

Envisioning A Gender Just Society
Five year perspective plan
National Alliance of Women (NAWO)
2023- 2028



Still I Rise

By Maya Angelou

You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells
Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops,
Weakened by my soulful cries?

Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin' in my own backyard.

You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?
Does it come as a surprise
That I dance like I've got diamonds
At the meeting of my thighs?

Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain
I rise
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.

Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise
I rise
I rise.

NAWO Strategic Plan 2023 – 2027

NAWO Strategic Plan 2023–2027 aims to guide its work over the next five years which addresses the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 5 ,8 , 10,13 16 and 17 .

At a time when COVID-19 has compounded all aspects of gender inequality, bold actions and increased financing are needed to address the needs of all the girls and women from marginalised communities and to rebuild a better and just world for women and girls..

The Strategic Plan is based on an extensive consultative process and draws from analysis of progress and persistent challenges. About twenty members including the seven executive board members of the National Alliance of women with the facilitation of Ms Anuradha Prasad and Ms. Karuna David sat together to work on the strategy for the next five years .

NAWO will focus on approaches and strategies to address the root causes of inequality and affect broader systems change, across its thematic focus areas: governance and political participation; economic empowerment; ending violence against women and girls; and Climate Justice actions.

The Strategic Plan is prepared considering the important national priorities and global goals set in the Sustainable Development goals and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

CONTEXT

The Covid- 19 pandemic has changed the whole scenario . The entire global- Socio Economic Political Climate is affected by this and India is no exception to it. Any strategy to work towards gender equality can't be made in present context without recognising the impact of Covid-19 on the whole humankind ingeneral and women and girls in particular.

. Volatile political climate both in India as well as on a global level has its impact on the work we do. We also have to recognise the Internal context with new restrictions on civil society actions through the various amendments in the Foreign Contribution Registration Act (FCRA) .

Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on Women

Women are the worst sufferers of Covid-19 pandemic worldwide. They are impacted in all spheres of their life such as their physical and mental health, education, economic situation, political participation, and high increase in gender based violence. In the pandemic time, India ranked 112 out of 153 countries in terms of women's disadvantage compared to men in health, education, economy, and politics. COVID-19 has exacerbated pre-existing socio-economic barriers and decreased women's ability to access essential services like food and nutrition, health services, especially Sexual and reproductive health services..

We are also aware that the pandemic has differential impact on different sections of the society. So, we recognise that not all women are impacted by the pandemic similarly. Intersectionality in terms of caste, class, ethnicity and age played a major role in increasing or decreasing the vulnerability of a particular woman.

Economic distress and vulnerability

Globally, due to the impact of the pandemic, the total number of women and girls living in extreme poverty has increased. Women were more likely to lose their source of income and less likely to be covered by social protection measures. ILO estimated that full or partial lockdown measures affected almost 2.7 billion workers, representing around 81% of the world's workforce. As per ILO 62 million workers lost work only in the Asia-Pacific region in 2020 because of the COVID-19 crisis. Women and young people experienced higher shares of job loss compared to their older, and male counterparts. With the pandemic the gender poverty gaps widened. As per a report of the World Bank report it expected that there would be 118 women in poverty for every 100 poor men globally, a ratio that could rise to 121:100 by 2030. South Asia is expected to be the most affected region, with the ratio rising to 129:100 by 2030.¹

UN Women's smart phone surveys in early 2020 found that job losses among informal-sector workers ranged from 25 to 56 per cent in all countries. Subsequent surveys in 2021 demonstrated that owing to higher vulnerability of women's jobs and pandemic-driven increase in unpaid care and domestic work burdens, a larger share of women were pushed out of labour markets.

The situation has been worse in developing economies where the vast majority of women's employment is in the informal economy without access to any form of social protection. Women from marginalised communities were already in extreme poverty and the pandemic has pushed them into further vulnerable situation.

In India, the lockdown imposed by the Government across the country created a huge migrant labor crisis which became the hot topic for a few weeks and then disappeared leaving millions of workers unemployed and starving.

Women formed a large part of this migrant workforce. Indian urban workforce had witnessed a huge influx of women migrant workers between 2001 and 2011, where female migration more than doubled from 4.1 million to 8.5 million (Mazumdar and Neetha N. wrote in a paper published in The Economic and Political Weekly in May 2020). In 2001, 47% of women migrating for employment headed to urban areas which grew to around 58% in 2011. "Notwithstanding the visibility of women among these migrants, the gender dimensions of the migrant question and the special conditions of women's labour migration remained largely ignored in the public policy interventions. As per studies done by ILO in pre-pandemic India, women made up only 24% of the workforce but during pandemic accounted for 28% of all job losses. Between March and April

¹ Policy Brief: ILO

2020 alone, an estimated 17 million women in both the formal and informal sectors, were left jobless. Women on average lost over two thirds of their incomes during the lockdown.

The increased household burden could also make it more difficult for women to re-enter the workforce when the economy is opening up, leading to economic consequences that will outlast the pandemic.

Indian women also spend more time doing unpaid care work at home (than men. On an average, they spend 9.8 times more time than men on unpaid domestic chores and 4.5 hours a day caring for children, elders and the sick. During the pandemic, their share of unpaid care work grew by nearly 30 per cent.²

In India over 90 percent of women are engaged in informal sector without any safety-nets. They are involved in various types of activities like, domestic work, construction work, street vending, agricultural labour. Access to benefits such as health insurance, paid sick and maternity leave, pensions and unemployment benefits are not available to these women, and at times of such crisis, the situation gets worsened.

Many countries including India introduced social protection and jobs programs in response to COVID-19. These packages included cash assistance (cash transfers), food assistance and labour works. Women could access limited benefits due to several barriers and social-political factors. During Pandemic India Government provided free ration for almost for a year. But the benefits do not reach the most vulnerable, especially women and from among women, the single women. It is estimated that around 28% of women didn't have PDS access, and 20% of women did not have ration cards in India³

Gender-based Violence

Women across country were being adversely affected in different ways during the Covid-19 pandemic and thereafter. Domestic violence had increased disproportionately during pandemic. Looking into its gravity, the UN called the increase in domestic violence globally a "shadow pandemic".

COVID-19 pandemic deepened economic and social stress coupled with restricted movement and social isolation measures, gender-based violence increased exponentially. Many women were forced to 'lockdown' at home with their abusers and at the same time the services to support services were disrupted or made inaccessible.

In India, reports of domestic violence, child marriage, cyber violence and trafficking of women and girls increased within the first few months of the pandemic. According to the National Commission of Women data, India recorded a 2.5 times increase in domestic violence between February and May 2020. Some women's organizations reported that in the first four phases of the lockdown, they received more reports of domestic violence than they had in the last ten years

² Covid-19 and Gender Equality: Countering the regressive Effects ,July 15, 2020 , Mckinsey Global institute

³ IWWAGE -Initiative for What Works to Advance Women and Girls in the Economy

for a similar period of time. Many women were unable to report the violence, as they had less freedom of movement and means to access help.

The Indian Government classified domestic violence shelter and support services as “essential” – an important step in COVID-19 response. During the first and second waves of the pandemic, 700 One-Stop-Crisis centres remained open in India, supporting over 300,000 women who suffered abuse and needed shelter, legal aid and medical attention.

The health impacts of violence, particularly intimate partner/domestic violence, on women and their children, are significant. This can result in injuries and serious physical, mental, sexual and reproductive health problems, including sexually transmitted infections, HIV, and unplanned pregnancies. Violence not only negatively impacts women but also their families, the community and the nation at large. It has tremendous costs, from greater health care and legal expenses and losses in productivity, impacting national budgets and overall development.

Impact on Health of women and Girls :

Restrictive social norms, gender stereotypes, home quarantining and diversion of resources to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic limited women’s ability to access health services as well as make them more susceptible to health risks. . Women’s access to sexual and reproductive health services has also been severely impacted due to the COVID-19 emergency response and global lockdowns. Multiple responsibilities has also put severe strain on their mental health.

While there have been reports suggesting that men, the elderly, and persons with compromised immune systems may be at greatest risk of fatality from COVID-19, the greater caregiving role that women and girls are expected to perform might compromise their mental health and well-being. Results from a recent PFI study to assess the knowledge and impact of COVID-19 on young people in three Indian states of Uttar Pradesh (UP), Bihar and Rajasthan show that 51% female adolescents experienced an increase in workload during the nationwide lockdown, as compared to 23% male adolescents. In UP 96% females experienced an increase in workload, with 67% being below 18 years of age.¹⁴ Specific population groups are showing high degrees of COVID-19-related psychological distress. Frontline healthcare workers are facing backlash from communities leading to stress. In the wake of the lockdown, people across all strata and age groups are finding it increasingly difficult to deal with social isolation and stress at home, with some facing increased abuse, disrupted education and uncertainty about their futures.

In addition to the caregiving burden, social norms in some contexts dictate that women and girls are the last to receive medical attention when they become ill, which could hinder their ability to receive timely care for COVID-19. Furthermore, myths, misconceptions and stigma surrounding COVID-19 can further drive people, particularly vulnerable sections like women and children particularly vulnerable sections like women and children report to hide their illness to avoid discrimination. This would prevent people from seeking health care immediately as well as discourage them from adopting healthy behaviours.

In India, there are 1 million ASHAs (Accredited Social Health Activists)¹⁶, 0.9 million ANMs (Auxiliary Nurse Midwives)¹⁷ and 1.4 million nutrition workers called Anganwadi workers.¹⁸ During the ongoing crisis, these frontline health workers are leading the health system's response to COVID-19. Given the increase in such cases during the COVID-19 outbreak, frontline health workers, women and girls with caregiving burdens, and community members fearful of becoming infected or infecting others may all experience stress and trauma relating to the outbreak.

Impact on Education

With introduction of the Right to Education Act (RTE) in 2009, India is focusing on free and compulsory education for all children between 6 to 14 years of age. However, this progress has been significantly hindered by the Covid-19 pandemic.

On a specific question about the effect of the pandemic on enrolment and retention of girls in schools, especially from education of girls among the socially and economically backward groups in schools, Education Ministry of Govt. of India submitted before the Parliament panel that "school closure in India affected 320 million children enrolled from pre-primary to tertiary levels of education. It has been estimated that of these, about 158 million are female students".

According to Observer Research Foundation, close to 250 million children in India were adversely affected due to school closures on eve of early lockdowns imposed by the government in response to Covid-19. Several children from less-privileged circumstances ended up dropping out of schools, some were forced to take up jobs in order to support their families who were dealing with pandemic-related deaths and income loss.

Only a third (33%) of girls in India attended online classes during the COVID-19 lockdown compared to 39% of boys, according to Save the Children research released on 02.03.2022 --- raising concerns that progress in addressing gender inequalities in education in recent decades could be reversed.

While the privileged section of private schools in non-rural areas resurrected the situation through online classes; the underprivileged section of the community had to take the hardest hit. Furthermore, **not furthermore but in the future** this will amplify gender gaps in education, increase risk of sexual exploitation, child marriages, premature or unwanted pregnancies and burden of household in the hands of girl children. The drop-out rates is expected to aggravate further and will disproportionately affect girl children education across the country.

Although private, urban schools in India were better adapted to new circumstances, government schools have struggled to transition from traditional in-person learning to an online ecosystem, especially in rural India.

A divide based on technology and access

As the families' income levels dropped amid the Covid-19 pandemic, female students have borne the brunt of disrupted education with all efforts to promote education previously going in reverse. One of the most direct impacts of Covid-19 on the education of girls has been because of shutting down of schools. As a consequence of closed schools and inequitable distribution of resources, more boys than girls have access to digital infrastructures such as mobile phones, internet services, radio,

and media. It is pertinent to note that there exists a 50% gender gap in mobile internet users in India where 21% of women and 42% of men use mobile internet. This became even more evident due to the sudden shift from classroom learning to virtual learning, there was a 'gender-based digital divide' that has made the situation difficult for female students.

Uninterrupted education relies on the availability of and access to digital infrastructure including the Internet, laptops and phones. While students in urban schools tend to have better access than those in rural schools, inequalities across class and gender still impact who can and can't use these tools. Also, access issues are further compounded by other constraints such as unreliable electricity supplies, home environments and study spaces, etc.

Impact of Climate Change on Women

The impact of climate change in India is becoming more and more evident every year, with intensifying heat waves, erratic monsoons, calamities related to weather, and frequent droughts and floods. The poor in the world are the most disadvantaged in terms of facing the consequences of the climate crisis, and women, constituting the majority of the world's poor, are the most vulnerable among them. Women are disproportionately affected by the impact of climate change.

Climate change impacts human health, food security, and results in destruction of physical infrastructure such as houses, roads, electricity etc. which directly impacts life of people. Women are more disadvantaged

Women are subjected to disproportionate impact of climate change due to several factors. Primarily women depend on natural resources for securing food, water, and fuel for the households which are already getting degraded and affected severely at times of natural disasters.

A report by Climate Action Network shows that women perform additional 12–14 hours of work due to climate displacement and migration. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), women also suffer higher mortality and a larger decrease in life expectancy during, and after, extreme weather events. Climate change disproportionately harms women due to their marginalised identities and, at the same time, increases the risk of widening such disparities. While women are more engaged in environment-related activities, they have very limited control over such natural resources and decision making power for its sustainable management.

Women constitute the majority of the agricultural workforce in rural India, a sector which is especially vulnerable to climate change. Climate change causes loss of employment and livelihood for women. Despite women's rich knowledge and experience in agriculture, they continue to hold very limited land-owning rights and minimal financial resources, which put them at a disadvantage in mitigating any climate-related crisis.

Gender equality is both, a component of the sustainable development goals (SDGs), and, at the same time, a precondition for achieving sustainability. In addressing the urgent crisis of

climate change, it is now crucial to acknowledge the gender dimension of its impacts, and for that to be reflected in the policy frameworks.

Women should be at the centre of developing sustainable technologies so that their adaptiveness is ensured from the beginning. Further, more gender-responsive investments are required to cope with this crisis. All climate change-related programmes and International Green Funds need to have a gender component, and progress should be closely monitored.

The History of NAWO

The Beijing Conference of 1995 and subsequent interest evinced by activists and NGOs triggered the emergence of NAWO which has since mooted the centrality of women's rights as human rights. In its affirmation of the commitments made during the Beijing Conference, the inceptional years witnessed much sharing of ideas, dialogue and coming together for alliance growth and stability.

NAWO enjoys a unique position in that it is the single largest National Alliance that has centrestaged critical issues of marginalised communities through a collective process and in particular, those of the Dalits, Adivasis and Religious minorities. NAWO's contribution is best seen in its reporting on and to CEDAW and its participation in the UPR reporting process— underpinning the denials and deprivations of women from marginalised communities. NAWO has been nurturing and capacitating human rights defenders who are increasingly coming under state vigilance. The relevance of human rights defenders has only grown which finds much justification in the many rights violations reported in the latest Universal Periodic Report.

Since its inception, NAWO has been negotiating for equal participation of women in governance. The simulated 'Women's Parliament' held in 2009, and State Legislatures to conscientize numerous women were most unique initiatives which have found resonance at global level. Special mention must be made of NAWO's engagement with the 12th planning process which resulted in several recommendations in the Plan document.

The strength of NAWO is its alliance base comprising of activists, networks spread in remote regions of the country. Having emerged from Beijing conference of 1995 and their commitments, NAWO's experiential base is truly home-grown and is now well poised to position its authenticated perspectives in the forthcoming National and Global processes.

NAWO is held with passion by its 7 focal points who have journeyed together, giving their voluntary time to NAWO's agenda. To forge ahead with its dedicated team, NAWO realises that they would have to strengthen their resource base (finance and human) and evolve strategies that advances its human rights agenda. This is the need of the hour.

NAWO has 5000 members in its alliance. Characteristic of this alliance is its diversified membership that includes civil society organizations, movement based networks and other sectoral organizations that include both women and men. What qualifies this partnership is the mutuality. The gain of the small partners, located in remote regions is seen in their exposure and

learning to macro realities. Several women activists too are members of NAWO. Many have leveraged their association and identity with NAWO in their defense against injustice on women. There is no denying that these small organizations and initiatives have in turn enriched and authenticated NAWO's thinking with their grassroots experience. It is this knitting of NAWO that needs to be recognized and requires continual nurturing.

Vision :

NAWO envisions a gender – just society, democratic and humane society where women and men can in partnership fulfill their responsibility of building a peaceful future.

Goal :

NAWO strives to advance women's leadership for an inclusive ,equitable ,just, sustainable , safe and secure society for women and girls .

Values that Guide the National Alliance of women:

- ▶ Respect for Human Dignity ·
- ▶ Freedom of thought and expression ·
- ▶ Belief in diversity and democracy ·
- ▶ Transparency and Accountability ·
- ▶ Secularism, Peace and Pluralism ·
- ▶ Social Justice and Human Rights ·
- ▶ Empathy and Solidarity
- ▶ Camaraderie and Collegiality
- ▶ Diversity in Leadership, especially leadership among youth

Making a Difference : Looking Back :

For NAWO, its evolution, progress and maturing came through four core processes. These include, the Beijing process, the CEDAW process, 'Women's Parliament' initiative and 11th Five Year Planning process. Each of these went through intense processes of consultations, dialogue, reporting, networking and publishing. Through all these processes, NAWO was brought to critical reflections ,concerns of the marginalised,women's rights,political empowerment of women and critical issues that women are contending with.

First and foremost,NAWO's script is best seen in its role and contribution on and to Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women(CEDAW).For NAWO,the reporting process under CEDAW has emerged as a strategic lever to identify, educate, disseminate and to make public the gaps, lapses, violations of state bodies in meeting its commitment to CEDAW as well as negotiate and advocate for remedial measures. For CEDAW reporting, NAWO adopts multi-level consultations (with NGOs, activists, and grassroots groups; use of reports of fact-finding missions and outcomes of judicial instruments such as IPL, RTI etc.) that embed dialogue, critical analysis and documentation. CEDAW reporting has taken on the colour of a

systemic response. Currently, NAWO preparing the 6th and 7th NGO Alternate Report. More and more women/ organizations want to be associated with the process of NGO Alternate Reports.

NAWO's work on CEDAW

1995 – 2004

- 2000 women were present in the first National Convention, following Beijing Conference of 1995. Capacity building for activists and advocates in several states of India were undertaken. Each of the state level workshop had 70 to 80 participants.
- Training of trainers was conducted in several parts of the country. Lead Trainers for India were retrained in South Asia by International Women Rights Action Watch (IWRAP)- Asia Pacific.
- Indian government delayed its first periodic report by four years which finally got submitted by 1998. The first NGO Alternate Report preparation started from 1998 through a consultative process with more than 500 Organisations. The report was submitted in 2000. This was followed by several meetings, consultations with NGOs, National Human Rights Commission and Government of India (GOI)

2005 – 2008

- Government of India submitted the 2nd and 3rd Periodic Report in 2006 which was reviewed by CEDAW in January 2007. NAWO's 2nd and 3rd NGO Alternate Report on CEDAW was prepared in consultation with 1,000 groups and networks across the country. More than 5000 women participated during this process. It was a culmination of 3-year process.
- This report brought into prominence the atrocities on women, identified the gaps in delivery of relief and rehabilitation of the survivors during Godhra carnage. An initial fact finding report on 'How the Gujarat Massacre affected Minority Women: the Survivors Speak', (April, 2002) was submitted to CEDAW which was followed by a Citizen's Report (Ms. Indira Jaising, a reputed Judicial Expert), in May 2003.
- A group within Gujarat had collected 5000 signatures from the internally displaced refugees who lived in camps for over a year which was submitted to Human Rights Commissioner and shared with CEDAW Committee members. NAWO was instrumental in taking a petition with the 5000 affected Muslim women's signatures to the CEDAW Committee. SAHRWARU, the focal partner of NAWO, supported by Dr. Ruth Manorama, the President of NAWO played a forefront role.
- The CEDAW Committee called the GOI in 2010 twice to appear before the Committee, first in New York and a second time in Geneva. Dr. Ruth Manorama, President of NAWO and Ms. Sheba George, SAHRWARU, a Focal Point of NAWO, participated to present affected people's views. CEDAW sought from GOI disaggregated data on Dalits, Tribal's and minority communities. The Government of India submitted a follow-up report on Exceptional Basis to the CEDAW Committee on Gujarat Violence.

Post 2010

- The Concluding Observations of CEDAW, 2010, highlight several critical questions/issues that have not been answered by GOI. CEDAW urged the GOI to identify specific lapses and making the deliberations public.
- The Government of India has prepared The 4th and 5th Reports for CEDAW in 2011
- NAWO has also submitted the 4th and 5th NGO Alternative Report and the CEDAW committee has given its concluding comments and NAWO has organized meetings to share the concluding comments.
- For the Past three years NAWO has been organising several Consultations for the 6th and 7th periodical report which is due in 2023.

Engagement With Committee On Elimination Of Racial Discrimination (CERD)

2001

- NAWO Collaborated with National Federation of Dalit Women and prepared a document, entitled, 'Gender and Racism' for the 2001 World Conference of 'Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, Related Intolerance' in Durban. NAWO's contribution lay in integrating its framework of intersectionality of gender and race'. In 1996, CERD concluded that the plights of SC/STs fall squarely under the prohibition of descent-based discrimination.
- The GOI report which was reviewed by CERD made no mention of violence and abuses against Dalits. CERD, therefore, used NGO Shadow Report to evaluate GOI report. Dr. Ruth Manorama, President of NAWO was part of this process. The "Concluding Observations (CERD /C/IND/CO 1a) March 2007. (19th February to 9th March) were widely disseminated in all capacity building programmes of NAWO.
- Several consultations were held on 'Descent Based Discrimination' in the following years at the Human Rights Council at the UN, Geneva.
- UN HRC-Commissioner prepared UN Principles and Guidelines on discrimination based on work and descent as a guiding framework for enhanced monitoring and implementation.
- Submitted, 'Discrimination Against Dalit Women on Decent Work Agenda' of ILO in the CERD meeting at Geneva.

Political Participation And Governance

Since its inception, along with many other activist groups, NAWO has persisted with its campaign for equal representation of women in political bodies which has been an uphill task. The 73rd amendment which gave 33% reservation for women in PRL has paid dividends – some states introducing women's component plan, a proposed bill to meet election expenses of candidates and the existing one third reservation for women being increased to 50 percent (Odisha, Kerala, Bihar, Jharkhand and Karnataka). But when it comes to women's

representation in the Parliament - in a list of 133 countries, India stands at 104th position with less than 15 (14.39) per cent of women parliamentarians. It is this low representation of women in Parliament and State legislatures, government service, judiciary and absence of women judges in Supreme Court that has come under critical scanner. This was one of the concerns raised by the CEDAW Committee. NAWO's initiatives on women's political participation have been unique and innovative.

The historic 'Women Parliament', held at the India's national capital in 2009 is a unique event. The 'Women Parliament' was a well-thought out process which went through stages of training of trainers who in turn trained the 545 elected representatives. Ordinary women, in particular from marginalised sections of society got trained; contested elections to get elected; hold proceedings and pass various bills – sending messages on ethical and inclusive politics that this country is badly in need of. It tabled several significant bills such as Constitution Amendment Bill, 2009 for Women's Reservation which allows for fifty per cent reservation in the Parliament; Domestic Workers (Regulation of Employment, Conditions of Work, Social Security and Welfare) Bill 2009 and the Right to Recall Bill, 2009 and discussion on the Union Budget. The Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly of Women released a political Manifesto just before the State Assembly elections. At the national level, NAWO too released a Political Manifesto that among others demanded rights to dignity and safety. Finally, five women MPs declared their vision statement at the Parliament.

The 'Women's Parliament' which received much media publicity has triggered interest in other countries to replicate the process and some women's groups are even thinking of having a global parliament for peace. A continuing initiative of NAWO is releasing political manifestos before all elections, interfacing with legislators and parliamentarians for dialogue – a process that has been educative.

Again, Legislative Assemblies for Women were held, first in the state of Uttar Pradesh and later one in Tamil Nadu and another in Andhra Pradesh.

Engagement With the planning process

At the instance of Planning Commission of Government of India, NAWO in collaboration with the Voluntary Health Association of India undertook a mid-term appraisal of the Eleventh Five Year Plan 2007-2012 to review aspects of health, women and child development, minorities, handicrafts and handlooms. This process went through a series of regional level consultations and interfaces with various stakeholders. For NAWO, this was a learning process that resulted in a strong interface with bureaucrats and policy making bodies.

Tangible outcomes are seen in NAWO's engagement in the planning process. NAWO created an opportunity to capacitate 2000 women & men on government schemes and disseminate guidelines to evaluate and monitor the programme at ground level. Several of NAWO's recommendations got integrated in the Plan Document. In 2010 a state core committee was formed in Andhra Pradesh, comprising of 13 women, to disseminate information on government schemes and programmes that benefit women. Another fall out of this is that a few of NAWO members are in the working groups (Empowerment of Minorities, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Voluntary Sector, Women and Child development) of the 12th Five Year Plan. NAWO also took the initiative to organise consultations

among Civil society organisations in the country during the 12 Five year Plan making significant contributions to the plan document .

NAWO's involvement High level Committee of the Government of India

The Government of India set up the High Level Committee on the Status of Women in India in 2013. Its mandate was to examine the social, economic, health and political status of women in the country since 1989 and evolve policies based on women's needs. The Committee submitted its report (in four volumes) in 2015.

The chairperson of the High Level Committee Dr.Pam Rajput is the current president of NAWO .NAWO members took initiative in organising regional level consultations and took active part in contributing to the Report.

The report assesses the status of women in India in "all aspects of their lives", including age, class, caste, religion, ethnicity, region and ability. It recommends measures for women's 'holistic empowerment', evaluates the impact of existing policies and legislative changes, and identifies gaps in their implementation. The Committee says that while there has been progress in women's education and their participation in local governance, the status of most women is not equal to that of men, especially women from marginalised sections of society.

Thematic Areas And Strategies For The Next Five Years .

Considering the post pandemic socio-political and economic context NAWO has decided to work on following thematic areas :

- 1. Women's livelihood , especially in the context of climate change**
- 2. Gender based violence mitigation and Enhancing women's' Human Rights.**
- 3. Women leadership building and active participation in decision making process in personal and public life. , especially youth leadership**
- 4. Action Research and knowledge building**

NAWO has centrestaged an entire gamut of women's rights issues of marginalised communities and in particular,the Dalits,Adivasis and Religious minorities.NAWO's perspectives are truly home-grown in that it stands firmly on Focal Points' experiences and perspectives.Most importantly, both NAWO members and its Focal Points have complemented each other and matured collectively.Above all,NAWO believes that its composite set of strategies will cascade an enabling atmosphere for full enjoyment of human rights by women.

For NAWO,several strategic platforms are being opened for strategic entry and interventions.It is also an opportune time for the Focal Points of NAWO to leverage their experiences, concerns and perspectives to the ongoing debates and policy initiatives on women.

The following section elaborates NAWO's thematic initiatives,strategies for the next five years.

NAWO's Focus for coming 4 to 5 years:

In the last decade the four themes which NAWO focused on, it was found that NAWO has fared best in the area of enhancing women's Human Rights as well as empowering the marginalised. Women in governance and Research and Knowledge building ranked lower. The strategies used in the last decade were also ranked and it was found that some of the strategies worked well and some that could still be worked upon.

The following table depicts the ranking done in the strategic planning workshop on the strategies used and how well it worked .

S.No	Strategy	Number who ranked Fair, Good, Very Good, Excellent	
1	Advocacy (Media cases, fact finding, data collection, campaigns, petitions, gram sabha activation)	✓ 7 Good. Can be improved	
2	TOT & Training	6 good, 1 fair	
3	Alliance Coalition Building	Good in state level. Natl. level fair	
4	Net working	3 Fair, 3 very good , 1 -0	
5	Perspective Building	1 good, 4 V good, 2 excellent,	
6	Awareness Programme	7 v. good	
7	Policy Review	2 Fair, 3 Good	
8	Collaboration & Outreach with wide ranging civil society actors	Very good	
9	Inter- facing with Government	1 Fair, 3 Good	
10	Collaboration with International agencies and conventions	4 V Good , 3 Fair	

1. Women's livelihood, especially in the context of climate change.

NAWO shall work towards economic empowerment of women so that they have income security, decent work, and economic independence.

Key interventions include the following:

- Working with member organizations towards recognising the care economy and negotiating for recognition, reduction, redistribution of unpaid care and domestic work, and enable women for more economic participation.
- Advocating for decent work, equal pay for equal work, and expansion of opportunities for women employment especially in the Covid-19 recovery programmes.
- Supporting the development and implementation of macroeconomic policies and practices that advance gender equality and women's empowerment by working with ministries of finance and IFIs.
- Advocating for women's and girls' women's economic rights, labour force participation and increased employment, and access to social protection systems, as part of COVID-19 economic recovery.
- Promoting women's increased participation and leadership climate-resilient agriculture and organic farming practices.
- Promoting and strengthening women's organizations and women's trade unions in unorganised sectors as well as among domestic workers to tackle discriminatory social norms, practices and legislation, and promote women's leadership to work on such issues.

As climate change is impacting women's lives severely, and increasing its impact day by day; and making them more vulnerable, especially the marginalised communities, it calls NAWO to address these issues in different ways.

NAWO's primary role will be to analyse and advocate for gender responsiveness in disaster risk reduction and response, and mainstreaming the gender perspective in prevention, preparedness and recovery strategies, systems, and programmes.

NAWO will capacitate the decentralised Gender Resource Centres with expertise and technical knowhow to engage in this sector in their respective states and NAWO will work at national level, coordinate with various agencies operating in this sector.

Many member organizations of NAWO are participating on disaster response and recovery programmes in different states. NAWO will identify these organizations and facilitate a 'Network' among them for sharing knowledge, expertise and best practices as well as address issues related to the climate change policies and programmes.

2. Gender based violence mitigation and Enhancing women's' Human Rights:

NAWO will make possible efforts to work with various stakeholders with the aim at women and girls living a life free from all forms of violence.

NAWO's key interventions will include the followings:

- Working with school boys and youth for behaviour and attitude change.
- Strengthening young adolescent girls with life skills on own health and sexuality.
- Creating safe and gender friendly schools, colleges , universities and work places .
- Advocating for implementation of all laws ,policies for addressing VAWG.

- Collaborating with organisations which work specifically on Access to fulfilment of Rights of girls and women in education and health sector.
- Collaborating with the system (police , Judiciary and Health departments)to strengthen the response (providing services) for survivors of Violence .
- Strengthening the available counselling as well as one stop centres , help line facilities by providing training and perspective on gender and violence .
- To monitor the reporting of Govt. on ending violence against women and girls (VAWG) to UN systems as per various conventions;

Strategies

This NAWO will undertake the followings to achieve the thematic goal:

- Facilitating thematic fact finding missions.
- Sensitizing various stakeholders on international commitments/treaties/instruments and holding the central and state governments accountable.
- Integrating human rights perspectives and standards in government policies and programmes.
- Building perspectives, capacities and extending requisite institutional support.
- Improving access to Criminal Justice System for women.
- Increasing accountability of the Criminal Justice System.
- Participate and share our grassroots experiences to the formulation of national action plans on prevention of VAW that promote positive social norms, including by engaging men and boys, and strengthening the knowledge and evidence base to prevent VAWG.
- Networking with various organizations including with women's organizations, CSOs, research institutes, Government ;
- Extending solidarity and support to Violence Survivors
- Organising fact finding missions, helping the victims access legal, health, counselling and other support services and continue struggle for justice.
- Generating awareness and working with social organisations to change attitudes, behaviour and practices; bringing positive social norms, engaging with men and boys.
- Strengthen NAWO's working with educational institutions and youth and students, youth at the community level, and engage men and boys as promoters of gender equality and women's empowerment.
- Promoting/ improving access to ESCRs for the marginalized.
- Social inclusion of the marginalized in all aspects of mainstream growth.
- Intervening in specific discriminations, disparity and violence based on caste, class and religion.
- Being part of campaigns, networks and integrating NAWO's perspectives on internal displacements and migration.

3. Women leadership building and active participation in decision making process in personal and public life.

Women and girls can benefit from gender responsive laws, policies, budgets, services, and accountable institutions. Hence, working towards 50/50 gender balance in decision-making at all levels to increase women's influence in political institutions and decision-making is most essential.

Increasing the awareness, capacities, and political will necessary to integrate gender equality into planning and decision-making; and strengthening the capacity of institutions to design sectoral strategies, plans, monitoring frameworks and budgets and to provide accessible, affordable, high-quality services free from discrimination.

Women leadership building and active participation in decision making process in personal and public life.

- Building Feminist leaders Regular course in collaborations with Universities and Colleges and other learning teaching institutions .
- Enabling women leaders at all levels to get into different committees right from village, level to National Level, South Asia Level as well as International level To Influence policies and Decision making.(perspective building and training)
- Supporting lobby and advocacy with empirical research, Action Research, for evidence building, Developing SOP , Manuals , Teaching learning materials, audio visual ,digital ,social Media .
- creating opportunities for inter-generational learning, mentoring

Strategies

- Establishing a Resource Centre for Women in Governance and leadership.
- Organizing and conducting pre and post-budget analysis(StateandCentral)from women'sperspectives.
- Debating and responding to the deliberation of the parliament and State assemblies
- Building inclusive leadership.
- Promoting institutional capacities and processes among the marginalised.
- Building alliances betweenDalit,ReligiousMinoritiesandTribals
- Intergenerational feminist dialogue

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4. Action Research and Knowledge Building :

In the years to come, research and knowledge building will emerge as NAWO's lifeline. To begin with, research and knowledge building will serve its planning, monitoring, evaluation processes. Beyond this, it is the knowledge base that will underscore its endeavour in advocacy and most of all its engagement in women's human rights reporting and

discourse. NAWO's experiential field base is most fertile ground to capture grassroots realities, build concepts that enriches and mainstreams women's rights perspectives in the national discourse.

- Promoting Issue based/thematic research for critical analysis
- Developing advocacy documents/ policy brief for influencing policies.
- Dissemination of information and creating public opinion.
- Data, information and analysis to feed into reporting of international treaties.

Role of NAWO-

- Mobilisation of women from grass roots for building women's agency
- Platform for women's organisations and individuals fighting for women's rights
- Taking up watch-dog role to monitor quality of women's life
- Act as a bridge between grass roots women and the government and think tanks to influence policy formulation
- Ensuring women's participation in policy making bodies
- Establish link from local to national to international forums for lobbying and advocacy

Role of NAWO Focal Points

- ▶ To plan, implement and monitor the programmes and actions of NAWO within the regions and states.
- ▶ To regularly dialogue and interface with the state governments within the region with regards to the Platform of Action
- ▶ To act as a pressure group.
- ▶ To demand legislation of State Policy for Empowerment of Women by the governments and to monitor its effective implementation.
- ▶ To be responsible for conducting campaigns of Regional and National importance, networking with regional and state level to build up documentation, conduction regional annual conference.
- ▶ To facilitate membership
- ▶ To formulate state and regional specific special programs, when and where felt needed, responding to humanitarian crisis.
- ▶ To ensure effective delivery of their roles and responsibilities, it is imperative to strengthen the focal points.

Apart from the above 4 thematic areas , NAWO will also work towards its own organisational development in the following areas :

- Media strategy
- *Digital strategy*
- Visibility of NAWO- at national and state level and Recognition of Nawo as an asset for gender equality

- Increasing membership base across the country .
- Bringing young leaders into governance process.