



SUDSC WEBINAR SERIES

Online Panel Discussion

Growing together: Engaging women for localised actions

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Time

3:00 PM - 4:30 PM (IST)

Date

24th April, 2025

Webinar: MS Teams

Link : <https://surli.cc/eyitmv>

Meeting ID: 387 699 059 472 1 Passcode: Yp2NW2BT

Background

Urbanisation is significantly transforming societal structures, presenting both opportunities and challenges for achieving sustainable and inclusive development. In this dynamic context, active engagement of women in localised development efforts is not only a critical pathway to gender equity but also a catalyst for economic resilience and inclusive urban growth (UN-Habitat, 2020). Although women constitute approximately 39% of the global workforce (World Bank, 2022), their participation in leadership roles, decision-making processes, and urban planning frameworks, is rather limited.

Integrating women's perspectives into community-led initiatives enables local governments and urban stakeholders to harness their knowledge, skills, and leadership potential. This inclusion enhances economic productivity, promotes social cohesion, and contributes to the creation of resilient and adaptive urban environments. Women's engagement at the grassroots level has been instrumental in addressing pressing urban challenges, including development of

affordable housing, water and sanitation services, and sustainable mobility solutions (UN Women, 2021).

Meaningful inclusion of women in decision-making not only promotes equity but also improves the overall effectiveness of policy outcomes. Community-based capacity-building programs and gender-sensitive resource allocation are vital tools in enabling women's participation in local governance and development planning. These strategies empower women to actively shape their environments while strengthening institutional accountability and community resilience (UNDP, 2018).

Moreover, incorporating diverse gender perspectives into urban and rural planning ensures that development interventions are more inclusive and reflective of the needs of all societal groups. This approach supports more sustainable and equitable outcomes, enhancing the legitimacy and long-term impact of localised actions (OECD, 2020).

About the Webinar

NIUA has entered into a strategic partnership with GIZ for supporting the implementation of the Sustainable Urban Development in Smart Cities - II (SUDSC II) project. Under this project, NIUA and GIZ have jointly initiated the “**SUDSC Webinar Series**” to support setting up of Communities of Practice (CoPs). At the overall level, CoPs have been conceptualised to facilitate knowledge sharing and promoting innovative practices in urban development, enabling discussions on pertinent topics/concerns like gender-responsiveness, inclusivity, risk-informed approach, need for innovative solutions in the urban domain, etc.

The **15th webinar** titled – **Growing together: Engaging women for localised actions** aims to explore and discuss the vital role of women in grass root level actions for shaping urban growth and sustainability. Through expert presentations and interactive discussions, the webinar seeks to identify best practices, share successful case studies, and provide actionable insights that stakeholders can implement to promote gender equality.

Key objectives:

- Explore the role of women in grassroots level governance and local development initiatives, highlighting their contributions to building resilient and inclusive communities;
- Promote gender-responsive local planning by identifying barriers to women’s participation and nudging policy interventions to enhance their engagement in decision-making processes;
- Highlight successful community-driven initiatives which have enhanced women empowerment, with a focus on replicable models and best practices for inclusive service delivery and urban development;
- Facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogue to strengthen partnerships between local governments, civil society, and private actors in advancing women-led localised actions;

Link to join the Webinar



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Session	Speakers	Topics/ Discussion Points
Introduction & Context Setting (10 mins)	NIUA/GIZ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing the SUDSC-II project & the Webinar Series; • Setting of the context; • Introducing the speakers;
Session 1 (20 mins)	Ms Bijal Brahmhatt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobilising and strengthening women’s collectives to lead grassroots level actions; • Training women to engage with urban planning and governance systems; • Leveraging digital technology to promote citizen participation;
Session 2 (20 mins)	Ms Punya Taru	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiatives towards inclusion of women in service provision – focus on urban sanitation; • Women on-boarding challenges; need for skill development; • Need for gender-sensitive infrastructure; • Overcoming social bias with better working conditions;
Session 3 (20 mins)	Mr Amogh Bhongale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender-sensitive initiatives towards solid waste management; • Women as key agents of change in promoting environmental consciousness within urban communities; • Need for gender-sensitive policies in municipal solid waste management, including access to health benefits, and safety equipment;
Q&A and Closing Session (20 mins)	NIUA/GIZ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderated Q&A session and discussion;
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closing remarks and Vote of Thanks;

Profile of Speakers



Bijal Brahmbhatt

Director
Mahila Housing Trust, Gujarat

Ms Bijal is Director, Mahila Housing Trust, Gujarat, who has extensive experience and broad knowledge of intersectional challenges that are mediated through housing and habitat, governance (lack there-of), informality, and gender for low-income urban communities and migrants in cities. She represents and advocates for the rights to improve living conditions, foster climate resilience and overall economic security, through socio-technical approaches and women-led models.



Punya Taru

Executive Officer,
Patna Municipal Corporation
(Initiative- Swachhangini)

Ms Punya Taru is an officer of the Bihar Administrative Service, having joined the cadre in 2019. Throughout her career, she has demonstrated a strong commitment to grassroots governance and social development. For the past year, she has been serving with the Patna Municipal Corporation (PMC), where she has been looking after the “Swachhangini initiative” as Executive Officer. Swachhangini is a cooperative of women sanitation workers, supported by the Diksha Foundation, Patna Municipal Corporation, and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The initiative is dedicated to eradicating the degrading and hazardous practice of manual scavenging, while simultaneously addressing gender inequality and promoting the empowerment of women in the sanitation sector.



Amogh Bhongale

Outreach &
Communication Lead,
SWaCH Pune Cooperative

Mr Amogh Bhongale leads outreach and communication at SWaCH and allied waste picker organisations in Pune, shaping communication strategies and executing outreach campaigns. SWaCH Pune, India’s largest autonomous cooperative of women informal waste pickers, and a groundbreaking model for inclusive waste management, where 4000 informal waste pickers provide door-to-door waste collection and sorting services to 10,00,000 properties in Pune saving the ULB 100+ crores per annum. SWaCH (in partnership with the Pune Municipal Corporation) has achieved exceptional levels of source segregation – diverting significant amounts of recyclables (200 ton per day) away from landfills and into recycling streams, along with achieving 21 ton per day of in-situ composting at 280 sites. This women-led community-driven approach not only keeps the city cleaner and reduces material leakage into the environment, but also ensures empowerment, livelihood and dignity for the women at the heart of the system.

Moderators:



Moumita Shaw

Technical Advisor,
SUDSC-II, GIZ



Unnimaya Balasundaran

Project Assistant
(Urban Management), NIUA