



## PRESS RELEASE

### **Round table on Impact of Political Reservations for Women on Local Governance and Rural Service Provision Convened jointly by NCAER, IDRC and CFS**

**Patna, May 10, 2011:** A Round table on "*Impact of Political Reservations for women on Local Governance and Rural Service Provision*" was held on May 10, 2011 at Hotel Maurya, Patna. The Patna roundtable was the third in the series on *rural governance and decentralization* under a research study supported by Canada's International Development Research Centre program initiative '*Globalisation, Growth and Poverty*'. It was inaugurated by the His Excellency, Mr Devanand Konwar, Governor of Bihar and attended by a large number of dignitaries from politics, government and academia, including, Mr. Mani Shankar Aiyar, former Union Minister of Panchayati Raj, Government of India, Mr. N.K Singh, Member, Rajya Sabha, Dr. Samar Verma, Senior Programme officer, IDRC, Canada, Dr. Bina Agarwal, Director, Institute of Economic Growth, New Delhi, Prof. Amita Singh, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Dr. Hari Nagarajan, NCAER, Dr. Nupur Tiwari, Jamia Hamdard and others.

Through the roundtable, a holistic attempt was made to address the issue of political reservations for women. Various aspects of rural governance and findings of studies about the impact of political reservation for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions in improving the service delivery were discussed.

*"Unless 6 lakh villages of India are fully developed, how can we think of total development of the country"*, said Mr. Devenand Konwar, Governor of Bihar in his inaugural speech. He also mentioned the huge impact such measures are likely to have, especially in Bihar, which introduced 50% of the reservation for women in Panchayat. The roundtable also marked the release of '*Gramsurajaya*', a newsletter of the NCAER-IDRC Project, by the Governor.

Mr. Mani Shankar Aiyar paid tribute to the Chief Minister of Bihar, for his rural sector policies, adding, that "while Rajiv Gandhi used to say that politicians should have faith in the citizens of the country, Nitish is way ahead of him. He has shown his belief in Indian woman by empowering them with 50% reservation at Panchayat level."

One of the major highlight of the NCAER's roundtable was the presentation of the findings of a study by Prof Hari K Nagarajan, Team Leader of the ongoing IDRC supported project at NCAER, '*Building Policy Research capacity, Governance and Growth in India*'. The study based on REDS/NCAER 2007 data shows that women are not only participating in *Gramsabha* meetings but also voicing their concerns on local issues like drinking water, roads, etc, especially in those areas where there is a woman *Sarpanch*. His study indicates that these empowered women are also given importance in intra household matters like children's education - which was unthinkable a few years ago.

This roundtable represents one of the most focused events intended to study the role of Women in Local governance through primary data and case studies collected from the state. During the course of the event, Presentations and intense discussions covered topics on

*Political Reservations and Quality of participation of EWR's: Experiences from Bihar* by Dr. Nupur Tiwari of Centre for Federal Studies, Jamia Hamdard University, '*Political reservations and Women's Welfare*', '*Political Reservations and the Quality of Governance*' and concluded with the '*Experiences from other states*', with the participation and experience sharing of community leaders from Assam and Bihar.

**About NCAER:** NCAER was set-up in 1956 as an independent, non-profit, applied economics research institute in New Delhi. It was created to support India's economic development through empirical socio-economic research. Today, it is one the most reputed, premier economics research institute in India, engaged in pioneering research work with an emphasis on policy analysis and application of modern quantitative techniques to development issues, regional development and planning, household income, consumption, savings/ investment and infrastructure.

NCAER's Governing Body comprises distinguished policy makers, academicians, and thinkers from financial and corporate sector. Currently, Mr Nandan Nilekani is the President of the board and the council is headed by Dr Shekhar Shah as its Director General.

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