

## Sustainable Gender Equal Development Zones Public & Private Partnership to Increase Resource Base

*(credit, land, housing, services and infrastructure for livelihood)*

The need to work on the challenges arising from the financial and ecological crises the world faces cannot be over stated. Area-based plans that promote safe migration can be one way to prepare for, and mitigate the effects of climate change. This note envisages a process by which women can lead solutions and shares with you empirical learning about the potential of including a gender-resource-equality framework in area planning.

### **Gender Resource Equality: Need to Involve State, as Well as Private Sector**

Though constitutionally bestowed, a large proportion of women and men remain deprived of rights to natural, human and financial resources within natural and built environment. Within this deprivation, women own and have access to even fewer resources. While some laws now restore the imbalance in family inheritance, the policy discourse in support of women's equal access and control over "public" resources remains relatively weaker. The State and corporations need to take greater responsibility for specific increases in the resources, as cultural and patriarchal controls inhibit access for women and other excluded groups to resources such as housing, land, water and basic services. This reduced their access and time for employment. With more market-driven projects and privatized development, corporate agencies' action and responsibility also need to be enhanced to increase access, control and use of common assets and resources by women. Gender Resource Equality Advocates in India with the support of United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) have promoted policies and project ideas to ensure gender resource equality within the concept of Sustainable Development Gender-equal Zone (SDGEZ).

**Sustainable Development Gender Equality Zones:** All state and local PRI leaders need to pilot this concept within their areas This would essentially mean that they understand and approve area development plans to include regeneration of resources such that each local governance unit, consciously sets aside at least half resources to women groups in order to manage the regeneration of natural and built infrastructure of the city. A SDGEZ pilot has been initiated in Edakochi, in Kerela (see [www.inspire-india.com/concept1a.htm](http://www.inspire-india.com/concept1a.htm)), which will award use rights to women and men equally for income generation; provide services such as safe drinking water, sanitation or old-age, children and migrant care projects; besides natural conservation projects and commercial support projects, where matching grants could be made available from the Central government. SDGEZ is accepted in principle and policy but needs to be applied in practice with a training, monitoring and evaluation framework.

**An initiative in India:** Implementation of the guidelines issued by the National Planning Commission's "District Gender Sub Plan" will be carried out through a program supporting pilot projects to apply lessons and upscale plans in many more regions with the help of various UN agencies. In Tamil Nadu, a wind-energy company, Suzlon, has successfully launched a public/private experiment in that gives land-use rights to women on wind-energy farms.

### **Women's Resource Equity Zones (WREZ) are visualized in:**

*1. Kochi, Kerela: The member of the Kochi Legislative Assembly 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-equality 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 WREZ an initiation in the IDPP plan.*

*3. Delhi: Program, meant for all, have difficulty reaching women equally is seen in Mission Convergence project of Government of Delhi. The SGRY scheme now gives access to infrastructure as advocated by SAFF. WREZs need to be planned in Delhi to give women infrastructure sanctioned under area development planning, as in Kerala.*

*The Inclusive Cities Project of the central government of India can include gender equality in resource ownership in spatial plans. The district administration can assist women to access infrastructure to organize safe migration, placement services, and care services in their neighborhoods.*

(See <http://www.suzlonfoundation.org/pdf/PublicAndPrivatePartnershipIncreasingWomenResourceBase.pdf>) .Such projects could be basic unit for area development plans.

## Leadership of Excluded Women

Increased participation of women in administration is the transformation needed to utilize existing women's resources in each neighborhood and to develop gender-resource equality. For this, data are needed to determine the percentage of public, private and government resources local women and men have access to and control over in each administrative unit. The gender deficit determines women's entitlements to fill the resource use and control and ownership gap to become equal.

### *Planning and Design*

Women specific needs only can be understood once they have been consulted in a manner that they fully understand their rights. Women plan their living and work environment to cater to needs of space to cook and care for family while managing production work at home. Their design of spaces determines how a woman can manage assets and be actively productive to improve the local life of her community.

*Women safety framework:* UNIFEM has developed the Women and Safe Cities project, which calls for redesigning areas with lighting and public spaces that can be used by many people at all times to ensure people will be present to call for help, if needed. This should deter violence, in general, and violence against women, in particular.

*Space needs and livelihood:* Healthcare centers and markets often are planned, but more workspaces and job opportunities are needed near the home to help women and men manage domestic and community responsibilities while 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.

**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.)

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### The Way Forward

- The means to achieve such substantive gender equality is possible by practical steps, including: Organized women and men mapping all available resources in their area to support their livelihood and infrastructure needs.
- Local, regional and national authorities adopting and implementing Gender Equality Action Plans, by including specific requests of local women for resource reallocation.
- The State ensuring budgetary and infrastructure provisions for the Gender Equality Action Plan and insisting on equitable allocation under all the schemes and in local charters and district gender sub plans.
- Resource owning institutions declaring any unused, underused resources/assets and making those available for use with mutual consent of needy inhabitants as part of charter of equality between women and men in local life.
- Corporations sharing resources with local communities: lands, buildings, vehicles, equipment, or any productive assets that can be used equally by women and men;
- Civil society actively pursuing gender equality in resource allocation and the principles of gender justice and equality.