

From: Celinal Paul Daniel, Integrated Women Development Institute (IWDI), Chennai, Tamil Nadu

ABOUT IWDI:

INTEGRATED WOMEN DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE is a Non – profit making, Non – Governmental and Charitable Voluntary organisation, working, for the women initiatives with the concept of women empowerment in social and economic self-autonomy and transformatory approach, since 1989. We are a registered society under societies registration act 1860 (xxi of 1860) restructured under Tamil Nadu Societies Registration Act 27 of 1975 and the Registration No. 52/89 dated on 15-02-1989, registered with directorate of Income-Tax under 80G and 12A clauses to get exemptions from the donations. IWDI is been run and managed by women those have long experience in Rural Development and Education. IWDI is already known for working for Women empowerment since last 14 years. By virtue our sincere activities and welfare measures aimed for the rural Women, aged, the children, the District authorities has chosen our organisation as COMMITTEE MEMBERS, to represent in various District committees.

WHO? – TARGET PEOPLE

The poverty stricken Women, who are Poor, Destitute, Deserted, Disabled, Widows, Aged, Orphans, Homeless, Schedule Caste, Schedule Tribes, Adolescent Girls, Slavery under Jamindars, Mill Workers, Bonded Labourers, Agricultural Labourers are in the target group living in the areas of Thiruvallur District. Similarly the various people living in Chennai city slums are also covered under the target area.

REAL PROBLEM:

The real problem of Dalit SC/ST women living in the rural villages is not economic but also social. The attitudes of our Dalit people have remained the same for generations. They still believe in what has been sowed a seed in them for centuries. It reflects the future of life is because of their ‘Karma’ sins of then previous birth and that their oppressors have been blessed to enjoy life. They resign themselves to defeated situations and accept injustice without complaint and centuries of this indoctrination of their fate, ‘Karma’ hate stunted the spiritual and psychological growth of these people resulting in low enthusiasm and lack of self-respect and human dignity. The other problems faced by these Women are trapping due to unemployment, food, water, housing, health care, childcare, natural resources, legal system, dowry harassment, sadist atrocities, gender exploitation, early marriage, rape, Molestation, Prostitution run away bride and bridegroom, marital conflicts, family break, depressed etc.,

REMEDIAL MEASURES:

We are working for Women and their sustainable development through various Income Generated Training Programs, Adolescent Girls, Afforestation, Agricultural, AIDS Awareness, Bonded Labour Rehabilitation, Child Labour Rehabilitation, Children Development, Environmental Awareness, Handicrafts, Health Education among the Eligible couple in Small Family Norms, Goatery, Herbal Plantation, Human Rights, Low Cost Housing Technology, Medical Camps, Natural Resources Conservation, Non – Formal Education, Old-Age Homes, Orphanage, Primary Health Care Among women for Children and Adolescent Girls, Rehabilitation for Homeless, Reproductive Child Health Care (RCH),

School Hygiene Education, Self-Help Groups formation, Skill Training, Urban Slum Project, Women Development, Integrated Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Education, Roof Water Harvesting, Village Development Committee (VDC), Women Empowerment

ECONOMIC EXPERIENCE:

We have mobilized about 251 Self Help Groups and provided them the required Training on building their capacity and linked most of the all groups with banks and other government sponsor programs. Something needs to be done for these village through SHGs, since no one is working for their upliftment and lifting from the prevailing degrading situation in the areas. The factors like poverty, illiteracy, disease, communal violence caste violence lead several womenfolk to dehumanizing conditions especially Dalit Women. Their situation is pathetic and these Women in the villages have no work and even the work allotted is found seasonal and forced to live in a situation of utter poverty and destitution, the potentiality of Women in the villages is not motivated and not directed towards constructive self development. These village Women in the target area are found always deprived of economic autonomy, they are grass root illiterates living in the bottom strata of closed societies. The caste system through religious indoctrination has perpetuated poverty and servitude. Many village women are entrusted with the labour work in piece meal and not on a continuous basis, thus fall prey to the middle men, Jamindars, local money lenders for loan amount for a high rate of compound interest unmanageable as these Women and children in them are longing for regular and one time meal per day. These groups being un-organised fall prey to these men and often could not repay the loan, are utilized as bonded laborers who feed the work, adjust their wages towards their abnormal compound interest and thus make them as bonded laborers who feed the work, adjust their wages towards their abnormal compound interest thus make them the advance/loan amount paid and the Women involved are continuing indebtedness and slowly passing their debts to their next generation thus become bonded laborers as well. Considering all these difficult situations faced by the Women in the target area, the various members in SHGs moved into these 44 blocks to educate about 5000 Women on the happenings around them, to eradicate the poverty around them, to liberate them from the bonded laborers group and about the abnormal compound, hour/meter interest charged by the money lenders, on the loans, making them under indebtedness continuously and the ways to avoid such money lenders, middlemen. The Women members of IWDI SHG urged the local Women that in order to free from such activities and to free from poverty, the importance of education, to avoid low enthusiasm. Availing government loans, forming micro credit systems among Women, moving with all the local people, to get liberated from bonded laborers, taking interest in local festivals functions etc., are to be taken care of by them.

IMPACT:

As such the SHGs of IWDI have taken initiatives to identify the poor Women problems those who are trapped due to unemployment this is where our agency is supporting in all these areas to the Women to come out of the socio economic oppressions become empowering. New issues have been raised, new methods are used for bringing awareness among the Women and different structures are appearing to mobilize Women and voice their feelings and needs. Our SHGs are manifesting on basic services to improve the quality of life of Women, for that our SHGs have given preferential treatment for skill development and our SHGs major ultimate objectives/ efforts is to make these Women economically independent and self-reliant. We further wish to record that according to Rabindranath Tagore, the development of any villager should be around economic, education and livelihood and he believed in the concept of Self

Help and laid emphases in community and collective action threw effective and involved community participation and the efforts and services of IWDI shall ever be felt by these target group in the rural villages and thus working to serve Women to demonstrate a clear commitment to Women's empowerment and female human rights on health, education and economic access and so on.

CONCLUSION:

The need of the hour requires a support, compassion more than providing free dole, food and to supplement the Traditional family system, social system, statutory backing, to enable them to with stand stress, strain, and to facilitate them to live with dignity, respect and peace of mind in the rest of life. We sincerely hope that the proposed seminar in Hyderabad will through open a better understanding of Women's soldiery in socio-economic practices in and around Asian countries and our discussion shall reflect mainly on Women practices.

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