

**Advance Centre for
Enabling Women Empowerment**



DHAN Kalanjiam Foundation



Advanced Centre for Enabling Women Empowerment (ACEWE)



ACEWE is a specialized centre established by DHAN Foundation, housed at The-DHAN Academy with anchorship of Kalanjiam Foundation to enhance knowledge and practice on women empowerment by working closely with women based people organisations, NGOs working for women empowerment, research and academic institutions which have discipline on gender and women empowerment and funding agencies.

Purpose

1. Create and manage knowledge on Women Empowerment from DHAN's field practice and outside experiences
2. Develop community based processes, tools and methods for institutionalizing Women Empowerment process in people organizations and civil society organizations

3. Mainstream Women Empowerment goal and indicators to development programmes/activities of DHAN and other civil society organisations, and
4. Integrate Sustainable Development Goals for facilitating global perspective on Women Empowerment

Mission

“Providing appropriate framework and developing process tools and methods for enabling women empowerment in people organizations and civil society organizations for sustainable development and influencing the gender policy through networking”



Belief Statements

- Women themselves are the agents of change
- Economic development with women empowerment perspective will lead to all other development processes in people institutions
- Transformative leadership of women will sustain the change

- Empowered women with family empowerment lead to prosperity

Core values

- Gender equity and equality (for opportunities and pro-gender rights)
- Democratic practices (for negotiation and creating strong demand system)
- Enabling (for expanding the scope for capacity building, knowledge sharing, sustaining initiatives, building self-reliance and long term sustainability)
- Innovation (for knowledge enhancement and improved and sustained field process and practices)
- Excellence (for efficiency, effectiveness and quality consciousness)

The ACEWE will provide platform to identify and nurture relevant practices and wisdom on women empowerment; will encourage developing innovative tools, processes and methods for institutionalizing women empowerment consciousness in the development programmes; will facilitate co-learning and exchange of knowledge to advance the women empowerment practice

DHAN'S WORK IN GENDER EQUITY AND EQUALITY

DHAN (Development of Human Action) Foundation maintains that women's poverty is a resultant of women's low-capital base that refers to their poor asset base, low-end skills and above all lack of opportunities. Women are also strapped for time because of their multiple roles and demands in domestic arena and their productive lives. Central to DHAN's theory of change is the signal of building the social capital of poor and disadvantaged women and in particular their financial and productive





base. Indeed, a major outcome of two and half decades of DHAN's gender initiatives is seen in the emergence of a highly gender aware women of their personal and social constructions. This segment of women is the social capital and niche of DHAN.

Women in domestic domain

At first count, these women have demonstrated capabilities to negotiate their gender space in their domestic lives and most importantly make choices to engage with formal institutions through micro-credit and finance and leverage their services. No longer are poor women caught in the usurious money-lending traps. DHAN has facilitated 300000 women to move out of poverty - which women themselves have self-declared.

Women in Productive arena of livelihood

Self Help Groups (SHGs) and their federations have opened opportunities for the poor women to enhance

their economic agency – as savers, build their capital base and enlarge their productive and entrepreneurial engagement. More than ever, these women are now aware that they are contributing to household economy which is a leap forward in gender identity. Also these women were able to set democratic process of decision making, expressing their voices and getting access to various services. These outcomes and impact are the salient achievements of Kalanjiam Community Banking Programme - a flagship programme of DHAN. The major achievement of DHAN is mooted of this **choice-making strategy** and framework.



Women in leadership and political agency

Political participation of women is also a core strategy of women's empowerment. While DHAN has given thrust to democratization of Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRI) and advocated for active women's role, DHAN could demonstrate this in one of its projects that it implemented during July, 2012 to June 2015. Through this initiative, 10,000 SHG members and leaders were capacitated on their roles and responsibilities in PRI. 2000 women ward members and 650 women presidents were also capacitated. This initiative has had several



multipliers. Two major outcomes are seen in independent functioning of 70 per cent of women ward members and forty percent of women Presidents becoming active independent functionaries. By updating voter lists, women in 70 Panchayats in the project area have become highly aware of their voting rights. A qualitative outcome was seen in women having taken an active role in participating and influencing processes in local governance at informal and formal levels. This model is now being contextualized in the States of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and Karnataka.

Women voices for wellbeing of community

There is no gainsaying that Violence Against Women (VAW) has grown with complex manifestations. As a strategy, DHAN has addressed VAW from the point of women's poverty. While the causes of poverty are located in social inequalities and globalizing forces, poverty is seen as a major cause of VAW. Although data is not available, DHAN believes that the 10-15 year-old SHG - federations in their operational areas have brought about reduction in domestic violence. This needs to be researched and documented.

The gender weave between women's poverty, lack of political skills and violence against women is complex, requiring nuanced analysis. This entails investments in human resources, institutional advancement, negotiations to increase gender spaces in societal institutions, movement building and policy advocacy. This is long term requiring sustained focus and attention.

DHAN strongly believes that transformative paths in gender have to bring collaborations most importantly with the state and other stakeholders in development.



As on March 2020, DHAN has a reach of about 2.13 million poor households organized into about 71,000 self-help/farmers groups in 85 districts of 14 States including one Union Territory in India managing about INR 2050 crore of development activities related to microfinance, water, natural resource management and agriculture development. It includes 32 % of community owned resources in addressing various development needs

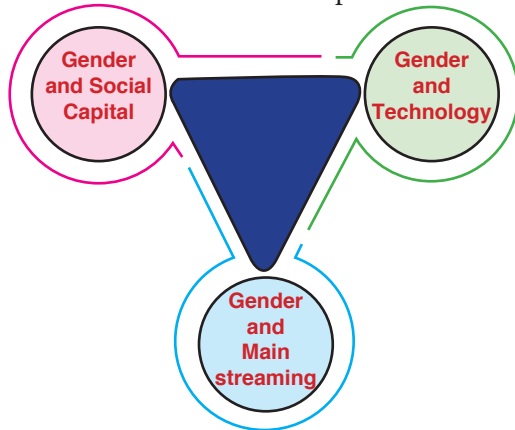


of the poor households. There are about 50,000 women leaders have emerged as powerful force in managing their institutions, monitoring implementation of community banking and other development activities and engaging the staff for advancing community banking. The leadership graduation is very vivid from groups to clusters to the federation levels and moving beyond federation for addressing larger development needs the communities. More than that they are able engage with mainstream institutions such as banks, panchayat institutions and government organisations and demand their services to address poverty issues at the district and states level. The innovative approach of social capital – federation collective provides leadership space for women through graduation and rotation process. The Movement and DHAN People Academy provides training and capacity building programmes to enable the women leadership for good governance.



Approach

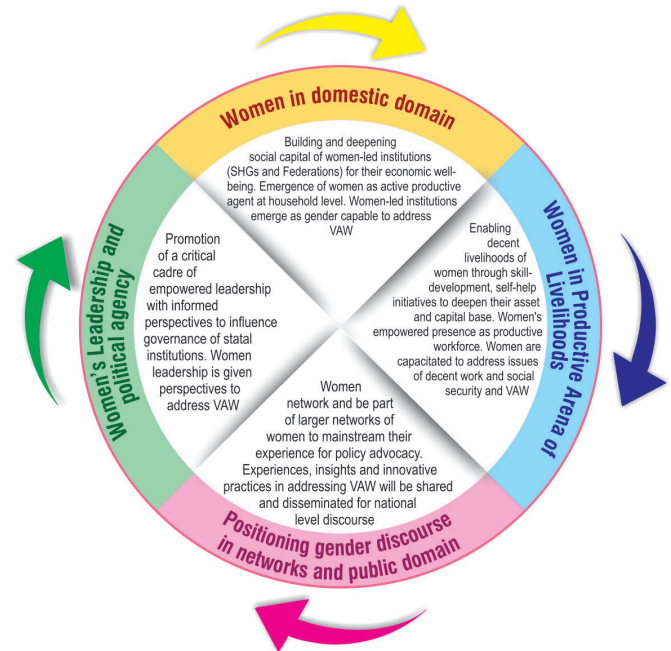
Five dimensions of WE – social, economic, political, legal and cultural would be integrated into the analytical framework. The enabling model of Women empowerment includes three components



Focus areas: The focus thematic areas of women empowerment are (i) Women and Financial Inclusion; (ii) Women and social security; (iii) Women and education; (iv) Women and healthcare and nutrition security; (v) Women and livelihoods; (vi) Women

leadership and governance; (vii) Women and water; (viii) Women and ICT; (ix) Women and justice; and (x) Women and Resilience.

DHAN's Theory of change



CORE ACTIVITIES OF THE ACEWE

Research: The Centre would undertake action research that can bring evidence based knowledge and impact evaluations with community participation for policy influencing. It would also engage students, interns and academia for short term and long term research and case studies on women empowerment.

Pilots with development practitioners: This is to build the research capacity of the field practitioners to develop women empowerment models, tools and indicators and integrate Women Empowerment agenda in to the development planning. Contextualized Women Empowerment models would be developed.



Longitudinal study: By creating base line, mid line and end line leadership graduation framework would be developed and indicators of good governance would be documented.



Training, capacity building and Education: Short duration development management programmes would be designed and offered for clarifying women empowerment concept, process and encouraging the participants to develop WE framework for their organizations and functional domains through cross learning and classroom learning. The Centre would design and offer a course on Women Empowerment for TDA students and students of subject relevance.

Documentation and publication: Case studies, best practices, relevant tools and evidence based studies would be undertaken by the Centre to refine and advance the concept of WE and publish articles on the subject matter.

Networking and Consulting: The Centre would promote a network among the practitioners of WE for cross learning to improve the field practices and influence the policy process at the national and international level.

Women Empowerment And Networking (WEMAN) for Policy advocacy: The centre would facilitate community-led policy seminars at different levels for large scale influence and impact. It is envisaged that the “PROCESS” is the product in WE, the regional councils of women SHGs (Kalanjiam), Kalanjiam Mutual Movement and community of outside organisations would be part of the network.

Archives and Knowledge Bank: ACEWE would collect all the relevant materials and documents and archive them in the library for references and wider usage.

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE

a. Seminars on gender and women empowerment

1. Gender and Development (1990) to sensitise the DHAN staff about the evolution of the gender concept, gender needs and ways of integrating the

gender needs into the development programmes with the facilitation of IWID (Institute for women In Development)

2. Gender and Culture (2000) with the support of EKTA conducted by the The-Dhan Academy

b. Documentation

1. Case studies on women leaders – “Valuing Others”
2. Internal Learning System for women – a self-monitoring tool to assess impact of Kalanjiam on their family development towards the set goals
3. Profile of five women leaders by Dudmila, The Netherlands
4. Study on “Impact of Kalanjiam on women empowerment” – Veena Padia to understand the process of women empowerment
5. Impact evaluation of community banking programme on women economic and social empowerment
6. “Gender development policies” for DHAN Foundation and people federations for gender policy practice

7. Lead Article on “Gender Matters” has been published in DHAN Annual report, 2008
8. A case on “Women’s Empowerment – Pathways to Autonomy” prepared and being used as a training material for the Workshop on Enabling Women Empowerment
9. “Unleashing the Women Power” a book depicting Empowerment of women in different domains:

c. Studies on gender empowerment for State Planning Commission

1. Impact of Dr Muthulakshmi Reddy Maternity scheme
2. Study on gender in small millet conservation, cultivation and consumption for RESMISA project
3. Gender policy for INAFI Network member organisations
4. Women and drudgery
5. Women in Agriculture
6. Women empowerment

d. Knowledge building events within DHAN

1. Gender mainstreaming for senior DHANites

e. Gender committees

1. Permanent working group on Gender and Gender Concern Committee have been constituted and working on gender policies and issues.

f. Pilots

1. Exclusive proposal on violence against women – theorizing the practice of women empowerment – theory of change
2. Pilot on women empowerment in urban slums through community banking of self-help group federations with WomenStrong Madurai Project
3. Contribution of Microfinance in Securing Life of Women with more than 50 years age who have been in the group for more than 20 years
4. Domestic violence status on women in India .
5. Contribution of MF - Education Loan on Girl Children in accessing Higher Education and its effects on the girls and her family
6. Pilot on Disaster Preparedness and Risk Management Ability of Women in Coastal context

g. Internship

Internship is being offered for students from National and International academic institutions. This gives the students the opportunity to learn about women empowerment from grassroots and sharpen their learning. Their theoretical references aid to evolve the future developmental action for the betterment of the community.

h. Course

Course on Gender and Practice as elective course of 0.5 credits being offered for PGDDM students

i. Knowledge sharing through celebrating events

DHAN Foundation along with the Kalanjiam Programme organizes and celebrates every year the International Women's day events on specific thematic areas.

j. Legal Aid clinic

Micro justice is a support centre for poor people, especially women, for making justice accessible through

the legal aid clinics which will be accessible and affordable for poor urban women against domestic violence, disputes relating to property and labour and against social issues or any legal out course which they cannot afford.



About DHAN Foundation

DHAN Foundation works with about 1.5 million poor households in 14 states in the country in rural, tribal, urban and coastal areas by promoting federated model of social capital among the farming communities, landless labours, poor women, fishers, vulnerable and marginalised communities for poverty eradication and empowerment of poor. DHAN believes that if woman is empowered, the family, community and the society at large will get empowered, hence it has scaled up its community banking programme across the country and promoted women empowerment process at large scale.

The-DHAN Academy

The-DHAN Academy is a pioneer institute in the field of development management education. It grooms and nurtures young graduates as professionals for development action by providing them education with relevant attitude, knowledge and skill. DHAN Foundation has promoted the Academy with the strategic seed support from SRTT in 2000. The Academy offers two-year Programme in Development Management (PDM) and Programme in Community Health Management (PCM). It also undertakes research, documentation and consulting services. Five specialized centres housed in the Academy are (i) Advanced Centre for Skill and Knowledge on Mutual insurance (ASKMI), (ii) Advanced Centre for Enabling Disaster Risk Reduction, (iii) Water Knowledge Centre (WKC), (iv) Advanced Centre for Enabling Women Empowerment and (v) Advanced Centre for Enabling Social Enterprises (ACESE). Through these centres TDA facilitates independent and collaborative research conducts Short and Long duration programme, online courses and specialized immersion programme to enable the world of practice to advance development action.

ACEWE

ACEWE is a specialized centre being established by DHAN Foundation, housed at The DHAN Academy with anchorship of Kalanjiam Foundation to build the capacity for bridging the gap in women empowerment process and create opinion makers on women empowerment.

The centre would focus on enhancing knowledge and practice on women empowerment by working closely with women based people organisations, NGOs working for women empowerment, research and academic institutions which have discipline on gender and women empowerment and funding agencies.



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1A, Vaidynathapuram East, Kennet Cross Road, Madurai 625 016. Tamil Nadu INDIA
Tel: +91 452 2302501 / 503 Email: kfpomdu@ghan.org, Website: www.dhan.org