superiority, hesitation of women to work in public life, economic dependence on men, etc. should be broken.

Women representatives need to be well informed on various developmental policies and programs by disseminating necessary information. Education, awareness and training on politics, legislations and day to day rules and procedures and processes prevailing at the local level are necessary towards the direction of women political participation. It will be unfortunate to see that elected women representatives do not know what to do to solve problems they encounter in their area.

Networking of women members of the panchayats is especially important because of their small number per village. Networking can give otherwise isolated women representatives a feeling of collective strength and exposing them to the experiences of other women representatives thereby increasing their participation. Participating in a forum can also give them the bargaining power which the panchayat members cannot enjoy. Intra-State and inter-state exposure visits of panchayat members needs to be encouraged so as to share the experiences which would make them more aware and empowered.

Leadership development programmes for women would promote their confidence and teach them that they are capable of occupying political positions. The public relations and management skills of women could also be developed in these programmes. Training would encourage them to take part in politics as well as raising the political consciousness among women.

There is a great need for transformative politics, which means transforming the “money and muscle” dominance into something more people centered and transparent. It means doing away with corruption and aiming for accountability. Clean elections need to be brought about along with an election system that is favourable for women’s political empowerment.

Pressure groups and support groups should be formed throughout the country to work as lobbying groups in conjunction with political parties. Their aims should be to increase the political participation of women at various level of the power structure and to support women eager to take part in politics.
Women should form their *own political parties* such as those existing in Canada, Germany, Iceland, Nigeria, Philippines, Russia and Spain. Women’s support groups should be formed throughout the country to work as lobbying groups in conjunction with political parties. Their aims should be to increase the political participation of women at various level of power structure and to support women eager to take part in politics.

To have regular programmes to *gender sensitize* the local, state and national level administrative personnel, the political party members and functionaries of the enforcement agencies should accord for priority.

Women do not have easy access to financial resources as those are denied property rights. They have no control over their earnings and form the low-waged or non waged strata of the society. Therefore, it is necessary to earmark special funding assistance to enable women to contest election.

To work towards ensuring that all elected women are imparted training in a conducive and enabling environment, such as facilities that would enable women attend all training courses without creating a burdensome situation like convenient timings, facilitate mobility, child care support and so on.

To have supportive mechanisms to ease woman’s domestic burden and enable her to participate actively and discharge her political duties effectively. Women representatives should form *into a “Critical mass”* so as to act as a pressure group in the legislature. A critical mass of women in politics can bring the agenda issues of crucial concern to women which are often otherwise neglected or relegated to second place, such as contraception, abortion, violence against women, gender discrimination, maternity leave, child care etc., for the women legislators are more responsive than men to the needs of all persons in the society.

*Devise, launch and promote public campaigns* to alert public opinion to the usefulness and advantage for society as a whole of balanced participation by women and men in decision-making.

Many a times, the panchayat secretaries take the advantage of the illiteracy and ignorance of the women members. To overcome this, the function of the Gram...
Panchayats should be made less complicated and transparent which the women members may be able to grasp and understand in the training programmes.

The state government may ensure that educated women also become village panchayat secretaries. This will certainly help the elected women to interact with women panchayat secretary more freely and seek her guidance in the work and participate more effectively in the panchayat functions.

The number of villages panchayat secretaries must also be enhanced presently each secretary being in charge of many panchayats is unable to discharge the duty in the desired manner.

Bureaucrats should be more receptive to demands of the women and their functioning should be made more transparent. The officials who discourage the women representatives’ participation must be checked and controlled accordingly. Gender sensitization training must be provided to them to encourage the women representative and to provide them the necessary support system.

More finance should be given to the panchayats. Finance should be directly sent across to bodies that are the final recipients.

The provision must be made in the act that it should become mandatory for the sarpanch to consult other members of the panchayat in our proceedings. Powers should also be delegated to panches and they should be involved in the development work in the village.

Efforts must be made to minimize the role of political parties at the level of panchayat functions.

Step should be taken to orient the people and the gram panchayat women members to improve the accountability through Gram Sabha and create space for people’s participation in the local governance.

If possible, some form of remuneration must be paid to elected representative to encourage them to take part in the panchayat functions more effectively. They should at least be paid allowances for attending the meetings outside their village or for attending a training programme. It would certainly help the women members to participate without the fear of losing on day’s earnings or the guilt of spending their husband's/son's hard-earned money.
In Indian villages, girls remain dependent upon father, brother or cousin and this very feeling continues in their married life. We must give capacity building training to girls in schools to be independent.\textsuperscript{3} The programmes of free universal education up to the age of 14 should be vigorously implemented. The courses of studies should include clues of gender equality, self respect, courage, independence etc. which would help to develop the personalities of girls/women. "In all kinds of public participation, the primary responsibilities of women for looking after home and children always come in the way. Unless arrangements are made for child care and other domestic responsibilities, the sustained participation of women in the public sphere is not possible".\textsuperscript{4}
