ECOMUSEUM CONCERNING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT WORKS IN INDIA

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Abstract

The status of women in India has been subjected to many great changes through time.. Women in India now participate fully in fields such as education, science and technology, sports, politics, media, art and culture, service sectors, etc. Still majority of rural women suffer not only from economic poverty but also from 'information poverty'. Rural women are vital and productive workers in India's national economy. Increased awareness and education can help women to know the importance of participating in sustainable development works. Museums are important because they help us to identify ourselves and our position in the world. Therefor , eco museum, a branch of new Museology, has a great role for securing women's participation in sustainable development works in India. This article shows how an eco museum can help women to conserve their own identity and promote it to the outside world by engaging themselves in overall development works.

Key words: Eco museum- sustainable development -women's participation

Introduction

Women in ancient India were held in high esteem. The position of a woman in the Vedas and the Upanishads was that of a mother or goddess. In the early Vedic age, girls were looked after with care. They were given the facilities of education. Remarriage of widows was permitted. But in the later Vedic period, daughters were regarded as a source of misery. The practice of polygamy deteriorated the status of woman. Women in the later civilizations were not allowed to go to schools. In the Gupta period, they were allowed to listen to the scriptures. In the medieval period, the practices of purdha system, dowry and sati came into Existence . It is thought that the right place for woman is in the home. They are considered fit for producing and bringing up children. Thus, women have been deprived of their rightful place in society and exploitation has been going on for centuries.

After independence, according India's constitution, women are considered as legal citizens of the country and have equal rights with men. Following are Acts for safeguarding the rights of women marked in the Indian constitution especially in the job fields:

1. The state shall not discriminate against any citizen of India on the ground of sex [Article 15(1)].
2. The state is empowered to make any special provision for women. In other words, this provision enables the state to make affirmative discrimination in favour of women [Article 15(3)].
3. No citizen shall be discriminated against or be ineligible for any employment or office under the state on the ground of sex [Article 16(2)].
4. The state to secure for men and women equally the right to an adequate means of livelihood [Article 39(a)].
5. The state to secure equal pay for equal work for both Indian men and women [Article 39(d)].
6. The state is required to ensure that the health and strength of women workers are not abused and that they are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their strength [Article 39(e)].
7. The state shall make provision for securing just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief [Article 42].
8. It shall be the duty of every citizen of India to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women [Article 51-A(e)].

Even though the constitution guarantees equal rights of women with men, India ranks 108th position out of 145 on the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index,

2015. As per the Census, 2011 the child sex ratio (0-6 years) has shown a decline from 927 females per thousand males in 2001 to 919 females per thousand males in 2011. The ranking of Indian women in economic empowerment is 0.3, where 1.0 means equality.

Women in India make up 7.5% of the world's total population. While certain development indicators show that their quality of life is improving because maternal mortality rates are declining; literacy rates are increasing; more women are gaining access to healthcare and education but the pace of change is heartbreakingly slow. This is a dangerous state of affairs for any society. Denying women opportunities to realise their potential is a waste of human capital and bar to economic progress. Women are undoubtedly the foundation of the basic unit of society, the family. Even in traditional roles they demonstrate great innovation, skill, intelligence, hard work and commitment. If we can utilize these attributes effectively, India's growth can be more inclusive and equitable.

Present scenario of women participation in Economy

TOTAL WORKERS IN INDIA - 2011 CENSUS

Population/ Workers	Persons		Male	Female
1	2		3	4
Population	Total	1,21,05,69,573	62,31,21,843	58,74,47,730
Workers		48,17,43,311	33,18,65,930	14,98,77,381
Percentage of Workers		39.79	53.26	25.51
Population	Rural	83,34,63,448	42,76,32,643	40,58,30,805
Workers		34,85,97,535	22,67,63,068	12,18,34,467
Percentage of Workers		41.83	53.03	30.02
Population	Urban	37,71,06,125	19,54,89,200	18,16,16,925
Workers		13,31,45,776	10,51,02,862	2,80,42,914
Percentage of Workers		35.31	53.76	15.44

Source: Office of the Registrar General, India.

Note: Workers include both main workers and marginal workers.

PERCENTAGE OF FEMALE MAIN WORKERS TO TOTAL FEMALE POPULATION UNDER BROAD CATEGORIES - 1981 TO 2011

Census Year	Percentage to Total Female Population				
	Female Main Workers	Cultivators	Agricultural Labourers	Household Industry	Other Workers
1	2	3	4	5	6
1981	13.99	4.65	6.46	0.64	2.24
1991	15.93	5.51	7.05	0.55	2.82
2001	14.68	5.11	4.51	0.95	4.11
2011	25.5	24.0	41.1	5.7	29.2

Source: Office of the Registrar General, India.

- Among the States/Union Territories, workforce participation rate of females in the rural sector is the highest in Nagaland at 52.3% and in the urban sector it is the highest in Manipur at 33.2%
- In the rural sector, 55.7% females were self employed, 4.4% females had regular wage/salaried employment and 39.9% females were casual labourers compared with 53.5%, 8.5% and 38.0% males in the same categories respectively.
- A total of 20.4% women were employed in the organized sector in 2010 with 17.9% working in the public sector and 24.5% in the private.
- The unemployment rate for women of all ages was 2.4 compared with 2.0 for men in the rural areas in 2009 10. It was 7.0 for women and 3.1 for men in urban areas during the same period. Among the States/Union Territories, the highest unemployment rate for women in rural sector was observed in Chandigarh (51.1%) and in the urban sector in Dadra and Nagar Haveli (60.0%) in 2009 10.
- Of the total job seekers registered with employment exchanges, women constituted 32.5% in 2009.
- Out of 30.87 lakh regular Employees, 3.37 lakh were women. The proportion of women in the total Employment is almost static, around 11% in the year 2011.
- In 2009 10, the average wage/salary received by regular wage/salaried employees of age 15 59 years was Rs. 155.87 per day for females compared with Rs. 249.15 per day for males in rural areas. For urban areas, it was Rs. 308.79 and Rs. 377.16 per day for females and males respectively.
- In 2010, the number of accounts operated by females in all commercial banks was

153.18 crores compared to 487.37 crore accounts operated by males. The deposit amount was Rs. 517209.74 crore for females and Rs. 1838826.25 crore for males.

Societal perceptions of females and their role are often the biggest barriers to change, because they shape women's perception of themselves. Across all strata of Indian society, people still believe that women are capable of performing only certain types of jobs and that marriage must take precedence over career.

Women in South Asia are far less likely than men to have a job or to be looking for one.

While 80 per cent of men in the region are either employed or searching for a job, the number for women is a lot lower; 32 percent. These low rates are largely due to cultural attitudes and social norms about women in the workplace.

But in some parts of South Asia, women's participation in the labour market is dropping further and is increasingly being seen as one of the main causes behind the slow growth in employment. One such place is India. According to the ILO's Global Employment Trends 2013 report , India's labour force participation rate for women fell from just over 37 per cent in 2004-05 to 29 per cent in 2009-10. Out of 131 countries with available data, India ranks 11th in female labour force participation.

This mind-set, common to both men and women, must change. We must focus on the girl child and help her escape the traditional stereotypes that stifle her potential.

Many social organization are working continuously for the betterment of women in India. Museum as an organization has a great role also. Museums in many countries are developing their social role, purpose and impact, forming partnerships with health, welfare, social service and other agencies. At a community level, museums can act as a catalyst for social regeneration, empowering communities to increase their self-determination and develop the confidence and skills to take greater control over their lives.

Museums are important because they help us to identify ourselves and our position in the world. They are significant to us as individuals, as a member of a community, even as a statement of nationhood. As "a museum is a non – profit making, permanent institution in the service of society and its developments" so its definition and conception need to change in order to cope with the new situation and the future needs of the society. The museums, like all other social institutions have changed through times. They have changed in form, in function and in basic concept. As a result the concept of New- Museology flourished. The essential feature of the New–Museology, as originally conceived, was that museums should

serve the present and future needs of their communities. Eco Museology, one of the branches of New–Museology, is primarily concerned with community development.

What is Ecomuseum

The term ecomuseum was coined by Huges de Varine who was the Director of The International Council Of Museums (ICOM). He invented the term in 1971 but the concept of ecomuseum was developed by Georges Henri Riviere who was the founding father of the new ecomuseum movement. . He was the first to understand the full complexity of the notion of the cultural heritage. It was on the occasion of the 9th General Conference of ICOM in Paris in 1971 Riviere and Varine had briefed on the latest trends in museum work, particularly on the role of the museum as a didactic instrument designed to build awareness of heritage not for any outsider or general public but for and by, a community for itself. Museum is interested in the heritage that of course everyone knows. But museum has also to be actively interested in development of a community has emerged as a new dimension. A great role must be played by ecomuseum where heritage and development can go hand in hand.

The three major variations of the definition are given by Riviere successively in 1973, 1976, and 1980. The final version of 1980 was published in "Museum" in 1985. There Riviere (1980) stated that "An ecomuseum is an instrument conceived, fashioned and operated jointly by a public authority and its local population. The public authority's involvement is through the experts, facilities and resources it provides; the local population's involvement depends on its aspirations, knowledge and individual approach." He further added that "It is a mirror in which the local population views itself to discover its own image, in which it seeks an explanation of the territory to which it is attached and of the populations which have preceded it, seen either as circumscribed in time or in terms of the continuity of generations. It is a mirror that the local population holds up to its visitors so that it may be better understood and so that its industry, customs and identity may command respect."

Rene Rivard, a well known Museologist from Qubec, identifies four categories of Ecomuseum.

1. The Discovery Ecomuseum (the traditional, and first, holistic model)
2. The Development Ecomuseum (concerned with the community, cultural identity, economic regeneration and stated political goals).
3. Specialist Ecomuseums (dealing with specific industries) and

4. 'Combat' Ecomuseum (usually in urban location and dedicated to pressing social issues)

Among these ecomuseums the 'Development Ecomuseum' and 'Specialist Ecomuseum' are concerned with the economy. These ecomuseums can help people develop their economic condition. The role of ecomuseum concerning economy may vary according to structure and mode of economy and demand of the people of a particular area.

Role of Ecomuseum

The concept of the ecomuseum is to empower local communities, especially the youth, women and the physically challenged persons dwelling in the rural areas. As a social institution ecomuseum can play a vital role for overall development of women. The important role of women in the welfare of the society is being realised gradually. As the socio economic progress of the community has a direct link with the empowerment of women, the development programmes for women are receiving greater attention. The ecomuseum is to ensure effective participation of women in sustainable development of the community.

The Ecomuseum

- Provide a cost effective approach to formal institutions for expanding and reaching out to poor;
- offer an effective alternative to pursue the objective of growth by facilitating the empowerment of rural poor women;
- make micro-finance available to cater to the consumption and production needs of poor women;
- provide a platform for poor women to participate in mainstream economic activity; and
- help in capacity building by providing greater awareness on various development and welfare programmes relating to woman and child health in general and education of children is particular.

India has classified and tracked its economy and GDP in s three sectors; agriculture, industry and services. From the point of view of Indian economy Ecomuseum occupies an important place in relation to agriculture, village industry and tourism.

Ecomuseum concerning women's participation in agriculture

Agriculture is an engine of growth and poverty reduction in India. But the agricultural sector in our country is under performing, in part because women, who represent a crucial resource in agriculture and the rural economy through their roles

as farmers, labourers and entrepreneurs, almost everywhere face more severe constraints than men in access to productive resources .Women make essential contributions to the agricultural and rural economies in all developing countries. Their roles vary considerably between and within regions and are changing rapidly in many parts of the world, where economic and social forces are transforming the agricultural sector. Rural women often manage complex households and pursue multiple livelihood strategies. Their activities typically include producing agricultural crops, tending animals, processing and preparing food, working for wages in agricultural or other rural enterprises, collecting fuel and water, engaging in trade and marketing, caring for family members and maintaining their homes. Many of these activities are not defined as "economically active employment" in national accounts but they are essential for the wellbeing of rural households.

Ecomuseum can take various steps to increase women's participation in agricultural work. The steps are given below:-

Making Data bank:

Ecomuseum can act as a data bank of the community. It is necessary to know the population status of women in a particular region for the development of women. Population data are the indicators of the various information of population like birth, death, migration, age, sex, marital status, religion, literacy, language, occupation, etc. Such data help to formulate and implement the various policies and planning in a country. Economic, social, cultural and political development takes place on the basis of the data. Population data can be found from various sources.

On the basis of the nature of data, they can be classified into two groups as follows:

1. Primary sources: First-hand data which are collected from individual person by the census, vital registration, sample survey, administrative records, population register, etc are primary sources of population data.

2. Secondary sources: The data which are found from, organizations, agencies, books, journals, magazines, annual reports, etc. are secondary sources of population data.

Education:

After collecting population data on women, ecomuseum can take steps to make them competent person so that they can take part in sustainable development work. Even though the constitution guarantees free primary schooling to everyone up to 14 years of age, very few females attend school.

Only about 39 percent of all women in India actually attend primary schools. There are several reasons why families choose not to educate their daughters. In rural areas women cannot hold a prestigious job due to lack of education, they take on the most physically difficult and undesirable jobs i.e. agricultural job. Most women are overworked with no maternity leave or special breaks for those who are pregnant. Women do the majority of the manual labor that uses a lot of energy compared to the men who do mostly machine operating. To spread education among women, ecomuseum can help to build up non formal and adult education centres. These centres are recommended particularly for women and other educationally under privileged groups who have limited access to formal school.

Information centre:

Information centre of ecomuseum provides information on different fields of agriculture. It gives information on different scheme of Central and State government organizations in agriculture and allied sectors. It has been seen that most of the time women in rural areas are not aware of the scheme provided by government organization. Not only government scheme but information on weather condition for cultivation, soil type, high yielding seeds, irrigation facilities etc. are also given by Ecomuseum

Technological and other knowledge:

Agriculture has been the backbone of human existence since time immemorial. It has also seen much advancement over the years. However, the agricultural practices carried out in India are still largely traditional. Indian agriculture technology has many limitations as compared to modern agricultural technologies around the world. To create awareness among women about technology related to agriculture ecomuseum can play an important role. Ecomuseum can take the following steps:-

- The subject of technological education related to agriculture may depend on the landform of the area, climate, types of crop, economic condition of the people etc.
- The language of the technological education should be very easy so that general women can understand within a very short period of time.
- The eco-museum can arrange the different interactive programmes with the help of experts of different agricultural institutes, agricultural scientists etc. to deliver lectures on technological education to people.
- The technological education must be people oriented for development of the rural

economic and to develop various rural planning.

Marketing:

Agricultural marketing is mainly the buying and selling of agricultural products. In earlier days when the village economy was more or less self-sufficient the marketing of agricultural products presented no difficulty as the farmer sold his produce to the consumer on a cash or barter basis.

Today's agricultural marketing has to undergo a series of exchanges or transfers from one person to another before it reaches the consumer. There are three marketing functions involved in this, i.e., assembling, preparation for consumption and distribution. Selling of any agricultural produce depends on some factors like the demand of the product at that time, availability of storage facility etc. The products may be sold directly in the market or it may be stored locally for the time being. Moreover, it may be sold as it is gathered from the field or it may be cleaned, graded and processed by the farmer or the merchant of the village. Sometimes processing is done on demand from the consumers, or to conserve the quality of that product. The task of distribution system is to match the supply with the existing demand by whole selling and retailing in various points of different markets like primary, secondary or terminal markets.

Most of the agricultural products in India are sold by farmers in the private sector to moneylenders (to whom the farmer may be indebted) or to village traders. Products are sold in various ways. For example, it might be sold at a weekly village market in the farmer's village or in a neighbouring village. If these outlets are not available, then produce might be sold at irregularly held markets in a nearby village or town. Therefore agricultural produce faces a challenge at the traditional market.

The museum can take some serious steps for the development of agricultural marketing.

The Main Activities Ecomuseum are given below:-

· Establishment of co operative for the benefit of women farmers as well as consumers.

· To create marketing opportunities for small and marginal farmers in cultivation of fruits, vegetables and flowers by formation of groups which includes production, storing and export.

· To create awareness among the women about the benefits of grading, marketing, value addition and processing their produce through regulated markets by taking up training, publicity and propaganda.

- To set up modern cold storage facilities to enable the farmers to store and sell their produce at favourable price and to help consumers to get quality food products.
- Processing Industries are promoted to minimise wastage of agricultural products and to increase employment opportunities of women.

Review

Actions to create an enabling environment for women's participation in sustainable development works generally take place at the macro- or meso-levels through the adoption of policies made by ecomuseum in the context of reform programmes. After certain interval ecomuseum will review its activities of different programmes. In every ecomuseum, there must be a review committee consisting of subject experts and women of the local community.

Ecomuseum concerning women's participation in village industry and handicrafts

Village industry and handicrafts are pillars of rural economy in India. Village industries are concerned in the main with the processing of local raw materials for local markets and with the help of simple techniques. But sometimes they are also part of urban cottage industries and handicrafts. Handicrafts stand in some ways in special category distinguishable alike from village industries. But as employment is as weighty a consideration in them as in village industries and the problems of technical improvement, marketing and organization are similar to those in village industries.

For developing the village industries and handicrafts with the help of local women the following points may be considered. These are: -Organization, Finance, Supply of raw materials and equipment,Marketing, Technical guidance and research.

Organisation :

So long as the village remained as a self-sufficient unit, goods and services were mutually exchanged within it on a sort of barter basis. But with the growth of communication and the opening of foreign markets and goods produced by the .women artisans have come in competition with foreign goods. A village organization consisting of women artisans has therefore to be built to suit these changed conditions. The ecomuseum can function to build up such organization in various ways. First, it motivates the women artisans to form associations on the basis of single-craft or multi-crafts co-operatives, preferably the latter, carrying on

operations connected with their crafts which are likely to derive the maximum benefit in respect to finance raw materials and demand for the finished products. While the organizations in the village provide base, the development of village industries require direction from ecomuseum. The primary responsibility for carrying out programmes for village industries is to be set by the ecomuseum with experts. Secondly, the organization of .women artisans will act as a wing of ecomuseum. This wing can be made by the local people for the development of their industry. Thirdly, the ecomuseum will collect the necessary information connected with village industries and handicrafts from various Government and Non-Government organizations and this information must be supplied to the organization of village industries so the .local women are aware of the latest development.

Finance :

Women artisans have scarcely any financial resources of their own, nor have they any security to offer. As a result they produce mainly to meet local demand with the help of their own traditional methods which are not always scientific and therefore productions become inferior in quality. The poor women artisans need money to buy good raw materials and machineries. The ecomuseum cannot provide money in general but the finance for the development of village industries can be supplied by various co-operative and financial banks under the supervision of ecomuseum.

Supply of raw materials and equipment :

Raw materials are essential to build up any kind of industries. Equipment are more or less some essential. ecomuseums are not in a position to provide raw materials and equipment but it can act in various ways. Firstly, the ecomuseum can make village women aware of local resources which are readily available. When .women of the community have secure tenure over the local resources, they feel more responsible towards the resources and manage it with an eye to the future. Secondly, with the help of experts, ecomuseum can display the information and arrange for a workshop about how to use and conserve local resources. Thirdly, ecomuseum can display modern equipment in its industrial gallery, so that people can be familiar with them and learn its functions..

Technological Education:

Non-formal education unit of eco-museum may provide education for implementation of scientific methods in rural development. Community development needs proper planning and implementation of rural technology. Rural technology is generally based on rural economy, sociology, culture and it

must be based on environment. In India the workforce participation rate of females is very low because of lack of their technological knowledge. Vocational training is equally important to women's economic independence.

The technological education of eco-museum follows some principles as below:

- The subject of technological education may be selected on the specific requirement of women.
- The language of the technological education should be quite easy so that people can understand within a very short period of time.
- The eco-museum can arrange different interactive programmes with the help of experts of science centres of NCSM, science clubs etc. and arrange to deliver the lecture for technological education of people.
- The technological education must be people oriented for development of the rural economic and to develop various rural planning.

In case of regional programmes there are various aspects for development. The regional planning includes land development programmes, health and sanitation development programmes, communication development programmes and environment development programmes. Every programme needs proper technological help. Both the people who set up the programmes and who get the benefits from the programmes must have technological knowledge. Technological knowledge can accelerate the participation of women in sustainable development work.

Technological knowledge for regional planning can be disseminated by Ecomuseum through various ways as given below: -

Mass approach –through booklets, local newspapers, mobile exhibitions, mass gathering etc.

Group approach through .women federation, symposium, cinema and drama, exhibitions, posters etc.

Individual approach-through door-to-door campaign and distribution of handbills.

Ecotourism and women's participation

One of the principal objectives is to promote tourism and assist women for economic development. In India ecomuseum can play a significant role to promote ecotourism along with cultural tourism. The policy and guidelines taken by ecomuseum on ecotourism areas follows :-

- There must be an information centre run by local women in every tourist spot which provides information on heritage attractions (including museums, buildings, historic gardens & sites etc.), festivals, special events, performing

arts etc., religious sites, types of architecture, the arts, traditional crafts, traditional food and drinks and natural beauty.

- It should be with the positive involvement of women of local communities. All the activities must involve women of local communities not merely as wage labourers but as partners in ecotourism developments. The women of the locality may act as a tourist guide. This may also help in the integration among people of the locality as well as with the people coming from different strata of life.
- There may be a sales counter attached to ecomuseum. In the sales counter there must be local handicrafts. Mainly the product of handicrafts which are made by local women. It would be better if the local craftsmen are involved with the dealings.

At the initial stage of development of eco tourism the local women can take it as a partial source of income. But when it flourishes they can depend on ecotourism as a main source of income. One of the drawbacks of any kind of tourism is that there are off seasons when visitors are not available. So, the people depending on ecotourism must have an alternative source of income for that time.

Conclusion

It may be concluded that accurate, current, regionally specific information and analysis is necessary for development of good policy. .Data collection, analysis and implementation of planning are needed for better understanding of women's roles in sustainable development works and the change that may take place over time in response to new opportunities. Ecomuseum is an ideal body which can act in various ways for women's development. It is very important to realize that eco-museology is the initial stage and part of new-museology. In India it is also at the initial stage. Although in India there is no such eco museum by name but now there are many museums, which are functioning similar to eco museum. There is a great scope to open up eco museums in various places in India for the benefit of women. When we educate and empower one woman, we set off a chain reaction that transforms the life of her family and the community she lives in. Last we must remember that "There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of woman is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing. There is no hope for that family or country where there is no estimation of women, where they live in sadness. For this reason, they have to be raised first." (Swamy Vivekananda)

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