everyone can acquire the capacities for using technology? Is it important?</p>	Interview, focus group discussions
	Main motivation for use of technology	<p>According to the technological use prevalent in the particular sites, probe for: Why do you use the internet/ the computer/the mobile/ the radio/ TV? What do you benefit from this?</p>	Interview, focus group discussions
	Relevance of TV and radio programme content for women	<p>Depending upon the programmes named by the women in response to the earlier probe, ask about: a. Do you think that the programmes you watch reflect the problems that women from <i>your community</i> face? b. What kinds of women characters appear in the programmes you watch? c. Can you identify with any of these characters or the situations they are in? To what extent? Why or Why not?</p>	Interview, focus group discussions
	Awareness about and access to public information through digital means (including TV and radio also)	<p>Among the programmes you watch on TV and hear on radio: a. Are there any that provide information about schemes and entitlements? If yes, which ones? What kinds of information?</p>	Interview, focus group discussions

		<p>b. Are there any that provide information about legal rights ?If yes, which ones? What kinds of information?</p> <p>c. Are there any that provide information about local government institutions and systems? If yes, which ones? What kinds of information?</p> <p>Are you aware of state initiatives to provide public information and service delivery through digital means? (Eg. Service delivery telecentres set up by state agencies, helplines, interactive website portals that provide information) <i>Eg. could be specified in field enquiry.</i></p>	
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8. Some overall premises at this stage

1. The action research methodology will include elements that are structured and designed by researchers and participating NGOs as well as elements that emerge during the research period from deliberations with women whose lives are sought to be impacted by the research.
2. The base line research may have some overlap with the introduction of activities. This means while some indicators will focus more on assessing 'what is', so as to then measure change at the end of the project about 'what has changed', some other indicators to assess change will be 'process' indicators that dovetail with the project's strategy and activities. So, for example, a social mapping exercise to enable participants to represent and articulate their location within local power structures, will be a project activity that could be done a couple of times in the next 2 years; it will also be the referent for an endline exercise of the same kind to measure change.
3. There will be a core set of questions in the survey method and also core set of elements in the other methods that are common across sites. The structure of all methods will be developed in as detailed a way as possible and discussed over skype for clarity between teams. The survey will come before the interviews.
4. The principal researchers and the research teams will undertake the pilots. The subsequent research will be done with their central involvement and everyday reflections with the wider team to ensure data quality.
5. The baseline research process – at the researcher end – needs to be closed out with the Situation Analysis Report. The deadline of this document can be kept a bit loose so that the momentum in the field is not overwhelmed by academic analysis and writing timelines. The project aspires to do much in a short time period, and hence will need to gallop steadily and set the pace for the NGO partners and women in the communities.

9. Decisions to be made

1. Developing survey questions with precoded options – IT for Change can do the first round, which can then be modified and changed as suitable for all sites. Pilots can be done month end?
2. Design of Mapping – ideas most welcome
3. Video baseline – very simple design, is needed since we can dovetail this with some interviews post survey. Will consult video team and share.
4. Field Intervention plan by June 14th