



**Women Empowerment for
Sustaining Development**

Workshop on
Women in Grassroots Governance

Madurai Symposium 2019

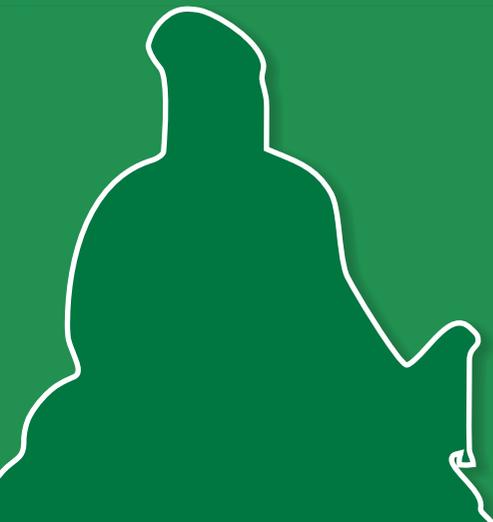
Thamukkam Grounds, Madurai

September 18, 2019

Organized by



DHAN Kalanjiam Foundation





Background

**“Good Governance is perhaps the single most important factor in
Eradicating poverty and promoting sustainable development”**

- Kofi Annan, Former Secretary General, UNO

As part of Madurai Symposium 2019, DHAN Kalanjiam Foundation proudly proposing to organize the workshop on women in grassroots governance to consolidate, conceptualize and show case the experience and importance of women contribution in people institutions promoted by DHAN Collective towards build and strengthening of grass governance and women empowerment.

People institutions such as SHGs federations are owned and governed by the communities themselves. Governance plays a vital role in the sustainability of people institutions such as SHGs federations and local bodies like wards and local Panchayats. In addition to the basic governance functions such as setting vision and strategies, establishing structures and systems, many people institutions set example by advancing the scope of governance by deepening the development interventions. People institutions with effective grassroots governance result in establishment of strong linkages between the poor and marginalized with other development stakeholders such as banks, government departments, Panchayati Raj institutions and corporate houses thus ensuring access to entitlements and basic amenities and resources.

The successful experiences, best practices and institutional mechanisms are available with different people institutions at their level. Unless it is shared across, such a treasure of knowledge would not be available for many other people institutions. This necessitates for a forum to facilitate the knowledge building on advancing grassroots governance by sharing of governance experiences, tools and techniques across people institutions.

Empowerment of women socially, economically, educationally, politically and legally is a continuous process and it requires structured process investment to gain the fruitful result. Women have a unique position in the economy, if women gain economic strength they gain visibility and voice. Women's direct participation in decision making capacity and income generation activities can make significant contributions towards women empowerment. Entrepreneurship can also help women to gain economically stronger, which may help them to improve their social status.

Women role in build effective Grassroots Governance

Governance plays a vital role in the sustainability & growth of any institution. In the case of SHGs federation, role of effective and efficient governance is inevitable. The governance includes both community leadership and executives who need to work for enhancing the leadership abilities, promote second-line leadership, undertake future search processes as a collective mechanism to set the strategic direction for their federations and institutionalize the established process, structures, events and systems.

At the federation level, we are not just meaning governance alone. We focus on good governance, ethical and effective governing system. It operates with fixed principles and procedures, such as **Participation, Consensus, Orientation, Rule of Law, Strategic Vision, Responsiveness, Effectiveness and Efficiency, Accountability, Transparency and Equity / Fairness.**

Learning is a continuous and participative process. Their learning becomes richer while doing their grassroots work. The leaders should be exposed to advanced concepts in development and management, in order to manage SHGs, AFG, Vayalagam, CDAs and other development programmes effectively. There is a need to strengthen and formalizing their role to provide maximum benefit to the community. In future, people institution leaders will graduate these community leaders and functionaries as resource persons both for federations and district-level governance. This graduation process should enable them to create an identity among the people and mainstream institutions. The graduation path of leaders requires lots of systems and processes that really help the leaders to become a resource person.

At any time, each federation has around 900 office bearers in governing at SHG, CDA and at the federation levels. This has to be nurtured and developed into collective leadership. They go through rigorous training on various aspects of programme management of their organizations and learn many things by doing themselves. They understand the importance of collaborating with others and the significance of each and every institution in the social fabric.

Rotation of leadership is done rigorously as per their constitutional specifications. They lead SHGs, CDAs and Federations by demonstrating value based leadership. Their devotion and commitment to the cause attract villagers and public leadership. Hence, many SHG and Federation leaders are invited by village and political organizations to serve in elected bodies and many of them, if opted, would be elected on consensus. Thus federation becoming a grooming ground for local leaders development is imperative.

The major challenges faced by people institutions to build the effective grassroots governance are ensuring age wise growth with quality, covering promotional cost, developing and retaining motivation of functionaries, retaining

people institution identity in its social space, protecting Federations from vested interest groups and enhancing the relevance of SHG Federations through partnership.

Objectives of the Workshop

1. To build uniform understanding of grassroots governance and evolve the framework and tool for assessing good governance and women empowerment
2. To understand the role of people institutions in building strong grassroots Governance
3. To sensitize the dimension of grassroots Governance
4. To list out the challenges and best practices to build good effective grass-root governance in people institutions.
5. To evolve mechanism and way forward for further strengthening of grassroots governance towards ensuring women empowerment process in people institutions.

Participants

A total of 75 participants are expected to participate in this event. The participants include representatives from Kalanjiam SHG federations, staff of federations, NGOs representatives and resource persons from Government Programmes, Academia, etc.

Expected Outcomes

This workshop will help in theorizing the field level best practices on grassroots governance towards facilitating and empowering women. Also it will provide cross learning among its participants to get inspiration from each other's experiences. End of the workshop common framework and tool for assessment of effective grassroots governance through women empowerment process, best practices and challenges to built good governance at grassroots level and mechanism to built good governance would be evolved and list out for further women empowerment process.

The specific outputs of the workshop include Documentation / Publication of best practices, developing framework for the tools for build effective grassroots governance by involving the women leaders for women empowerment for poverty reduction Identifying relevant leads and plan of action of the respective SHG federations on advancing women empowerment in their federation.

Date of the event

September 18, 2019 (Wednesday) from 12.00 noon to 05.00 pm

For further information, please contact

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