



Madurai Symposium 2019

Women Empowerment for Sustaining Development

18-22 September, 2019



Bulletin

Day 5: 22 September 2019

Global Closing Ceremony



The curtains of Madurai Symposium 2019 came down after a successful five days' grand gala events of about 42 Workshops/Seminars/Roundtable and 9 Community conventions in global closing ceremony on September 22, 2019 evening.. Mr. M. Kalyanasundaram, CEO, INAFI-INDIA has delivered his welcome speech. He told that this symposium has been very instrumental in creating a space for learning and the knowledge sharing. He mentioned to the audience that women empowerment is the global agenda and those who are involved in the development, empowerment of women bring positive transformation in the society at large. Because of this, the women empowerment theme has been chosen for the 9th edition of Madurai Symposium this year.

This word has been coined from 1975 Mexico action plan, Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies, (1985), Beijing Declaration and platform for Action (1995) followed by the Millennium Development Goals (2001-15) and now Sustainable development Goals (SDG 2016-30). For the past 23 years, DHAN foundation and the other people institutions are spearheading the process of women empowerment. women empowerment is having many dimensions like social, economic, political and many others,

told Kalyanasundaram. He briefed the dimensions of women empowerment like Social, Economical, Political and so on and the two streams viz. Community and development stakeholders who were the participants and deliberated during the symposium in five given sub-themes.

Ms. A. Umarani, Chief Executive, DHAN Kalanjiam Foundation facilitated the Madurai Symposium 2019 Declaration to be presented before the audience. About 54 Declarations have been read out by the senior Programme Leaders of thematic verticals in DHAN Foundation.

Dr. G. Revathy Subbulakshmi, Vice Principal, Senthamil College gave a Public Speech on Women Empowerment and thoughts of many important personalities like Vali, Mahakavi Bharathi and M.K. Gandhi. She voiced her views as to empowering the women, men are playing the major role. We have to say that, by the joint effort of the men and women we have to sustain and empower to get full-fledged empowerment. Her speech also recalled the importance of Ms. Savithri Bhai Phule who had intervened on the education for the backward community and was mentioned as Mahatma by none other than Gandhi. Her speech was a

mix of humour, development content and new historical information related to Women empowerment.

Mr. T.S. Rajasekar, IAS, District Collector, Madurai in his valedictory address said that Empowerment has different dimensions. DHAN has found out a strategy to empower women which led DHAN to achieve the success of scaling up across 14 states with lakhs of poor households.

Then he has shared that empowerment is not about the independent, it is about the inter dependence. We have built this values and ethics from the ancestral period. Political empowerment is not about winning election or male guided female representatives. It is like how the president of the SHG are behaving, and playing the role in the decision making. Even they are playing role in the local governance. But at the same time, when the women needed support the men in the family will extend their support for her. This implies the healthy society. Then he has insisted the women participants to be politically empowered.

Mr. M.P. Vasimalai, Executive Director, DHAN Foundation, cited poems from Avvaiyar's Nalvazhi on food and the human being, agriculture followed by values and ethics which will give the satisfaction. He away the immediate Pathway of Symposium 2019 as below:

That all the declarations could be possible only if all the mainstream institutions will participate. Women Empowerment (WE) he coined that as WE. (>>>) WE which means we. For this, the manual can be created which will give demonstration for the community.

And then he shared about the partnership that this symposium created a space for partners to demonstrate. This symposium given knowledge about us and the gaps that we have, what are the action plan for the gaps need to be focused on.

This is not about the individual knowledge-built learnings. It is co-created co-learning. This needs to be done on a sustained way for the betterment of the society. Then he thanked all the participants for making this event a successful one.

Ms. Annette Houtekamer of DHAN International in her address gave a data that all of the women are having role to unleash the potential of women valued to contribute R.28 trillion dollars will be the GDP in 2025. She also highlighted few important actions that evolved in the events attended by her as special guest or resource person. We must raise awareness and make the women and men to take part in the decision making. The action points, she highlighted are

- Membership in the SHG and learn how to resolve the conflicts in the group.
- Bridge the digital devices for the empowerment of women like mobile banking, e-learning and rely upon technologies for the digitalization, kiosks, and financial literacy.
- All the development stakeholders have to work together for year-round for empowering the women.

Mr. A. Gurunathan, Director, The DHAN Academy proposed vote of thanks to all those contributed to the

success of Symposium 2019. The participants and guests stand to National Anthem and with that, the global closing event ended with jubilation.

KNOWLEDGE BRIEF

Workshop on Women Empowerment - Pathway to Sustainable Development Goals

The SDGs have specific gender equality targets in its 17 goals other than having a standalone goal on gender equality. It is called for more consistent sex disaggregation of data across many indicators. This is very important to create resilient, equitable and inclusive society. Gender focus in development initiatives could not alone help achieve the desired goals. Participation of women, stakeholders and organisations working on women is essential to have context specific localised development strategies that could lead to achieve the desired goals. The vision of ensuring human rights of all, achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls is possible only by then. The SDGs envisages to work for significant increase in investment to close the gender gap and strengthen support for institutions in relation to gender equality and the empowerment of women at the global, regional and national levels. All forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls will be eliminated, including through the engagement of men and boys. Creating sound policy frameworks at the national, regional and international levels, based on pro poor and gender sensitive development strategies, are required to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication. Elimination of gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations are very much needed.

Workshop on Savings - A powerful tool for Women Empowerment

Women empowerment can be defined as a process leading to enhancing women's control over financial, human and intellectual resources in society. In any nation, the women empowerment could be measured to the extent of their involvement in social, economic and political fields. Though women comprise almost half of the total percentages of world's population, are still deprived of their rights in most of the developing countries in South and East Asian nations apart from the African countries, due to prevalent gender discrimination.

Situation of women in rural areas is more miserable than their counterparts living in urban spaces. They remain powerless, due to their less participation and involvement in the generation of resources critical for development. If the goal of women empowerment is to be achieved in totality, efforts on modernization is urgent to bring the women in the mainstream development.

There are numerous barriers to the empowerment of women in India. Women are not given equal space when

they are widowed, divorced, separated etc., it is more miserable; as per 2011 census, there were nearly 7.4 crore single women in India.

NABARD seeded SHG concept in the 80's and have since become a movement from its modest beginning in mid-80s., Annual report of NABARD 2018-19 says, there are 12 crore women reached through 1 crore SHGs with savings of Rs. 23000 crore and bank loan outstanding of Rs.87,000 crore.

The savings done by the women should not be look or treated as savings, it should be rather treated as the investment for the future. This could be possible only if the money is working and earns money. For that the savings should earn in the way of compounding to have the better lump sum at the end. Women have higher life expectancy than men, this makes the women to depend on the savings during their last times.

Round Table on Women in Agri Biodiversity

A nation with enriched agricultural biodiversity could prosper and sustain food and nutrition security besides fulfilling the ecosystem services. On the contrary, population growth, greed among people, climate change incidents have made negative impact on deterioration of agri-biodiversity rich landscapes in many parts of the country. UNESCO, therefore declared the Western Ghats house to thousands of plants, trees, insects and birds as monumental heritage that needs continuous protection. After the invention of many hybrid varieties and seeds, the traditional and rich agricultural biodiversity started withering. It is quite obvious that increase pressure on land and reduced per capita land holding, men are migrating to the nearby towns due to lack of employment and population growth. Women of today are taking care of crop selection, seed storage, preservation, and cultivation. About 75% of agriculture fields in the rural area are taken care by the women. As per the women participants, application of FYM, silt, mulching, increases the soil texture, health, moisture holding capacity and ultimately leading to reduced water requirement. In order to address the risks and vulnerabilities, women have to take-up multi-cropping with crops of various water requirement, physiology, and tolerance to drought. Introduction of tree crops directly contributes to the better ecosystem and serves as a bird sanctuary.

**Workshop on Domestic water use:
An activity-based literacy for women**

As the right conviction agrees, future wars on the earth will be fought over water. As there will never be a substitute for water to sustain life on earth, citizens have to give utmost care in conserving our water resources. Continuous awareness and literacy on conservation of water becomes inevitable to all sectors of society and all State government should mandate them as important policy action. Special emphasis should also be given to ensure the meaningful learnings among poor people use minimal water, when the 'economically poor' communities graduate themselves through multiple development interventions their culture

also changes friendly. Therefore, inculcating knowledge on 'responsible consumerism' among women is mandatory. Development professionals working on water conservation ought to expose the public, especially women towards right consumption, virtual water and carbon footprints behind their cultural changes.

Workshop on Women empowerment through rejuvenating hereditary weaving enterprises

The Indian textile industry is in the process of responding to the changes in the global economy and has started utilizing its strengths to build up international status. Today, India is the second largest producer of textiles in the world, next only to China. The Indian textile industry is one of the largest and oldest and considering the availability of inexpensive skilled workers and technician along with the availability of cotton in the country, it has been doing well in the recent past in terms of production and exports. According to the Ministry of Textiles (2015), India produces 95 % of the hand looms of the world which makes it the second largest cottage and labour-intensive sector after agriculture. It has been playing a vital role in the country's economy by forming part of its rich heritage and exemplifying the artistry of the weavers. Due to non - availability of skilled labour, the small companies have lost their relevance. Over 38,00,000 weaving companies provide employment to approximately 12. 5 million people, thereby, making weaving industry the largest provider of rural work force. Textile sector is next to agriculture sector in terms of engaging labourers and supporting livelihoods. It is preceded by the agriculture sector. There is a huge quantity of availability of the raw materials; the continuous supply of economically affordable labour force is the contributing factors behind the success of the present weaving industry of India. It is estimated that the weaving industry in India will grow by 28 per cent to over 37 million tons in due course. The industry will maintain its growth throughout 2015. According to the silk weaving industry a combination of the abolition of quantitative restrictions, declining tariffs on textile imports, and events. Cheap imports of silk, especially from China, which is posing tough competition to the Indian silk - weaving industry at present. The liberalization of the international trade along with change in the reforms of indigenous economy, have affected negatively to Indian Weaving Industry.

Handloom sector is the only manufacturing sector wherein one finds large number of women producing products which are worn by large number of women. A unique feature of handloom sector is that 60 per cent women produce almost 70 per cent of women products. There is no recognition to women's work as weavers, even operations and take on labour-intensive activities. Women do not have access to government identity cards, except in cases where they are widowed or are members of the cooperatives. Women lack direct access to wages since weaving is a household enterprise and men take the final product to the master weaver for sale. Single and older women suffer more since they cannot take on labour intensive activities and lack family support. Literacy levels in general are poor

amongst weavers and particularly lower in girls and women. Adolescent girls are also involved in weaving operations at the household levels and as paid wage workers though women play a major role in all pre-loom Amongst shed workers who weave on looms owned by master weavers, wages are lower and working conditions are highly unfavourable. Women weavers are keener to innovate in new designs and products in response to market needs and demands, but they have lack of knowledge about the design development. However, their working, living and wage conditions need to be improved. They need to be empowered in various ways. Almost all the government schemes projects and programmes on handloom sector have been and continued to bypass this major workforce through various means.

Round Table on Women and Heritage (Past, Present and Future)

Women have noteworthy contributions in the historical era too. From the first Veda viz. Rig veda and sub-sequent Vedic period the questions raised by women went unanswered and the neglect of women who were intellectual in their thought. Yet women contribution during Pallava, Chola period in temples, preserving the culture as well as traditions were conveniently forgotten by the society in the modern century. Kazhukumalai inscription in Tuticorin district revealed that about 50

women teacher who used to teach men in ancient period. Heritage taught as simple living by women involvement from cradle to grave. Women empowerment is nothing but the revival of our traditional glory of the past into present.

Workshop on Alcoholic Anonymous for Women Empowerment

Women breaks out emotionally, sad and depressed on their spouse addiction to alcohol. Men took drinking as a social status inherited by culture. On de-addiction women are the major change agents. Alcoholic Anonymous (AA) groups play the major role for effective de-addiction. Post de-addiction most are not associated with AAs, and hence are relapsed. Madurai have 27 AA groups, but AA has not gone in rural areas of Madurai district. Strategies and mechanisms can be worked out through collaboration for promoting more AA's to maximise the success percentage of de-addiction. The AAs groups are like 'Suyambu'-initiated by self-intuition and not on other insistence. These groups will focus on prevention, promotion, curative and eradication of alcoholism from life. Drinking is a disease that can be cured by sensitizing the community. The family members should understand the situation and give enabling environment to the addicts and encourage them attend AAs meetings. Behaviour Change Communication strategies combined with family environment could make de-addiction process a success.

MADURAI SYMPOSIUM 2019 DECLARATIONS

DHAN Kalanjiam Foundation

Following important resolutions have been made in several seminars/workshops and conventions on "Women Empowerment" convened by the Kalanjiam Community Banking Programme as part of Madurai Symposium 2019.

1. Social capital shall be made more inclusive by reaching out to the excluded left out poor/deprived/disabled women – for social, financial and economic inclusion.
2. Strengthening and shaping federations as civic institutions to work with mainstream institutions – Panchayats, Government, Banks etc. to access for their entitlements with ease and dignity.
3. The social capital shall be the building block of mutuality which in turn expands the social capital of communities who have come together to address development issues of utmost priority for them. The power of mutuality when radiates through the social capital impacts women in many ways from empowerment

perspective – family, space for leadership and economic opportunities.

4. Social capital breeds social capital as a specific collective for a focused action to address specific issues such as health, livelihoods, social security etc. The business social capital shall be the springboard to enhance and enlarge women entrepreneurial skills and capacity to build the business enterprises.
5. Beyond financial linkages, the women-run enterprises shall be supported by relevant stakeholders (government departments, promoting agencies) dealing with enterprises – expand market opportunities, value chains and new technology.
6. Social capital is a great platform to build value based family and community systems encompassing seven soft skills: (i) கீர்த்தி, (ii) ஸ்ரீ, (iii) பேச்சாற்றல், (iv) நினைவாற்றல், (v) மேதமை அறிவாற்றல், (vi) பொறுமை and (vii) தாளாண்மை of women.
7. The local / grassroots governance shall be inclusive of women and enabling women's

participation in the panchayat institutions, natural resources and ecosystem conservation services.

8. A structure with well-defined systems shall be put in place at the block/district level to build leadership skills among the local communities and capacity building process that brings about maturity and graduation in leadership for higher responsibilities and larger collective action. Leadership skills and capacity of governance acquired at grassroots (federations) shall be nurtured for effective role in larger governance – large communities and geography.
9. The role and capacity of women in moving family out of poverty from economic perspective and the other facets of poverty including health, education, shelter, and hygiene should be recognized and appreciated.
10. The amicable resolution at the family level shall be the priority for addressing the issue of domestic violence. Family counselling coupled with community counselling shall be the strategy. Legal course shall be the last resort. A family level happiness index shall be developed as an indicator of domestic violence free families.
11. Savings shall be the family culture and the entire household shall be involved as savers. The power of savings shall be harnessed for need based investments in livelihoods, financial assets as pension and asset building.
12. The financial institutions such as Banks and KDFS should extend affordable gender sensitive credit products to empower well-being of women and their families along with financial literacy.
13. The mainstream financial institutions and technical organisations in collaboration with women SHGs to deliver affordable credit products for enabling the poor women to own their homes and eco-friendly habitation.
14. A memorandum of concern detailing the pricing, lending and recovery practices of not only MFI, as also private sector bank, small finance bank which are inimical to the interest of the microcredit clients shall be submitted to the Reserve Bank of India and Government of India to rectify the wrong situation in microfinance sector.

15. Achieving gender equality and equity in all aspects through convergence of plan and action by government and non-governmental organization is the effective strategy to reach many SDGs.

DHAN Vayalagam (Tank) Foundation

1. To exhort government to take stock and keep a data bank on women engaged in agriculture to help evolve women centric agriculture programmes for larger participation of women.
2. The women engaged in agriculture shall have fair deal in terms of wages, land rights and representation in the farmers' organisations. More importantly land and assets ownership shall reflect gender equality with joint ownership.
3. As about 30% cultivators and in the 47% of the labourers involved in agriculture are women, the imperative of imparting livelihoods skill training, modern technology awareness and use and resource support for kitchen and nutrition gardening has been emphasized.
4. Women are the most disadvantaged community when it comes to climate change and its impact at the household level and also society at large. They are having less adaption and mitigation skills to overcome the negative impact of climate change. The seminar suggested that large scale awareness programmes shall be rolled out by development stakeholders including government to benefit women folks.
5. A paradigm shift in cropping pattern - from cereal crops to small millets, multi-cropping, introducing innovative agriculture techniques, farmers friendly credit programmes, etc. would be an effective climate change mitigating tools.
6. Traditional wisdom and practices are found to be highly relevant to combat climate change induced challenges. Extensive research and documentation and proven traditional methods and approaches to overcome negative impact of climate change is need of the hour and should be practiced immediately without any further delay.
7. Agriculture Finance Groups (AFGs) are playing financial empowerment role in women empowerment in agriculture sector through livelihood and other development. The workshop with women AFGs demand the

stakeholders to document best practices and disseminate them to women in agriculture.

8. The workshop stresses the banking community to showcase women led livelihood initiatives and proven business plan models across the nation for recognizing and encouraging women to be financially included at the earliest.

Centre for Urban Water Resource (CURE)

1. CURE should ensure women leadership in every 'urban oorani restoration association' that it promotes in future. It should facilitate the 'waterbodies restoration' process for women SHGs, to pilot water security as tool for Women Empowerment.
2. CURE should demonstrate 'Photo story' as an educative tool for 'water literacy' by conducting sessions with diversified audience. It should also experiment video graphic form of 'water watch' to reach more people.
3. CURE should design and pilot 'water clubs' at minimum 5 schools for school children to inculcate water literacy among the uncorrupted minds. An activity and field visits based curriculum should be prepared so that the students will work along with the support of parents, which will create water literacy among the whole family. The students of water club should be introduced to ancient wisdom on waterbodies, water conservation technologies, concepts of water, relation between water and life, etc.
4. CURE should constitute a multiple stakeholder consultation forum which will be meeting every month to derive action plans on 'redesigning urban water tanks', pilot the same and evolve from the same. The consultation forum should develop policies exclusively for redefining waterbodies.

Panchayat Development Programme

1. The Madurai Symposium appreciates 15 Indian states including Tamil Nadu for enhancing women reservation from 33% to 50%. At the same time we urge Government of Tamil Nadu to conduct local government elections immediately with no further delay.
2. We propose Government to conduct "Mahila Gram Sabha" once in a year to provide exclusive attention to women development on March 8 (International Women's Day) every year.

3. In every village panchayat, a steering committee for women empowerment to be promoted with the membership of panchayat council members and women SHG leaders.

Coastal Conservation and Livelihoods Programme (CALL)

1. Coastal livelihoods and coastal conservation are inseparable, hence our livelihood intervention should address the both equally and efficiently to empower women.
2. Fisheries / marine based livelihoods / skill building / technical support / livelihood financing shall be more focused to create sustainable employment to women in all seasons.
3. In order to strengthen the fisheries enterprises a larger scale the FPO for sea weed/fisheries will be promoted. Women shareholders should be given priority.
4. Collaboration will be established with banking institutions / universities / research / government on coastal conservation livelihoods / disaster risk reduction.
5. Action research / studies will be taken on the areas of women and DRR through ACEDRR.
6. Promotion of DRR committees / volunteers are very essential and equipping them with relevant skills and knowledge.
7. Village marine conservation council will be promoted and strengthened for engaging the conservation activities.
8. Cleaning up the coastal areas will be regularized and scaled up along with the promotion.

Rainfed Farming Development Programme and Small Millet Foundation

The federations resolved that, they will work for the improvement of women farmers through the following interventions improvised to the specific contexts:

1. Improvement of the livelihoods of women farmers by offering credit and technical support on farm-based livelihoods particularly livestock rearing, mechanisation of task undertaken by women for reduction of drudgery, land development activities and natural farming.
2. Capacity building of women for undertaking new non-farm activities (Tailoring, Handicrafts and mat weaving) and off-farm activities (Honey bee rearing and Mushroom cultivation)

to move away from engagement in Beedi rolling and Match industries.

3. Training and motivating members and adolescent girls for adopting healthy food practices including consumption of small millets, reconstruction and use of toilets and opting for safe drinking water.
4. To encourage and offer credit support for education of children, with a special focus on girl children.

Small Millet Foundation

- 1) Exploring the adoption of browntop millet will be taken up in a few small millet locations in tribal context where suitable climate condition prevail for its cultivation.
1. Small millet foundation's newly launched SMF V3 portable dehuller would be the best household level intervention for reduction of drudgery of women.
2. SMF V3 should be scaled through different NGOs, processing industries and private value addition companies.
3. There should be another focus on the behavioural change of the men to support women in food processing to reduce their drudgery.
4. Besides nutritious millets there should be focus on varieties of different grains to be incorporated in our food basket.
5. Awareness programme should be conducted to create the interest among the young generation for consumption of millet.
6. SMF will organize motivational events to document the embedded rich indigenous practices in local community.
7. SMF will use the methods and skills for a better and in-depth understanding local food, its importance, source and effort needs for their improvement.
8. SMF will plan series of interventions based on local understanding gained from participatory method and implement in coming months.

Sustainable Healthcare Advancement (SUHAM) Trust

1. Integration of SHGs and Health needs have to be done across the country using the model of

Federation Collective where SHG platform has successfully demonstrated the effective mainstream convergence and significant change in health, nutrition and sanitation status among poor households towards impacting the livelihoods.

2. The intensive focus on 1000 days window period of pregnant mother and first two years of child should be given top priority across the country by the government, healthcare institutions and civil society organisations. This should be followed up by physical and mental development of children towards achieving higher productivity and addressing infant and maternal mortality.
3. Access to safe water and sanitation for all should be given emphasis by ensuring functioning toilets at household level, reviving defunct toilets, household tap water connections and policy level decision making for roof water harvesting towards achieving Goal 6 of Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 will empower women to a great extent.
4. The state and central governments has to recognise the work of Alcoholic Anonymous where they are taking continued efforts in changing the behaviour of addicted people and retaining them at Sober stage and this will address the violence against women.
5. The need for convergence of Governments, Healthcare institutions, Skill building institutions and NGOs for achieving better healthcare should be necessary for empowerment of girls and women socially and economically.
6. Nutritional security of women and children has to be ensured by integrating the work of National Health Mission and Poshan Abhiyan from Government of India. The people institutions and community needs to be oriented on traditional food practices and household level nutritional garden.
7. The government has to give important priority on addressing unwanted blindness by empowering the rural women and youth through skilling on eye care screening towards addressing the problem at early stage through vision centres.

Madurai Symposium 2019 in Media



We profusely acknowledge with thanks the support of all our partners and event organisers for successful convening of Madurai Symposium 2019.

