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www.suzlonfoundation.org or www.sathiallforpartnerships.org

Public & Private Partnership



Increasing Women Resource Base

Optimal Resource Use for
Sustainable Development



Gender Resource Equality: Need to Involve State As Well As Private Sector

Though constitutionally bestowed, a large section of women and men remain deprived of equal rights over key resources. While laws have been amended to restore this imbalance in family inheritance, the policy discourse in support of women's equal access and control over "public" resources remains relatively weaker. Gender Resource Equality Advocates in India with the support of UNIFEM (United Nations Development Fund for Women) have promoted policies and project ideas to ensure resource equality. The State needs to take greater responsibility for specific increase in the resources, as cultural and patriarchal controls inhibit women's and other excluded groups' access to even basic resources such as land, water and services. As more and more developmental projects are getting privatized, corporate agencies' action towards women resource increase, also needs to be given impetus.

The Indian Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life

This charter, adapted by Sathi All for partnerships (SAFP) from the European Charter recalls Indian Constitution, formed on fundamental rights and liberties including the promotion of the equality of women and men. Based on the international legal framework of Human Rights of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, adopted in 1979, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of the United Nations, of 1995, the Resolutions of the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly of 2000 (Beijing +5), and the Worldwide Declaration of the International Union of Local Authorities of 1998 on women in Local government, there is an urgent need to adopt and implement this Charter.

Implementation of the Gender Equality Charter

Through this charter the signatory recognizes that the right to equality of women and men is a fundamental prerequisite of democracy, and that a democratic society cannot afford to ignore the skills, knowledge, experience and creativity of women. The signatory also assures equal rights of women and men to vote, to participate in the formulation and implementation of policy, to hold public office and to perform all public functions at all levels of the government and recognizes the principle of balanced representation. She/he recognizes the value of twinning between Indian cities with international cooperation by Local and State governments, in bringing citizens closer together, to promote learning on gender equality in local habitat across state frontiers.

Role of Local and Regional Governments

The role of local and regional governments in promoting gender equality was affirmed in the Worldwide Declaration of IULA (the International Union of Local Authorities) on "women in Local government" adopted in 1998. The new world organization, United Cities and Local Governments, maintains the equality of women and men as one of its principal objectives.

The government at all levels in India is invited to make a formal public commitment to the principle of equality of women and men, and to implement, within their territory, commitments such as

- (1) Adopt Gender Equality Action Plan within 2 years of signing and implement it. Organize consultations before adopting the Plan, and once adopted disseminate the Plan widely.
- (2) Set clear objectives and priorities ensuring right to equality in resource use;
- (3) Ensure involvement of women in the development and implementation of local and national policies; enable women to make appropriate choices concerning housing, security, public transport, the world of work, or health.
- (4) Revise and evaluate its Gender Equality Action Plan as circumstances require.

Visit www.sathiallforpartnerships.com for more information.

We-Farm: A Win-Win Solution by Suzlon

Suzlon, a leading renewable energy sector company came forward to share its land resource with local women and men approximately 100 acres, in the midst of its Wind Farm in Tirunelveli district (Tamil Nadu), India are given to the local women groups for supporting their livelihoods. While identifying local women, priority was given to the neediest but organized groups of women. The Positive Women Network (PWN+) and Covenant Center for Development (CCD) were evidently the most suitable as both are national level organizations with roots amongst the women groups around Suzlon's wind farms. Women members of these organizations, closest to the wind farms were consulted and asked to select plots as per their convenience. From the cultivable patches (as most of the the wind farms are barren and infertile) short-listed by Suzlon, local women selected plots on the basis of proximity, productivity and contiguity. Suzlon gave user rights on these plots along with perennial water sources, electricity connections, pump sets and well grown coconut and other fruit trees.

Realizing that besides access to productive sources, financial, technical and psycho-social support would be required, Suzlon Foundation involves NGOs with professional expertise in various fields for effective implementation. With continuous exchanges on operational plans, cropping combinations, varieties available, required inputs, equipment, etc. women who were not used to taking farming decisions of this scale are feeling more confident. While PWN+ has opted for vegetables, ground nuts and bananas, CCD promotes cultivation of medicinal herbs.

A PWN+ supported SHG of 20 women cultivates approximately 50 acres of land comprising of Survey Nos, 400, 401, 407 and 409 in Radhapuram ; and 15 women from CCD supported SHGs of local herb collectors (who were earlier known as rat catchers after their traditional occupation) cultivate another 50 acres (approximately) comprising of Survey Nos, 17, 18 and 19, in Udeythur.



“ Few of us have done farming before, most of us worked with our families rolling beedis (local cigarettes) as children. When we saw all this land, we were not confident, but as we started working and were given guidance throughout by Suzlon Foundation people we are giving 100 per cent effort and ,in fact, we now feel that nothing is impossible for us”- Says Gayatri, aged 38, Member of the Positive Women's Network

“Earlier I traveled 15 kilometers to the farm land where I was working as a contract labor, it was very difficult for me to travel and work each day. Now with this initiative I have access to employment just 1 kilometer away from my village, where we are cultivating herbal plants which will be sold by us in the local markets. I am happy now as this would enable us to make more money in the future and provide us a sustainable livelihood opportunity.”- Says Muthulakshmi, aged 33, Member of the Covenant Centre for Development

Suzlon Foundation, facilitating Corporate Social Responsibility for Suzlon, aims at integrating pro-people, pro-environment approaches across business functions; enhancement of natural resources in its custody for strengthening local livelihoods has been one of the focus areas. Instead of worrying about encroachments and spending to safeguard resources, the corporates can thus share excess resources with locals, and the local women and men can gainfully use such opportunities to supplement food requirements, cash income and leisure too.

The foundation has been particularly interested in promoting women's participation in management of natural resources, as they remain excluded from access to / and benefits from lands. The land transactions often happen between men and male dominant agencies. In order to offset this undesirable trend, the foundation decided to involve women in conjunctive use of wind farm lands. The Corporate desires to optimally use resources in its custody, which would otherwise lie vacant; and the local women need an opportunity to prove themselves as managers of local resource bases.

Here are some examples where wind farm lands along with standing trees, water sources are being used by the local communities. As the wind turbines belong to several customers and financial institutions too have stakes in their investments, these lands can be given only for “use” rights with a mutual understanding.

- In Supa, Ahmadnagar District, Maharashtra, Suzlon supports over 150 families through Gram Gaurav Pratishthan a local NGO by giving access for grazing on approx 250 acres of wind farm land. Village community has treated this land with soil and water conservation measures and since two years over 600 animals get nutritious fodder, who earlier solely depended barren lands.
- In Vitave, Dhule District, Maharashtra, Suzlon partnered with the Forest Department to construct a check dam, in the wind farm neighborhood; not only has this increased water availability but Adivasis have been able to bring approx 50 acres of land under two crops, instead of just one rain fed crop.



- In Jaora, Ratlam District, Madhya Pradesh, Suzlon supports Village Development Committee to demonstrate cultivation of Soyabean, Red Gram and a medicinal plant Sarpagandha, on 4 acres in its wind farm. It is a special project to encourage other farmers to adopt these KVK recommended crops and the returns are used by the committee to support its work.

For us it's not just another CSR project of community development, it's an effort towards inclusive development. If Corporates and civil society have confidence in each other, resources will be used optimally; and if there is equal access to women and men it will reflect in balanced growth. The existing blatant disparities in development indicators will then start declining.

Seemantinee Khot
Head- Corporate Social Responsibility

Sustainable Development Gender Equality Zones : A Great Opportunity to Restore Gender Balance

To ensure that women and men benefit equally from the budget-sanctioned under development plans, a system of “use rights” for built infrastructure / land for a Women Resource equity Zone (WReZ) needs is proposed as a State Government Plan, where matching grants could be made available from the Central government. The context of a WRZ will be within any planned intervention. If WReZ is accepted in principle and policy any new development plan like sustainable development zone in Edakochi or IDDP Kollam can work on the principle of giving contracts and use rights to women and men equally for income generation, provision of safe drinking water or sanitation projects or services. The National Planning commission of India has ensured that each planned district needs to have a gender sub plan

“Women’s Resource equity Zones” (WReZ) are visualized in:

1. **Kochi, Kerela:** The MLA of Kochi has sanctioned 15% budget of the State Government to establish a Sustainable Development Zone (SDZ) in Edakochi .The planners have accepted SAFF advocacy to include gender equity resource zones within this planned initiative.
2. **Kollam, Kerela:** Similarly, the Integrated District Development Plan (IDDP) of Kollam has accepted policy and project ideas to give WRZ an initiation in the IDPP plan.
3. **Delhi:** Programs, meant for all, have difficulty reaching women equally is seen in Mission Convergence, Government of Delhi. The SGRY scheme now gives access to infrastructure as advocated by SAFF. WReZ’s need to be planned in Delhi to give women infrastructure sanctioned under area development planning as in Kerala.

Inclusive cities project of central government can include gender equality in resource ownership in spatial plans. District administration can assist women to access infrastructure to organize safe migration, placement services, and care services in their neighborhoods

Leadership of Excluded Women

Increased participation of women in administration to utilize existing women's resource in each neighborhood is the transformation needed to develop gender resource equality. In Tamil Nadu women workers have drafted proposals for their right to salt pans, in coastal areas based on efforts like the Suzlon's, entire districts needs to be mapped for many such income generating activities that can form a part of the area development plan. In Delhi Positive women are also being prepared to take on tasks to develop their concept of women resource zone. Here, the example of planned initiatives in Kerela, provide a framework that WRZ components can be a part of development initiatives that are already budgeted in government plans. For this data on the percentage of public, private and government resource, women and men have access to and control over needs to be collected in each administrative unit.



UNIFEM stands committed to empowering women to reclaim their de-facto and de-jure rights to resources including property and inheritance in keeping with the commitments made in Beijing. From UNIFEM's experience I know that women's groups are looking for sustainable solutions. This is an opportune time for doing work on Sustainable Development models. UNIFEM is and will remain the strong ally of the excluded women's groups for realizing their economic and social security.

Planning and Design

Women specific needs can only be understood once they have been consulted in a manner that they fully understand their rights. It needs to be seen how different women plan their living and work environment. The provision of small toilets is not suitable for a woman's need to drape saris, or breast feed. They need to have space to cook and care for family while managing production work at home. Design of spaces determine how a woman can manage assets and be actively productive to impact the local life of her community.

Women safety framework has been developed by UNIFEM women and safe cities project. This experience calls for redesigning areas with lighting and public spaces that can be used by many at all times to have people to call for help. This may deter violence in general and violence against women in particular.

Space needs and livelihood. Healthcare, markets are planned often but more workspaces and warehouses near the home help women and men to manage domestic and community responsibilities along with increasing their productivity.

Distance of the built infrastructure and livelihood resource from residential space is an important factor for women to use and claim that resource.

The Way Forward

- Organized women groups map all the available resources that they can utilize to support their livelihoods.
- Local and regional governments adopt and implement Gender Equality Action Plans, by including specific requests of local women for resource re-allocation for sustainability of the area.
- State and National government ensure budgetary provisions for the Gender Equality Action Plan and insists on equitable allocation under all the schemes.
- Institutions, Panchayats, government departments, NGOs, temple trusts declare any unused, under-used resources / assets and make those available for use with mutual consent of desirous users.
- The Corporates share resources with local communities; whether lands, buildings, vehicles, equipments or any productive assets, with specific provisions for women and men from excluded sections.
- Civil Society actively follows up gender equality in resource allocation and merits of gender justice.



Our Stakeholders

Suzlon Foundation leads Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives for the Suzlon Group of companies working in the Renewable energy sector. Registered as a Section 25 Company in Dec 2007, Suzlon Foundation has initiated a number of projects in partnership with Civil Society Organizations for sustainable development . (www.suzlonfoundation.org)

UNIFEM is the women's fund at the United Nations. It provides financial and technical assistance to innovative programmes and strategies to foster women's empowerment and gender equality. Address : D 53, Defence Colony, New Delhi 110024 , (www.unifem.org.in)

Sathi All for Partnerships, a civil society organisation, promotes partnerships to work for women resource increase and care for disabling mental illness. SAFP coordinates two global forums i.e the Consult for Women and Land Rights and Habitat International Coalition - Women and Habitat Network., SAFP, Address : E09 Anand Lok Mayur Vihar I, New Delhi. (www.sathiallforpartnerships.org)

Positive Women Network (PWN+) a registered organization (Reg.No:396/98, under Societies Registration Act of Tamil Nadu) working at All-India level as a network of HIV positive women, with HQ in Chennai (www.pwnplus.com)

Covenant Centre for Development supports a number of producers' cooperatives. In Tirunelveli they have trained one of the most excluded communities, consisting of herb gatherers/cultivators to collect medicinal herbs which are processed and sold to pharmaceuticals; thus supporting their livelihoods. (www.ccd.org.in)