



Madurai Symposium 2019

Women Empowerment for Sustaining Development

18-22 September, 2019



Bulletin

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Round Table on Experiential Learning in Empowering Women at Grassroots: Innovative approaches and Challenges

KNOWLEDGE BRIEF

Women empowerment is the process of enabling and developing ability or potential in women. As a result, they can think and act freely, exercise their choice and control their lives, besides reducing discrimination and exploitation of them. It also make women get empowered in social, economic and political spheres where they are able to play an equal role at par with men in society. But in real world, the mind-set of the society is not giving the confidence to do something for women and make them feel inferior.

Poverty is affecting 90% of the development of the women. As a consequence, they are not getting proper education to become self- dependent .There are three challenges in empowering women with sustainability and they are namely Health, Society and Poverty. Solutions of these challenges in an integrated manner should be found by development stakeholders. Changes in mind set will bring the opportunity and increase the number of choices for every individual women to make them empowered and take care of their own destiny and do away with gender-stereotypes. Awareness creation, continuous capacity development and motivation of women would pave way to overcome the issues enlisted.

Education play a pivotal role in empowering women's participation in decision making in democracy, dynamic transformation of society and shaping the destiny of future generations. The development sector, particularly grassroots NGOs, requires development professionals to facilitate the development process so as to ensure sustainable development outcomes. The unorganized poor communities need to be provided with an enabling environment to get them organized for accessing and managing resources for their livelihoods development. Enabling the poor would lead to their entitlement and empowerment. There is a need for long, continuous, and rigorous development processes from committed development professionals to bring the desired changes in the lives of the poor.

PROCEEDINGS

The alma-matter of TDA has very rich experience in their committed development work at the grassroots in upliftment of poor and vulnerable. Their concrete actions for empowerment of women in terms of leadership and governance and deliberate on how building social capital for collective action helps the poor women in getting their entitlements, rights and achieving gender equality.

Ms. Vinayashree, Project Executive shared that the main challenges she found to be tackled are many and the issues like alcohol/drug addiction and gender biased education required to be addressed squarely so as to empower women in her working block. She tries to find solution by organizing continuous meeting for the women, motivational speeches, arranging exposure trips to advanced Kalanjiam federations to see and believe from the contributions of empowered and experienced women leaders.

Mr. N. Jankiraman, Faculty cum alumni put forth his views strongly as women empowerment is not 'against the men'. Women can be empowered with the support of male. Self- confidence & freedom of choice could result in women getting empowered. He gave different examples how the women could be

discriminated even in higher society also so we could not come to conclusion women empowerment happen among learned and high income class society.

Mr. Bijaya Kumar Nayak from Koraput, Odisha narrated that financial inclusion, focus on income generating activities could play significant role in women empowerment. Tribal women are working equally with men in field but they are unaware about their rights and get less paid compared to men, because of illiteracy. He opined strongly as to opportunities should be made for tribal women which in turn result women come out of their traditional schedule and to prove themselves.

From effective energy production and utilization by women from household wastes for lighting and as fuel shall give women a good income by way of reducing the expenditure on commercial LPG gas and solar energy could be harnessed for household level heating and cooking, told by Dr. J. John Gunasekar, Head of Department of Renewable Energy of AEC & RI, Kumalur in Trichy district.

Dr M. R. Suresh, marketing professor from SDMIMD, Mysuru shared about their experiment on self-employment for women in villages of Karnataka. He defined the topic as "Women being self-dependent with better choices is women empowerment" and focused on women health and nutrition. He addressed that small initiative started on individual level could create an impact and later could become a mass movement, thus reiterated a start is important.

Ms. Annette, DHAN international, The Netherlands expressed her thoughts about women empowerment and explained that how experience sharing could become a tool for encouraging and empowering the women. Mr. Manjunath from Karnataka expressed his real concern about women empowerment as to they are not raising their voice for their rights. While Mr. Veerendra, alumni of TDA working at Kalburgi in North Karnataka opined that women participation in decision making ought to be given importance. Mr

Mr. Jerome from his present nature of development work that supports SHG federation change towards sustainable energy by providing LED bulbs at low cost. Ms. Jeyamalini of Madurai shared her own real life experience about her grooming by her mother build confidence in her and live with her individuality in the society