

Empowering rural women to strengthen their leadership capacity

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We Need to Empower Women and Develop their Leadership

Because

- 70 percent of the two billion poor are women
- Two thirds of illiterate adults are women
- Employment rates for women are declining
- Women earn 10% of the world's income and own 1% of its property
- Women do more than 67% of the hours of work done in the world

We Need to Empower Women and Develop their Leadership *contd..*

And Because

- Women perform reproductive roles in families and society
- Make major contributions in informal sectors of economy in rural areas
- Their knowledge, skills, experience, competencies, talent and potential needs to be utilized and developed to the fullest

UN Milestones in Support of Women

- 1975 International Women's Year
- 1975 – 1995 The Four Global Women's Conferences
 - Mexico
 - Copenhagen
 - Nairobi
 - Beijing
- 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Beijing Declaration and the Platform of Action in 1995

Why Empowerment of Rural Women in India?

- India has the lowest sex ratio-933 (per thousand males)
- The female literacy rate in India is 54.16% compared to 75.85% for males
- Only two percent of women workers are employed in the formal sector
- Representation of women in national parliament is only 12%

Indian National Agenda for Women's Empowerment

- 1990 National Commission for Women
- 1991 National Committee on the Status of Women
- 1993 Ratification of UN CEDAW
- 1995 National Policy for the Empowerment of Women

Schemes for Empowerment of Rural Women

- Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP)
- Trade-related Entrepreneurship Assistance and Development (TREAD)
- National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)
- Rural Women's Development and Empowerment Project
- Indira Mahila Yojana for Holistic Empowerment of Women

Structure of Women's Participation in Major Centrally Sponsored Schemes

WATER

- At least 30% of hand pump technicians should be women
- Women technicians to be represented on the village level water monitoring committees
- Completion certificate of hand pump installation to be obtained from women technicians only

Primary Education

- SSA National Mission Governing Council provision for representatives from three women's organisations
- School Development Management Committee has 15 members of which 50% are women parents.

Health (National Rural Health Mission)

- 50% representation of women in the Village Health and Sanitation Committee
- Women's groups at habitation level to have a role in building local health team (Auxiliary Nurse Midwife)
- Accredited Social Health Activist at the village level

Rural Employment (MGNREGA)

Central/State Employment Guarantee Council - Out of fifteen non-official members, not less than one-thirds are to be women

- District Planning Committee
- One third or 50% representation in these committees at the Panchayat level.

73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments

- 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments of 1993 mandating one –thirds of women in rural and urban local bodies, at all tiers, including single posts.
- There are 1.2 million elected women representatives in institutions of local governance in India - more than in the rest of the world put together

Capacity Building Interventions

At a Personal Level

- Developing self confidence
- Public Speaking Ability
- Media relations
- Raising issues of concern and priorities in village level meetings
- Personal behaviour
- Organising skills
- Independent identity









Capacity Building Interventions *contd..*

At a Collective Level

- Gender sensitisation and awareness
- Agenda setting and prioritization of needs of constituency
- Conflict Resolution and Peace Building
- General Knowledge/Current Affairs
- Networking and Collaboration
- Budgeting and account keeping



Micro Planning

Bottom up or Base Upwards planning process on issues related to

- Water Supply
- Electricity
- Community Toilets
- Garbage disposal
- Improving Agriculture
- Land Encroachment



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Social Audit

A tool to understand the extent of benefits reaching the target groups

- National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
- Health – Pre & Ante Natal services, Maternal mortality, Immunisation





Impact upon women leaders

- Building of knowledge base
- Developing of skills
- Increase in self confidence
- Respect within families and community
- Clarity on rights and roles as citizens
- Solidarity amongst women
- Challenging male dominated spaces and roles

What helped

- Family support
- Gender sensitisation and awareness
- Capacity building
- Access to information
- Enhanced literacy levels
- Networking
- Membership with local CBOs
- Support from men – families, community, elected representatives, government officials

Continuing Challenges

- Gendered Identities, practices and culture
- Stereotyped gendered roles
- Inferior self image
- Gendered relations with household
- Role models of men as figures of power and political actors
- Masculinity of political culture and processes

Continuing Challenges *contd..*

- Lack of gender mainstreaming in institutions
- An “add on women” approach
- Gendered policies, norms & systems
- Difficulty to maintain a ‘work life balance’.
- Lack of financial independence
- Violence including sexual harassment against women in leadership