

On the question of Women's empowerment

Case Study of Ashankur's journey in the realisation of SDG 5 and SDG 10



Mandve village map drawn by women a dive into what lies within

Report prepared by

Rekha, Kalpana, Rita



Guided by

Dr Leena Gupta

Habitat Ecological Trust



Facilitated by

Ashankur / IELA



Background:

Women represent half of the population in India. Along with men, women play a major role in forming a society and forming the government. In the field of science, women now can successfully launch operations to the moon, play a vital role in the defence of the country, operate aircraft, trains and metros. Women are globally making an impact on various sectors such as banks, I.T, e-commerce, designing and so on. In India, Many sports were once believed to be unplayable by women. This taboo has however been eradicated by the nation's sportswomen setting records and gaining global recognition by winning majors and international tournaments. Women are also gaining appreciation in the field of politics from village level to international level.

Despite all these achievements India is yet to become a complete gender equal nation. Women are still considered a source of entertainment. Whether it is domestic life or social events men often exploit and torture women.

When we talk of empowerment of women in the Indian context, we need to understand that historically in traditional matriarchal society, women had pride of place. The female concept of divine energy Sakti preceded Shiva. As patriarchy progressed, the role of women in society got degraded. Matru-Sanskriti was replaced by Pitru-Sattatmak Samaj. Shortly after independence, rights of women again began to be recognised in a limited way in Indian Society. Universal franchise granting women the right to vote as part of the principle of gender equality was adopted by the Indian Constitution in 1950.

The Indian Constitution clearly states India is a gender-equal country however; women still face various kinds of violence. Some common kind of violence that Indian women often face is domestic violence, violence in public places, physical violence, mental violence and so on. Fear of violence has become a hindrance to women's freedom and success.

Rape and murders of women have become a common incident in India. Cases such as physical violence against women, harassment, and dowry, expelling women from home, gang rape, abduction, acid attacks, molestation, female feticide and cyber-crime have been increasing in India. Violence against women after consuming alcohol or drugs has a common issue in India.

After 1970, many women groups were formed to raise voices against violence against women. Concerns against gender-based violence and gender-based laws were raised and work to change such mentality and laws were implemented. Even though, the crimes against women compelled us to launch women movements, take action against such crimes and the laws became sterner, the rate of crimes increased during all those years. The atmosphere of our society has become more and more dangerous for women. This has increased the fear amongst not only women but also amongst men. Where men and boys can free roam during day or night, women and girls feel unsafe and hesitate to go alone especially during the night. In many families, girls are not allowed to go out at night at all however; there are no restrictions on boys of the same family. The patriarchal approach, the male dominating

government structure, the flexibility in the judicial process, not giving rights to girls on ancestral property and belongings have been the primary reason for increasing cases of violence against women.

After the Nirbhaya case of 2012, the Justice Verma Committee was constituted to recommend amendments to the Criminal Law to provide quicker trial and severe punishments for the accused criminals for committing sexual assault against women. After the report was passed, the rape cases are being immediately registered in police stations. The media is being more active in covering and reporting such cases. Consequently, the voice against rape cases has been arising and fewer incidents of hiding the cases have been witnessed.

The central government passed many laws for the safety and promotion of welfare of women. Central government provides 33% reservation and the state government provides 50% reservation to women in Panchayat seats. In the political context, after reservation, more women are coming to politics. Subsequently, women representatives, with the help of training provided by NGOs, increased their leadership skills and awareness. However, due to the dominant male representatives in government structure, women representatives often rely on males for decision making. Participation in the decision-making process is very less. Women's safety has never been given priority by our government. Media is the fourth pillar that fails to cover the issues of women and often try to disregard such issues. In an economic context, women are unpaid employers in the family. Most of the work done inside the house, rearing children, old people, cattle rearing all are the responsible taking but still, she is ignored in the family.

The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, built on three principles namely non-discrimination, state obligation, and substantive equality. India adopted CEDAW in 1993, still, we face the problems like domestic violence, rape, dowry killing, acid attack, honour killing, child marriage, low female sex ratio, forced prostitution, female infanticide, and sex-selective abortion, malnutrition, pay disparity, women do not own the property, sexual harassment in the workplace, social problems related to poverty, illiteracy, more work, poor health, anaemic and malnourished. Almost half of the adolescent girls are chronically malnourished, poor nutrition during pregnancy often leads to birth complications. In rural areas do not have access to safe and self-controlled methods of contraception. The public health system emphasizes permanent methods like sterilization; almost 95% of females have adopted this method.

India's policy on empowerment of women drafted in 2001 builds on the Constitutional rights of women.

An extract from para 1 of the Policy 2001:

The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles. The Constitution not only grants equality to women, but also empowers the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women.

An extract from Para 2:

From the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-78) onwards has been a marked shift in the approach to women's issues from welfare to development. In recent years, the empowerment of women has been recognized as the central issue in determining the status of women. The National Commission for Women was set up by an Act of Parliament in 1990 to safeguard the rights and legal entitlements of women.

Para 3 states:

India has also ratified various international conventions and human rights instruments committing to secure equal rights of women. Key among them is the ratification of the **Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)** in 1993.

*The Second last para of the Summary of CEDAW states **The Convention is the only human rights treaty which affirms the reproductive rights of women and targets culture and tradition as influential forces shaping gender roles and family relations. It affirms women's rights to acquire, change or retain their nationality and the nationality of their children. States parties also agree to take appropriate measures against all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of women.***

The National policy on women's empowerment drafted in 2001 and **the draft National policy on women drafted in 2016, fail to acknowledge reproductive rights of women and the influential force of culture which effectively deny women their constitutional rights in practise.** In the absence of this recognition, there are no real safeguards against gender discrimination at the workplace. Women are forced to play out traditional roles as homemakers, bearers of children and other restrictions stemming from patriarchal mind sets. Only a handful of women are in a position to seriously raise issues related to gender equality. Due to being in a minority they are discriminated against. Provisions of gender equality at the workplace are primarily those related to equality of opportunity for economic and health provisions and reservations in the political sphere. While these do help raise the consciousness of women, experience at the workplace and in the political sphere indicate that it is patriarchal outlooks that decide the criteria for equal opportunity. Acknowledgement of women's issues is essentially reduced to the creation of a separate women's unit/ Mahila Mandal for protection of women and women's rights. Keeping this in mind, provisions related to equal pay for equal work, equal opportunities for health care, creche for children and reservation for women in the political sphere while being welcome moves, will fail to bring about the equality they supposedly address; unless the fundamental issues related to women's control over their own decision making can be sorted out.

CEDAW correctly recognises the entrenchment of patriarchy in the traditional systems in place and embedded in culture and tradition. So while the recognition of traditional knowledge is a key element related to empowerment, how the knowledge systems and knowledge base of women has been systematically undermined over the centuries is an

important part of the empowerment process. Physical/ Sexual targeting and violence against women is a conscious strategy to undermine the empowerment of local communities. As such women are the most vulnerable. Be it Internal issues (domestic violence, rapes, acid attacks, dowry, trafficking, prostitution, economic exploitation, gender discrimination, mental harassment, professional harassment, emotional harassment, sexual harassment at work place, female foeticide & female infanticide, poor health, malnutrition, poor education, no or poor legal rights on properties, etc.), External ones (international border conflicts- potential vulnerable target for different kinds of harassments, rape, international flesh trade), communal violence and custodial crimes; women are subject to the most brutal forms of harassment, violence, torture and indignities.

Knowing the social, political, and economic marginalization of women we ICAN gender group, want to work on the transformation process and improve the living conditions of women. Initiate their role in transforming social structures, activities at the micro-level, advocacy measures aimed at influencing policy change at the macro level.

Local Context:

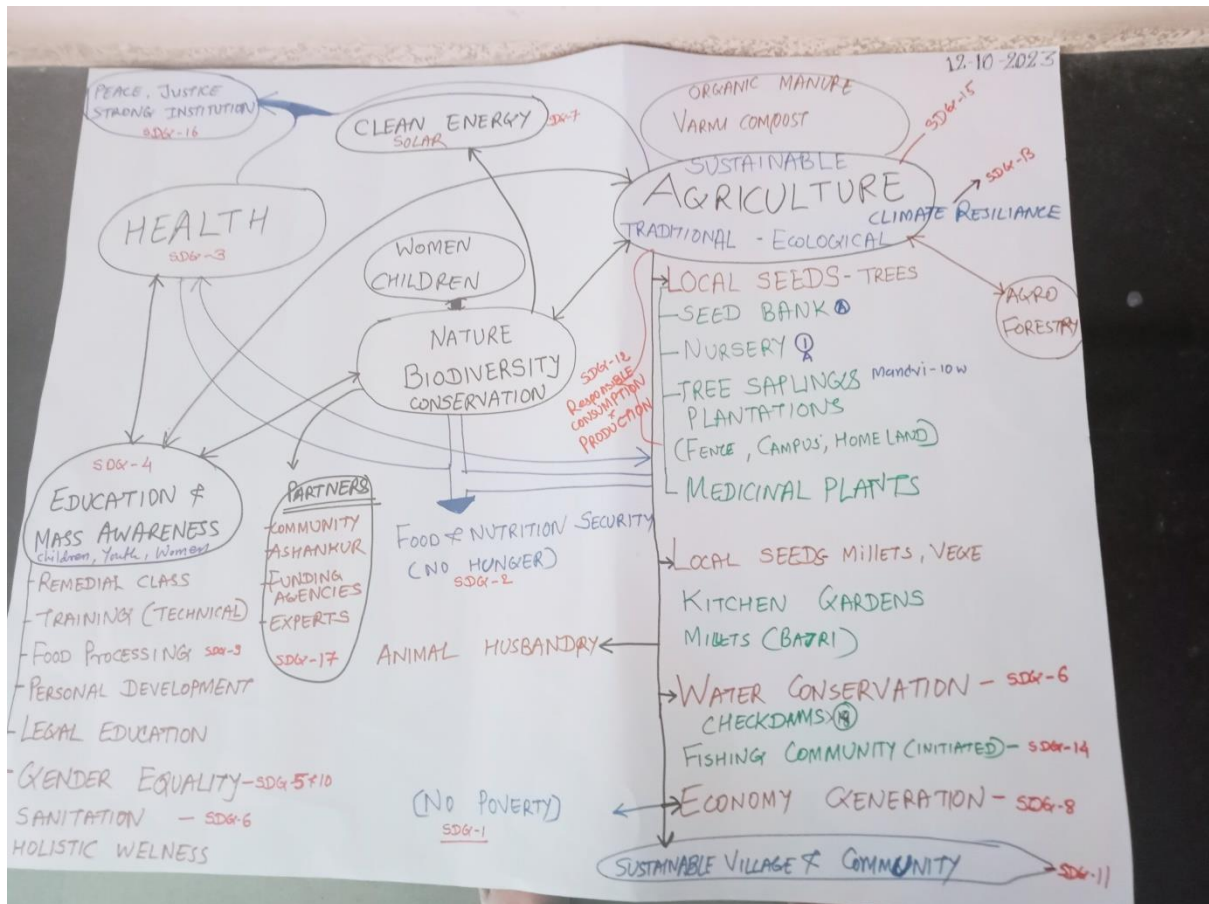
On the question of gender equality it was observed that there were four major stages where this was operational

- Prior to birth where the desire of the families was to have male children, it was observed that larger families in the current situation mostly related to wanted to have a male child.
- At the time of schooling where preference was given to the male child despite greater competence of the female ones.
- Post schooling, at the time of marriage where the women irrespective of their competence were burdened with the question of looking after the home. If they did manage to work it was with the additional burden of looking after the home as well.
- At the work place where conditions related to work put restrictions on the progress and free expression of women.

There was also a lively debate on the issues as also questioning the stereotype that it was always women who were additionally burdened. It was pointed out that the question of women in the workplace was also not free of the question of a cheaper workforce with males rendered unemployed and cheaper women workforce engaged in its place.

In response it was pointed out that the necessity for equality and questioning stereotypes stemmed not just from a justice point of view but the fact that mechanisation and computerisation had made the traditional division of labour based on gender characteristics, more or less redundant. The questions related to production too raise questions related to for whom, for what, why and how. Educated, gender sensitive families now prefer one, maximum two children implying quality attention to the children rather than numbers. This aspect of quality life and quality living applies to the production process also and hence issues related to sustainability and quality of life and hence the need for women to be independent decision makers are also on the rise.

Where does Ashankur fit in ?



The schematic diagram provides us with a quick overview on how Ashankur is addressing the 17 SDGs. At the centre lies Nature/ biodiversity Conservation. Since this is the first time the team put it all together, the related data bases on which this is based is still scattered. Over the next few months this will be consolidated with further details on the programmes undertaken, related GPS maps showing locations and development of the specific content related to each aspect highlighted here. The details of the work done on Biodiversity and Education are given in two separate charts below.

जैवविविधता

* 1st ट्रेनिंग एकुण विद्यार्थी संख्या = 113

अह भागी विद्यार्थी = दिव्य दया बंदर अकुल भोकर
= हरेगाव अंत तेरेजा अकुल
= भाशांकुर की विद्यार्थी.

* फीडबॅक - अडिबॅक तयार करणा

* वीज लागवड - पोंछे तयार करणा

शेवगा, अर्जुन, निंब, सागरगोटा, कोरपड, अमलदास

सिताफळ, रामफळ = 500 पोंछे

* एकुण पोंछे जाहे = 210 दिव्य दया बंदर अकुल और 7 गांव के 10 रिमिडीअल वन्य मं
= बच्चो को पोंछे जाकर उनको उन पोंछो का शुलधरल जताया

* 2nd ट्रेनिंग एकुण विद्यार्थी संख्या = 60

अह भागी विद्यार्थी = अंत तेरेजा अकुल की 50 लडकियाँ
= देवठाली गाँव के 8 विद्यार्थी
= इतर = 2

* आगे के तीन अरिने का नियोजन

- 1 बच्चो को सीध से पोंछे जताने का ट्रेनिंग - हरेगाव अकुल/रिमिडीअल वन्य मं
- 2 रिमिडीअल वन्य मं जैवविविधता का अस्थासक्रम की शुरुआत - रिमिडीअल वन्य मं
- 3 अकुल में किचन गार्डन भा ओषधी पोंछे लवाने का प्रोत्साहन करना
(गाँवो के अकुल में)

Details related to the work done on Biodiversity

शिक्षा

* रिमिडीअल क्लास

- शुरुवात - 2010-2011

- * बच्चों की - अक्षांकुर में देवप्रिया अरिशा क्लास को 8-10 बच्चों की आठवाली लड़कियों को मराठी भाषा पढ़ने में दिखाने
- हमारे क्वच गार् की महिलाओं को अपने काम की कठ से बच्चों को पढ़ने में दिखाने के कारण इतनी श्रेणी

* 2022-2023 इस वर्ष में रिमिडीअल क्लास की संख्या 13 है.

- जिसमें लड़के - 118 और लड़कियाँ - 143
लड़कें = 261 अंपंग संख्या - 2

* टिचर की क्वालिफिकेशन - 10th - BA; B - D.Ed

* साल में एक बार उनके लिए ट्रेनिंग

* ट्रेनर - जो दस साल से स्कूल में पढ़ाने का अनुभव

* अभ्यासक्रम - अ-बी, क, का क, मराठी वाचन, लिखना
1-100, बेरीज- वजाबाकी, भागाकार, गुणाकार, टेबलस
जर्नल नॉलेज,

- इस प्रकार के अभ्यासक्रम के अनुसार बच्चों की प्रोग्रेस रिपोर्ट तयार की जाती है

- ज्यादातर क्लास में 1st से 4th तक के बच्चे अपजती नतिव मजबूत करते हैं,

- 5th-7 के भी बच्चे जिनकी पढ़ाई विद्या में दिखत आती है उनके भी क्लास में शामिल किया जाता है.

- पढाई में कमजोर बच्चों पर विशेष ध्यान

- जिसमें वो अच्छे कर सकते हैं उसमें इनको प्रमोट करना.

* फीडबैक - टिप्स, पत्रेष्ट

* विशेष रूप से ध्यान देने की जरूरत बच्चों की संख्या - 27

* विशेष गतिविधियाँ - - साल में एक बार सभी बच्चों की शारीक, आधित और सामान्य ज्ञान की परिक्षा

- आलदिन और खिसमस में सांस्कृतिक कार्यक्रम का आयोजन.

- साल में एक बार द्रोहाणिक दौरों के लिए बाहर लेके जाते हैं।

* 2022-2023 वर्ष में नये क्लास की संख्या = 4

- परफॉरमस अच्छा नहीं होने के कारण बंद क्लास = 4

- रिट्रेस क्लास की संख्या = 4

- पुराने क्लास = 8

Details on the work done on Education

Way Forward:

As pointed out above the work done on the 17 SDGs will be consolidated slowly over the next few months so that there is a specific thrust to each of the SDGs and SDGs 3 & 4 in particular. The training given on the use of note cam app and GPS readings will come in handy to provide location specific photography which will help better define the issues contextually. At the meeting it was decided that based on the interest of the women SHG groups and the potential they unfolded for involving the children, more promising villages would be selected in the first phase for a more comprehensive base line data development in the light of ecosystems approach to livelihood and sustainable development. The potential of developing value added products based on the demonstration of how to prepare tooth powder from the native biodiversity will be followed up as well in terms of more comprehensive training programme for the women SHG members after discussion among the team members and the programme facilitator.