

SUGRAMA – GRAMA PANCHAYAT CHUNAYITHA MAHILA PRATHINIDHIGALA SANGHA – KARNATAKA

MANIFESTO - 2016-17

SUGRAMA SAMAVESHA – MARCH 3-4, 2016

SUGRAMA – Grama Panchayat Chunayitha Mahila Prathinidhigala Sangha – Karnataka is a federation representing the rights and interests of Elected Women Representatives (EWRs) of Grama Panchayats (GPs) of Karnataka. **On March 3-4, 2016 SUGRAMA members – Elected Women Representatives of 250 Grama Panchayats (GPs) of 25 taluks of 12 districts of Karnataka gathered in Bangalore to discuss the issues hindering effective governance and administration in Grama Panchayats.**

The members formulated the manifesto for the year considering the issues of the Grama Panchayats and the problems pertaining to elected women, as given below:

Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Department:

1. SUGRAMA will like to congratulate the state government's decision on increasing the tenure of the Grama Panchayat President and Vice President from 30 months to 5 years. This amendment will have a significant impact on strengthening elected women's leadership in Panchayats and in the process strengthen local democracy. **Therefore, we would strongly urge the Government to formulate rules and issue guidelines without further delay** so that the current uncertainty towards its implementation is removed.
2. SUGRAMA will also like the Government speed up the process **to disburse the honorarium and sitting fees for the new members according to the new amendment (as of now there is no uniformity in disbursement in all the Panchayats) to their respective bank accounts and regularize it with no delays.**
3. We would also want the **government to implement of Karnataka Panchayat Raj Act** in its true spirit by also ensuring efficient delivery of services, schemes and programs such as **National Food Security Act, Right to Education Act, NRLM and MGNREGA.**
4. Extend the provisions of **The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 to Grama Panchayats as well so** as to build an enabling environment for women to effectively participate as elected leaders of their panchayats, carrying out their public role, without the threat of violence, of which addressing harassment becomes crucial.

5. With more than 50% of women elected to gram Panchayats in Karnataka and Panchayat Bhawans as official spaces for elected representatives to carry out their duties, provision for **separate toilets for women members** needs to be made in the present tenure.
6. We welcome government's move towards issuing ID cards for elected representatives in PRIs, however this initiative is yet to be implemented. We urge minister **that the process of issuing identity cards be expedited through** the Taluk Executive Officers.

Women and Child Development Department:

1. We congratulate the Government for the steps taken to conduct Mahila Grama Sabhas through passing a circular. We demand the Government **to pass an order to this effect and ensure effective implementation of Mahila Grama Sabha on women specific issues rather limiting it to providing awareness.**
2. We demand the Government **to reduce the age of the divorced single women from 40 years to the age when she gets divorced or abandoned. This is primarily because many women belonging to BPL category neither get re-married nor are employed and are found to be more vulnerable.**
3. We demand proper and effective implementation of the **'Prohibition of Child Marriage Act – 2006'** especially in areas where incidence of child marriage and early marriages are high. The government implement the provisions of the law in its entirety.
4. With many programmes and schemes catering to women who are in need of care and protection, **we demand the Government for effective implementation of schemes such as Open Shelter, Ujwala, Swadhara, Family Counselling Centres and Santhwana** and make State Women's Commission also as an accountable body to ensure its implementation.
5. We demand the **construction and usage of separate toilets for girls in the schools and functional toilets in all the Anganawadi centres.**
6. We demand for the enforcement **of Child Protection Policies in all Government aided and unaided schools and colleges. Further, we ask the government to** increase allocation and frequency of bus services from gram panchayats to the nearest institute of secondary and higher education for girls. This is aimed at preventing drop outs of girls as well as reduce the risk of violence that they currently face in pursuit of their aspirations and goals.
7. The Government should look at **providing gender sensitization trainings to school and college staff** and to commit on **'0' tolerance of incidents of violence.**
8. We sincerely urge the ministry **to address the vulnerabilities of young adolescent girls at high risk of early marriage and child marriage** on a mission mode. **Focused interventions need to be undertaken that targets at reducing their drop out from formal system of education** as well as young adolescent girls who have not been able to access the same, especially those belonging to the marginalized groups, (economically and socially) and minority groups. **Adolescent girls at high risk of early marriage should be identified and linked with government scholarship schemes that promote livelihood options, vocational training and skill building.** All these linkages and information should be made accessible with information about the same widely disseminated and promoted in Panchayats involving parents and other key stakeholders.