

# Seminar on Role of women SHGs in efficient management of water commons – Showcasing the experiences of Kalanjiam women groups

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A seminar highlighting the pivotal role of women Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in the efficient management of water commons, showcasing the experiences of Kalanjiam women groups, was held at DHAN Foundation on March 20, 2024. Coordinated by K. Rajalakshmi and M. Vidhya, the event witnessed the participation of 45 members, leaders, and staff from various districts.

The seminar commenced with the lighting of the lamp by esteemed guests, community leaders, and staff. Ms. M. Vidhya, Regional Coordinator, delivered the welcome address, followed by insights shared by Ms. A. Natchiyar Ammal, Deputy Director of Agriculture, on the changing trends in water consumption and the importance of efficient water usage. She emphasized the significance of water saving practices, traditional food systems, and the role of mothers in instilling water conservation values in the younger generation.

Ms. Vidhya presented a PowerPoint on the role of women SHGs in water management, highlighting challenges faced by women in water management and their contributions to water conservation efforts. She emphasized women's involvement in renovation activities, community meetings, and decision-making processes related to agriculture water requirements.



Ms. K. Rajalakshmi, Programme Leader, DHAN Foundation outlined the Proposed Theory of Change for women SHGs in water management, focusing on financial services, technical expertise, and social capital. She detailed the achievements of Kalanjiam Foundation in water conservation and outlined the five-year plan for further initiatives.

### **Subsequent group discussions led to actionable insights:**

**Role of SHGs in Mainstreaming Water:** Discussions focused on practical actions like renovating tanks, ooranies, and ponds to optimize water storage, addressing borewell-related community needs, and ensuring regular tank maintenance. Initiatives such as planting tree saplings in tank bunds and constructing rainwater harvesting structures in member households were emphasized, along with promoting water literacy and promoting Vayalagam associations.

**Mobilization of Funds from Panchayat and Local Donors:** Efforts were made to mobilize funds with Panchayat authorities and local donors. Community members can contribute through labor work, demonstrating their commitment. Funds are allocated at the Kalanjiam level to ensure project sustainability. Leveraging government schemes like the 100 days' work program for tank renovation will further facilitate resource allocation.

**Role of Women in Water Conservation:** Women play a pivotal role in conserving water through efficient usage and maintenance of water structures, contributing significantly by recycling water for agriculture and household management. They actively engage in cleaning and maintaining water structures, ensuring cleanliness and proper functioning, and nurturing tree saplings to promote greenery.

**Policy for Water Conservation in Women SHGs:** Water conservation plans are integrated into annual and people planning exercises, focusing on greening initiatives achieved through effective water recycling, emphasizing sustainability within women SHGs.

The seminar concluded with a vote of thanks by Ms. K. Rajalakshmi, acknowledging the valuable insights shared and the commitment towards effective water management by women SHGs.