

**NON TRADITIONAL LIVELIHOODS-A FUTURESCOPE: EXPANDING HORIZONS
A ROUNDTABLE CONSULTATION**

Date-20thFeb 2020- Time-10.00a.m-3.00p.m

Venue-India International Centre, New Delhi



An advocacy Roundtable Table Consultation was organized by the National Network on Non-Traditional Livelihoods in partnership with Magic Bus Foundation India and Quest Alliance.

The consultation was organized on **20th Feb 2020** and **attended by 30 participants** from civil society organizations, academic and research institutes, representation from industry, government and donor agency. 15 network members joined the meeting as well as participants from 6 non- members' from across the spectrum of donors, industry partners and government (Details of attendees in Annexure 1).

Table1: Details of Participating Organization

Civil Society Organizations - 15	Quest Alliance; Magic Bus; Samaan Society; Archana Women's Centre; Etashah society; Breakthrough; Girls Count; Saath; Srijan; Janvikas; Jabala; Nirankar; Aksaha; Open Eyes Foundation; Azad Foundation
Academic and Research Institutes - 2	Western University (Canada); International Centre for Research on Women
Government – 1	National Skill Development Corporation
Industry – 3	FICCI, Asian Paints, VKL Seasoning
Donor Agency – 1	Empower

Context

With the declining workforce participation at 17.5% (SDG India Index 2019) and according to the Global Wage Report of 2018, 92% women in India are earning less than Rs.10, 000 a month, primarily restricted in the informal sector with no social security. Issues of violence, safety and mobility and unpaid care work further restrict women's entry and continuity in the workforce. At present 1 in every 3 women face violence in their lifetime and 2.5 million crimes against women reported in India (NCRB, 2017) and 65% of girls (15-18 years) drop out of school for household chores (National Commission for Protection of Child Rights).

The World Economic Forum estimates that raising women's participation in the workforce can increase India's GDP by 27%

It was in this context that the network in **September 2019 during the Annual General Body Meeting (AGBM) streamlined three advocacy areas which it would focus for the next year viz.:**

- **Creating Gender Sensitive Markets:** to ease entry and sustain workforce participation of women
- **Training and Education on Non-Traditional Livelihoods:** to understand the pedagogy which is required to secure women remunerative and decent work in NTL and;
- **Unpaid Care Work:** the entry point to understanding what are the enabling environments required for boosting women's workforce participation

This Roundtable Consultation, first of three to be held in 2020, was organized to take forward the first advocacy agenda of creating gender sensitive markets for promoting women's entry and sustainability in NTL.

The Roundtable began with a brief introduction of participants and their organizations followed by a brief on the network presented by Amrita Gupta, the coordinator for the NTLN shared about the strength, journey and objectives. At present the network has **25 organizations and 7 individual members across nine states in India.**

Objectives of the network were reiterated to build the context for the roundtable:

- To share challenges and learnings of organizations in NTL
- To identify areas of collaboration, capacity building and build synergies in promoting NTL, including engagement/advocacy with the state and other stakeholders
- To work towards building a collective to project and give visibility to the need of main-streaming NTL within the policy discourse of government and non-government sectors.
- To advocate for enabling social structures and infrastructure which facilitate women's participation and retention in NTL.
- To create a body of knowledge on new avenues of NTL and strategies to access them



SESSION 1: CURRENT INITIATIVES ON CREATING GENDER SENSITIVE MARKETS

The first session of the Roundtable initiated discussions on how organizations in the civil society, industry and donor agencies are working towards i) Creating Gender Sensitive Markets on NTL ii) Expanding Inclusive Markets through Government ITIs and Initiatives by Industry and; iii)



Donors in Creating Gender Sensitive Markets respectively. For this purpose first some of the organizations made presentations on initiatives, strategies and what more can be done which was followed by open discussion.

Under the first section on creating gender sensitive markets, initiatives were shared by Azad Foundation, Samaan and Archana Women's Centre.

Meenu Vadera, Founder of Azad Foundation and Sakha Consulting Wings drawing from her experience shared that the first step in creating gender sensitive markets is to develop or provide gender sensitive infrastructure like availability of safe and hygienic washrooms, working women's hostels, restrooms etc. Both organizations have worked towards creating a nurturing environment enabling entry and continuity of women as professional chauffeurs. The existing business models in the industry are not gender sensitive and fail to create a market like that. The business model of Sakha has been revised time and again to respond to the needs of women and actively handled the issue of safety, hygiene, counselling, legal support and creating a work environment accommodating personal or family responsibilities.

Rajendra Bandhu, Founder of Samaan shared about their initiative Yantrika which is training women as two wheeler mechanics being implemented in Indore, Madhya Pradesh. First step in this direction was to have flexible criteria to get more and more women as professional mechanics. Second step was placement of mechanics which goes hand in hand with changing perceptions. For this Yantrika Service Centres were set up as an all women service centre. Initially to popularize the centres and bring in more customers many schemes were launched which provided servicing at discounted prices, servicing camps were set up at city centres giving service at nominal fee. Provision of quality service was imperative for success of the service centre and for customers to overcome the belief that women mechanics will not provide quality service.

Thresiamma Mathew, Founder of Archana Women's Centre shared the challenges and strategies for bringing more women in the construction industry as skilled labour. In 1989, it was very uncommon to have women masons and families would deny work to them despite receiving proper training from AWC. To address this initially AWC employed one male and one female mason together at one construction site and gradually made a space for women masons in the market. They linked women masons with local panchayats to get more work, enabled them to become contractors themselves or tied up with existing contractors to advocate for equal pay for equal work.

From here, the discussion moved towards expanding inclusive markets through government ITIs. The presentation was made by Quest Alliance.

Ashutosh Tosaria, Director-Youth Program, Quest Alliance shared about the engagement with the ITIs and enrolling more and more women to increase their participation in the workforce. There are over 350 government training institutes which have now been made co-ed with a mandatory admission of 30% women. But seats reserved for women are going unfilled and there is low awareness on ITIs, so a lot of work is required first to get women excited about ITI. At present engaging with 18 ITIs focusing on technology and IT industry with new courses being added including training on sexuality, safety training with Delhi Police, and classroom legal



training by lawyers. The challenge right now is how to popularize ITIs and bring more and more women into its fold.

The third issue of discussion was on initiatives by donor agencies and industry partners on creating gender sensitive markets. The presentations were made by Empower and Asian Paints.

Jayanthi Pushkaran and Alifya Lochanwala from Empower shared the country wide strategies adopted by Empower on NTL and women in NTL. Starting with asking partners to be intentional about NTL to creating an ecosystem as providing employability skills is not enough. A gender collective with partners has been formed looking at each life stage through a gender lens and designing interventions at each level. The third strategy has been a paradigm shift to bring more women in NTL in the Empower decision making an example of which is inviting Savita, Driver with Sakha Cabs to be in advisory panel of Empower. Two important realizations to work towards have been need for collaboration for trainings and scaling up and need to work on mental health. The negotiations both in and outside home have proved to be emotionally consuming. Some of the strategies adopted for the latter need include counselling of both women and her family.

Brij Sharma and Sachin Arora from Asian Paints, shared how through its colour academy Asian Paints is providing certificate courses under National Skill Development Corporation to women as painters. At present they have 25 academies across the country out of which nine are moving academies meaning they go town to town to train women. The biggest challenge as they shared has been to convince both the women and her family to bring them into this trade. The courses are short term with a basic course conducted over 6 days and an advanced course over 9 days. Since the painters are certified they are able to reach out to a niche customer. Each woman is supported in client engagement at her first site visit which gives confidence to both the woman applicator and client. At present there are six women applicators who are well known in the market and have done jobs even at airports.

Following presentations on current initiatives, the floor was open for discussion. Some of the key discussions are shared below:

Discussions:

International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW) shared the topline findings of a recent study conducted by them looking at enablers and barriers for women's entry and sustainability with a focus on non-traditional livelihoods. **The barriers primarily include gender segregated market in which market and state are determining what women should be trained in** and certain occupations and social security are getting attention and there is no intervention in others. **Two primary enablers are formal or informal women's groups or associations and the ability to negotiate within the household regarding unpaid care work and safe commute.**

Taking the discussion forward, one of the responses was that struggle has shifted from training to employment of women. At the employment level, it is easier to break the barriers at the level of trainees and sustain them in employment but not at the level of employers.

One suggestion was to explore the potential of markets in the upper middle class section who are now becoming employers and such households also provide safe workspaces. On this a concern was raised that this market maybe remunerative but not necessarily equitable and sometimes

even exploitative. Segregation of women into low paying and low levels jobs is harassment in itself. **These points should be kept in mind when framing the “Asks” in the following session.**

Women are coming to public spaces and markets but the challenge here is how these markets are reacting to this. Corporates are showing interest but there is a gap in investing to create spaces in their mainstream work and not just corporate social responsibility. Different forms and nature of violence in these spaces need to be discussed more.

Outcomes:

- At the level of training providers as well as women taking the training, there is a need to shift focus from building technical skills to building entrepreneur skills to ensure employment
- At the level of employer or market, business models need to promote women in NTL and reach out with evidence based success as the messaging. For this industry and civil society need to collaborate
- Civil society should take lead in expanding the definition of gender responsive or sensitive spaces and markets accommodating different genders and not be gender binary

The points discussed in this section viz. gender sensitive infrastructure, focus on entrepreneurial skills, addressing unequal pay, harassment and different forms of violence in the work environment should be addressed while framing Key Asks in the next section



SESSION 2: KEY ASKS FROM THE GOVERNMENT, CIVIL SOCIETY AND INDUSTRY FOR CREATING GENDER SENSITIVE MARKETS

The next section focused on **Key Asks from and by Civil Society, Industry and Government** for creating gender sensitive markets and enabling greater participation of women in the workforce. All participants were divided into three groups, with representatives from the three sectors and through discussions each group presented the following Asks:



Government

Group Members: Amrita, Alifya, Poulomi, Baitali, Md. Zahid, Archana (NSDC), Paridhi

- **Investment in expanding horizons at the level of education and messaging** at the government level with respect to Non- Traditional Livelihoods. Introducing NTL as a career option from the beginning itself through educational institutions
- Devising **evidence based policy in collaboration with civil society** for creation of gender sensitive environment for enabling women to opt for non-traditional livelihoods
- **Investing in enablers like quality public services, safe and hygienic public facilities,** working women's hostels, crèche etc. to promote and sustain women in NTL catering to **both urban and rural population.**
- **Define Gender transformative training** and learn and draw action points from existing research for developing gender transformative training modules
- **Mainstreaming NTL in the larger agenda of skill development** and organizations like National Skill Development Corporation recognize the skill++ framework (Both points were also raised as Asks by the Civil Society Group). This can be done through government initiating discussions or consultations and referring to the plethora of evidence and research already available on NTL and women in NTL
- Decoding the word women and **addressing intersectionality**, because it is not a homogeneous group with same demands or needs

Civil Society

Group Members: Rajendra Bandhu, Thersiamma, Meenu, Ashutosh, Kirti, Archana, Anandita, Bipasha

- **Creating awareness on Non-Traditional Livelihood** including what is and why NTL, initiatives which have succeeded. (Example of Sakha Consulting Wings was shared that with success of Sakha more partners came forward to scale the model). Creating more awareness and providing information will not only provide visibility but promote more organizations to take up NTL
- Organizations especially **large skilling organizations which are already focusing on livelihood need to be more intentional about NTL options** making it part of their approach and narrative (Example shared is of any skill training organizations which run 200-300 vocational centres in the country, the moment they talk about NTL it will get higher visibility)
- As a network, when we approach women and NTL, just skilling is not sufficient. There is a need to develop a framework of skill++ and define what the ++ will comprise of like rights, sexual and reproductive health, knowledge needs which are integral to the technical trainings
The network can develop a module defining skill++ and requisite capacity building which can be adopted and scaled by National Skill Development Corporation
- Education and awareness on NTL and women in NTL need to be across stakeholders including the women, their families and communities, corporate, government

Industry

Group Members: Anuj, Pritha, Jayanti, Aditi, Brij Kishore, Sachin, Ramita, Anmit, Manjari, Rajendra

The group began by sharing the context in which they held the group discussion. What needs to be done to make the space (corporates) where women are more or less absent more attractive, safe and comfortable for them? Based on this following are the Asks from and by Corporates:

- **Train them better and train them right, identifying the skills both industry and women need** so that women are able to compete in the formal workforce.
- **HR policies must address provision of information and enabling women to assert their rights and negotiate for better salaries and gender sensitive work environment** to make spaces inclusive and sustain women in the formal workforce
- If industry is providing training (also for organizations and any entity who is providing skill training) to **provide certification**
An example of this is Godrej, when they provide training in skin care they also make available tools to the women trainees with which they can start their own work until they find desired employment
- **Industry should reach out to the community to build trust and become part of NTL network** like this one
Given the current rate of women's workforce participation at 17.5, it cannot just be the responsibility of civil society organizations anymore, **industry should become partners**
- Monthly or quarterly meeting with families and home visits of women employees entering these spaces to enable trust building
- Industry must ensure Equal Pay, and statutory policies like POSH, maternity leave etc.
- Mechanisms like transportation and reservations can be a start to bring in more women and making them feel safe
- Industry needs to move beyond recruitment and focus on creating an enabling environment which includes engaging with men in the families and communities



Discussions

In response to the point by Industry of having a mechanism of periodical meetings with family or home visits, it was felt that the mechanism instead of trust building may lead to constant monitoring of women in the workspaces by their families. The focus is not on gaining approval



from the families but encouraging and enabling women to take their own decisions and negotiate with the family.

The industry group agreed with this concern and shared that the idea behind this is to only ensure higher retention rate of women and not seek approval of their families. It can be a beginning exercise, if not a regular practice.

Azad Foundation shared an example here, that initially when they enrolled women for training they form required approval from a family member, but this was changed to friend or a partner, a deliberate step to move out of the traditional family circle. The decision to tell the family or not should be only of the woman who is taking the training or entering the workspace.

A question was asked from all three groups by the moderator if these Asks were addressing any particular organization, industry or government office?

The industry (group) shared that their focus was on MSMEs, Corporates and Enterprises and given more time they would have liked to design separate asks for these three industries.

Outcomes that still need detailing-

- From the government's perspective, the Asks should detail which ministry or department and at which administrative level the demand is being made
- All three groups will detail who are the Asks addressed to through virtual coordination as a follow up to the roundtable

Following the discussions, **Dr. Vandana Bhatnagar, Chief Program Officer, National Skill Development Corporation**, shared her views on the current initiatives and challenges faced by NSDC and how the government and civil society collaborate to promote women in employment and NTL. She shared that NSDC is working in the domain of livelihood and skill development and is providing connect between the private and the government sides of the training ecosystem. 50% of the trainings are for women. In their experience, women tend to perform better than men at all stages. But at the employment level they are forced to make choices among a lot of social pressures like how far is the work place, what is the nature of the work environment, relocation, etc. which places constraints on them. Efforts are constant to create an enabling environment.

- There is a huge diversity across the country in terms of needs, challenges and aspirations and it would be valuable if organizations (or networks) like NTLN can work to create some kind of segmentation.
- Further, if there is an interest we can create stories where the breakthrough has happened to use as material for advocacy and awareness.



SUMMARY AND WAY FORWARD

The Roundtable was brought to a close by Meenu Vadera with following takeaways (detailed below) and thanking all members and organizers for their support in making it a success

- The NTL network and the organizations individually are approaching a technocratic subject of livelihood and skill training from the rights based perspective and through a political lens which is an essential but recent development which needs to be continued.
- In the context of gender inequality with deep rooted, where structural norms that limit women's work participations by reiteration of gender roles and stereotypes and stigmas attached to it; in this context to just train women is not enough as a network **but need of the hour is to dive deeper into discussions to work towards bringing the two perspectives livelihood or skill building and rights based approach together**
- A critical takeaway is looking at NTL from beginning to end with interventions at every stage from family and community to women's journey to the training centre; during and after the training and then in the industry
- Government can provide platform, visibility and scale to NTL and the current initiatives around it. There is need to proactively engage in advocacy with the government for the same.
- There is much experience, research and evidence within civil society which can effectively bring about the change and the network **urges the government to give us spaces for collaboration to tap into these resources to give NTL the required platform and plan more collaborative initiatives**

ANNEXURE 1
DETAILS OF PARTICIPANTS

S. No.	NAME	ORGANIZATION	SECTOR
1	Dr. Bipasha Baruah	Western University, Canada	Academic/Research Institute
2	Azmat Mihaz	Quest Alliance	Civil Society
3	Anuj	Magic Bus, India Foundation	Civil Society
4	Rajendra Bandhu	Samaan Society	Civil Society
5	Thresiamma	Awc	Civil Society
6	Mathew Ridhi	Etasha Society	Civil Society
7	Pritha	Breakthrough	Civil Society
8	Rizwan	Girls Count	Civil Society
9	Rajendra	Saath	Civil Society
10	Jayanthi	Empower	Donor Agency
11	Aditi	Girls Count	Civil Society
12	Brij Kishor Sharma	Asian Paints	Industry
13	Sachin Arora	Asian Paints	Industry
14	Manjari	Magic Bus, India Foundation	Civil Society
15	Mohd Zahid	Srijan	Civil Society
16	Ashutosh Tosaria	Quest Alliance	Civil Society
17	Kirti Joshi	Janvikas	Civil Society
18	Baitoli Ganguly	Jabala	Civil Society
19	Anmit Vashisht	VKL Seasoning	Industry
20	Meenu Vadhera	Azad Foundation	Civil Society
21	Ramita Taneja	FICCI	Industry
22	Anindita	Etasha Society	Civil Society
23	Archana	Nirankar	Civil Society
24	Alifya	Empower	Donor Agency
25	Poulomi	ICRW	Research Institute
26	Amrita Gupta	NTL Secretariat	Civil Society
27	Nandita Shah	Akshaa Centre	Civil Society
28	Paridhi	Azad Foundation	Civil Society
29	Archana Singh	NSDC	Government
30	Vandana Bhatnagar	NSDC	Government