

Women Development in Wadi Program

Concept

Wadi is a family based livelihood intervention, which provides equal opportunities and benefits to both men and women. Women's contribution to livelihood enhancement through Wadi is important. However women's lower literacy, poorer nutrition; lack of access to and control over decision making and resources affects their participation. Due to socio economic constraints and stereotypes; women's needs are different than those of men. Women contribute to production but do not have access to monetary benefits. Women form sizeable productive work force of the rural economy, but do not get opportunities for improving skills, and using advanced technology.

Women have the potential to lead development change and they have a right to participate in development programs. So, Wadi program has consciously integrated 'Women Development' in the overall livelihood enhancement program.

The focus is on empowerment which means enhancement of capacities to have better control over economic, political decisions, courage to deal with injustice, self esteem and access to control over resources.

Approach

- **Understanding needs of women:** As a result of secondary status of women, they remain deprived of benefits of development initiatives. To integrate women in development programs, understanding their development needs is very crucial. Such needs are identified through systematic need assessment.
- **Initial Focus on Practical Gender Needs:** Practical Gender Needs can be identified easily and could be fulfilled by material inputs. They are the immediate needs to make routine life better. So, initially project activities are focused on addressing Practical Gender Needs. Identification strategic needs and enhancement of women's capacities to meet those needs is a

continuous and long term process. While working on practical needs, it is necessary to understand women's Strategic Gender Needs and facilitate the process accordingly. e. g. imparting women necessary training on various trades and skills related to Wadi

- **Working through Groups:** Collective action plays important role in sustaining development programs. Wadi program focuses on group building so that groups can work as support structures at local level. The capacity building process integrates groups in livelihood activities such as SHG Exposure visits for Wadi, promotion of Kitchen gardens, Training local persons for new technology e.g. improved chulha, diffusers. The groups cater Credit Needs for consumption and production.
- **Context Specific Inputs:** Different socio-economic groups need different types of inputs. Wadi program evolves context specific inputs in the broad framework of approaches discussed above. Understanding viability of interventions is important aspect.
- **Strengthen Linkages:** The groups get facilitation support in strengthening linkage with local institutions like Banks, PRI, PHCs. This institutional linkage is essential for sustainability of the program and increasing women's role in decision making.
- **Sensitization:** It is necessary to work with men for women development. Sensitization of men, boys, girls and women is necessary to make them aware of women's situation and strive together for women's empowerment.

Process

- Home visits, individual dialogues with various women and men – to understand situation and introduce SHG concept

- Wadi participation is not necessary condition for SHG participation, SHG members are motivated to participate in Wadi
- SHG formation process – exposure to other project areas, initial meetings, formation, saving, rules and regulations, regular meetings, bank account, records, credit, IGA, collective actions (e.g. Village cleaning, Gynecological camps, participation in Gramsabha)
- Need identification and related inputs e.g. ball bearing, washing stone, hand pump installation,
- Identification of potential Wadi participants and landless participants
- Capacity building – member training, office bearers’ training regarding SHG management, IGA training, PRI training, Gender sensitization, Functional Literacy
- Developing linkages – with bank, PHC, School, Government departments etc.
- Handing over – developing ownership of members, sustaining ongoing activities without staff support
- Institution Building and Strengthening – formation of Clusters, Federations, participation in Cooperatives, Village committees, PRI committees
- SHGs should get income for the time they spend during exposure visits for providing resource inputs (not only for providing food)

Range of Activities

- **Organizing** and mobilizing women for Credit and skill for various income generation activities through **SHGs**
- Introduction of various **Drudgery Reduction** technologies e.g. ball bearing, hand pump installation

- **Transferring Technology** to women e.g. grafting, record keeping, livestock management
- **Focusing on women's Practical Gender needs** like safe drinking water, low cost toilets
- Education and health **Awareness** programs
- **Linkages of** women's groups with mainstream institutes like PHC, Gram Panchayat, School, Bank etc.
- **Cadre building of women volunteers** e.g. SHG training, Health training, Wadi inputs, IGA

Major Challenges

- Availability of qualified (skills and capacity) staff and staff turnover
- Illiteracy amongst women
- Scattered population, difficult to reach out and collective action
- Tribal/Local language
- Target timeline does not take into consideration time required for strong processes
- Women's workload
- Cultural issues – women do not have space in traditional environment, men staff interacting with women (in the initial stage), alcohol addiction,
- Migration – irregular savings, gap in capacity building processes, inconsistency in addressing needs
- Opposition of certain local sections e.g. moneylender, non-participants,
- Lack of exposure, mistrust – intense efforts required for rapport building
- Challenging area – infrastructure, forest area. Hilly area, extreme climatic conditions, communication facilities, not good facility to stay with family,

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- Maintenance of inputs given e.g. ball bearing, handpump, Pressure cooker, smokeless chulha,

Tips/Indigenous knowledge

- Staff sensitization /capacity building regarding Women Development should be given priority.
- Each program/project should have context specific Women Development Strategy.
- Women Development work should start right from pre-establishment stage.
- Adequate budgetary and human resource provision should be included in project proposal.
- Regular review of Women Development component should be planned with other components\
- Women Development aspects should be discussed in all-men meetings and with all-men groups also.
- Special efforts should be made to create space for women in Village Meetings.

FAQs

1. Why SHG in Wadi?
2. Can we work with SHGs established by other NGOs/ Programs?
3. Non-Wadi participants can be SHG members?
4. Why only women's SHG?
5. What is the difference between WT and SHG?
6. What should be the meeting agenda?
7. Is women staff required for working with women?
8. Can migrating families be members of SHG? Can they participate in Wadi?
9. How to mobilize women to participate in training and exposure visits?
10. How to develop rapport with communities and especially with women?

Resources

- a) **Training material :** Training manual, Booklet, Films, Charts, SHG Records, CDs, Best SHG case studies, Wallpaper in Marathi, Newsletter in Marathi and Hindi,
- b) **Human Resource:** BAIF staff in various states (25), Trained cadre of Community workers (50+), Best SHGs (for exposure visits), Community Cooperatives, Training centers (Pune, Uruli, Jawhar, Peith, Vansda, Chaswad, Tiptur, Ghatol, Surshettikoppa, Allahabad, Raniganj)

Photos

Best Practices:

- Needs assessment (Swayamsiddha)
- SHG Functioning (Dr. Manibhai Desai SHG Award)
- Federation Management – Jawhar, Tiptur, Raniganj
- Family health interventions – clean kitchen, glass tiles etc.
- Cadre building – SHG, Health, IGA,
- Women Development Strategy (Swayamsiddha, EU, KfW)

Indicators

1. Number of women reached out through SHGs (total number of women in the project area)
2. Number of SHGs linked to bank for credit availability
3. Number of women participating in Exposure visits
4. Number of SHG members working as resource persons for various training programs (SHG, Wadi)
5. Number of women using drudgery reduction interventions introduced through Wadi program

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6. Range of topics discussed in SHG/Cluster/Federation meetings
7. Number of women regularly participating in Gramsabha
8. Knowledge regarding family assets created through Wadi program
9. Number of SHG members availing various government schemes e.g. Indira Awas
10. Number of SHG members covered under insurance.
11. Number of SHG involved in processing of Wadi products (mango, cashew, amla etc.)
12. % of SHG sustaining after the end of the project
13. Quality of Participation of women in Apex bodies, Cooperatives, various village level committees (beyond numbers)