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Thesis

**Probing the Minds of Elected Women Representatives
on Village Councils in India**

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Abstract

This paper aims to probe the minds of Elected Women Representatives (EWRs), the harbingers of change in rural political governance in India. It explores the interrelationships between their own thoughts, emotions, and behaviours, as well as those of their families, Village Council (VC) members, and villagers. It describes the influence of these variables on the performance of EWRs. Based on action research, realist and critical ethnographic methods, including interviews with 120 EWRs in 19 districts, covering 100 villages, this paper unearths the following nine key themes: (I) Family history in politics helps in being elected but does not necessarily influence the performance positively; (II) Financial status enhances the chances of being elected to but does not necessarily influence the performance positively; (III) Regions with abundant natural resources do not necessarily produce better performing EWRs; (IV) Seven attributes of self-confidence, love, learning, authenticity, survival instinct, social engagement, and fairness have the most significant influence on the performance of EWRs; (V) Performing EWRs see their leadership role in Village Councils as that of 'mother-leaders' of an extended family of villagers, while underperforming EWRs see it as a competing commitment, which conflicts with their role as homemakers; (VI) Better performing EWRs tend to have positive gender and leader identity integration while underperforming ones experience identity conflicts; (VII) Villagers are gender-neutral in their treatment of successful EWRs, but they show gender bias in their treatment of underperforming EWRs; (VIII) Village Councils become transitional objects for EWRs seeking 'freedom' from their previous identities; (IX) Successful EWRs see themselves as both, the instruments of change and the change itself. This paper also signals a need for the psychological transformation of EWRs, by proposing the idea of setting up 'therapeutic communities' in³ villages, to foster the attributes that significantly influence the performance of EWRs.

¹ Throughout this paper, 'EWR' is used as a generic term for a woman president of a Village Council. A woman president is the democratically elected leader of a Village Council in India. EWRs and EWR Presidents are used interchangeably to make it easier for the readers.

² A Village Council is a village-level statutory institution of local self-governance in India.

³ Inspired by Wilfred Bion's work in establishing a 'therapeutic community' in hospitals that treated British soldiers during World War II, this approach shifted the focus from the treatment of individual patients to a group-based treatment; in Bion's case, this approach allowed soldiers to return to the battlefield. This systemic paradigm includes all aspects of leadership, social participation, education, and rehabilitation.

Key words: Elected Women Representatives (EWRs); Gender; Gram (Village) Panchayat (Council); Quota: Reserved seats in Village Councils (VCs); India; District; Performance: Successful implementation of plan of action drafted by the VC, for the betterment of villages; Identity; Change

“I am the hope of the villagers and my village is the hope for me, I can disappoint neither them nor myself.”

[One of the Elected Women Representatives (EWRs)]

Introduction

Why do we need to probe the minds of EWRs?

My interactions with Indian government officials have revealed one overriding and uncomfortable truth. Although it has been 25 years since the 73rd constitutional amendment guaranteed a quota of 33%–50% women in the local political governance of villages, the psychology of EWRs remains unexplored, at worst, and tainted with gender bias, at best. Although there have been a few attempts to understand EWRs better, most of the attempts have been ignored or forgotten. In the rare cases where reforms have been implemented, they have proceeded slowly. In the academic literature, there has been little focus on the link between EWRs' positive or negative emotions (input) and their performance (outcomes). The lack of interest in this topic is surprising, given the fact that EWR performance⁴ has been shown to have a significant downstream positive impact on the socioeconomic progress of India.

The key questions, when probing the minds of EWRs, relate to two ancillary questions; ‘why does progress in villages matter?’ and ‘why do women in political village governance in India matter?’ Responses to these questions are outlined in the next few paragraphs.

Why does progress in villages matter?

Of India's approximately 1.3 billion population, 850 million people live in 638,596 villages across its 29 states and three union territories. Villages generate US \$1.1 trillion, roughly 50% of India's total GDP of US \$2.3 trillion (Government of India, 2018). Quite obviously, the growth of villages and villagers matter for India and the world at large, as India is among the most promising developing nations in the world, expected to become the 5th largest economy in

⁴ The term ‘performance’ is used to describe successful outcomes achieved by the Village Council president, because of implementing progressive actions for the betterment of a village.

the world in dollar terms by the end of 2018 (Centre for Economic and Business Research, WELT Report 2018). This assumes significance when empirically, there appears to be a high correlation between the progress of women and economic progress of the nations. 'Societies that prefer not investing in girls pay a price for it in terms of slower growth and reduced income' (Dollar D & Gatti R, 1999 and Xu L, 2015).

Why do women in political village governance in India matter?

Villages are governed by the Indian Ministry of Rural Development. To realise its true growth potential, India needs an inclusive form of growth, covering more than 700 main cities and tier I, II, and III towns that provide demand and act as employment generators for most of its villages. Men in villages have migrated to the larger towns to work, while continuing to maintain their traditional roles on farms. At the same time, women have supported their fathers and husbands by taking on more significant roles in farming. As a result, the traditional identities of men and women in villages have been changing, especially during the last 10 years. This change has affected the governance of villages, where more women have been encouraged to take up positions that control the agenda of Village Councils. Their inclusion in village political governance began in 1993, when India enacted a constitutional amendment that made it officially a gender-neutral nation (and therefore socially progressive), without realising that this change would also have a significant impact on economic progress. Twenty-five years later, the Indian government has begun to recognise this link more decisively.

In parallel, the United Nations has set out key development goals for India, weaving together social, political, and economic intentions and actions. Inclusive growth can only be achieved if the country views these intentions and actions from a holistic perspective. One of the main goals is gender equality and the participation of women in the political, social, and economic arenas. This goal focuses attention on the extent to which gender equality in governance impacts villages and their progress.

Although the 73rd amendment called for women to participate in local political governance, this goal does not appear to relate to any known link between women in political governance and progress in villages governed by EWRs. Instead, it reflects the assumption that

women will somehow become capable and well-equipped to make changes in the political, social, and economic fortunes of villages, once they assume power.

This study provides evidence suggesting that capable, well-equipped women in village level political governance could foster the political, social, and economic progress of villages, significantly enhancing the probability of India becoming an economic, social and political superpower in the next 30 years. It is therefore necessary to explore what it takes for an EWR to be 'capable'.

This paper analyses the factors that incapacitate or impede some EWRs. The Prime Minister's Office (PMO), Village Councils (or Gram Panchayat in India), and the Ministries of Women and Child Development, Rural Development, Skills and Development, Human Resources and Development, and various other stakeholders in the system have partially recognised that EWRs need support. Several actions have been planned and initiated to train them in the procedural and administrative aspects of leading a Village Council and implementing government schemes with health, education, social objectives. Nevertheless, today, barring a few progressive states in India, many EWRs are perceived as lower-status, poorly educated pawns (most left school after the 7–10 grade) put into positions of power by their husbands or manipulative village or district political figures to benefit their patrons, rather than villagers. The government-espoused theory that capable women in political governance lead to better political, social, and economic progress seems tenuous, at best, based on the current evidence in India.

There is little understanding of the fact that psychologically strong EWRs are more capable than those who are merely 'skilled' because they have undergone procedural and administrative training. Their success makes it crucial to investigate how psychology influences the performance of EWRs, not just through their personal views and feelings, but also in relation to their interactions with other people. Cornwall and Goetz (2005) have scrutinised the factors that 'constrain and enable women's political effectiveness' in such democratic spheres. They suggest that an important, but often overlooked, determinant of women's political effectiveness is the extent to which they have had an opportunity to learn political skills and build constituencies through political apprenticeships and experience in political parties, civil society

associations, and informal arenas. This argument brings us to the important issue of the psychology of EWRs in the context of groups, Village Councils, and villages.

In some sense, India has adopted the view of 'pluralists', such as Robert Dahl (1961), as opposed to the 'elitist' views propounded by C. Wright Mills in 1956. Essentially, the elitists argued that, as power always went to those who enjoyed higher status and wealth, women had trouble gaining power in governance because they did not enjoy high status and wealth. The gender quota in India's Gram Panchayats (Village Councils) was an outcome of the view that being granted positions of power would give women a chance to build the necessary skills and resources to use power, as argued by the 'pluralists'.

To explore the question of whether capable candidates achieve positive outcomes, once they are in power, it is useful to look at the state electoral platforms marketed by candidates and the economic progress achieved by states. Increasingly, voters are inclined to elect candidates who promise to achieve greater economic progress, rather than those who offer any other any other value proposition (Vaishnav & Swanson, 2015).

One of the studies in the Handbook of Development Economics suggests, 'while men tend to resist change, putting up social defences, women often insist on change if they come to power and voice this ambition loudly', 'On average, a woman speaking during the Gram Sabha (Village Meeting) is 14% more likely to attract a negative response. In unreserved Village Councils, this likelihood increases to 25%' (Duflo, Pande & Petia 2007). This paper confirms these results, especially in the case of women from less privileged backgrounds.

The impact of the psychological profiles of EWRs on their performance must be investigated, to determine which psychological profiles are most valuable for contesting elections and which categories of EWRs are likely to perform well. Two stages are critical: being elected and functioning in the post after being elected. The various chapters below set out the methodology, process, and insights provided by this study, which uses system psychodynamic principles, interwoven with other considerations. The following paragraphs describe the outline and structure of this paper, as well as its expected outcomes.

Chapter 1 sets out the research objectives and develops a platform for further research. This paper analyses critical psychological factors that may predict EWR performance. It also aims to inspire policy makers to consider the psychology of EWRs when defining changes in the electoral framework. The probable outcomes include policy recommendations to help these women become more psychologically capable, redefine the norms for electing EWRs, alter the organisation and management of budgeting, make and implement Village Council schemes and services and, perhaps more importantly for the academic community, expand and significantly develop ideas of socio-political psychology in an Indian context.

Chapter 2 cites relevant references, as part of a literature review. After examining the ancient roots of the idea of gender roles in India, the prior studies been grouped into the following six topic categories: 1) the gender equality movement and women's empowerment in India, which led to quotas and reserved positions for Indian women; 2) the global women's rights movement, feminist psychology, and its influence on India; 3) socio-political Psychology and EWRs; 4) essentialism and cultural psychology that concern EWRs; 5) the evolution of EWRs in India, and 6) the effectiveness of EWRs in Village Councils.

Chapter 3 summarises the research methodology and design used; a detailed methodology is referenced in the Appendices. This study recognises the psychological factors and interactions that influence Village Council outcomes. To ascertain which factors EWRs and villagers considered the most important, I adopted largely qualitative methods to build insights and generate hypotheses.

Chapter 4 contains a discussion of these insights, based on 120 interviews with EWRs in the field. It describes two levels of night vision and attempts to demystify the EWRs' pre- and sub-conscious minds, unfolding into the four layers of self, family, Village Council, and village. This chapter also describes the ethnographical findings derived from visiting the households and offices of Village Council members. Finally, this chapter details findings from the small action research project conducted as an aspect of the field visits.

The key findings of this study enable the construction of a map depicting the emotions and attributes that dictate the cognitive and behavioural conduct of EWRs and can predict their

performance. This study explores the variables that have made EWRs both more and less effective in their work.

Chapter 5 defines possible future directions for this research, given the current limitations and possibilities of further exploration.

Chapter 6 describes how EWRs perceived the benefits of this study, which provided a space for confiding, interacting freely, and sharing their emotions, feelings, and thoughts. The interactions during interviews have encouraged EWRs to come forward and reflect on themselves and their roles better. Interestingly, in a surprisingly short time after the field visits, several EWRs and members of the Resource Support and Development Centre, a non-profit organisation that helped me gain access to the EWRs and has worked with the government for the last 30 years, wanted to discuss a possible plan of action to incorporate into the government's training curriculum, designed to build the skills and capacities of EWRs.

The thesis concludes with my own reflections on carrying out the study; in this section, I view myself as an instrument of the change I plan to promote, as a citizen of India, for the social, political and economic advancement of the grassroots population.

Chapter 1: Research Aims and Objectives

Probing the Minds of EWRs and the System

I set out to probe the minds of EWRs, to understand the preconscious and unconscious emotions and attitudes that make them who they are and might also explain their performance in Village Councils.

The Systems Psychodynamic Approach and the Day and Night Vision Framework, A Method and Objective

The framework used here is not just a method, but also an objective of this study. Day and night visions essentially refer to visible (day) behaviours and the invisible, deeply embedded (night) emotions that drive those behaviours.

Everything in this world is a part of an interconnected system; one must acknowledge the interdependence of the components that make up the system. While this study aims to demystify the consciousness of EWRs, their minds cannot be understood as isolated intelligences. It is important to recognise the system that EWRs operate in to interpret their thoughts and behaviour correctly. This system has four levels: the EWR herself, her family, the political system (the Village Council), and the villagers who elect her. The systems psychodynamic approach, integrated with the day-night vision framework, can help to explain this four-level system and various phenomena in the lives of EWRs.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In researching this study, I have reviewed the academic literature on the psychology of women and their role in various contexts, including self, family, the Village Councils led by women, and the villages they live in. This study also fundamentally addresses the issue of gender neutrality and its effectiveness, in the local Indian socio-political context.

The following literature review covers the historical, political, social, and economic lenses that have been used to study the evolution of gender quotas, the women rights' movement, and the status of EWRs in India. In the Discussion section, I have commented on the ways in which these findings corroborate and conflict with those of previous authors.

The ancient roots of the idea of 'gender' in India

An examination of the ancient literature in Sanskrit, from as long ago as 10000 BCE, reveals that India was a society that worshipped the role of women and celebrated the role of men. There was a clearly visible decline in mutual respect for both genders during the centuries that followed, and particularly between 3228 BCE and the 1950s. This decline was marked by discrimination against women in all walks of life, including political governance.

The following paragraphs essay a review the historic and modern literature on the subject. An overview of the ancient or prehistoric literature is provided in Appendix 1.

The gender equality movement and women's empowerment in India, which led to quotas and reserved positions for Indian women

Between 1835 and 1890, the social activist Jyoti Phule and his wife Savitribai Phule, in the Indian state of Maharashtra, first talked about the importance of restoring rights, such as education, to women. Dr Ambedkar (trained in the UK), from a minority background, discussed women's rights and the importance of women in India between 1920 and 1950. Several weak attempts were made to revive the status of women. Social activists like Margaret 'Gretta'

Cousins (Irish-Indian) attempted to explain the psychological damage being caused by the unjust treatment of women.

After India's independence in 1947, as the idea of gender equality gained momentum and its applications in various roles in society received attention; politics was one of these areas. Dr Ambedkar talked about reforming the roles women played. He was the author of an Indian constitution that mirrored some of the thinking from the West on women's empowerment.

The Indian constitution is remarkably forward-looking when it comes to women, but the spirit remains on the page. It has taken India more than 50 years since Independence to truly understand and begin to implement some of its clauses. Some of its provisions include equal protection for both genders, no gender discrimination in employment, education, or pay, and a directive renouncing all activities derogatory to women .⁵

Adopting a lens of equality, such laws can be criticised for being 'paternalistic' in spirit and treating women as vulnerable people who need to be protected. It is ironic that the simple act of defining protective measures suggests that one gender is weaker than the other. This was the attitude opposed by feminist activists.

The global women's rights movement, feminist psychology, and its influence on India

Globally, one can trace the debate about the role of women and actions to expand women's rights from Olympe de Gouges in France in the early 1760s, Anne-Josèphe Théroigne de Méricourt (also French) in the late 1700s and early 1800s, Mietje Hoitsema in the Netherlands in the early 1800s, Annestine Beyer in Denmark in the early 1800s, and many other activists from Italy, Germany, Greece, and the UK, who began the fight for women's rights, roles, and positions in the spheres of education and politics. Significant progress was made during the 1800s.

⁵ Subsection 3 of Article 15 authorises the State to make 'special provision for women and children'. This section introduces a variety of laws designed to benefit women; it stands as one of several constitutional authorisations of affirmative action. In India, women and men are treated differently by the laws that protect women.

In the US, the movement began much earlier, perhaps due to the way in which the country came into being as a land of freedom and opportunity, even before those principles were embodied in the constitution. In 1647, Margaret Brent asked for but was denied two votes in the Maryland Assembly. In 1848, Mott and Stanton organised a Woman's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, NY; they took a cue from the Founding Fathers in issuing a 'Declaration of Sentiments': *'We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal'*. In 1912, four million women became eligible to vote and in 1916, Jeannette Rankin of Montana became the first woman elected to the US House of Representatives.

The psychology of women gained importance in 1960s and 70s with the rise of Anglo-US feminism (Matlin, 1993; Squier, 1989; and Unger & Crawford, 1992), experiencing a resurgence in the 1990s (Sweet-Cushman, 2014). Women felt the need to see psychology through a female lens, as in the pioneering work of E. K. Baker (1976, 2010) in developing RCT (Relational Cultural Theory). This theory continues to be referenced and developed; in 1989, L R Squire showed that the main tenets of egalitarian and liberal thought reflected the feminist movement that began with Karen Horney, who coined the term 'feminist psychology'. The Association for Women in Psychology (AWP) was created in 1969 in response to the American Psychological Association's apparent lack of interest in the women's liberation movement. The Society for the Psychology of Women was founded in 1973.

Uphoff and Cohen (1979) and Oakley and Marsden (1985) examined ideas involving participation in politics and approaches to participation in rural development. In parallel, several United Nations publications between 1950 and 1990 directed countries to introduce equality and democracy and to embrace forms of political leadership that would seek to restore peace and prosperity, especially after the end of World War II in 1945.

Socio-political Psychology and EWRs

After World War II, political psychology surged, as a domain, because psychologists wanted to explore the psychology of politicians who had committed war crimes. Such research gave rise to famous theories, including the 'authoritarian personality' theory. Jeanne Knutson did pioneering work in the *Handbook of Political Psychology* in 1973, later founding the International Society of Political Psychology in 1978. The frameworks of 'social dominance orientation' (SDO) (Sidaneous & Pratto, 1999, 2004) and 'right-wing authoritarianism' (RWA) (Altemeir, 1988) became useful frameworks for explaining the psychology of politicians. The 'big five personality theory' (BFPT) is another prominent framework in this field (Gosling, Rentfrow, & Swann, 2003). In this paper, I have chosen to explore and discover the topic referring but without restricting the analysis, to any of the theoretical frameworks developed earlier.

Researchers have shown that participation in a social movement can ignite a collective identity among members, leading to a shared commitment to improve their situation (Duncan, 1999; Melucci, 1992; Vindhya, 2012). EWRs share a social identity in their villages, which is shaped by their husbands and the other villagers; this, in turn, impacts their primary tasks and the risks they experience or feel able to take. It is interesting to see how sharing an identity with other EWRs in a district can impact the psychological construct of these female officials, prompting action to change the status quo.

Research also suggests that individuals' social and political identities, as well as the context of their lived experiences, are significant predictors of willingness to participate in political action (Hammack, 2010a; White & Rastogi, 2009; Wiley, Deaux, & Hagelskamp, 2012). I have chosen to study EWRs to understand how willing they are to participate in Village Council elections, given competing commitments.

Mayo C (1982), in his theory Positive Marginality, (PM) has suggested that being marginalised can be an effective source of strength and a source of social positive change for some individuals. EWRs are a marginalised community in India. Positive Marginality is a response to scholars who mainly view marginalisation as a source of oppression and

disempowerment and therefore a weakness (Dutt & Grabe, 2014). As previously mentioned, some EWRs have been effective in Village Councils and others have not. What we are witnessing in India is a situation in which few EWRs appear to derive strength from PM, although Mayo's PM principles appear to be in action.

While studying the American elections in 2016, the first time in US history that a woman presidential candidate was nominated by a major party, Professor Ditonto found that gender played a significant role in how much voters cared about a candidate's perceived competence. Women candidates seen to be as competent as men scored equally well in voter perceptions; however, voters were less forgiving of women than men when the candidates were perceived as incompetent. This shows that the downside risk of underperformance is higher for women than for men. My findings in the case of EWRs are consistent with these results, even though the context is vastly different. I found that successful EWRs (perceived to be effective performers at the Village Council office) were treated as fairly as men by villagers, while EWRs perceived to be incompetent faced opposition, ranging from discreet criticism to open and well-publicised fights.

Essentialism and Cultural psychology in relation to EWRs

Mahalingam, Haritatos & Jackson (2007) have made pertinent points about the concepts of social categorisation shaped by the naturalisation of social categories, proposed by Rothbart and Taylor (1992).

Mahalingam & Rodriguez (2006), who found that essentialism was the psychological lynchpin that anchored an individual's personal and social identity. Essentialism enables us to construct theories of social groups, which often legitimise the privileged status of a dominant group and its sometimes-physical control over non-dominant groups (Mahalingam R, et. al.). In the case of EWRs, the dominant group is clearly made up of men and villagers. The concept of essentialism thus determines the social identity of EWRs in a variety of ways.

The Evolution of Elected Women Representatives (EWRs) in India

Nirmala Buch, in her excellent book *From Oppression to Assertion* (2013) commented that Panchayats or Village Councils have governed villages for thousands of years in loose local jurisdictions. It was during British rule in the early 1900s that the system became more organised. However, structurally, these Village Councils remained a fiefdom of powerful landlords who used their platform to exercise coercive techniques and to extract social, political, and economic benefits from oppressed members of the society.

Sharma notes that a 1958 report of the Central Council of Local Self Government concluded that Panchayats should be 50% female to be truly representative; in the short term, two seats per Panchayat should be reserved for women. As a rule, until the 1980s, these seats were reserved. It was only in the early 1980s that the debate over women's rights gathered momentum in India. Finally, in 1993, it was made mandatory to reserve one third of the seats.

Uma Shankar, in her study, 'Challenges and Opportunities: A Study of Women Panchayat Representatives in Karnataka', Institute of Social Studies Trust, Bangalore (1995) and Madhu Kishwar, in 'Social Empowerment and Women', his keynote address at the National Conference on Women and Panchayati Raj, New Delhi (1995) note how certain states have become more progressive by overpowering caste-based politics to ensure the inclusion of women in Village Councils.

The psychology of caste-based dominance or superiority interplays with the psychology of gender dominance. For several centuries, gender-based discrimination fuelled caste-based dominance in India. EWRs continue to bow down to superior caste figureheads in Village Councils due to caste, and to men of inferior castes in positions of power due to gender discrimination. Bidyut Mohanty (Economic and Political Weekly, JSTOR, 1995) notes that class, caste, the criminalisation and factionalism of politics, and a lack of awareness of the legal and economic constitutional rights of women in society are critical factors influencing the lack of women's participation in elections and local political governance. The most important factor was

⁶ Caste-based politics remain one of the best examples of the 'power' supposedly inherited by being born into a particular family, prevalent in India since 1200 BCE.

observed by Chitra Bhandari in 1993 and 1997. Participation has been most effective where there is homogeneity in other factors, such as caste and community. She also made observations about why the amendment had not yielded early results.

The Effectiveness of EWRs in Village Councils:

This literature comments on the outcomes and experiences associated with the 33% and 50% gender quotas or reserved seats in Indian states, highlighting some of the issues and challenges faced by EWRs when carrying out their primary tasks.

Karen J. Maroda, Milwaukee (2004), in her article, 'A Relational Perspective on Women and Power', integrates a psychoanalytic relational approach with feminist theory and social psychology to observe that 'women are more likely to pursue power in ways that help others', whereas 'men are more likely to pursue their own individual ambitions'. 'However, both genders become more nurturing in their expressions of power as they age'. The presence of siblings in early life and having children as adults are more likely to produce an individual who demonstrates prosocial power. I have tested some of these variables in this study.

Van Lange, De Bruin, Otten, and Joireman (1997) have delineated three basic categories of relational style: those practiced by prosocials, individualists, and competitors. EWRs turn out to be more prosocial than individual or competitive.⁷ This implies that they are likely to take a win-win approach that benefits themselves as well as the villages, rather than a win-lose approach, like some men in power, who may exhibit a greater tendency to look for personal gain, even at the cost of derailing village progress. It is this quality that separates the EWRs from men in power. In this study, the EWRs have demonstrated that, in most cases, the outcomes they have sought and achieved have been positive, both for them and for the villages.

⁷The authors suggest 'Prosocials tend to maximise outcomes for both themselves and others (i.e. cooperation) and to minimise differences between outcomes for themselves and others (i.e. equality); individualists tend to maximise their own outcomes with little or no regard for others' outcomes; and competitors tend to maximise their own outcomes relative to others' outcomes, seeking relative advantage over others'.

EWRs have also faced difficult choices between prioritising home tasks and Village Council work. In their 2017 article in *The Qualitative Report*, Ray Titus, Debashish Sengupta, and Sahana Madan clearly point out that the trade-offs often favour home duties rather than the responsibilities of being in power.⁸ This explains why EWRs have had mixed effectiveness in actively participating to achieve desired outcomes for their villages, during their time in power.

Puri (1971) has argued that women play an important role in decision-making at home and are consulted by their husbands on farm-related activities. However, this research indicates that EWRs in India tend to have little voice, even at home, unless they have specific positive psychology traits.

Women have been shown to be most active in management of homes, while men dominate in money management (Chatterjee & Chakrabarti, 2007). In previous studies, women have reported becoming more emotionally involved in decision-making discussions than men (Titus, Sengupta, & Madan, 2017). This may be one reason why men have traditionally dissuaded women in their families from taking power, a fear that the women might yield to the requests of villagers, compromising their own gains. This corroborates the suggestion made by Van Lange, De Bruin, Often, and Joireman.

It is important to note that the link between education and participation in decision-making may be mythical. Mona Mehta and Shilpi Saraswat (2014) have also accentuated what was found by O'Neil & Domingo, 2015 that most EWRs are educated but nevertheless have less involvement in decision-making. The recent directive of the Indian government to increase the threshold education limit for EWRs is appreciated but does not guarantee enhanced participation in decision-making. Women are responsible for more than half of family duties and responsibilities, but this does not seem to empower them to participate in decision-making. (Mehta & Saraswat, 2014). The FAO has reported that 'women are less likely than men to own land or livestock, adopt new technologies, use credit or other financial services, or receive

⁸ This study looks at decision-making by women as based on four possible contexts that may arise, where decisions are called for. These contexts are qualified based on two broad parameters, namely the level of involvement (dictated by the stakes at play) and the predisposition displayed. Involvement is qualified as high or low (on a continuum), whilst predisposition is either cognitive or affective.

education or extension advice' In some cases, women do not even control the use of their own time (FAO, 2010). Paxton, Kunovich, and Hughes (2007) have concluded that 'women throughout the world face many social or cultural constraints to political empowerment and many are discouraged from engaging in public decision-making processes altogether'. This phenomenon is clearly present in the relationship between Indian Village Councils and EWRs. Forward-looking states, such as Maharashtra, have done a better job at creating a 'safer space' for EWRs, allowing them not only to hold power, but also to be effective at it. In addition, the presence of organisations such as the Resource and Support Centre of Development (RSCD), which has played an enormous role in creating awareness and structural advantages, making it easier for states to adopt the amendment, have made it possible to disprove some of these findings.

'Patriarchal structures continue to exclude women from aspects of political life and women often encounter prejudice based on assumptions that women lack 'masculine' traits, such as leadership and levelheadedness, necessary to succeed in politics' (Paxton, Kunovich, & Hughes, 2007).

Research carried out by Sharma, Rao, and Sharma (2013) has argued that men dominate in most farm decisions in rural families. Most decisions related to buying and selling land, machines, and other agricultural implements, and to improvements in harvest and livestock management are taken by the husband or head of the family (Sharma, Rao, & Sharma, 2013). Raazia Hassan Naqvi and Muhammad Ibrar (2015) have found that, in most of rural families, most decisions that relate to household and agricultural matters are made by the family head alone. The wife is consulted only on household matters and is not involved in independent or joint decisions on agricultural matters. In a negligible proportion of cases, the wife takes independent decisions. Although this study was carried out in Pakistan, it echoes similar conditions in many Indian villages today.

Bala, Moorti, and Sharma (1993) in their study of the participation of rural women in decision-making, have revealed that, in more than 90% of decisions, the participation of women was only of a supportive nature. Illiteracy and a lack of knowledge and awareness were found to

be the major reasons for lower participation (Bala, Moorti, & Sharma, 1993; Lal & Kumar, 2007).

The research of Muzamil Jan and Shubeena Akhtar (2008) reveals that there are no significant differences between married and unmarried women when it comes to decision-making power. 'Women generally possess low decision-making power and are mainly dependent on masculine and/or familial decision-making' (Jan & Akhtar, 2008). Kavita Baliyan (2014) has observed that women have a prominent role only when it comes to petty household issues. In most cases, women act as initiators in making decisions about some major household matters, but the final decisions are ultimately taken by men. In rural India, even though women participate in economic activities, they have little role in decision-making, particularly in matters related to agriculture and finance.

'Gender differences have led women to suppress their desire to make decisions on various issues that arise from their daily activities. The roles and responsibilities of women and their choices are restricted to a specific sphere' (Bano, 2014).

The previous literature clearly outlines the conditions that govern rural households in India, from which EWRs emerge as candidates to contest Village Council elections.

This study aims to explore those variables that separate psychologically more well-suited EWRs from EWRs who find the role difficult. The evidence mentioned in some of the earlier paragraphs, while generalised, presents a fair representation of India.

Summary:

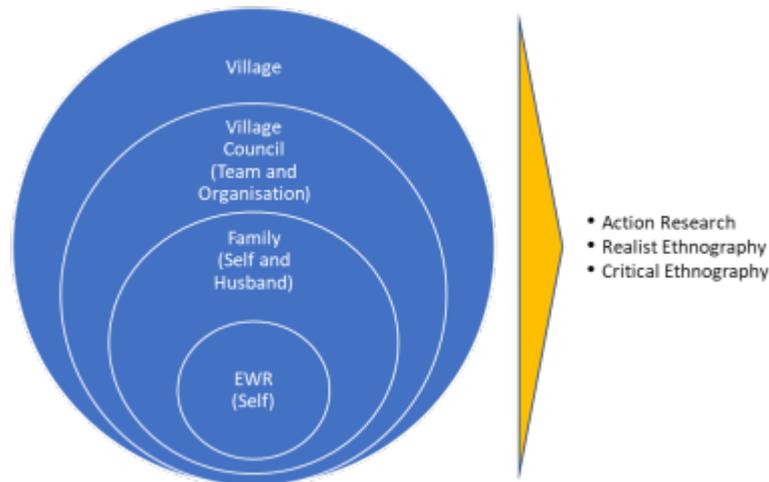
Previous authors have attempted to study and theorise about gender issues, the quota system, Village Councils, and EWRs. However, there has been very little research on the links between EWRs' positive or negative emotions, thoughts, feelings, or beliefs (input) and their performance (outcome) in relation to their primary task, to promote progress in their villages. This gap in literature reflects the need for probing the minds of EWRs.

If electing a woman to govern the Village Council is a necessary condition for positive change, then perhaps a 'night vision' analysis of their minds can help EWRs become more productive in their leadership roles. This research attempts to fill a gap in the field, aiming to provide a starting point for other studies that will ultimately help EWRs and the social system they operate in to act cohesively and change the fortunes of Indian villages.

⁹ Used interchangeably to allow ease of reading

Chapter 3: Research Methodology and Design

Three methods have been used to probe the four layers of the EWR social system.



This study has employed **three** main research methods:

Action Research: The EWRs and their husbands were presented with approximately 150 positive and negative emotions and asked to choose five that described their current and desired states. I investigated their choices and linked these to their responses to other realist and critical ethnography tools (Fetterman, 2010; Creswell, 2013; Long, 2013).

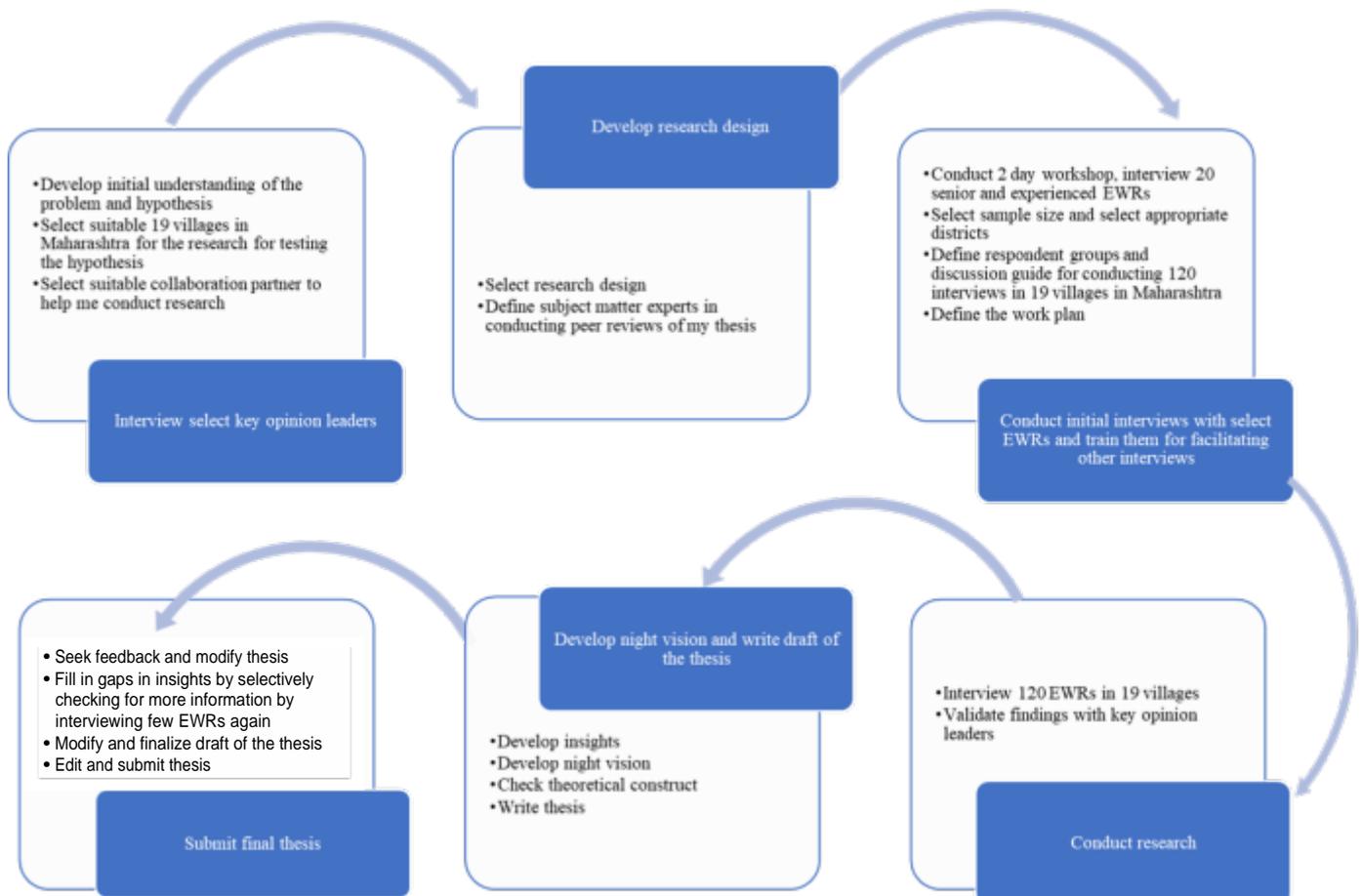
Realist Ethnography: Silent observations of objects in the EWR's house and Village Council office were made in the visits.

Critical Ethnography: In-depth motivational interviews, supplemented with deep listening techniques (Walters, 2005). These also provided EWRs with a 'psychologically safe' space (Walumbwa, & Schaubroeck, 2009).

This paper uses the tool of day and night vision that attempts to unfold the unconscious mind. Day vision is the visible/observed behaviour of EWRs. Night vision is the invisible pre-conscious emotions driving day vision (Lehman & Van de Loo, 2016).

Thesis Approach

A six-step approach was followed to conduct the study and develop the thesis
(Please refer to Appendices 2, 3, 4, 5 for detailed approach).



The day and night vision findings were carefully developed by first tabulating the responses from the Action Research, EWR interviews, conversations with the spouses, villagers, Village Council (VC) members etc and finally, silently noting the observations based on the visits. I constructed the frequency distribution of the answers and observations and noted the similarities and dissimilarities. The observations and my reflections showed a pattern in the EWR profiles, their psychological construct and their performance in a VC. I studied the pattern to infer on the variables that influenced the performance significantly and moderately. The assessment of the influence is qualitative and may be open to interpretations.

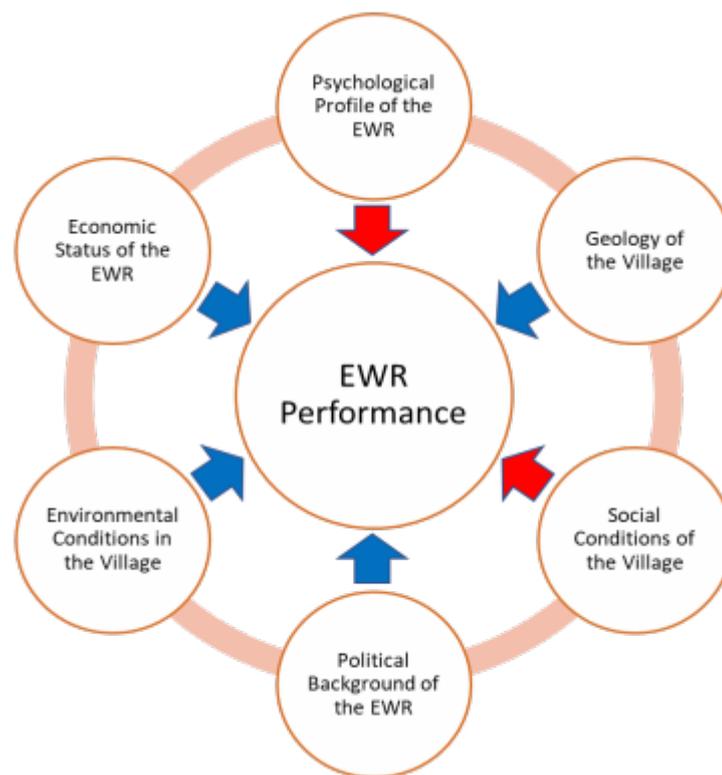
Chapter 4: Data Analysis and The Night Vision Discussion

Summary

The two influence maps describe the variables and variable interdependencies that lead to an effective EWR performance, the primary task (Hirschhorn, 1999, Chen, 2000 & Owens, 2015) of an EWR president. These interpretations are drawn from three methods, adapted from the Realist and Critical Ethnography model (Harris, 1968; Agar, 1980, 1996; Maanen, 1988) and the Instrument of Emotional Attributes (see Appendices 4, 5, 6).

Of the 120 EWRs who were interviewed, 70% were performing or successful EWRs, while the remaining 30% were underperforming. Performing or successful EWRs succeeded in implementing their intended actions, as part of a progress plan drafted by the VC. Underperforming EWRs were unable to garner support from VC members or villagers in implementing the agenda. Regardless of whether the EWRs we interviewed were successful, the findings shown in Influence Map 1 and the findings proved to be valid.

Influence Map 1



Before commenting on the psychological and social variables that form the main part of this discussion, it is important to look at various political, economic, environmental and geological factors and what influence do they have on the performance of EWRs.

The political background and economic status of EWRs moderately influence performance

The political background and financial status of EWRs increase the probability that they will be elected into office, but only partly predict office performance.

EWRs with no family history of being in politics did as well as those from political families. Of the 20% of EWRs who had a political family background, with fathers or grandfathers who were Village Council members or presidents, many gave a performance that was mixed at best. In many cases, they were less effective than those without such backgrounds. Although there was no negative correlation, it was only weakly positive. In addition, most successful EWRs initially ran for election at the request of a local, senior (often old and respected) male leader other than their husbands; some of them had little genuine interest in entering politics. Those who ran for election on their own met with mixed outcomes. EWRs tend to relate to local male political leaders, rather than to their husbands, as authority figures (Berghaus, 2016). The husbands prefer to take a subsidiary role if the EWRs enjoy the backing of local political authorities on winning elections.

Financial status has indeed helped the EWRs to fund their elections and develop the resources needed to promote their candidacies (Phadke & Parchure, 2018). However, EWRs with no assets have done just as well as wealthier candidates; economic status helps to mobilise resources and develop a following, but it does not necessarily imply a better outcome. This study shows that many EWRs from poorer families had the personal drive to assume leadership in Village Councils, while financially better-off EWRs either leveraged their financial position to advance village causes or became complacent about the money and power they enjoyed after being elected.

Other studies have indicated that wealthier EWRs tend to raise issues related to economic and health progress much more frequently than men. Esther Duflo from the Jameel Poverty Action Lab at MIT, Lori Beaman and Rohini Pande of Yale University, and Petia Topalova from

the IMF, have noted, in their study entitled 'Women Politicians, Gender Bias, and Policy-making in Rural India' (2007) that women with income and assets in hand tend to raise issues involving spending on education, health, nutrition and other issues that matter for children and women in general; in doing so, they have a significant positive impact on the economy. In political governance, EWRs are often better at voicing these issues than men. It stands to reason that the psychological safety (Walumbwa, & Schaubroeck, 2009) provided by woman in power will be more comprehensive in relation to gender issues than that provided by men in power.

The co-existence of both above interpretations may raise a question on the criteria used to select EWRs. The findings of the present study suggest that, while women may voice issues better than men, due to psychological safety (Walumbwa, et al. 2009), they may have less drive to implement the changes. This issue need further investigation.

Natural conditions in a village moderately explain EWR performance:

These variables include the natural resources of a village, whether it is near or far from the sea, and whether it is endowed with forests, mountain ranges, natural resources, grasslands, and favourable or unfavourable weather conditions. Such variables may not make any material difference in the performance of EWRs. In ecologically or geologically starved or deficient villages, EWR performed as well as, if not better than, their counterparts in villages with more favourable factors.

Nature plays a role in providing opportunities to enhance performance, but this does not imply that EWRs with natural advantages necessarily perform better than their peers. In fact, a lack of natural resources and hardships that result in community battles for resources make some EWRs more resilient, helping them to 'cope socially' as 'fighters'. (Rodrigo, Martin, Maiquez, & Rodriguez, 2007; Zeidner, 2006) At the same time, an abundance of water does not make EWRs complacent about efforts to conserve water; it is not a 'flight' or '*fright*' situation, (Kunimatsu & Marsee, 2012). as most EWRs prefer to tend or befriend (David & Lyons-Ruth, 2005). In this study, the successful EWRs showed more belief in socially constructed reality than in biologically determined fate.

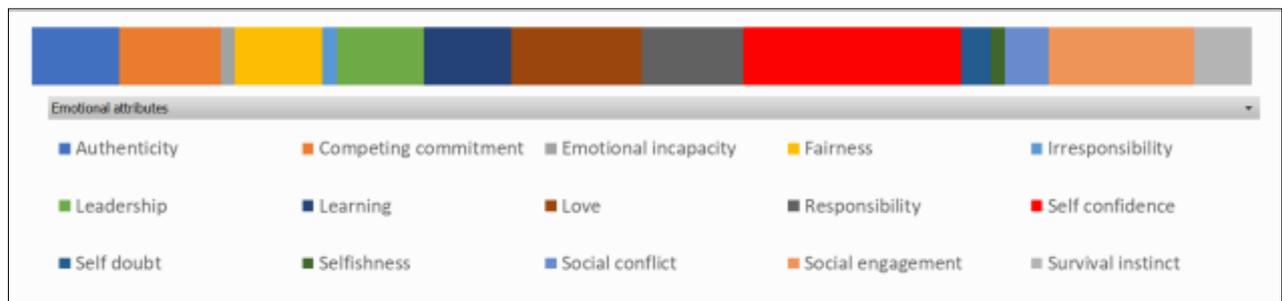
EWRs became more 'responsible' in tougher situations that forced them to 'protect' (Heifetz, Grashow, Linksy, 2009) their villagers from any harm caused by variables they could not fully control. They treated adversity as an opportunity to show leadership. A combination of these two emotional attributes enabled them to become as successful as more privileged EWRs.

Psychological and social factors significantly influence EWR performance.

Before considering day and night vision, it is important to consider the attributes that occupy the mind share of EWRs, earning the maximum # of instances that were observed during the interviews.

Successful or performing EWRs clearly seem to have a positive mindset shadowing negative emotions, as reflected in the following distribution of 15 attributes:

Σ = 84 or 70% of the 120 EWRs interviewed



The top 3 choices of performing EWRs were the attributes of 'self-confidence', 'love' and 'social engagement'. It was amply clear to me that they linked these attributes as 'mutually reinforcing' as they shared their lives, their struggles, their mental fortitude, and the approach to lives. They experienced identity integration despite of experiencing competing commitment.

On the other hand, less successful or underperforming EWRs appear to mostly have a negative mindset, as reflected in the following distribution of 7 attributes:

Σ = 36 or 30% of the 120 EWRs interviewed

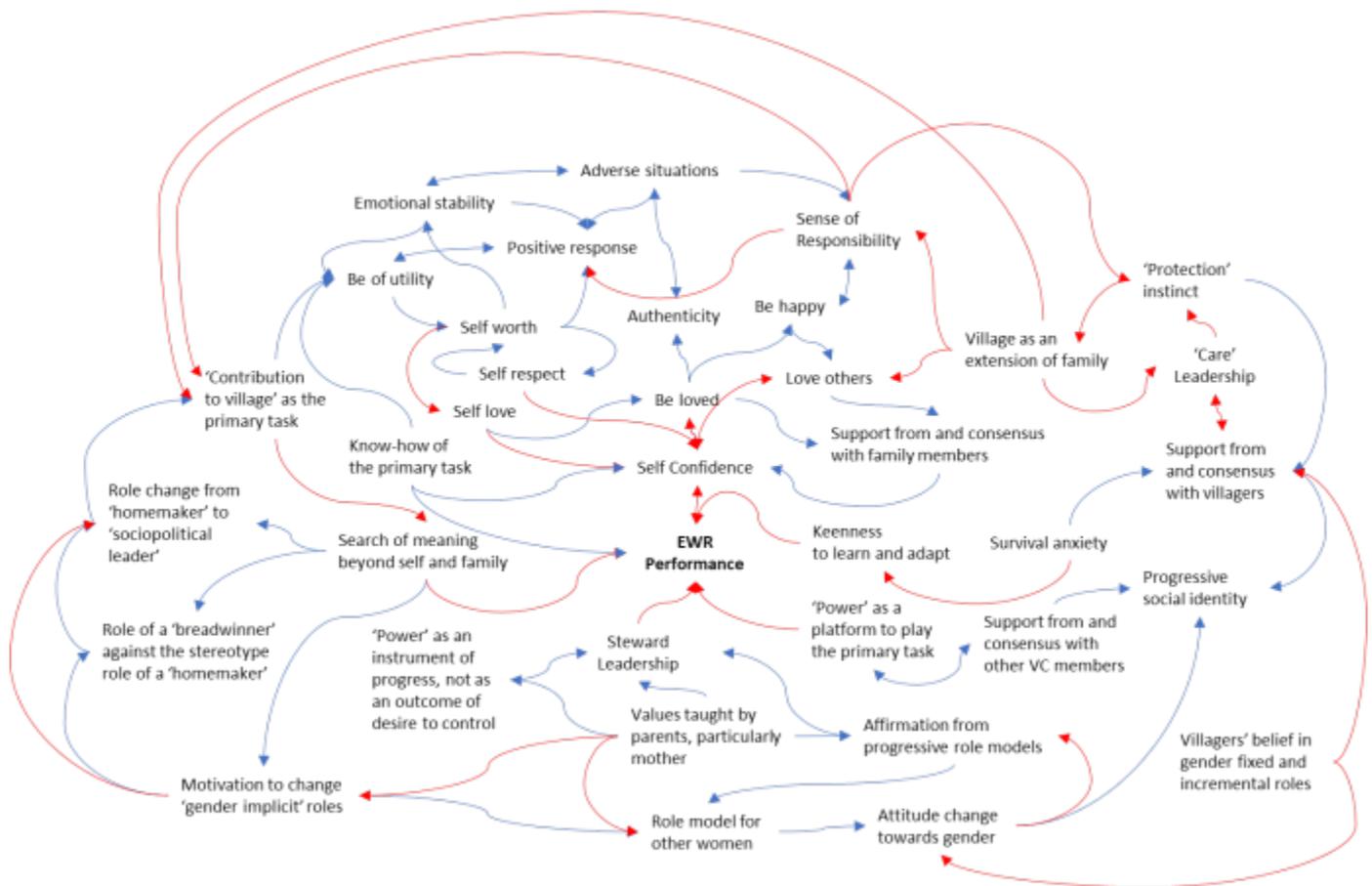


The top 3 choices of under-performing EWRs were the attributes of 'self-doubt', 'emotional incapacity' and 'irresponsibility'. Their stories indicated to me a certain degree of identity conflict that made them ineffective in their working lives.

Influence Map 2

The complex tapestry of the attributes that were chosen by the EWRs revealed itself to me as I studied the responses to the questions.

Of the 150+ emotional attributes that EWRs reacted to (see Appendix 5), 30+ attributes that EWRs considered most relevant, have been analysed based on the interpretation of answers to the Critical Ethnography Questionnaire (see Appendix 4). Influence Map 2 shows these 30+ emotional attributes and their influence on each other.



Legend:

- ↑ Significant influence
- ↑ Moderate influence

Self-confidence and a string of seven emotions

“Nothing can stop me. I will make the change happen, whatever it takes for me to do it”

[One of the Elected Women Representatives (EWRs)]

Self-confidence emerges as the most important psychological attribute to explain the performance of EWR presidents (Hollenbeck & Hall, 2004; Hoffman, Woehr, Maldagen-Young & Lyons, 2010; Popper, Amit, K., Gal, Mishkal-Sinai, & Lisak, 2004). This is one of seven emotions that form a close interdependent relationship.

Self-confident and successful EWRs usually solicit good support from family members (especially their husbands) and strongly believe in spreading universal attributes of love (Goleman, 1995; Ashforth 1999). They embrace most of the seven emotional attributes of love, learning, authenticity, fairness, survival instinct, social engagement, and leadership. This confirms findings in the literature, particularly from a similar study of PsyCap or psychological capital observed in successful leaders (Peterson, Waldman, Balthazard & Thatcher, 2008). 83% of the successful EWRs chose these seven emotional attributes as the most important ones among 150+; while only 41% of the unsuccessful ones picked them as the most important ones.

EWRs who spread love appear to love themselves. They demonstrate self-worth, self-belief, and self-esteem (Chemers, Watson, & May 2000; Gibbons, 1986; Kotter, 1988; Murphy, 2002). EWRs with self-esteem and self-worth usually have strong survival instincts. They learn fast and adapt; this prompts them to make the effort to build the knowledge they need to accomplish their primary task (Hirschhorn et al. 1999, 2000, 2015). Spreading love does not come easily unless one loves oneself and has self-esteem and respect. An astounding 92% of the successful EWRs celebrated the ideas of self-esteem and self-respect, while over 80% of the sub-optimal performers thought the idea of self-respect was overrated!

Survival instinct is the primal force that we, as humans, have inherited from animals through evolution, spanning millions of years. In the case of successful EWRs, this trait appears to dominate their responses, helping them to learn and adapt better. Interestingly, it is not only

existential anxiety (Hannay 2014) that encourages them to learn; they also have a strong drive to expand their own physical and mental potential; this enables them to learn better and faster.

While the survival instinct is at the level of 'self', the drive to expand potential is not at the level of 'self' but relates to the level of the 'family' and to villagers, the extended family. It is strongly correlated with a strong sense of responsibility, recalling the phrase 'noblesse oblige' or 'privilege entails responsibility'; it enables them to work hard to protect their families and extended families. The sense of responsibility that includes extended families also allows EWRs to 'direct' and 'protect' the people they feel responsible for (Heifetz, et al. 2009). Both EWRs and villagers offer mutual support and cooperation, realising that they are interdependent parts of the 'system' of a village. EWRs also demonstrate a third dimension, 'order', which is characteristic of effective leaders (Heifetz, et al., 2009).

Successful EWRs also share a social identity with their villagers (Reicher, Haslam, & Platow, 2007). This finding provides increasing evidence that leaders who can build a common identity are more likely to rally their people to serve a common cause, rather than a cause espoused only by leaders. It seems plausible that leaders such as EWRs, who think of themselves as leading a common cause (advancing the villagers) have more successful than leaders who see themselves as merely occupying a position of duty or authority, as required by legislative changes.

Most effective leaders are first-born children in their family systems. There is evidence of an overrepresentation of first-born children among female political leaders and the present study has confirmed this to be true in the case of EWRs (Andeweg & Van Den Berg, 2003). 71% of the underperformers or suboptimal performers were either younger or middle children.

Most EWRs have inherited from their parents or learned from their teachers that fairness is important, both when it comes to outcomes, and when it comes to the process one follows to arrive at a decision (Van Der Heyden, Blondel & Carlock, 2005). This approach is authentic for women leaders who have overcome difficulties (Cook, 2012; Felt, 2018), because they know that the next generation of women will not live better lives if unfair practices and falsehoods that have governed society for centuries can continue, alongside the idea that these practices are

necessary for survival. The notion of doing better for society and a burning desire to be useful can be passed on by parents or primary school teachers. More often than men, the EWRs appear to present their true selves, rather than projecting an image. Considering the social setting and their backgrounds, successful EWRs seemed remarkably authentic. As Guenter, Schreurs, Emmerik, and Sun put it in 2017, 'this trait elicits a positive response from silent workers in the villages, amplifying the momentum of progress'.

Successful EWRs have emotional capability and a huge capacity to reflect (Huy Quy, 1999). Again, as much as 94% of the successful EWRs demonstrate high levels of maturity and stability with respect to their emotions, even in the wake of trauma. Running a Village Council provides a perfect opportunity for them to exercise those faculties. Their primary tasks and roles at home and at work allow them to prioritise, choose, act, and seek feedback all the time. Less successful EWRs need to develop this capacity (Hirschhorn et al. 1999, 2000, 2015). In fact, emotionally capable EWRs enhance the emotional capital (Huy Quy, 1999) of the villagers. Collectively, it is a mutually reinforcing and rewarding relationship.

EWRs who suffer from guilt or a lack of self-worth (Chemers, et al., 1986, 2002) end up doubting themselves (Barkouli, 2015), which constrains them in their roles. Emotionally shy EWRs (those unable to express themselves well) have also been found to be controversial at work, generating arguments in the Village Council and from male members. EWR presidents did not seem to find it any more difficult to influence positive action once they raised their voices than male Village Council presidents. Interestingly, this result contrasted with the findings of Esther, Pande, and Petia (2007), based on the samples they studied.

The Mother-Leadership of Villagers, as an extended family:

"We are a family...I need to look after them"

[One of the Elected Women Representatives (EWRs)]

73% of the successful EWRs think of villagers as the extension of their families. This new form of leadership can be termed being a 'Mother Leader', in cases where EWRs perceive themselves as acting like mothers to their extended families and working with them to achieve a common goal.

Looking after the family often comes naturally to these women because they see themselves as 'care leaders'. Care leading (Houghton, Pearce, Manz, Courtright & Stewart, 2015) is a behaviour derived from the instinct to 'protect'. It can become an automatic (not authentic and yet positive) response to the situation of finding themselves elected as the leaders of villages. Care leading and protecting a family are behaviours often found in mothers (Heifetz, et al., 2009).

The findings of the present study show that EWRs have a strong sense of responsibility, which enables them to work hard to protect their families and extended families. They are also able to make hard choices in discharging their responsibilities. For example, several EWRs have 'directed' (Heifetz, et al. 2009) their children to better schools in cities to look after villagers (i.e. members of their extended families). They tend to have a clear sense of what is best for their children and extended families. This allows them to win support and respect from the villagers, which in turn enables them to provide better for their children. These EWRs also direct the villagers, which becomes their primary task (Hirschhorn et al. 1999, 2000, 2015). EWRs who assume leadership at work tend to expect to be obeyed at home, in cases where their husbands willingly share the home responsibilities. The entire household tends to follow the EWR, even at home.

EWRs do not seek power or a position to fulfil a desire for dominance or control. Instead, they seek opportunities to contribute to their community as a way of finding meaning in life (Smith, 2017). They treat Village Councils as a platform for that opportunity. Successful EWRs

recognise that power will allow them to contribute more and faster; they therefore learn to navigate Village Council politics effectively. By contrast, less successful EWRs view their roles as a type of 'service' and may be relegated to the minority position in Village Councils.

EWRs tend to respond to the needs of their extended families sincerely, often leading to win-win results for themselves and the villagers. At times, they set aside potential personal gains in the larger interest of the community. Men, on the other hand, tend to view the villagers as a workplace responsibility, and not as members of an extended family. They may therefore fail to initiate an action that addresses village issues if they believe it will only benefit the villagers and not advance their own careers. The warmer, enlarged lens of EWRs helps them achieve more confidence and cooperation from villagers.

EWRs who view their responsibility to the villagers as an additional duty tend to view it as a 'competing commitment' that may interfere with their commitment to their own families (Kegan & Laskow, 2001). This makes it harder for them to balance their roles as mothers to families and EWRs. An examination of the Core Conflictual Relationship Theme (CCRT) (Lubrosky 1984, 1997, 1998; Eells, 1997; Book, 1998a; Dos, 2013) for underperforming EWRs shows that, while their own wish (W) is to make a change (like successful EWRs), other Village Council members (ROa) believe that they demonstrate reluctant, late cooperation and procrastinate while carrying out tasks. They tend to fall into two key forms of distorted thinking: the fairness fallacy and polarisation (McKay, Davis & Fanning, 2011). They feel dejected, lost and ambivalent (RSa). Their behavioural response (RSb) is that of inaction or laissez-faire leadership, neither task- nor people-oriented. Little wonder, that 89% of the EWRs who faced these issues and were unable to meet them, met with uncooperative VC members or faced hindrance in implementation, from them, eventually causing delays or delivering a sub-optimal performance.

Successful EWRs have positive social identities and experience identity integration. Social identity is a meaning attached to the self in the context of social surroundings of an individual. As individuals take up several roles their identity is formed severally (Karelaia N & Guillén L, 2014). Their self-views are related to how they view their gender-identity and whether it conflicts with their leader-identity. Successful EWRs demonstrate that attributes expected from

a woman and expected from a leader need not be conflicting. While gender stereotypes would advocate more *affectionate* behaviours from mothers while leaders would be expected to demonstrate more assertive, decisive and clinical behaviours, mother-leaders in EWRs defy this paradigm. Unsuccessful or underperforming EWRs inherently experience a tussle between these identities leading to less authentic leader behaviours, impaired decision making, stress and poor motivation to play leader roles often resulting in a spill-over to a role of a mother.

Gender bias in the treatment of underperforming EWRs

Most Village Council members respect EWRs, if they seem competent, regardless of their gender. They are intolerant of EWRs and treat them with bias when they consider them incompetent, disagreeable, or impractical. Underperforming women are treated more harshly than underperforming men.

There was an unwritten understanding that if women were elected, it was doing them a 'favour', even though it is required by the legislation. This was clear in some of my conversations with men in local governance, who cited examples of EWR underperformance more vehemently than similar cases involving men. It was also evident that the stakes were higher for women than for men since women are trying to do something that men have always done. There is a perception that the men have been 'gracious' in offering this opportunity to women.

'Gender implicit' theories (fixed vs incremental) (Kray, Howland, Russell, & Jackman, 2016) argue that the notion of what a woman should and should not, either as a biological necessity or when roles have evolved, due to sociocultural factors, governs the lens through which men and women see their roles in society. I saw aspects of this belief existing unconsciously in the society. In cases of underperformance, there was a tendency to ask whether the fact that women were acting outside prescribed roles almost gave men a right to 'punish' them for failing. Given that men hardly ever play any role traditionally discharged by women (raising kids like a mother or doing household chores), they consider themselves absolved of any guilt (Fischer, Shaver, & Carnochan, 1990) since they have stuck to their roles. It therefore becomes harder for women who underperform, as it is much harder to climb back to a position of

respect after episodes of underperformance. In one of the villages, an underperforming woman had to face significant resistance from her male colleagues after a few setbacks in her achievement record. Cases in which EWRs faced significant resistance or criticism due to underperformance reflected an overall belief in fixed gender implicit theory by the villagers. In villages where incremental theory believers were more dominant than the fixed theory believers, the villagers were fairer and less critical of women (Van Der Heyden et al., 2005), treating them as they would treat men.

Dr Terry Batter, a Harvard Business School professor specialising in gender role research in the workplace explained at the International Gender Research Forum (IGRF) in Washington DC in July 2012 that 'in most societies, gender roles are set like plaster early in its founding and will never soften again,' and that societies 'gain experience and develop, but they do so on the foundation of enduring divisions of labour between the sexes'. His comments confirm my experience of having interacted with EWRs and the actors in their systems.

Village Council Offices, 'the bonds of freedom'

Frankl (1984) has discussed the way in which a response to external stimuli determines 'freedom'. Village Council offices are transitional objects for successful EWRs. The objects fill a void, representing the much-cherished concept of 'freedom' (Petriglieri, 2010, 2011) that womenfolk deserve, away from the walls of homes that confine them to mundane household duties; they also represent a 'bond' with the extended families. The offices are vehicles that help them engage socially with the villagers, and allow them to protect and direct (Heifetz, et al., 2009) these members of their extended families.

Homes and immediate families represent a unit where EWRs see their past and present identity, while Village Council offices represent a unit where EWRs see their 'changing present' in a state of 'becoming' and certainly their future (Whitehead, 1920s). They see their 'possible selves' in the role of the president of the Village Council (Ibarra, 2004). Contrary to expectations, prior to the study, the Village Council offices were not merely work places; for successful EWRs, they are a mirror in which to see their progressive social identity.

Successful EWRs can move from the confined spaces of their homes to Village Councils, adapting themselves to move from 'singleton status' to 'membership individual' (Turquet, 1994). Their shyness, hesitancy to interact, and the vulnerability of being exposed to Village Council members is shadowed by emotions and acts, as described in Themes I and II of the previous paragraphs (Kegan & Lahey 2009). This attitude contrasts with that of underperforming EWRs, who stick to their shadowed selves and mental cocoons, despite being out of the physical cocoons of their homes.

The roles that successful EWRs want to play define how they see the places that allow them to play those roles. They see families and extended families as 'one system' and themselves as the 'kernel of this system' (Senge, 1996, 2014)

Underperforming EWRs, on the other hand, see the offices as places for extra work, adding to their current responsibilities at home. In some cases, underperformers treat their offices as places to redeem themselves by doing good for society. It seems clear that the underperformers invariably have guilt (Fischer, Shaver, & Carnochan, 1990) of some kind, relating to their past lives; they aim to offset it through good deeds by using the Village Council office.

Another finding of this study is that EWRs who suffer from guilt (Lehman & Van, 2017) related to their past lives find it hard to make peace with; in fact, it increases their self-doubt (Kinias & Sim, 2016) and undermines their confidence in their ability to do primary tasks (Hirschhorn et al. 1999, 2000, 2015). Because of this, they find it more difficult to think with clarity about ways to collaborate with Village Council members; this, in turn, affects their social identity and execution of duties adversely.

EWRs are both, the instrument and the change

EWRs see themselves as instruments of change that need to be changed themselves (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). They aim to renew themselves and the villages at the same time. They are both givers and recipients.

In the EWRs' concept of their role in the 'system' they see their potential selves as a new object of social identity (Oyserman & Fryberg, 2006). In that sense, they view themselves as part of the village and as the shaper of a new village or new order. In a strange way, they feel as if they are playing the role of goddesses within the village system. They consider themselves to be both separate individuals and part of the system they lead.

EWRs sometimes lose their own separate identities, apart from their families and the other villagers. Being one with the change has a deeper meaning. Perhaps, this is the very root of EWR success; the absence of this root causes other EWRs to be unsuccessful. The notion of being change agents and change itself in the context of their roles, needs a deeper understanding of underlying variables.

Chapter 5: Limitations and The Future Directions of The Research

The night vision developed during this study rests upon a discovery made by probing the minds of 120 EWRs in 19 districts across 100 villages of the state of Maharashtra in India. This study was the start of a journey into the fascinating field of women's socio-political leadership at the grassroots level in India. The study is subject to limitations which also are the future directions of the research.

Firstly, this study provides opens a door to a range of topics that could be probed deeper to predict the levers of change better. In this context, this study is a platform on which quantitatively rigorous pressure tests can be carried out to examine statistically significant correlations between the variables outlined in the influence maps; these can predict controllable levers to improve EWR selection and performance.

Secondly, by drawing on the fields of political psychology, behavioural economics, and philosophy, this research would shed more light on the interrelationships between variables that help us better define the psychological profiles of EWRs and deal with this subject more holistically.

Thirdly, the study outcomes are intended to accentuate the need to equip EWRs with the necessary tools to fortify their minds. I propose the creation of 'therapeutic communities'¹⁰ to teach and foster the right emotional attributes among EWRs, their families, and villagers. The deliberations on the nationwide formation of the communities will enable all the actors in this system to achieve Village Council objectives, shape electoral policies for adoption by central and state ministries, provide a base for making a positive socio-political change, and thereby improve their economic status. Such improvements would enable India to march towards achieving its equality-related Sustainable Development Goals.

¹⁰ Inspired by the work of Wilfred Bion, in establishing what he called a therapeutic community in hospitals that treated British soldiers during the Second World War; it shifted the focus from treating individual patients to a group-based treatment that prepared them to come back to the battlefield. This systemic paradigm included all aspects of leadership, social participation, education, and rehabilitation, exactly what is called for in the social systems of EWRs.

Chapter 6: The Early Benefits

Traversing the path of this intervention, I discovered that EWRs are indeed looking for a psychologically safe space (Walumbwa, & Schaubroeck, 2009), to share feelings, emotions, thoughts, and ideas relevant to their primary tasks. The process of deep listening (Walters, 2005), motivational interviewing, and engaging them in a discussion of how they could realise their own potential worked miraculously fast; within 10 days of my concluding the interviews, some of the EWRs shared with me that they had afterthoughts and reflections on how to do justice to their roles in Village Councils and even at home. Some of those afterthoughts and reflections involved the realisation that their new possible selves truly represented the right choice; others helped them to introspect about who they really were and how they could leverage their strengths.

While the self-realisation of possible selves is the first sign of EWRs being conscious of how they would make a difference, the real and quantum change is possible once the Ministries of Rural Development, Women & Child Development and others concerned with institutionalising governance practices at Village Councils become conscious of the psychological needs and therapies that could be implemented in Indian villages. The consultations with the concerned officials have begun.

Reflections

Reflecting on this study, I realised that my choice of topic germinated in my mind in childhood, when I saw the plight of women in rural areas in some of my travels. I do hope to contribute to the society that the EWRs belong to. I share their deep desire to rescue and change socially unprivileged and minority groups (Kets de Vries, 2013). The idea must have remained in my subconscious until now, when the trigger of writing a thesis pulled it to the surface.

The 'night vision' lens (Lehman & Van de Loo, 2016) and psychodynamic systems approach (Kets de Vries & Cheak, 2014) are and will remain the main tools used to make this change possible, in any therapeutic communities set up in villages.

Finally, the fact that my intervention was therapeutic for some EWRs was truly the best gift I could have received because of carrying out this intervention. I do realise what an enormous impact it would have, should the therapeutic communities be set up in villages, specifically to fortify the minds of EWRs and other actors in their ecosystem. With this hope, I conclude my thesis, which is just a start along the path to realising the psychological transformation of EWRs.

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Appendix 1: Prehistoric Literature

In India, one can trace the psychology of gender since *Rig Veda*, an ancient code of conduct written around 1500 BCE as an example of egalitarian, equalitarian, and comprehensive depictions of 'night visions' of human emotions, feelings, thoughts, and ego and defence mechanisms, occurring at the self, group, and societal levels. My examination of the text suggests that gender roles were not defined to confine women within certain roles in society but were largely misinterpreted by the society then.

Rig Veda, analysed by Western and Asian scholars worldwide, notes that the status of women in India was superior to men and they were respected as much as men (Bumiller Supra, note 8) (Weiler, 1988 in Vol 1 Introduction, *Sources of Indian Tradition*, 3). The Indus civilisation that lived around 2500 BCE ascribed equal rights and status to women. Aryans, who came to India around 2000 BCE, via the silk route from Europe, mingled with the Indians, living in what was called a 'Hindu' continent and an institutionalised gender egalitarian society. Between that time and somewhere around 1250 BCE, the society's attitudes towards women derailed; several scriptures believed to be written by saints and spiritual people were misinterpreted.

Manusmriti, one of the oldest legal texts, developed in 1250 BCE, was instrumental in assigning roles and rights to women in India, clearly assigning them inferior tasks. The *Manusmriti* was also one of the first Sanskrit texts studied by European philologists. It was first translated into English by Sir William Jones in 1794. The treatise assigned roles to men and women and believed that the 'primary task' of women (Hirschhorn et al. 1999, 2000, 2015) was to serve men and bear children, and later to provide cooked food for men who clearly dominated the relationship. In many ways, those were the first seeds of discrimination in society. The idea of gender roles was born sometime during that period ¹¹.

The European Renaissance, which took place between the 12th and 17th centuries CE, heralded the divide between Western and Eastern notions of human material progress. It coincided with a rapid decline of India's spiritual, cultural and economic status. For the 500 years until 1947, the Dutch, Portuguese, French, and English empires exploited the divisions between India's genders, cultures, languages, economy, politics, and society. Indians related to their rulers as people do in feudal kingdoms and empires.

¹¹ The idea was also upheld by men, on grounds that we must recognise and respect the inherent natural differences between men and women, which require them to play different roles in society. Women became the objects of passion and lust—the weaker sex, designed to confine themselves to tasks that men considered low status.

Appendix 2: Selecting the state of Maharashtra and 19 districts:

Based on the 2012 and 2014 census, which estimated the rural population, there were around 600 million women in India, of whom 450 million lived in villages. Since 1993, when the Government of India (GOI) brought in legislation (as part of the 73rd constitutional amendment) that reserved 33% of the seats in Gram Panchayats (Village Councils) for women and subsequently increased that to 50%, the noble goals of women's empowerment, gender neutrality, rural development, social liberty, and inclusive economic prosperity have been notoriously difficult to achieve. Among India's 29 states, only four have 50% reserved seats for women in Village Councils and municipalities, while nine have 50% reserved seats only in Village Councils. Sixteen have 33% reserved seats for women in Village Councils. Some states have achieved the expected outcomes, and some have not. Gender quotas for women have been in place for over 75 years in the world (Mansbridge, 2005). Instituting gender quotas was meant to increase the number of women holding political power. Before 1970, only five countries had adopted gender quotas in politics; 45 years later, 100 countries have adopted them (Bush, Sarah Sunn, 2011). In its 2018 annual budget, the Indian government broached the idea of having 33% reserved seats for women in parliament.

This study focuses the state of Maharashtra for three reasons. First, Maharashtra is one of India's most diverse states, from a political, physical, geographical, social, economic, and religious perspective. Maharashtra and Karnataka were the first two states to adopt a modern form of the Panchayat concept and pro-women policies in India in the 1960s. Even now, they are front runners, with 50% reserved positions. For this study, I selected 19 districts that represent this diversity. Each district individually or collectively provides insights and answers. Second, Maharashtra was the best place to carry out an intervention, given the language and cultural familiarity; the conversations with the EWRs were carried out in Marathi (a local language that enabled me to connect with EWRs, not only intellectually, but also culturally and emotionally). It was more straightforward to carry out and action this research from my base in Mumbai, Maharashtra; this location made it easier to control the output quality and correct the course if needed. The findings of this study can be acted upon by the State Government of Maharashtra by adopting the future directions suggested in Chapter 5.

There are 35 districts and around 43665 villages in Maharashtra. This represents a huge diversity; I selected 19 districts covering around 100 villages, which provided the best opportunity for me to develop deep insights. These villages represented a wide range of diverse economic situations and demographic characteristics (including population, gender, and age). They also represent diverse religious beliefs, castes, and communities that control people's attitudes. Lastly but most importantly, these 19 districts and around 100 villages exhibit diverse political and social profiles that in turn produce interesting and varied EWR profiles.

Please see Exhibits 1–7.

Appendix 3: Critical Ethnography Questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed to be open ended to elicit a free discussion without limiting the respondents to boundaries of their responses. It was translated into local language to allow the EWRs express themselves the best. The collation of responses was done in local language and then translated into English. It was then codified and tabulated for ease of interpretation.

The steps I followed in making EWRs develop an understanding were designed to build confidence in EWRs that my intent was genuine.

I interviewed 20 EWRs at the Village Council and DC levels to first, build a general view on the need for such an intervention. I use these interactions to define the questionnaire. I then followed up with a 2-day workshop to train the RSCD officials to conduct interviews with EWRs in Maharashtra.

Given the huge gender issue and social sensitivities in the villages, I needed to be careful with the method I used to study EWRs, since, in most cases, they are not allowed to interact with men other than their husbands. For this reason, I teamed up with some senior EWRs to gain access and acceptance. This enabled me to carry out the interviews with the EWRs, the subjects of this study.

Critical Ethnography: 'Motivational Interviewing' and 'Providing Psychological Safety' (Walumbwa, & Schaubroeck, 2009) Open ended Questions that I asked the EWRs:

This is a set of questions that I asked the EWRs to build up a picture of their Psychological Construct (PC). I divided the EWRs into those with positive and negative PC, based on their answers, and assessed the factors that are significant in predicting PC, based on the answers and insights developed during the interviews. I also tested the extent to which these factors influenced Village Councils in which the EWRs' performance met expected performance levels, as compared with Village Councils where the EWRs were less successful.

Profile of a Woman

- A. Born in/Age:
- B. Marital status:
(Married/Unmarried/Remarried/Divorced/Estranged/Second wife/...)
- C. Religious orientation:
- D. Educational status:
- E. Grades for the last two levels of education
- F. Previous occupation:
- G. Current occupation:
- H. # of hours spent in the family:
- I. # of children:
- J. Ages of the children:
- K. Age of the husband:
- L. Parents alive/dead:
- M. Married at the age of:
- N. First child born after # of years of marriage:
- O. # of abortions/miscarriages:
- P. # of members of the family (Husband/children/in-laws/parents/others):
- Q. Income of the family in ₹:
- R. Family's consumption expenditure in ₹
- S. Do the children earn an income?
- T. Occupations of the children:
- U. Your earned income in ₹:
- V. Assets of the family in ₹:
- W. Ancestral and earned mix:
- X. Earned asset mix:
- Y. Family property:

Feelings and Emotions in the Family (Continued...):

1. Please tell us some memories of your childhood.
2. Do you respect your parents?
3. What did your parents teach you?
4. What did your parents scold you for?
5. Do you respect your parents?
6. What did your parents teach you?
7. Do you have any siblings? How many brothers and sisters? How many first cousins? Are you the youngest or oldest or in-between? How do you feel about it? Why?
8. Did you get along well with your siblings? Why?
9. What are your most pleasant memories with your siblings?
10. Do you share a good relationship with your parents now? Why?
11. Do you feel more grateful to your father or mother?
12. Who in your childhood do you remember the most? Why?
13. Do you miss anyone in your life? Why?
14. How is your husband? How do you relate to him (as an authority)?
15. Does your husband love you?
16. Do you feel sexually objectified? By whom? Do you think it is fine if your husband, does it? Why?
17. Why do you think your husband married you? How do you feel about that?
18. When do you sleep?
19. When do you eat? Do you eat after your husband does?
20. Who cooks the food in your house? Do you cook all the food? Do your daughters and sisters help you?
21. Who does most of the household work? Do you get any help?
22. Do you think you should have been more educated? Why?
23. Who encouraged you to study? Why?
24. Who encouraged you to be good at housework? Why?
25. Which subject did you like to most? Why?
26. Which subject did you dislike? Why?
27. Did you like your teacher? Why?
28. Did your teacher help you in your studies and learning?
29. Did your father help you in your studies?
30. Does your husband help you in your studies and learning?
31. What important decisions have you made in your life?
32. Which important decisions in your life were made by your parents or others? Why?
33. Do you think you will have trouble surviving without your husband? Why?

Council Profile of the Woman

1. # of meetings attended as a ratio of the # of meetings per year
2. # of hours spent in the Council:
3. Elected in:
4. Elected by (members/general elections/key influencer...):
5. Elected first/second time?
6. # of years as the member and/or the Head of the Council:
7. Your Department, if you are a member:
GA/Fin/PW/Agri/Health/Edu/Soc Welfare/IT/Other:
8. Outcomes for you:
9. Achievement in the past two years (Excellent/V Good/Average/Poor):
10. Reasons for Achievement:
11. Top three outcomes targeted in next two years:

Feelings and Emotions about having a position in the Council

1. Do you attend Council meetings?
2. Would the ownership of family assets made you attend meetings or have a stronger voice in meetings?
3. Do you speak in the Council? Do you mostly observe?
4. Do the members of the Council support you in your work? Why?
5. Do the members of the Council not support you? Why?
6. Do the female members of the Panchayat support you more than the male members? Why?
7. Do you support other members of the Council? Why? If you don't, why not?
8. Which members of the Council would you would like to gain support from? Why?
9. Which members of the Council would you prefer not to support? Why?
10. How does the head behave with you?
11. Do you feel that you are respected in the Council?
12. Do you respect other members?
13. Do you hate someone?
14. Do you like someone?
15. Do you feel better when you participate in the Council?
16. Do you feel better when you lead the Council?
17. What do you feel when your contribution is rejected by other members of the group?
18. How do you feel most of the time when you are functioning in the Council? Useful? Exposed? Vulnerable? Shy? Anxious?
19. What acts as a barrier, stopping you from communicating? What acts as a gateway? (to be explained)
20. Are you in a state of self-doubt or self-compassion (to be phrased differently)?

Woman's Role on the Council

12. Who helped you to run for election? Explain
13. What help do you value most? Why?
14. Is your role on the Council defined? Who defined it? Have you been briefed on the role you are supposed to play? Is it different from what you have been doing? Why?
15. What is your 'primary task'? what is the 'primary risk' you face? (to be explained)
16. What is your secondary role, task, and risk? (to be explained)

(...Continued) Feelings and Emotions in the Family:

34. Do you think your husband will have trouble surviving without you? Why?
35. Do you think your children are better off without your husband? Why?
36. What does your husband do that you think he should not do?
37. What should your husband do that he does not do?
38. Does your husband have any bad habits? What are they? Why?
39. What have you done to help him overcome his bad habits?
40. How does he respond to your help?
41. Does he take help from someone else? Why?
42. Does your husband talk to you affectionately? Why or why not?
43. What makes you sad? What makes you happy? What makes you enraged? What makes you feel dejected or depressed? What makes you feel elated? What makes you feel unsafe?
44. Do you feel protected or isolated?
45. Do you feel unsafe? Why?
46. Do you feel you should assert yourself more?
47. Do you feel guilty?
48. Do you worry that you might never do anything in life that you can feel proud of? Have you done anything that you are proud of? Why?
49. Have you done anything that you feel ashamed of? Why?
50. Do you ever feel like hitting someone?
51. Do you like to talk? Are you silent? What do you like to talk about?
52. Do you like sitting in a corner of the room or alone? Why?
53. What do you do when you are alone?
54. Do you realise that you and your husband are interdependent? Does he realise it? Why do you think you always need to obey him, as a man, if there is interdependence?
55. What do you do when your husband is around?
56. What do you do when your in-laws are around?
57. How do your in-laws interact with you? Why?
58. When do you cry? Why?
59. When was the last time you laughed a lot? Why?
60. What do you think you can do to feel better every day? Why?
61. How do your husband's friends and relatives behave with you? Why?
62. What do you like about the village you live in? What don't you like? Do you know of a better village? Why do you think it is better than yours?
63. Do you have friends? Who are they? Are they childhood friends?
64. Do you interact with your friends? When? What do you like about them? Who would you like to spend the most time with? Why?
65. How does your husband interact with your friends? Why?
66. Do you find yourself in situations that could have been avoided? Is there a consistent pattern to these events?
67. What are you considering doing about your status?
68. Do you believe that ownership of assets, such as land, would have helped you have more say in family matters?
69. What are your options?
70. Do you have all that you need to improve the situation?

17. How does your role fit into the workings of the Panchayat? Does it complement others' roles? Is it in conflict with other roles? Why?
18. Does your role or primary task conflict with those of your family? Why?
19. Evaluate the extent to which you think family comes first, regardless of your success in the Village Council (will politics end in the short term while family bonds are for life?)
20. Would you like your role to be different? Why?
21. Do you regard this role as a 'competing commitment' in relation to your family commitments? Or do you see it differently? Why? (to be explained)
22. Do you think that the Panchayat (Council) is an object (transitional or otherwise) that meets your need for a 'safe space'? Does this role allow you to feel 'equal' to men?
23. Has your self-confidence increased after being in the Gram Panchayat?
24. Does your husband give you more respect than before?
25. Does anyone share your home responsibilities?

Attendance, Participation and Outcomes in the Council

(This section describes the dependent variable 'Effectiveness of an EWR'):

1. How many times did you attend or not attend a meeting?
2. How many times did you speak in a meeting to tell members about an issue/problem?
3. How many times have your explanation of issues or problems been heard by others?
4. How many times have the points you've made influenced the final decisions made by the Panchayat?
5. How many decisions have been made by the Panchayat during the time you've been a member?
6. How many decisions were made, in which you did not have any say?
7. How does the decision-making process happen? Was it different in the past? Would it be different in the future? Why?
8. Do you interact with collector officers at the Zilla level (IAS or revenue officers or those who run the elections), such as District Magistrates (District Court) or Tahsildars, who are responsible for Taluka elections, and Talathis, who look after the villages?
9. How about CEOs, municipal councils, Zilla Parishads, Panchayat Samitees (Councils) and Taluka Samitees?
10. Do you interact with the Secretaries or other key actors, such as CEOs, Gram Sevak (Bhau, as they are addressed in Maharashtra) and their equivalents? How about Block District Officers (BDOs)?
11. Do you think that the Panchayat has a clear idea of what needs to be done to achieve desirable outcomes?
12. Do you think that the Panchayat has achieved the desirable outcomes?
13. Do you think you have achieved the outcomes laid out for you?
14. What have the obstacles been in voicing your views, participating, or achieving goals in the Gram Panchayat?
15. Do you think that a fair process is followed to make decisions?
16. Who decides what needs to be achieved and why?
17. What would you do to make your Panchayat achieve more than it has in the past? Why? For example, would you be happy if you were asked to accompany the Gram Panchayat to the BDO or CEO office to do the follow up? What if you could call the Gram Sevak home without any fear that your husband or in-law would object? What other measures are needed to create change?

Defence mechanisms and cognitive behaviours

1. Do you avoid discussing your problems, wishes, and feelings with anyone? If you do discuss them, whom do you talk to?
2. Do you find yourself refusing to accept any reality that may be unpleasant to you?
3. Do you ever do something that you regret later? Have you been unable to stop doing it?
4. Do you feel isolated and negated? In your family or the Council?
5. Do you feel superior to others in the family/Council?
6. How do you manage the polarisation of views?
7. Are you afraid of any objects or subjects—anything you want to mention?
8. Do you feel anxious in the Council? Why?
9. Do you feel that other female members in the Council are victims like you?
10. Do you feel 'decorated yet voiceless' in the Council?
11. How do you manage to contain your 'negative emotions'? (to be explained)
12. Have you accepted that this is your fate?
13. Do you respond or act in a manner that you owe to past experiences? Have you thought about whether you could respond differently? Why?
14. Have you ever revolted? Have you ever expressed denial? Have you ever said 'no'?
15. Do you feel that you should change? You should change someone/something? Be changed?
16. Is your response to 'fight in', 'be frightened of' or 'take flight from' a situation? why? (to be explained)
17. What events in the Council have caused you distress? Why? What did you do to overcome the situation?
18. Why do you think wrong or unfavourable events happen in the Council? How do you feel about their causes?
19. What events in the Council have made you happy? Why? What did you do afterwards?
20. Would you behave differently if the same event happened again?
21. How have these events formed your view of the functioning of the Council?
22. Who would help you build the capacity/capability to succeed at your 'primary task' in the Council? Who would help manage your 'primary risk'? (to be explained)

Appendix 4: Realist Ethnography Guide

Realist Ethnography:

A. Ethnographic observations on her house:

1. *What objects do you see in a woman's house?*
2. *What elements strike you as 'male' symbols and 'female' symbols?*
3. *What is the 'feel' of the place? What smells are you aware of?*
4. *How large is the house?*
5. *What belongings do you see in the home?*
6. *Can you see anything broken?*
7. *How old does the house look?*
8. *How clean is the house?*
9. *What pictures/frames are on the walls?*
10. *How large is the house?*
11. *What strikes you as odd in the sitting area?*
12. *What strikes you as odd in the bedroom?*
13. *What strikes you as odd in the kitchen?*
14. *What does the nameplate on the front door say?*
15. *What is the approach road like?*
16. *Is the house of a woman known? Why?*

B. Ethnographic observations on the Panchayat (Council) office

1. *What does the nameplate on the front door say?*
2. *What is the approach road like?*
3. *Is the Panchayat place known to the villagers?*
4. *What is the seating capacity?*
5. *What pictures frames are on the wall?*
6. *How large is the place?*
7. *What strikes you as odd?*

C. Ethnographic observations on Women in Panchayat (Council) Meetings and Group Behaviour:

1. *Who attended the meetings?*
2. *What were the proceedings like? Did anyone minute the proceedings?*
3. *Did the women members speak? Did the Sarpanch speak?*
4. *Did you observe 'deep listening'? (to be explained)*
5. *How many times did the men from the Sarpanch family speak?*
6. *Who read the government schemes, budgets, tasks?*
7. *Were any status updates, progress reports, or setbacks reported? Why?*
8. *What struck you as odd?*
9. *Did anyone put a question to any member?*
10. *What was the outcome? Was any plan discussed to enable the Council to act on decisions?*
11. *Did you observe a 'feudal structure' or a 'participative/distributed' or 'servant' leadership (to be explained)?*
12. *Did you notice an 'us' vs 'them', 'me vs you' or 'he vs she' attitude from the perspective of men or women (to be explained)?*
13. *Was the Sarpanch or woman member a 'singleton', 'member individual', or 'individual member' (to be explained)?*
14. *What was the emotional apparatus of the group (to be explained)? Why?*
15. *What was the emotional capital of the Council? Why?*
16. *What was the 'social identity' of the group? What was the social identity of the women members? What was the identity of the Sarpanch? What were the differences and conflicts? Why? (to be explained)*
17. *What were the biases, stereotypes, and forms of discrimination? Why? (to be explained)*

18. *Who were leaders, followers, fence sitters, provokers, and rebels? Which actors were reticent, ambivalent, assertive, aggressive, active, passive, or uninterested? Why? How did each category relate to the women members and Sarpanch? Why?*
19. *Did the Council members seem like a family, warriors, traders, knowledge workers, directors, or actors?*
20. *Do you think the Council is an 'emotionally intelligent' organisation? (to be explained)*
21. *What is the culture of the committee?*
22. *What is the 'emotional capability' of the committee? (to be explained)*

Appendix 5: Instrument of Emotional Attributes

Instrument of Emotional Attributes Valued by EWRs: What are the values of the EWRs and the men in their lives?

Make small paper cards of these values (one value per card) and ask the respondent to choose and eliminate cards. Ask the respondent to choose the 25 cards that best describe the values she upholds as the most important in life. Then ask her to choose the 10 values at the top of the list. Finally, ask her to choose 5 out of those 10 that are truly the most important in her opinion.

- | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Agility | 38. Competence | 74. Integrity |
| 2. Dignity | 39. Focus | 75. Intellect |
| 3. Vigour | 40. Community (service) | 76. Compassion |
| 4. Affluence | 41. Accomplishment | 77. Modesty |
| 5. Discipline | 42. Creativity | 78. Nurturing |
| 6. Confidence | 43. Accountability | 79. Gratitude |
| 7. Acceptance | 44. Drive | 80. Safety |
| 8. Passion | 45. Pleasure | 81. Commitment |
| 9. Gender (sensitivity) | 46. Utility/Usefulness | 82. Openness |
| 10. Mastery | 47. Religiousness | 83. Education |
| 11. Thrift | 48. Sensuality | 84. Tolerance |
| 12. Thoughtfulness | 49. Intimacy | 85. Merit |
| 13. Zeal | 50. Spirituality | 86. Capability |
| 14. Achievement | 51. Teamwork | 87. Respect |
| 15. Faith | 52. Attentiveness | 88. Philanthropy |
| 16. Determination | 53. Courage | 89. Justice |
| 17. Humour | 54. Drive | 90. Recognition |
| 18. Fun | 55. Kindness | 91. Honesty |
| 19. Affection | 56. Freedom | 92. Self-respect |
| 20. Ethics | 57. Balance | 93. Understanding |
| 21. Reputation | 58. Inspiration | 94. Sensitivity |
| 22. Surrender | 59. Loyalty | 95. Empathy |
| 23. Authenticity | 60. Cooperation | 96. Harmony |
| 24. Fairness | 61. Healthiness | 97. Equanimity |
| 25. Obedience | 62. Balance | 98. Credibility |
| 26. Control | 63. Contribution | 99. Beauty |
| 27. Happiness | (family) | 100. Innovation |
| 28. Mobility | 64. Vision | 101. Support |
| 29. Sublimity | 65. Wisdom | 102. Respect |
| 30. Cooperation | 66. Survival | 103. Magnanimity |
| 31. Sharing | 67. Humility | 104. Trust |
| 32. Diversity | 68. Risk taking | 105. Appreciation |
| 33. Investment | 69. Recognition | 106. Rationality |
| 34. Thankfulness | 70. Stability | 107. Justice |
| 35. Rigor | 71. Patriotism | 108. Organisation |
| 36. Entrepreneurship | 72. Wealth | 109. Learning |
| 37. Motivation | 73. Brilliance | 110. Connection (society) |

111. Leadership	126. Influence	140. Teaching
112. Adaptability	127. Progress	141. Flexibility
113. Love	128. Reproduction (bearing children)	142. Power
114. Family	129. Duty	143. Generosity
115. Excellence	130. Ambition	144. Optimism
116. Understanding	131. Forgiveness	145. Candidness
117. Patience	132. Friendship	146. Pride
118. Morality	133. Connection (family)	147. Tradition
119. Empathy	134. Stewardship	148. Balance
120. Joy	135. Reliability	149. Empowerment
121. Knowledge	136. Self-control	150. Effectiveness
122. Altruism	137. Environmentalism	151. Professionalism
123. Education	138. Sacrifice	152. Caring
124. Grace	139. Sophistication	153. Enthusiasm
125. Help		

Appendix 6: Key Opinion Leaders and Subject Matter Experts

The subject matter experts and key opinion leaders who helped me in developing my thought processes and calibrating my ideas.

- Kinias Zoe, Associate Professor, Academic Director of Gender Initiative at INSEAD, Singapore and UC, Santa Barbara
- Manasi Phadke, Economist, Professor, Gokhale Institute, Pune
- Aditi Pandey, Member, ASSOCHAM National Council for Women's Empowerment, New Delhi
- Madhavi Rajadhyaksha, Senior Program Officer at the Columbia Global Centers, Mumbai
- Ajita Vidyarthi, Program Analyst, Women's Peace & Security and Gender-responsive Labour Migration, New Delhi
- Tania Pal, Associate Director, CRISIL Foundation, Mumbai
- Sonali Patnaik, Director at the Arupa Mission Research Foundation, New Delhi
- Dr Anurag Priyadarshini, Development Professional, Researcher, and Writer, Bangladesh
- Dr Chandrakant Puri, Professor, Mumbai University
- Dr Anjali Nigam, CEO & Founder Director, WhiteSwan Consulting Group, WCG, Mumbai
- Sonali Srivastava, Founder, Anode Governance Lab, London
- Jennifer Mujawar, Senior Programme Coordinator, International Relations Office, Tata Institute of Social Sciences

Appendix 7: Exhibits

Exhibit 1: Source: Women Stats Project 2016; <http://womenstats.org>

Percentage of Female Ministers

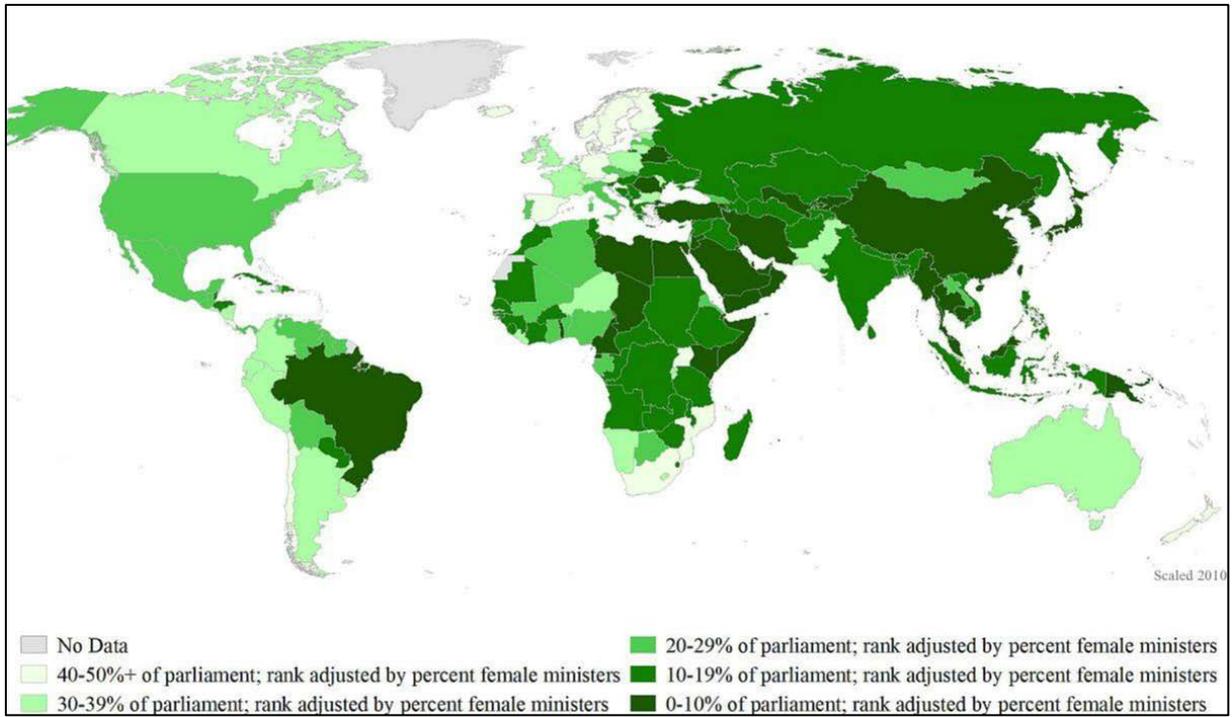


Exhibit 2: Source: Scroll, Young India Fellowship Election Data Unit, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Lok Sabha or Lower House Representation. The last elections held in India were in 2014; the 2016 data is therefore the same.

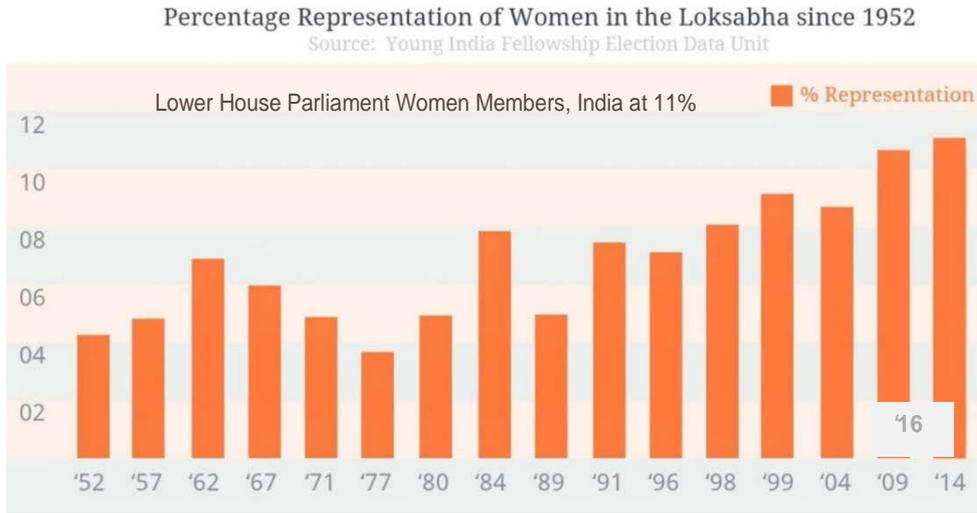


Exhibit 3: Source: CIA Fact book, Members of Parliament, Economist Intelligence Unit, 2016

Lower House Parliament Women Members, Global Representation, 2016; Asia at 18.2%

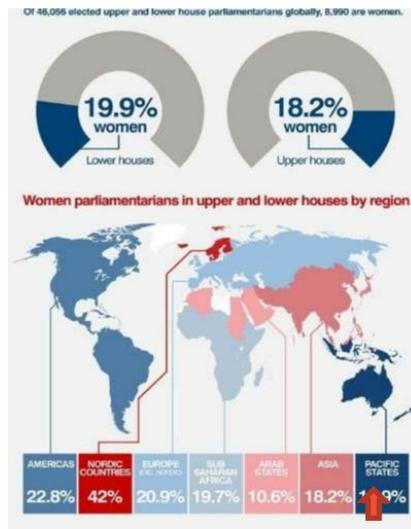


Exhibit 4: Source: Scroll, Young India Fellowship Election Data Unit

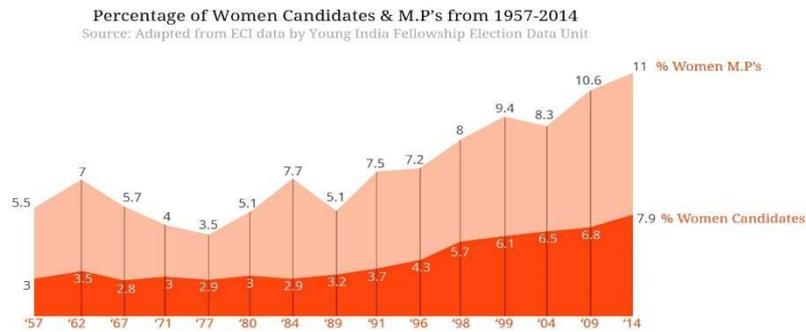


Exhibit 5: Source: censusindia.gov.in/Census_Data_2011

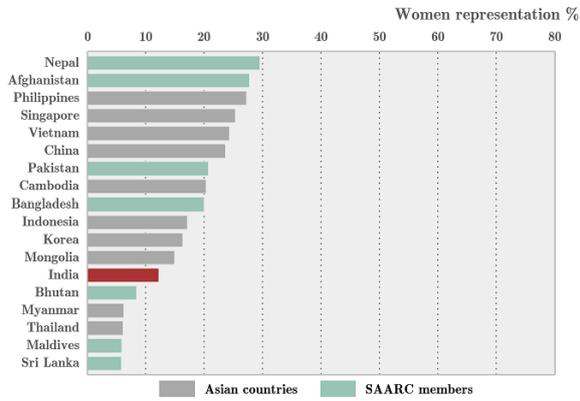


Exhibit 6: Source: censusindia.gov.in/Census_Data_2011

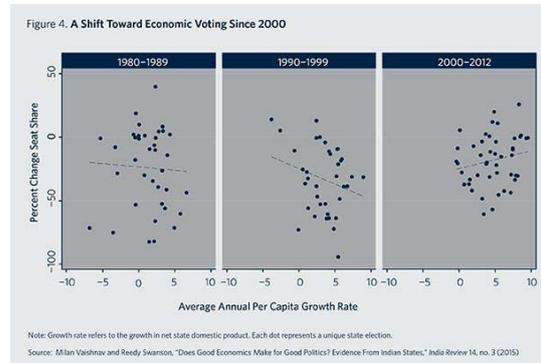


Exhibit 7: Source: Pockeerla.com



Appendix 8: Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my parents and sister, my sister's family, my wife Sanjeevani and daughter Soumya, whose encouragement and support has made it possible for me to focus on undertaking this study and writing the thesis. My ideation process, which involved selecting a topic and testing the idea with my wife, gave me several initial insights into the process. Sanjeevani also translated my English questions into Marathi, the native language of the EWRs, allowing me to conduct interviews in their native language. I am grateful to my family for putting up with my not spending weekends with them, during the time that I was travelling to villages on the weekends for conducting interviews and immersing myself in the process of inquiry.

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