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NEWSLETTER

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An Overview – Climate Change and Gender



Changing climate is one of the most daunting global challenges of the present time. The warmest weather based on recorded 13 years of average global temperatures have all occurred between 1997 and 2011. The Human Development Report for 2011 observed that Climate Change continued to threaten livelihoods in low human development index nations and that climate change may also worsen the most lingering environmental threats such as deforestation, water scarcity and land degradation, which often hit the poorest the hardest.

Climate Change is not gender neutral, it impacts women more. Women in developing countries are particularly vulnerable to climate change because they are highly dependent on local natural resources for their livelihood. Women charged with securing water, food and fuel for cooking and heating face the greatest challenges.

There is a global gender gap in earnings and productivity – women make between 30 and 80 per cent of what men earn annually and this

To cope with adversities of Climate Change and its impact on gender we need to do the following:

- In-depth and evidence-based analysis of women and men's roles in sectors impacted by, and their strategies for coping with, Climate Change.
- Integrate gender perspectives throughout Climate Change programming in order to effectively address both women and men's needs and priorities, ensure the complete and meaningful participation of women and achieve gender-equitable outcomes.
- Mitigation and adaptation efforts should address sources of gender-based vulnerability, gender inequality and poverty.
- Incorporate gender perspectives into national and international Climate Change finance mechanisms and strategies.
- Incorporate women and gender equality in emergency measures during natural disasters.

is mainly due to gender-based differences in time use, access to assets and credit as well as the services offered by markets and formal institutions (including the legal and regulatory framework). These factors make women more vulnerable to Climate Change risks. Women comprise 43 per cent of the overall agricultural labour force, however, percentages vary from region to region and from country to country. Overall, women make up half of the agricultural labour force in the least developing countries though in developing countries they own between 10 and 20 percent of the land. The fact remains that women are in a disadvantaged situation. The cumulative effect of poverty and social, economic and political barriers is that women will continued to be disadvantaged in coping with the adverse impacts of the changing climate like drought, flood or any other natural calamities.

Also, compared to men, women face huge challenges in accessing all levels of policy and decision-making processes. This renders them less able to influence policies, programmes and decisions that impact their lives.

"Gender inequalities intersect with climate risks and vulnerabilities. Women's historic disadvantages – their limited access to resources, restricted rights, and a muted voice in shaping decisions – make them highly vulnerable to climate change. The nature of that vulnerability varies widely cautioning against generalization. But climate change is likely to magnify existing patterns of gender disadvantage." United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Report 2007/2008 – Fighting climate change: Human solidarity in a divided world, New York, 2007.

LWSIT Partner communities combating climate change



Community adopting alternative livelihood

The rising sea level have been posing a threat to many coastal villages along the Indian shoreline. Resinga village of Nimapara block, Puri (Odisha) is no different and has been bearing the brunt of the impact of climate change. The village lies on the banks of river Dhanua which is a tributary of Kushabhadra and Bhargavi. The village witnesses annual inundation of Dhanua which impacts their livestock as well as their livelihood. Due to this, every year around 225 acres of arable land lie submerged in saline water, gravely affecting their food security. This forces the men in the village to migrate to nearby towns in search of livelihood.

Even though all villagers are affected by this impact of climate change, it is the women who are affected the most. The women being the primary care-givers in the families, struggle to make ends meet and hold the family together.

It was during such times of turmoil that LWSIT initiated development work in Resinga village in 2005. To ensure the villagers have alternative livelihood options, LWSIT counselled the women to undergo training on mushroom cultivation. The women convinced the men to undergo the training too. This resulted in 33 persons (20 women and 13 men) being trained on mushroom cultivation.

Over the years, 112 families out of 200 families in the village are engaged in mushroom cultivation. This has resulted in Resinga village being referred to as 'mushroom cultivation village' in the block. Although women were primarily active and engaged in this alternative livelihood, eventually it has graduated into being a family venture. Men procure the raw materials from the nearby market and together with the women prepare the germinating bed for the cultivation.

Now each farmer collects 325kg of mushroom from 500 germinating beds which yields a profit of Rs 36,000 per month excluding the recurring cost. The produce (which usually is around 4-5 quintal daily) is marketed in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack at Rs 110 per kg.

In spite of the onslaught of nature still continuing in the village, their alternate livelihood is secured. The women are now able to ensure the family has a square meal, the children are able to continue with their education, and health needs of the family are addressed.

Janaki finds light at the end of the tunnel

Clouds of trouble hover over distraught farmers in Balangir district – the scene is no different in the lives of the husband-wife duo - Rupadhar and Janaki. Rupadhar and Janaki are doting parents to five children and dutiful caregivers to an elderly parent. The district, over the years, has been facing drought-like situations which forces the farmers to migrate to neighbouring states in search of livelihood.

Rupadhar and Janaki had 3.5 acres of arable highland on which they were growing cotton, banana and papaya. With the passage of time, the change in rainfall pattern, and rising temperature contributed to Rupadhar's distress migration. In an effort to provide for the family, Rupadhar migrated to Raypur as daily wage earner where he earned Rs 200/250 for 10-15 days of the month.

In Rupadhar's absence the burden of providing for the family fell solely on the shoulders of Janaki. She was the primary caregiver for both her children and the elderly parent. She struggled to meet the health requirements of her family as well as to address their daily basic needs.

Janaki states that when LWSIT started development interventions in her village, it was like a ray of hope to her. In order to enhance their financial situation, LWSIT supported them with some income generation schemes. From the earnings through these IGAs, they were able to repair a dug well to irrigate their 1.5 acres of land and grow 1,200 tissue culture banana saplings through LWSIT facilitation from the Horticulture department. By selling the first harvest the family earned Rs 40,000.

Rupadhar laments that had LWSIT started its development interventions two years ago, he would not have had to migrate to earn a living and thus burdening Janaki with the responsibility of keeping the family together. Janaki quickly adds she is thankful to God that all her children are able to continue their education and are growing up to be responsible human beings.



Women lead in conserving the environment

A galloping ride from hollowness to fullness

*M*athurapahari Upporpara of Bharkata village in Md.Bazaar block, Birbhum district (West Bengal) is home to 41 poverty stricken tribal families. The vicinity of the village has been ripped apart by stone quarries destroying all natural vegetation in its trail exposing the area to environment degradation.

Almost all women in the village worked as daily labourers in either stone quarries or crusher units where they toiled for meagre wages and were vulnerable to sexual and other forms of harassment. Even though some villagers have arable land, they do not get adequate production due to the steady decline in rain and ground water. Hence, they are forced to either migrate or work as daily wage earners in the quarries.

Quarrying has many negative effects on the environment. The major environmental effects of quarrying are destruction of vegetation, disruption of animal habitats, diversion and blockage of natural drainage systems, soil erosion, noise and dust pollution. Every second person in Mathurapahari Upporpara suffers from Respiratory Tract Infection (RTI) and are vulnerable to Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI), thanks to large number of stone quarries and crushers in the area.

The women of Mathurapahari were keen on bringing about a change in their village – they wanted to protect their environment and stop working in the quarry. With the advent of LWSIT they were able to organise themselves into 3 Self Help Groups (SHG) through which sustainable development initiatives were undertaken. These three groups have 41 members representing each family. With LWSIT support, the groups started apiculture as an alternative livelihood. Till date they have made an impressive profit of Rs 76,909.

As most of the wastelands in adjoining areas are being usurped by stone quarry as well as crusher owners, these empowered women were determined to save the land. With LWSIT support in 2013, they converted 1 acre of wasteland into a lush mango orchard, by planting 700 trees. This endeavour not only saved the land from being usurped but also gave the area a green cover. In 2015, they harvested 192 kg of mangoes whereas in 2016 the yield was 300 kg; the women were able to earn Rs 9,000 within the last two years.

As a result of alternative livelihood, out of 41 women, 26 have completely stopped working in the stone quarries or crusher units. Fifteen women who are still going to the quarries and crushers are empowered enough to demand equal wage as well as raise their voice against any form of harassment.



My Space Volunteer Speaks

*T*he summer of 2016 has been very special to us because of our internship at the Lutheran World Service India Trust. This one month has been an enriching experience for the both of us. As second year students of Sociology, getting a first-hand experience has made us understand the fall backs of the education system in our country, to start with, and also things like urban slum development, social problems of the marginalised section of the society and so on. We were interacting with children who had dropped out of school and were a part of bridge course initiated by LWSIT.

These children from nearby slums dropped out of formal schools that they were previously attending. The first thing that we inferred in this one month is that these children have tremendous potential and most of them have not dropped out of school due to lack of interest in academics but due to underlying socio-economic reasons.

Our classes usually included drawing sessions, dancing and singing sessions apart from days when we taught them rhymes and basic English words like sun, moon, star, etc. These children have dreams like all of us and aspire to become successful in life so that they can provide for their families and themselves.

To conclude we would like to thank LWSIT for giving the both of us such a wonderful opportunity to not only teach and interact with the kids but also learn. We came across a few children and their stories that made us look at life with a different perspective altogether. It indeed was a spiritually enriching experience.

Apoorva Sekhar, Second Year, Dept. of Sociology, St. Xavier's College, Kolkata. and **Ishani Chakrabarti**, Second year, Dept. of Sociology, Miranda House-University of Delhi, New Delhi.

Glimpses of the Quarter

Events, meeting, training and workshops attended this quarter

- Executive Director and Mr B N Biswal attended the Annual Meeting of ACT Alliance India Forum held on April 22, 2016 at CWC of UELCI, Chennai.
- Orientation on “**Guidelines and Strategies for appropriate implementation of programs under MGNREGA**” in the OTELP project was held on June 8, 2016 in Kalahandi district of Odisha. This orientation was attended by four staff members.
- Quarterly staff Review Meeting was held for all the project units from May 2 to 7, 2016.
- One staff attended a ToT on Basic Engineering from June 4 to 6, 2016.
- Finance Review Meeting was held on April 19, 2016 at the LWSIT National Office which was attended by accountants from all Units.
- International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) organised a day long training on “**Situation specific paddy cultivation**” for all the rural project units in Odisha. The training was held on June 3, 2016 in Bhubaneswar.
- Review of Units and staff capacity building program was held for STEER Rural Units in western Odisha from June 22 to 25; for GEP (Bhubaneswar and Cuttack Units) and STEER Rural Units of Kendrapara, Puri and Keonjhar from June 7 to 10; for GEP Kolkata Unit, STEER Rural Birbhum Unit and DSSQC Birbhum Unit from June 28 to 30, and for SEEPRP Assam Unit from July 5 to 8, 2016.
- Quarterly ICC meeting was held.

Visitors in this quarter

- Mr Parthasarathi Changdar, CSR Manager of Akzo Nobel India Limited visited LWSIT to discuss a possible partnership on May 12, 2016.
- Shri Sadhan Pande, Minister for Consumer Affairs & Self Help Group & Self Employment, Government of West Bengal visited GEP Kolkata Unit on June 9, 2016.



Initiatives undertaken by Resource Mobilization team during the quarter

- Proposal submitted to Rotary India Literacy Mission (RILM) for ASHA KIRAN Project.
- IRRI India collaborated with LWSIT to promote stress tolerant rice variety under IRRI-DoA Odisha Project.
- Partnership was developed with ICICI Foundation to mobilize youth for skill development.
- Royal Infraconstru Ltd engaged with LWSIT as a partner for utilizing time and talent of their staff members towards the service of the aged, homeless women at the Shelter for Urban Homeless under the GEP Kolkata Unit.

Forthcoming events in the next quarter

- Executive Director will meet Bishops of AELC and SALC, Moderator of GELC and representatives of UELCI and ELCA in the month of July 2016.
- Mr. Mukhunda Sutradhar will attend AZEECON - ToT program at Medan, Indonesia from July 17 to 27, 2016.
- Ms Monijinji Byapari will have bilateral discussion with United Mission to Nepal (UMN) in Kathmandu on Mid-term Evaluation of SEEPRP and Capacity Building on August 9, 2016.
- Mr. Imai (Global Child Support Committee Chair), Mr. Naraba (South Asia Program Coordinator) and Dr. Gretebeck (Senior Program Advisor) of JELA will visit LWSIT from August 24 to 26, 2016.
- Executive Director and Ms Monijinji Byapari will attend “**Gender Inclusive Rights Based Development (GIRBD) Workshop**”, Lao PDR from September 25 to 29, 2016.