



Madurai Symposium 2019

Women Empowerment for Sustaining Development

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Bulletin

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KNOWLEDGE BRIEF

Convention of Women Entrepreneurs

Women perform multitasking in our society. Women empowerment implies the ability of women to take decisions with regard to their life and work and giving equal rights to them in all spheres like: personal, social, economic, political, legal and the like. Women empowerment is the much-talked about development issue. Women are increasingly getting empowered now to decide on the course of their life and professions. They realize their fullest potential in managing their work, balance their family and then excel. Women who could not think beyond the welfare of families in the past have now awakened to action.

With steady increase in the number of working women, they have gained financial independence, which has given them confidence to lead their own lives and build their own identity. They are successfully taking up diverse professions to prove that they are second to none in any respect. But while doing so, women also need to take care and to strike a balance between their commitment to their profession as well as their home and family.

A research conducted by Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation reveals that women constitute around 14% of the total business entrepreneurship and top five economic activities undertaken by women entrepreneurs are agriculture (34.3 Percent), manufacturing (29.8 per cent), trade (18.23 per cent), other Services (5.38 per cent) and accommodation and food services (2.77 per cent).

The easily accessible credit schemes of Government of India extended the support for the women entrepreneurs in availing business loans/ short term working capital. NABARD sponsored MEDP (Micro entrepreneurship Development Programme) and LEDP (Livelihood entrepreneurship development Programme) for the skill building of the women entrepreneur are many Schemes require to be popularized among women entrepreneur, The Civil Society organizations including SHG federations should have livelihood promotion agenda with adequate resource support by the government.

Though many such financial and non-financial support services are available to promote women entrepreneurship, there are many challenges that hinder the progress. Lack of equal access to education & employment, inequalities in the labour market, rising sexual violence and unequal division of unpaid care and domestic work remain the key barriers to women advancement.

The roadmap arrived at the convention for women to become a successful entrepreneur is: Grab the opportunity when it comes, Take timely action, Be alert to market dynamics, Deliver product/service with quality and Dream big and chase it.

Convention on Women and Coastal Conservation

Women are the major and courteous stakeholder in the coastal conservation. UNDP says when the women educated then her knowledge influence many members of the society. It is always surprising to the fishermen that the water is full and wandering, as far as the foreground is concerned. The coast is home to a many dwellers like marine fishermen, estuaries fishermen, fringe communities that depend on ocean as vital natural resources. The Tamil Nadu coastal areas have a variety of unique, highly educated and rare, and endemic species, especially in the forests, coral reefs, estuaries, kayaks. It is the habitat of sand dunes, seaweed, seaweed and other rare endangered species. The Tamil Nadu Sea, which possesses such important resources and characteristics, has been experiencing many problems in recent years and is losing its character and natural resources. The family ownership and the community ownership of the coastal areas are mostly with the Women. Most of the women in the coastal areas are involved in the alternative livelihood like agriculture.

Workshop on Women Empowerment through Habitat Development

Women are the most affected as they spent considerable time in home in relation to men who migrate more for their livelihood. That's why women's right to adequate housing, as an inalienable, integral and invisible part of human rights. Women are facing problems in their habitat are lack of protection against wind, rain and cold, lack sanitation and drinking water facilities, no separate arrangement, for keeping animals, recurring costs of maintenance is high and are incapable in protecting against natural calamities. They are thinking houses which will enhance the quality of life, it will improve their labour productivity.

The cost of constructing the house is high and it is beyond the credentials of the poor communities who are vulnerable to multiple risks in their livelihood. In this context, graduated approach of incremental house is found to be viable to match their capabilities and resources. Experience sharing of the federations highlighted the process of evolving lending policies by the community themselves on rent, lease, repairs and for construction of house incrementally. There are no exclusive products for the poor who live on rent, lease, repairs of the existing house, hence the need for formal institutions to fill this gap in lending to poor in affordable term.

To advance the concept and practice of incremental housing, inception report on the status and the demands of the housing and habitat needs to be prepared by people institution. Inventory of technology suited to different contexts has to be worked out and institutional mechanism needs to be in place at

nested institutions and regional level. Integration with mainstream institution and technical organisation for leveraging the resources is vital for advancing the concept of empowerment of the poor communities.

Policy Round Table on Responsible Microfinance

Microfinance has been recognized globally as a crucial part of development programmes to address poverty. Microfinance includes savings, credit, insurance, pension and payment services. While savings led model has been adopted in India microcredit has been predominant in global financial ecosystem, where delivery model has been dominant vis-a-vis enabling model unique to India through the SHG bank linking programs. The enabling social capital of SHG and its federations and the sustainable linkage with the banking systems. For poor it is important to have access to microfinances services with affordability to address poverty. And bank is better placed with appropriate policy frame work to provide access with affordability. Yet, there have been still arguments, largely from microcredit institutions, that access is more important consideration for the poor and price do not matter a lot. Globally and more so in India, there has been narrative on the 2Ps of microfinance that is Pricing and Practices. Exploitative pricing and undesirable practices have been on the rise calling for microfinance which is responsible and focused on the original objectives of addressing poverty rather than accentuating through this 2Ps. In India, women bore the brunt of these 2Ps resulting in disempowerment. Following that the participants were discussed about the challenges, issue and current situation related to Responsible microfinance, that simply put microfinance is considered as despicable when it is friendly and beneficial to the clients from access and economic perspective. Microfinance is not charity nor commercial but compassionate finance. All the same, it should be sustainable from credit perceptivity debit on the compiling need for making micro finance more responsible largely stem from the financing activities of micro finance institution and to a lesser extent from the banking system as well. The predatory pricing, open and hidden, by MFIs coupled with their undesirable and unacceptable lending and recovery practices have brought to the fore the imperatives of responsible microfinance.

Workshop on Role of women in Eye care

The Workshop has given a platform for Aravind Eye Care Hospital and Community Federation representatives to discuss on the Role of Women in Eye Care. Nurses plays the crucial role in eye care. The event reaffirmed that nursing is one of the honourable professions that provides an opportunity for every one of them to serve for the people. The model of women empowerment through the nursing course of Aravind eye care hospital has been showcased. Generally, women who are involved in offering health services are mostly the doctors and nurses. However, they are not giving importance for their health and coming forward to take the treatment. Really, the women nurses working in Arvind Eye Care systems prove their working in tandem with ophthalmologists increases the efficiency of the doctors. The Nursing course empowers the women / girls not only in the technical part of eye care, but also equip them to work with community. The nurses shared their experiences of flying overseas to train the nurses in eye care.

The course and profession equip them in “holistic manner” in communication, accounts and management. The nursing profession motivates and prepare them for patience, care, hospitality and working with community. Another community development initiative of Aravind Hospital is the production of eye care accessories like lenses. Women are being trained in the production of lenses and quality testing of the lenses. This initiative reduces the cost of the lenses. Generally, the cost of the lenses ranges between Rs.2500- Rs.13000. Now the cost of the lens is Rs.300/- Moreover the lenses are undergoing quality testing as per international standard. This initiatives also supports for 150 countries.

Vision Centers of Aravind is one of the mile stone initiatives towards women empowerment. The role of women in Vision Center initiative is highly appreciated. Each vision centre is operated by two trained women. The Vision Centers are reaching out more women in the villages to make easy access to avail eye care service with quality. Since, the Vision Centers are at the village level, Women feels easy and happy to approach the Vision Centers and get the treatment. The Vision Centers motivates the women to give importance for health issues especially on eye care and get involve in the treatment. DHAN and Aravind hospital are travelling in the same path for the development of the community in Health care. The workshop discuss about the work of Aravind Eye Care hospital initiatives and DHAN-SUHAM health care initiatives. Integration point with Aravind and DHAN-SUHAM has been arrived through in this workshop. The possibilities of establishing Vision Centers and encouraging Kalanjiam family members for enrolling them in undertaking eye care nursing course are explored in the workshop. Similarly the participants of urban Kalanjiam federations resolved to create awareness on eye care technician course being offered by Arvind Eye Care Hospital.

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

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.

Workshop on Eat Local Eat Healthy - Building the capacity of Women and Farmers’ Organisations

India is a country of 1.2 billion people and the country is now witnessing poor nutrition related increased occurrence of health problems amidst growing population, urbanization etc. In the developing countries like India, regular diets often consist of starchy staples with not enough nutrient-rich sources of food, such as animal source foods, fruits, vegetables, beans and pulses. This is one of the reasons behind triple burden of malnutrition prevalent in India - coexistence of undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies and overweight as well as obesity. It is in this context, there arise an imminent need to promote local food and dietary diversity so as to ensure nutritional balancing. The balanced nutritive diet should be 40 % vegetables and fruits, 25 % cereals, 15 % pulses, 10% oil and 10 % animal protein. Access and availability of nutritionally balanced diet that suits local context need to be sourced by the community with required understanding. The federations of community should get awareness on the local/regional food systems and their contribution to nutrition and a drive to consume them for living healthy life.

Seminar on Women and Livelihood Development: Role of Agriculture Finance Groups

Women in Agriculture as their major livelihood are facing difficulties in making viable farming due to climate change, water scarcity as a result of drought and so on. Agricultural Finance Groups (AFGs) as part of village tank associations are functioning based on 5 basic principles such as women members' role in leadership, democratic functioning, Physical, economic and social security of women and so on. The bridging of gap in women empowerment between urban and rural women could get addressed through well-functioning AFGs and providing them the required finance for livelihood activities by linking them to commercial banks. The total financial solution of rural women of AFGs is achievable by covering the risk of self and spouse under life and health insurance products, microfinance schemes, covering all the cultivated crops under crop insurance, all assets like house, vehicle, agricultural machinery, etc. under general insurance and social security coverage through pension schemes. The highly democratic and integrated AFG functions help the member to benefitted.

Workshop on Reducing Violence Against Women (VAW) through De-Addiction intervention

The implications of alcoholism and drug usage among men and the youth are escalating which results in violence against

women, adolescent girls and children. Alcoholism eats away the peace and pleasure in the family. Stakeholders should work together to ban alcoholism and also should work out the strategies to sustain the mission. Indeed, psychological depression is the major implication of alcoholism. The psychological problems need to be addressed with love and care without stigma and discrimination. Alcoholism not only impacts the family but also the entire society. Sexual harassment is one of the daring expressions of alcoholism. Government makes a range of attempts to address violence against women; the toll free number 181 is available round the clock for support. Alcoholism is treatable and there is an immense scope to bring the addicts back to normal life. Everyone should take the responsibility by adapting an addicted family and work for them. The government should give due attention for the families who are all getting services through De-addiction centres. As part of 150th year celebrations, Gandhian principles and values to be integrated with the de-addiction programmes. In fact, Psychotherapy shows better results, but it depends on the individual attitude. Women being the driving force of a family, she has greater role to educate her family members about ill effects of alcoholism. The love, care and moral support need to be given to the addicts, personal care, engaging them in spiritual activities and spending time with them brings positive changes within the addicts at a faster rate.

Plenary on Redesigning urban irrigation tanks for redefined future

Before 2000 years, our ancestors converted natural depressions into irrigation tanks. They connected tanks to form a tank cascade system. The ‘Self-revenue generative’ nature of the irrigation tank was the key factor behind conservation of tanks by local communities. Urban ‘irrigation’ tanks are no more ‘irrigation tanks’. The loss of tank command area affected their revenue process. Urban irrigation tanks that generated revenue through direct production such as farming and fisheries in the past, are currently providing indirect services such as ground water recharge and flood regulation. These indirect services could not generate the revenue ‘demanded for tank restoration’. Loss of ‘stake’ led to loss of ‘stakeholders’. ‘Administrative authorities’ showed less interest to invest on these ‘minimal revenue generating’ tanks. This led to deterioration of urban tanks. Since, each tank in the urban tank cascade is facing diversified issues, they should be redesigned context specific. The tanks should be ‘redesigned’ in a way that it will be ‘self-revenue generative’. The art of conservation is in understanding the difference between ‘sustainable exploitation’ and ‘over exploitation’. Therefore, the ‘revenue’ generative design should be handled with caution. The components in ‘design’ process should be ‘regenerative’ in nature. As there are multiple regulations on urban tanks, the redefined ‘self-revenue generating’ ‘regenerative’ design should be piloted, documented and intervened in policy level too. It is not the ‘redefined’ model that shall be scaled up but it’s the process. The process that ‘redefines’ the urban tanks should be inclusive of multiple stakeholders and the gender. Only then the process will align with the ‘Mother economy’ defined by J.C.Kumarappa.

Workshop on Empowering women through Holistic Development: HCL Consortium Way

The convergences and partnerships are recognized at HCL Foundation as very vital and/or indispensable to socio-economic growth, as enlisted as one of the SDGs (Sustainable

Development Goals). HCL Foundation works towards the key interventions to alleviate poverty and achieve inclusive growth and development. The Women Empowerment is expressed in its work and active engagement of community through Life Cycle Based, Integrated Community Development Approach with a thematic focus on Education, Health, Livelihoods & Skilling, Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction & Response towards ensuring holistic development. The Consortium of HCL with development organization in and around Madurai city works with different age groups of women and children on different development agenda.

The collective action of HCL consortium partners is expressed in leveraging services and programmes from mainstream institutions while working as a consortium. Still there is a huge scope for convergence, cross learning and avoid duplication of work towards achieving holistic development of women. Multi-dimensional cum integrated approach provides space for empowering women at higher level. There is a need for developing resilience among the community to handle the potential problems like psycho-social, mental health and non-communicable diseases. The student and child friendly environment should be focused to promote healthy generations.

Workshop on Making homes Violence Free for Women

Domestic violence is a universal social problem. Violence against women is often seen as a legitimate right of men across nations. "From the cradle to grave, women are objects of violence from those nearest and dearest to them". Nearly 37% of women of the society have experienced some form of physical or sexual violence. This numbers are not exact figures as there is under-reporting in many countries. The legal and structural frameworks are mostly to protect the rights of the women and they fail to ensure creating happy families as its potential to address the core issues amicably is minimal. Accessing legal and structural frameworks has its own social and cultural taboos. There is a perception that domestic violence and alcoholism has interlinks, but it is not the sole factor; even in its absence domestic violence does exist. The free call services like 181 at one stop solutions have given access to the victim the opportunity to seek redressal. Yet the lack of awareness, knowledge and cultural belief systems etc. are systemic hurdles that restricts women from seeking consolation. The common response to the issue of domestic violence is to groom the next generation with gender equality at home. When the attitude of male chauvinism is uprooted from the minds of male children at home and girl children beholds motherhood to its highest level, then the possibility of happier homes and peace is never seen as a distant reality.

PROCEEDINGS

Convention of Women Entrepreneurs

Ms. A. Meenakshi, Team Leader, DHAN foundation, in her lead paper, presented about women Entrepreneurship status in India and Tamil Nadu, various skill building trainings given by DHAN in collaboration with stakeholders, different schemes by government and shared about DHAN's models of Livelihood.

Ms. P. Hema Jeyamurugan, President, Amaran Rajiv Gandhi Handloom Weavers Production and Sales Society Limited, Karaikudi, who is from weaving family, shared her journey in

weaving business and how she got Patent for "Kandangi" sarees. She mentioned that the government departments are extending their support for weavers and helping them to enhance their livelihood.

Padmashree Chinnapillai shared her experience of her journey with DHAN and how Kalanjiam is helping women across the nation to improve their livelihood status. She asked the convention participants to do assess the demands of their location and start intervening with their livelihood and come out of poverty and be a role model for the others.

Ms. A. Bhamu Buvanawari, DDM, NABARD, Salem shared that considering old days, now women are becoming self-sustained and contributing equally to family's economic and social wellbeing. Yet there exist some gaps in enlarging the business volume. Every woman has to develop/enhance their unique skill to learn and market the venture, which they establish. For expanding the business, MUDRA loan could be given which is a collateral free loan up to Rs.10 Lakh. And for the Farmers' Producers Organizations (FPOs), the central government are ready to give credit up to Rs.1 Crore without any collateral. If the skill and empowerment is not utilized, then the empowerment is of no use. DHAN has promoted over fifty FPO in that 4 FPOs are fully owned and managed by women. In the 2018-2019 they did a business volume of more than Rs.1.5 crore worth.

Ms. A. Umarani explained DHAN's way of seeing livelihood activity as three phases. One is personal self, then collective, then second is the quality product with the value addition and the third is to have perfect marketing. She expressed that women should not do business for economic purpose alone but also do with self-satisfaction and requested to make sure everyone in family owns and supports their livelihood activities.

The key declarations voiced on the requisite to documentation of women entrepreneurs success stories, continuous capacity development in improving marketing skills, establishing legal and statutory team to co-ordinate the various enterprises, strengthening FPO activities and arranging exposure visits to profitable units. Government agencies should allocate an exclusive incubation fund to encourage small time women entrepreneurs to come forward to initiate business in large numbers.

Convention on Women and Coastal Conservation

Mr. S. Singarayar, Programme leader, DHAN Foundation has initiated the program and he elaborated the role of India in the marine marketing. His reference on Gandhian Quotes states that "Nature is for the need of the human not for the individual's greed".

Mr. T. Aasaithambi, Team Leader, CALL program – DHAN Foundation pointed that the coastal community are the prime respondents to the disasters. The experience that the coastal communities were oriented and trained on Disaster risk reduction (DRR) are noteworthy.

Mr. G. Sugumar, Director, Tamil Nadu Fisheries University pointed the scientific fact that importance of seawater on controlling the world temperature. The involvement of women in fishing activity are mostly invisible but their contributions are very high. He focused on importance of coastal habitat and conservation of biodiversity. He shared the experience and

model of Kombadurai Village of Tuticorin district in Tamil Nadu. This is one of the model fishermen village. They are a self-regulated fisherman community with efficient fishing methods with advanced, innovative fishing gears, excellent sanitation and hygiene, no alcoholism. There is also collective allocation of funds to savings, insurance and pension. It is astonishing to see 50 % of fisher folk are them are women participant in fishing activities. He also mentioned in Tamil Nadu 2500 women are directly involved in fishing itself. He said that we have to encourage more security for women fisherman communities and give more trainings for women who are involved in allied fisherman activities.

Mr. Rajesh, Professor, Zoology department, American College, Madurai concerned about the problem of modern fishing techniques. His concern is more about the degradation of coral reef and the endangered species like the Sea-cow and sea-horse. The panel insisted for promoting village marine council to conserve coastal resources, biosphere and endangered species. Fisherman grievance day at all coastal districts should ensure all stakeholders views and involvement in ensuring the implementation of coastal regulation act. Renovation and restoration of rain water resources to ensure sustainable agriculture and drinking water need for human and livestock. Coastal watershed development, women led alternative livelihoods with financial support to ensure sustainable and conservation of coastal resources. The convention resolved to Community led coastal habitat rehabilitation, Focus on Women led alternative livelihood, stopping of dumping debris and plants in sea awareness on coastal regulation zones act , ban illegal and unethical fishing.

Workshop on Women Empowerment through Habitat Development

Women’s right to adequate housing, as an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of all human rights, has also been recognised, implicitly and explicitly in a range of international and regional human rights instruments. Women are the most affected as they spent considerable time in home in relation to men who migrate more for their livelihood. Women look for houses which will enhance the quality of life, improve their labour productivity, house as a place for production, suiting their way of life which is conditioned by socio, cultural, environmental and economic conditions.

Sri. Kathiresan, Former General Manager, Indian Bank in his opening remarks said that housing is a basic need and everyone has an aspiration to have a home for his/her family. Sri. Kalyanasundaram, Chairman, DHAN HOPE in his address called for strengthening the new house by repairs and fulfil incremental housing needs. He wanted to explore the scope of cluster house and work out products and services based on the subgroup discussion. He wanted the participants to explore the relevance of Habitat Development for Women empowerment. Sri. Udayakumar, Branch Manager, Indian Bank in his address said that he was pleased with the role of DHAN Foundation in being proactive to the felt needs of the communities.

The cost of constructing the house is high and it is beyond the credentials of the poor communities who are vulnerable to multiple risks in their livelihood. In this context, graduated approach of incremental house is found to be viable to match their capabilities and resources as our experience in the field of housing vouchsafe for the same. Experience sharing of the

federations highlighted the process of evolving lending policies by the community themselves on rent, lease, repairs and for construction of house incrementally.

Policy Round Table on Responsible Microfinance

The round table conference that titled on responsible microfinance started with effective stakeholders from INAFI INDIA, Kalanjiam Foundation, DHAN Foundation, SIFFS, PREM and Maruti Modigia Produced Company Ltd. Mr. M. Kalyansundaram, Chief Executive Officer of INAFI INDIA suggested some facts and delivered the concept of microfinance and its need among the poor people. The major discussion is on MFI where there is no transparency in ultimate cost of borrowing by the clients. It is not enough for MFIs to declare only the rate of interest or margin gap. Interest plus all other charges being recovered by the clients including the premium for the insurance shall be declared to know the actual cost of borrowing. MFI shall be restraining by the reserve bank in preventing and undesirable lending practices which include excessive loans to the self-help group or its members’ individual, multiple loans to the clients, poaching practices. A memorandum of concern detailing the pricing and lending and recovery practices of not only MFI, as also private sector bank, small finance bank, which are inimical to the interest of the micro credit clients shall be submitted to the INAFI INDIA network to the reserve bank of India and government of India to rectify the situation. This final resolution mainly focused on eradication of exploitation from poor people and transparent credit policy of money lending with clear regulations.

Workshop on Role of women in Eye care

Mr. B. Udayakumar, Faculty Associate, LAICO, Aravind Eye Care System shared about the purpose of the workshop in detail. DHAN and Aravind hospital are travelling in the same way for the development of the community in Health care. Generally, women are involves more in offering health services, however, they are not giving importance for their health and coming forward to take the treatment. There exists a huge gap in decision making status between men and women. Economic and skill development will ensure the women empowerment, which will also ensure the economic development of the society.

Ms. Deepa, HR Manager, gave the special address on “Role of Aravind Eye Care in Community Development”. She highlighted that, around 3.90 crore people are blind in the world, in which around 1.20 crore blind are in India. She mentioned that, with the available technology, it is possible to bring back vision of 80% of the people. Aravind hospital is known for the camps and production of eye care accessories. She explained the about the research and training initiatives of Aravind. Another community development initiatives is the production of eye care accessories like lenses. This initiative reduces the cost of the lenses. Generally, the cost of the lenses ranges between Rs.2,500 and Rs.13,000. Now the cost of the lens is Rs.300 only and the lenses undergo quality testing to ensure international level standards.

Ms. Arumugaselvi, Coordinator of Cataract division shared about the eye disorders in detail. She explained about the root cause of several disorders and its symptoms like Cataract and Glaucoma, She explained in details about how diabetes affects the eye lens. She highlighted the children specific diseases like Inactive eye, short sight. She expressed the general concern on

lack of awareness among old age people on Eye Donation and need for creating awareness among old age people. The awareness on nursing course is very less. She mentioned that, "Nursing" is a women specific community service. Aravind perceives the role as Mid-level ophthalmic Personnel and the course provided equips them with necessary skills.

Ms. Gomathi, MLOP Technician, Retina clinic, explained about the process of enrolment of the nursing course, growth path of girls in the nursing course. She added that, the nursing girls are doing the counselling for the patients. The nurses are equipping the foreign students too and also visited other countries and won several awards for the organisation.

Ms. Pitchai Meena shared that, Women / girls are given special training to equip them to work at village level vision centres. She explained about the Vision Centres. She mentioned that, the vision centers are being managed by 2 nurses trained by Aravind. There are about 75 vision centers. For the vision center operation, Women are being equipped in Computer skill, Accounts management, stock maintenance, data entry, problem solving and leadership.

Experience sharing of nursing students: Ms. Vaanishree expressed that this course and career gave her an opportunity to fly to Nigeria and train other country nurses on eye care. She mentioned that, in addition with satisfaction, she has earned and saved Rs.5000/- per month for the past 3 years and with which she can able to contribute for her marriage in the near future. Ms. Muthumanimegalai working in Aravind vision center shared her experience as a vision center staffs. She expressed that, she is working with 50000 villagers and she considers them as her relatives and would like serve for them.

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

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.

Workshop on Eat Local Eat Healthy - Building the capacity of Women and Farmers' Organisations

Mr. M. Karthikeyan, CEO, Small Millet Foundation started the workshop with the three topics viz. clear concept of local food, key features of a local food and what will be the future plan at federation level in order to promote local food and dietary diversity

Mrs. Salome Yesudas, Deccan Development Society, who had vast familiarity on participatory rural appraisal process on different quality of foods spoke in the event. She advised the community to classify the source of food into three sub groups in aspects of quality, seasonality and satisfaction level. And another activity was done by the participants of the workshop for the types of food intake on different subcategories based on cereal, pulses, vegetables, fruits and animal proteins, the local food sources were documented. Based on the outcomes she suggested everyone to consume more vegetables and fruits, asked to grow more fruit plants and vegetables in home and agriculture lands, increase animal protein intake by promoting backyard poultry. Some of the action points emerged in the workshop: Village level meetings should be conducted on regular periodicity to promote local food consumption,

government and food science institutions have to convene capacity building programme and field level demonstration to improve local dietary food consumption.

Seminar on Women and Livelihood Development: Role of Agriculture Finance Groups

Mr. Selva Raju, Program Officer, DHAN Foundation in his lead presentation highlighted in the mixed groups where the leaders are women, the repayment of credits availed (both internal and bank loans) is much superior to that of the groups with men as leaders.

Mrs. Prema Sr. Project Executive, shared the main role of AFG is to address financial stress during crop cultivation, credit access at fixed interest rate mainly for agriculture and non-farm activities is also important to leverage funds from nationalized banks. The leadership training and skill-building for women members helped them to run their AFGs with success.

Mrs. Chitra Kavitha, Manager, TNGB, Natham, highlighted that here are about 80 AFGs in Natham Vayalagam federation which got bank linkages to the tune of 3 crores, with a special focus to women farmers where there is no default and . She appreciated mutual help prevails among AFGs, especially for hospitalization. Finally, she added that empowering women is only way towards sustainable future.

Mr. Vasavlingam, Honorary President of Vayalagam Movement showcased a Oorani (drinking water tank) renovation work has been done exclusively by women members worth rupees 50,000 is a welcoming trend in women and livelihood development. Mr. Velusamy, Leader Vayalagam, Theni, insisted equal responsibility should be needed from both men and women for overall development.

Workshop on Reducing Violence Against Women (VAW) through De-Addiction intervention

Dr. C. Ramasubramanian, Founder, Chellamuthu Trust and Research Foundation, Madurai has explained that the Psychological depression is one of the major causes of alcoholism. He further added that the de-addiction should be treated as collective responsibility wherein the people belongs to all age groups should cooperate. Smt.Chinna Pilllai mentioned that the women members are to be empowered to handle the ill-effects of alcoholism at family level She recalled few de-addiction implemented in her cluster.

The presenters of the workshop have thrown many lead points to the forum to reflect on Violence Against Women (VAW). Alcohol Anonymous committee have to be organised for sensitizing the family members and also to interrelate with alcohol addicts. The acts related to violence against women were well explained with details. ‘We provide excellent care and services to the alcohol addicts and our peaceful environment recovers them at a faster rate’ says Mr.Manoj from SAPRK. He highlighted about the importance of various treatment measures such as family counseling, pharmacotherapy, detoxification and rehabilitation through de-addiction centre could become important steps to curtail alcoholism and restore normalcy.

While sharing their experiences towards moving out of alcoholism, few men members have explained about the

mechanisms they followed to overcome the problem. The forum felt happy to listen their success stories. A detailed discussion was happened in sub groups to map out the issues related to VAW and also to discuss the mechanisms to sensitise the member families about the mission. The declarations of the workshop have been constituted with few key areas like issues related to VAW, strategies to sanitise the women, and sustainable model to address alcoholism on lone run.

Plenary on Redesigning urban irrigation tanks for redefined future

Madurai once called as ‘Maadukulak keezh Madurai’ indicates that the Madurai civilisation was established based on the agricultural economy generated from the command area of Madakulam irrigation tank. There were many archaeological evidences showing the term ‘Kulak keezh’. But the process of urbanisation had converted the land-use and land-cover of the irrigation tanks and its command area. Almost 13 out of 18 tanks in Vandiyur Cascade have lost their command area. This resulted in deterioration of tanks. As the centuries old tank cascade system has lost its ‘irrigation’ purpose, it’s time for ‘redesigning them for the better future’. In this context, Centre for Urban Water resources has organised this workshop by bringing up multiple stakeholders such as engineers, historians, botanists, ornithologists, water conservation practioners and social activists to discuss on the same. The team presented the present status of the Vandiyur tank cascade system and opened up the Plenary discussion,

Ms.Madhulika Choudary of Dhruvansh NGO of Hyderabad, who has renovated Negnampur Lake and Yerrakunta Lake explained her ‘wetlands based tank rejuvenation’ model. She highlighted that, “Duty of a conservationist is to create a space for ‘the mother Nature’ to regenerate herself. As a mother it is responsibility of every woman to contribute towards conservation”.

Dr. B.J. Pandian, while sharing his experiences in rejuvenation of Ukkadam tank said, “The experimental process of urban tank restoration should be inclusive in nature to bring every stakeholder in same page. This will help in scaling up.”

Dr.Prof Stephen of American College expressed, “It is important to pilot ‘water clubs’ for school students to create ‘water literacy’ among young unpolluted minds. The curriculum should be rich with activities and field tours so that learning process will educate the whole family via student”.

Dr. Badrinarayanan, a bird watcher of Madurai shared his concern over inappropriate desilting that disturbs the ‘plant succession’ process and bio-magnification of heavy metals through sewage fed tanks among migratory birds.

In the concluding remarks Dr. Venkadasamy highlighted, “The redesign should be ‘self-revenue generative’. Scopes for converting isolated urban tanks into sacred groves shall be explored and piloted in few of them with the help of district administration.” Many volunteer groups and associations from Madurai, working for waterbodies conservation were awarded with title, ‘Thanneer Mainthargal’ (Offspring of Water).

Workshop on Empowering women through Holistic Development: HCL Consortium Way

The main purpose of this program is to create impact on the development area by each consortium partner shared and cross

learning happen among them for Win-Win collaboration and come up with impact booklet. The brief sharing by the partner NGOs of HCL foundation is provided below:

1. Aide et Action is mainly working on skill building training viz. basic computer education for women and automobile course for men and they got employment opportunity with regular income earning.
2. BSSG is focusing on women empowerment through SHG and Child development projects. SHG loans are being provided for business and income generation activities. Vocational training centers, community colleges and program for noon meal provided at ICDS Centers and program run away children of BSSG are doing socially relevant actions.
3. FPA, India is mainly working on family planning, reproductive health, RTI and STI, HIV program, also for day care centers, mobile health clinics, satellite clinic, safe abortion, care and support centers, skill building unit offering nursing course of four-month duration, adolescent girls with the support of HCL Foundation.
4. CURE, DHAN Foundation, focuses on revival of Vandiyur tank cascade. The main objective of this project is to involving women as a fore-runner in restoration of ponds, ooranis, water bodies and tanks. They are doing activities like rain water harvesting structure in schools, treatment of sewage water for agriculture and water literacy program conducted in this project.
5. OfERR NGO, mainly works for Srilankan refugees, also for children and adolescents. And they have promoted children parliament program, Green school garden program, promoting savings habits for the students by opening savings account in post office and self-defense training courses.
6. M.S. Chellamuthu Trust and Research Foundation primarily works for De-addiction centers and mental health programs. Their target group is 6th-12th standard students. The main focus is to addressing drug abuse, emotional problems, mental health related problems through life school education trainings. Need based counselling and medical support provided, career guidance program, establishing NALAM centers at schools
7. WASH Institute: The main focus is open defecation free environment by doing construction of individual and common toilets especially for women, school health and sanitary blocks, establishment of RO water plants at schools, women friendly toilets in main cities. They are providing safe drinking water facilities through WATSAN Committee.
8. SUHAM Trust, this is one of the DHAN collective institution which is mainly working for health, nutrition and sanitation ensuring health and nutrition security of women, girls and children. The institution also works in addressing other health problems like non-communicable diseases especially breast and cervical cancer, which helps to identify the problems of women at early stage. The violence against women is addressed through addressing de-addiction intervention.

The event at Madurai symposium evolved Pathways to consortium of HCL Foundation to work on women empowerment focus in a complimenting each one's strength for the well-being of women.

Workshop on Making homes Violence Free for Women

Ms. Premalatha from One Stop Center (OSC), Department of Social welfare shared violence against women is partly the cultural evil that we need to bury down in this generation. Now-a-days women have more power than man because of education and their will power. However, beating child at home is also a form of domestic violence, that practice needs to zeroed in. Women used to fear to talk against man about his act of harassment and violence, unless expressed solution are not in the vicinity she reiterated.

Ms. S. Selva Gomathi, Chairman, Justice Shivraj Patil Foundation shared that, OSC as a good initiation that gives one stop solution against violence perpetrated against women and child. Now the real problem is that women should come forward to express the problem, and for that much more awareness promotions are needed. The child from a disturbed parenting has all the possibilities to follow the same path in their elder age. She briefed the audience on how many of the women related rights acts have transformed over the years from being male centric to that of pro-women, this is possible because of the efforts made by civil society organisations. Hence seeking remedies alone creates the space for better protection frameworks in place, so women are having the opportunity to be in happy homes.

Mrs. Umarani shared that women leader in Kalanjiam groups, clusters, and federations; have to work for creating happy families in their communities and ensure that they have happiness in their own family. If they spare at least an hour a day they can think, discuss, and act on their own rights, the issue of domestic violence at homes will surely decline. Building family value is essential to build future happy families. Hence, grooming of the children without gender bias and following the principles of equality at home is the central action point women should start practicing at home.

Ms. Glory Deborah, Director, New Creation Trust shared on the various forms of violence in families. She called women to create the space for equality at home, so as to bring the desired gender balance in the society. In many DV cases women disable women and are also harassed by men, and this is a very pathetic situation that could be addressed only through collective action.

Ms. Shobana Kumar, District Child Protection Officer spoke about the rights of child, and the need to educate children on safe and unsafe exposures in and out of home. Stringent acts were in place to protect children from any form of abuses, it won't serve the purpose unless the child is well-informed of distinguishing unsafe exposures. Detailed sharing on Legal form of adoptions and child welfare protection enlightened the participants on the subject.

Ms. Sangeeta from Crime Prevention and Victim Care (PCVC) shared about women related violence and services and interventions available for physical, psycho-social, sexual and economic empowerment both formal and informal.

The subgroup deliberations came out with key declarations namely: to promote community watch groups, awareness campaigns about legal measures and utilizing existing social capital to deliberate and evolve innovative measures for stopping domestic violence.