



## NON-TRADITIONAL LIVELIHOODS NETWORK (NTLN) – GENESIS FLAGPOSTS

**2014-15**

LEARNING JOURNEYS ON  
NTL OF WOMEN

5 STATES  
17 ORGANISATIONS VISITED - NGOS AND  
GOVERNMENT  
61 PARTICIPANTS

**OCTOBER 2014**

NTL DIRECTORY SHARING &  
REFLECTIONS WORKSHOP

**APRIL 2016**

NTL NETWORK INITIATION  
MEETING

13 PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS

**SEPTEMBER 2017**

NETWORK ESTABLISHMENT  
MEETING

16 PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS

**APRIL 2018**

FIRST STEERING  
GROUP (SG)  
MEETING

6 MEMBERS + 1 NTLN  
COORDINATOR

**AUGUST 2018**

FIRST ANNUAL GENERAL  
BODY MEETING

21 MEMBER ORGANISATIONS  
5 INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

**AUGUST 2018**

SECOND STEERING GROUP  
MEETING

6 MEMBERS + 1 NTLN COORDINATOR

**JANUARY 2019**

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
ON 'MAKING NTL WORK FOR  
THE MARGINALISED'

200 ATTENDEES  
20 COUNTRIES



# **NON-TRADITIONAL LIVELIHOODS NETWORK (NTLN) GENESIS 2014- January 2019**

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## Context

According to a research conducted by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the participation of women in the labour force and their access to decent work opportunities, are critical for achieving the goal of inclusive and sustainable development. Recent trends in India show decreasing participation of women in the labour force (for paid work). Social norms and gender barriers alongwith policy and institutional frameworks that shape the employment opportunities for women are important factors in restricting women's entry into the world of work. Domestic and care responsibilities, lack of skills, limited mobility and safety issues, framed by patriarchal thinking and gender-based discrimination make it difficult for women to access employment at the very basic level. Added to this, are the multiple challenges faced by women in terms of choice of work, working conditions, employment security, wage parity, discrimination, and balancing the competing burdens of work and family responsibilities. Within the neo-liberal context, the employment opportunities being offered to women largely involve piece-meal work, home-based tasks, low-paying and insecure industrial jobs—thus not helping women find 'decent' work<sup>1</sup>.

Gendered patterns in occupational segregation imply that the majority of women's work is typically concentrated in a narrow range of sectors, many of which are vulnerable and insecure<sup>2</sup> on the one hand, and gendered (or associated with women's stereotypical imageries) on the other hand. Both within the informal economy where the majority of women work and the formal economy, women's work is usually ghettoised in the more 'unskilled' or 'softer' (read reproductive role related) spaces.

While several organisations are working on women and livelihood issues across India, a majority of them focus on the existing and accepted (read feminine or domestic) roles of women as workers—centering on the Self-Help Group (SHG) model of credit and thrift; home-based, small-scale industry or cooperative model for common modes of production like incense, food items (pickles, jams), clothes, etc.; or earning secondary incomes.<sup>3</sup> And then there are other organisations that have or are challenging the traditional frameworks by creating new roles for women as paid workers, by training them in skills which are not necessarily 'soft' or mirroring domesticity and introducing new sectors and avenues for the women workforce.

Resource poor women (i.e. those who live at the intersections of economic, social and cultural marginalisation) are particularly disadvantaged in accessing livelihoods with dignity, both, which are 'traditionally' accepted as arenas of women's work and 'non-traditional' occupations that are otherwise male-dominated.

In 2015, the United Nations led its member states to adopt 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a "universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030". The

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<sup>1</sup> Report of Reflection workshop on Non-Traditional Livelihoods with dignity and empowerment, organised by Azad Foundation, October 2014

<sup>2</sup> Female labour force participation in India and beyond by Ruchika Chaudhary and SherVerick, International Labour Organisation, ILO-DWT for South Asia and Country Office for India, New Delhi: ILO, 2014

<sup>3</sup> Report of Reflection workshop on Non-Traditional Livelihoods with dignity and empowerment, organised by Azad Foundation, October 2014

17 SDGs are integrated—that is, they recognise that action in one area will affect outcomes in others, and that development must balance social, economic and environmental sustainability. Through the pledge to “Leave No One Behind”, countries have committed to fast-track progress for those furthest behind first<sup>4</sup>. According to a study, the SDGs recognise the urgent need to bridge the worlds of education and employment; and ensure a solid educational and skills foundation for all, including young people, to make that leap to the world of work<sup>5</sup>. The context within which non-traditional livelihoods are taken up by resource-poor women and their marketability are critical factors in this process.

While there are several points of intersection between non-traditional livelihoods for women and the 17 SDGs, the following are considered significant vis-a-vis the current thinking and action around non-traditional livelihoods for women.

**SDG 1:** No Poverty

**SDG 4:** Quality Education

**SDG 5:** Gender Equality

**SDG 8:** Decent Work and Economic Growth

**SDG10:** Reducing Inequality

In fact, non-traditional livelihoods for women acquire an important status in taking the SDGs vision and mission forward, as also in the discussions on Beijing+25 in 2020. The year will mark the twenty-fifth anniversary since Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPFA) which set strategic objectives and actions for the achievement of gender equality in 12 critical areas of concern. Like the SDGs, these issues are cross-connecting; however, the following areas of concern are significant with respect to non-traditional livelihoods for women:

- Women and Poverty
- Education and training of women
- Violence against women
- Women and the economy
- Institutional mechanisms

The sixty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) to be held at the UN Headquarters in New York from 9<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020 will include an assessment of current challenges that affect the implementation of the Platform for Action, the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women, and its contribution towards the full realisation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and will be a crucial forum to lobby for the recognition and promotion of non-traditional livelihoods for women<sup>6</sup>.

The above context, along with the work of Azad Foundation on “livelihoods with dignity” since 2008, led to the initiation of a journey (in 2014)—with like-minded organisations from different parts of India—that resulted in the creation of the Non-Traditional Livelihood Network (NTLN) in 2016. This document traces the genesis of the NTLN, with its significant flag posts upto January 2019. It is based on the available documentation of meetings and interactions organised by Azad

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<sup>4</sup><https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html>

<sup>5</sup>4th Asia-Pacific Meeting on Education 2030 (APMED2030) (12-14 July 2018, Bangkok, Thailand), Regional Recommendations for Action on SDG targets 4.3 and 4.4

<sup>6</sup><https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw64-2020>

Foundation initially and the network (once formed); and structured as a simple, but coherent read.



## Seeding the Idea: Secondary Research on Non-Traditional Livelihoods for Women in India

With a focus on addressing gender inequality that pervades private and public spaces in India, Azad Foundation has believed that the creation of non-traditional, high-return livelihood options for women is a means to challenge traditional gender roles that have restricted women's capabilities and horizons. In early 2014, the organisation conducted a desk review to identify various initiatives engaged in providing non-traditional livelihoods for women across India. This secondary research, that took about 6-7 months, resulted in a directory listing of 30 initiatives/ organisations associated with non-traditional livelihoods for women. The directory can be accessed here <http://azadfoundation.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Directory-of-Organizations-final-final-feb-2.pdf>

The outcomes of this research were shared at a meeting held at Zorba The Buddha in New Delhi, on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2014<sup>7</sup>. This meeting served as a space to reflect and articulate in a more holistic manner, the understanding of the term 'non-traditional livelihoods'. It also served as the base on which Azad Foundation planned to undertake learning journeys and networking with organisations working on or interested in this area of women's work. The meeting was attended by 22 participants, including staff and consultants of Azad Foundation, some board members and fellow-travellers, experts and representatives of organisations working in the field of gender, livelihood and informal sector.

Infact, this meeting seeded the idea that, over two years, took shape in the form of the Non-Traditional Livelihoods Network (NTLN).

Participants spoke about the relevance of working on NTLs of women in the current time, with a focus on empowerment and dignity. They brainstormed on issues of skilling, higher incomes, spaces for women to empower themselves and build feminist solidarities, while taking on formerly male-centric occupations. Azad Foundation shared that 'Non-traditional' livelihoods are not just seen as a descriptive category of activities but as an analytical category which can address the structures that limit women's livelihood options, create new opportunities for them and help them fit into new roles as paid workers, at home or society at large. The NTL model gives equal weightage to training as it gives to provision of jobs and linking trained women to income generation—not focussing on supplementary or marginal income generation but building careers and providing jobs that allow women to be substantial earners in the family and often primary bread winners.

**Directory of Organizations**  
Non Traditional Livelihoods for Women in India



<sup>7</sup> More details available in the report of the Reflection workshop on Non-Traditional Livelihoods with dignity and empowerment, organised by Azad Foundation, October 2014

Being the first of such platforms to discuss NTLs for women, some important questions were raised to further conceptual clarity on the issue:

- Are we able to challenge the practices of mainstream male centric occupations or do women have to adhere to the dominant norms in order to survive?
- Is our model getting trapped into fitting women in 'men's world'?
- Are we increasing the work load of women as paid workers when their unpaid work continues?
- Is work space allowing them to discuss and deal with personal and familial issues?
- Is work environment helping them cope with domestic and familial roles?
- Are there too many negotiations that women are being subjected to – surviving public spaces, performing in male dominated professions, battling domestic responsibilities, dealing with guilt that comes with their aspirations and ideals of womanhood, motherhood, etc.?
- Is overlooking domestic and reproductive roles, a solution or part of the problem?
- Are we in any way devaluing reproductive work?

The participants agreed that these discussions needed to continue and a network on NTLs for women would serve as a pressure group to negotiate on this issue with the state, donors, market and within civil society, as also undertake policy advocacy for investments on women and livelihood areas, research and ground level actions to promote women's entry into non-traditional livelihood spaces.

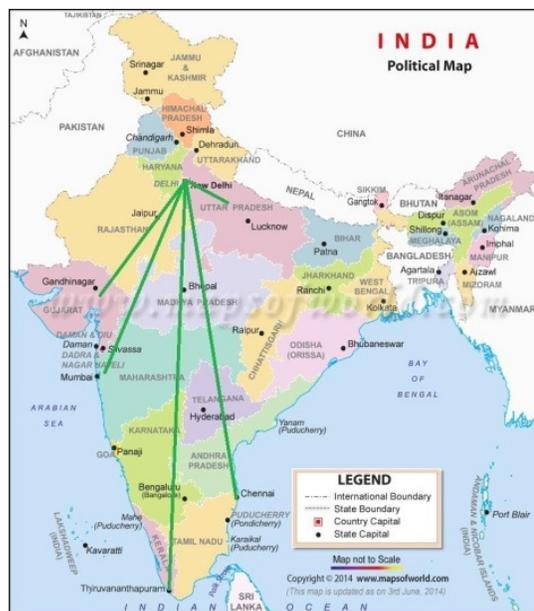
### Learning Journey's: Understanding and Networking with selected NTL initiatives/ organisations



As a follow-up to the work on the NTL Directory, in early 2015, Azad Foundation decided to organise learning journeys for their trainees, drivers and staff to selected 'non-traditional livelihood' based organisations, across five Indian states.

Having worked almost as a pioneer and building a practice on the ground in the domain of non traditional livelihoods for women, this journey was conceptualised to create a collective space with others who may have traversed this journey. Azad Foundation was aware that there may not be too many organisations working in this space. Thus, while the NTL directory was the first step to identify such organisations, the learning journeys were seen as the second step towards initiating conversations with some of them.

A team of 10-15 participants including trainees and drivers across different centres of



**Tracking the NTL learning**

Azad Foundation (i.e. South Delhi, North Delhi, Gurugram and Jaipur), and staff was constituted for each state level learning journey—totalling 61 participants<sup>8</sup>. Starting on 26<sup>th</sup> January to 13<sup>th</sup> February 2015, they visited 18 non-government, government and private organisations (considered important models and relatable to Azad’s work), at the following locations: Chitrakoot (Uttar Pradesh), Ahmedabad (Gujarat), Nasik-Mumbai (Maharashtra), Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala) and Chennai (Tamil Nadu).

<b>TYPE OF ORGANISATION</b>	<b>ORGANISATIONS VISITED/ LOCATION</b>
GOVERNMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KUDUMBASHREE, Kerala</li> <li>• Vidyut Sahayak, Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company Limited (MSEDCL)</li> </ul>
NON-GOVERNMENTAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vanangana, Chitrakoot, Uttar Pradesh</li> <li>• Khabar Lahariya, Chitrakoot, Uttar Pradesh</li> <li>• Hand Pump Mechanic, Chitrakoot, Uttar Pradesh</li> <li>• Apni Rasoi, Chitrakoot, Uttar Pradesh</li> <li>• Janvikas, Ahmedabad</li> <li>• Dalit Shakti Kendra, Ahmedabad</li> <li>• SAATH, Ahmedabad</li> <li>• Abhivyakti, Nasik</li> <li>• Association for Non-traditional Employment for Women (ANEW), Chennai, Tamil Nadu</li> <li>• Slum People Education and Economic Development (SPEED), Chennai, Tamil Nadu</li> <li>• Tamil Nadu Women’s collective (TNWC)</li> <li>• Archana Women's Centre, Kerala</li> </ul>
BUSINESS/ CORPORATE MODEL	PRIYADARSHINI TAXI, Mumbai, Maharashtra
PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP	SHE TAXI, GENDER PARK, Kerala
RESOURCE CENTRE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SAKHI, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala</li> <li>• Centre for Women’s Development and Research (CWDR), Chennai, Tamil Nadu</li> </ul>

The important question to understand during this learning journey was “what is non-traditional?” For example, some initiatives are non-traditional because they deal with issues and arenas that have not been open to women until now or are considered only as being a man’s domain. A more critical question was to understand the idea of dignity and empowerment in the light of these initiatives. “If we think of something as empowering, providing dignity, the idea of the woman’s agency comes in. There are some initiatives that enable women to have their own agency, to control their work and wealth, and make crucial decisions related to their lives. Such initiatives may not typically be engaged in non-traditional livelihoods, but may have women engaged in tailoring, cooking and such occupations. However, the very fact that they enhance women’s agency may lead to their inclusion in the ‘non-traditional’ category. What we can see then is that engaging in male dominated livelihood areas is not the only

<sup>8</sup>These details are available in the 2015 learning journey’s report with Azad Foundation

criteria for being non-traditional”<sup>9</sup>.

Seeing women and men engaged in different kinds of professions - be it traditional or non-traditional, the participants felt that, given the opportunity, a person can do anything.



Participants were inspired by the new training methodologies (like videography) in the work of Dalit Shakti Kendra; the “saheli system” of Priyadarshini as a good way of initiation into the profession, while also learning through experience. During the SHE taxi visit, some participants were excited by the ‘emergency buttons’, others felt that they had crossed some of the initial problems and face newer challenges now. Across all groups, the participants were happy to see the way women work together in collectives, “it is the women themselves who are taking the other women forward”. In the case of Archana Women’s Centre, the team spirit was amazing, with no visible boundaries between the status of community women and the head of the organisation.

Most of the organisations visited during the learning journeys focus on grassroots work that involves bringing women into the workforce. It was noticed, especially in Chennai and Trivandrum, that though it is initially difficult to get women into non-traditional professions, once they are in it, it becomes easier. The participants felt that, for cities like Delhi and NCR where they work, it would be a good idea to set up of a local centre which could help in getting women into non-traditional occupations and provide them with regular information and support.

This learning journey was a good opportunity to expose participants from Azad, to other women engaged in similar work and social circumstances they could relate to. This was not only encouraging but also helped them understand how, even in different cultures, women face similar conditions and oppression—and the fact that they are fighting these barriers becomes an added motivation. It was also an opportunity to create networks with other women, who could serve as support structures in the future. The exposure and interactions with diverse women (mechanics, masons, drivers etc.) from similar resource poor backgrounds as the participants (i.e. the Azad trainees and drivers) helped strengthen the participants’ resolve to continue doing something new and different in their work and personal lives—challenging themselves and their social environment.

Above all, the learning journeys were helpful for Azad to network with organisations that had a similar approach and offered diverse livelihood options and strategies. In fact, the learning journeys were as useful for the host organisations as for the participants from Azad and they too expressed interest in joining hands around non-traditional livelihoods for women. Organisations like SAATH and Janvikas expressed the desire to send women for training at Azad and to help them get jobs thereafter. Khabar Lahariya, which is a women’s run newspaper did a feature on Azad and its women on Women’s Day to celebrate the association and spread the idea of NTL. Archana Women’s Centre expressed interest in collaborating for training of women drivers in Kerala. Organisations

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<sup>9</sup>Learning Journey’s report, Azad Foundation, 2015

like Gender Park showed interest in extending support, developing linkages and a long-term association. The learning journeys also played a significant role in disseminating the idea of women as drivers and that, women can be trained in this field and earn dignified livelihoods.

In all, these learning journeys became the next building block to consider forming a national level collective or network that could be used for advocacy of women workers rights in the future.



## **Expanding Conversations and Network Initiation**

A three-day working group (that later took formal shape as the steering group) meeting was organised at Vishwa Yuvak Kendra between 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> April 2016 in New Delhi, to go deeper into the concept of non-traditional livelihoods for women. The meeting was attended by 13 organisations and some consultants who were interested in going deeper into the concept of non-traditional livelihoods for women, through shared knowledge and experiences.

The **objectives** of this meeting were as follows:

- To share experiences, challenges and needs of organisations in NTL
- To identify areas of collaboration, 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 development and policy discourse.
- Create a road map for continuous engagement of this forum

The discussions held during this workshop were important in opening up the discourse on non-traditional livelihoods for women, and setting into motion a process that subsequently led to the formation of the Non-Traditional Livelihoods Network a year later.

It is common knowledge that women's roles are predominantly defined by patriarchal norms, and often, do not allow them to exercise their 'agency'. Efforts at organising women are attempts at enabling women's empowerment in ways that they can challenge the very social norms that bind them, within and outside the home.

Participants agreed that there is a lot of work being done by various organisations—government, civil society and corporate—to address the issues of

livelihood, violence, sexuality etc for women. However, only some of these agencies challenge traditional frameworks by creating new roles or spaces for women, teaching them new skills, which may not necessarily be 'feminine' or gender stereotypical. Examples of such skills include masonry, carpentry, commercial driving, etc. Such efforts open up new sectors for women and provide new ways of income which may be much more remunerative than existing ones. Infact, they not only enhance the skills and incomes of working women but also question patriarchal norms.

Participants discussed that, if women acquire skills, which are technically and socially valued, and that becomes a source of their 'real' income—it is one way of empowerment. It is all the more important when rights and gender-based inequality are discussed—for example, women's control over income and choice, and negotiating their position in the job market. They argued that, seeing that these are the ways in which empowerment and social change can come about, it is thus important for us to categorise 'non-traditional' in these terms. They also felt that it is important to recognise that many women may have jobs both, in male-dominated sectors and non-traditional occupations, but do not have 'choice', 'control over income' and may be exploited and discriminated against. On the other hand, there are some occupations which are associated with the 'traditional' roles of women, but they provide women with good income and respect in society. So a balance needs to be kept between traditional and non-traditional occupations, so that women's roles are neither de-valued nor abdicated.

The participants shared that women have been systematically excluded from higher education, vocational trainings and as a result, remunerative work and employment. Families and households give greater priority to the education and training of boys and men, creating a vicious cycle whereby girls and women are consistently denied bettering of their work and employment prospects, their access and capacity for decision-making and the possibility of determining the course of their own lives. The last decade has seen a percentage increase of women in higher education, but a steep decline in the workforce participation rates of women.

They discussed that, gender division of labour, gender pay gap and gender discrimination across all areas of life is steeped in 'tradition', taken advantage of, by the economy and society at the expense of women. Government bodies and other organisations may have schemes and policies that are gender sensitive, but these have not been translated effectively. At the level of the family, the community, socially, politically and in the economy, this discrimination is taking on newer forms and needs to be challenged and broken.

One of the ways to break this vicious cycle of denying women their rights is creating training and development opportunities for resource poor women in non-traditional skills and increasing their access to them. Even within the growing agenda of skilling in India, non-traditional occupations for women have not been prioritised as viable livelihood options.

The two days were spent in developing a collective understanding of the NTL sector through experience sharing, outlining some basic principles and concrete plans vis-a-vis the NTL network formation. The discussions brought out some of the challenges faced by individual organisations in terms of mobilisation (supply), market (demand) and the complex processes of women's

empowerment that are integral to the training and livelihood practices for the resource poor<sup>10</sup>.

### **Defining NTL for women**

The participants agreed upon a definition of non-traditional livelihoods for women, which foregrounds an intersectionalities perspective and is inclusive in nature:

*“Non Traditional Livelihood refers to livelihood practices that help women break stereotypes emerging from the intersections of gender, caste, class, religion, sexual orientation, disabilities and other marginalities and oppressive structures, within a dynamic context of space and time. NTL increases the set of viable livelihood choices available to women and give them access and control over skills, technology, market, mobility and resources. It creates economic stability along with psychological, social and political empowerment.”*

### **Suggested Principles for the Network**

The participants had an open discussion on some basic principles that should govern the set up and functioning of a network, with each sharing their different inputs from personal and organisational experiences.

- From the NTL perspective and in the context of women workers, motivation to speak, social support and mutual learning as important as market incentives.
- Commitment to social-political change more important than livelihood or economic interests to keep the youth focused and bonded to the organisational space and values.
- An important part of keeping a network alive is to find relevance in the ever changing socio-political scenario.
- A common understanding, approach, passion or dream fundamental to come together as a network.
- Essential objective of a network is to give visibility to a common issue, not any one organisation or individual.
- To sustain a group, continuously reinvent, be creative and find ways to sustain financially.
- Building a network takes a lot of time and energy but that should not lead to a loss in variety and new ideas. This variety needs to be maintained even while the model is being created and intensified.
- To have a dynamic network which also holds people together, members have to be open to dissent and understand the value of protest. This is one of the core values which the group needs- the capacity and inclination to protest.
- A network offers value and power in coming together to fight for a common goal and the ability to protest against unjust policies.
- A network enables the exchange of knowledge and resources and helps enhance one’s own skills and resources on the commonly shared issue of interest.

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<sup>10</sup> A detailed report of this meeting is available for access to network members.

- Networks should be driven by some basic minimum values, including, mutual respect, equal labor, and inclusiveness. Networks should not be top-down.
- Funding is important to sustain the collective spirit and functionality of a network. Monetary contributions should not determine the importance of an organisation in the network. In this context, it is better if a network refrains from being donor driven.

Floor discussions clarified that the purpose of the network should be made amply clear and the culture of democracy and mutual accountability should be developed at the initial level of network formation. It was shared that, if all the members are working towards the same goals and know what they want from the network, there is enough experience and power even in a small group to advocate NTL issues at the policy level.

### **Suggested Goals for the Network**

The participants identified some mutually shared goals, including both, expectations and contributions of members to enable the network to promote NTL for women.

- Sharing of Information and Knowledge on the issue, opportunities and policies
- Sharing of Best practices and Failures (in terms of strategies)
- Capacity Building (through exchange visits and trainings)
- Support, guidance and Learning
- Promoting NTL for reducing Gender gap (ensuring presence of women in different livelihood sectors, formal and informal)
- Advocating Policy Changes (through engagement with Parliamentarians, government institutions and media from local to national and vice-versa)
- Developing Accreditation Standards

The participants spoke about how the network could achieve its goals, and made suggestions on the use of e-platforms, joint research and co-creation of knowledge on the issue (through various evidence generation modes), inter-organisational sharing based on themes and geographies, etc. They also discussed the significance of contributing existing training modules and curriculum through a well-designed platform of sharing (both physical and virtual). The participants shared that the NTL network would be a valuable forum to create a broader perspective/ suitable environment for non-traditional livelihoods, be a strong platform for sharing successes and challenges on NTL.

### **Building a better Ecosystem through the Network**

Along with the focus, principles and strategies of network functioning, the participants agreed that a broad-based but relevant membership structure and collaborations would enable the network to create a valuable ecosystem on non-traditional livelihoods for women in India. There could be multiple levels in the network: organisations, trainers, practitioners, with a membership fee based structure across different categories.

The following was suggested as a framework for this process:

<b>Members</b>	<b>Collaborations</b>
NTL Focused	Interested Parties
Knowledge Generators	Academics
Schools	Corporate*
Lawyers	Media
Clients	Trade Unions
Practitioners	

The three key words central to the NTL Network that the participants agreed upon at this meeting were: **ADVOCACY, SHARING, CAPACITY BUILDING**. They further identified focus areas on two of these strategies as below:

<b>Areas of Capacity Building</b>	<b>Advocacy Issues</b>
New NTL related Expertise	Stock taking of NTL and how it has impacted women on state, national, international level
Understanding broader socio-political issues contributing to NTL	NTL based training in ITIs for women and men
Understanding policies impacting NTL	Opening up jobs: government, corporate (quota/ incentives)
Training Methodology	Safe and hygienic public utilities
Existing NTL/ Financing Options/ Gaps	Investing adequately in women's training
Understanding on how women learn	Social empowerment in government supported skill training
Counselling	Documents and Citizenship issues for resource poor women
Mobilising	
How to do advocacy	

The meeting concluded with an affirmation by almost all participants to join the NTL network. Some of them reserved their confirmation pending discussion with their organisational members.

<b>Organisations that agreed to be part of the Network:</b>	<b>Pending</b>
ARCHANA WOMEN'S CENTRE	ASPBAE
AZAD FOUNDATION	HUMSAFAR
JABALA ACTION RESEARCH CENTRE	DSK
JANVIKAS	
RASTA	
SAATH	
SAMAAN	

The group decided to consider the possibility of establishing a Secretariat for the network and develop a plan for the next six months along with commitments both, in terms of human resources and funds. In the interim, a Working Group of selected members was to formulate a NTLN charter and membership

framework—Baitali Ganguly, Sujata Gothoskar, Nilanjana Sengupta, Nisha Dhawan, with support from Sumedha Sharma.

Upon finalisation of the charter and membership criteria in consultation with the network members, a formal letter of membership was to be circulated. The Network members agreed that they would also reach out to other organisations/ individuals working on NTLs with women to join the network.

This meeting concluded with a listing of tasks and responsibilities to take the network formation further:

<b>Task</b>	<b>Responsibility with</b>	<b>Dateline</b>
Report of the Workshop	Azad Foundation	mid-May 2016
Charter and Membership Criteria	NTL Working Group	mid-August 2016
Google Group	Padmakshi Badoni	April 2016
NTL Directory	Azad Foundation	
Enlisting new members	All organisations	September 2016 onwards
Next Meeting		November 2016 (pending availability of all)



### ***Formalising the Network Structure and Focus***

Despite the decisions taken during the April 2016 meeting, the lack of sufficient funds made it challenging to undertake activities for taking the NTL network plans forward. In early 2017, Azad Foundation heard about Ford Foundation’s portfolio of funding on Non-Traditional livelihoods—through which it had supported a few partners for enhancing NTL practice on the ground, develop deeper understanding through research and so on. This marked the beginning of donor support to further the NTL network on the one hand and also brought in the synergy of partnerships with other Ford Foundation project holders such as Akshara, ICRW, Nirantar and TISS.

Representatives of 16 organisations came together for a meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> September 2017, which led to the formalisation of the NTL network and can be termed as the network establishment meeting. It was attended by 16 organisations and some individual consultants who had been part of the collective conversations on setting up a NTL network, partners of the Azad ‘Women on Wheels’ programme, and organisations who were supported by Ford Foundation under its NTL portfolio. This was a large and diverse group coming together into this space for the first time and included organisations working in the area of non-traditional livelihoods for women, on women’s empowerment and adult education programmes for generating women’s livelihoods in general, capacity building, funding and research organisations, and individual consultants.

The common thread binding the participants was the recognition of the need to form a collective in the non-traditional livelihood sector for socially and economically marginalised women in urban and rural India. It was agreed that such a collective process would be aimed at visibilising and mainstreaming non-

traditional livelihoods for women in the development discourse and advocate for gender equality. Seen in the larger context of women and work, non-traditional livelihoods help women break the dominant role stereotypes that have hitherto subjugated them. A recap of the previous discussions since 2014, brought the participants on the same page vis-a-vis the formation of the NTL network and its objectives were reaffirmed as below.

**Objectives of the Network:**

- To share experiences, challenges and needs of organisation in NTL
- To identify areas of collaboration, 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 development and policy discourse.

**Final Definition Adopted**

The definition decided upon at the April 2016 was accepted as final, by the NTLN.

*Non-traditional Livelihood refers to livelihood practices<sup>11</sup> that help women break stereotypes emerging from the intersections of gender, caste, class, religion, sexual orientation, disabilities and other marginalities and oppressive structures, within a dynamic context of space and time. NTL increases the set of viable livelihood choices available to women and give them access and control over skills, technology, market, mobility and resources. It creates economic stability along with psychological, social and political empowerment.*

The members brainstormed on the concept of non-traditional livelihoods and what the network would stand for, in an attempt to gain clarity and come to a shared understanding as a group. The points of discussion are highlighted below:

- Critiquing the definition of 'skill', members argued that, skill often has an economic value associated with it and since women (more often than not) don't do paid jobs, women's work is mostly looked at as 'unskilled' work. The 'value' of a skill is also determined by the gender which engages in it; hence it is also not a gender-neutral term. In the NTL context, it was suggested that the cognitive aspect of skilling should also be highlighted.
- Skilling of women by itself is a change in the right direction but values of the network should reflect women's empowerment both, in the personal and professional sphere.
- One of the key components of looking at non-traditional sector for women is breaking stereotypes emerging out of the intersectionality of identities such as gender, caste, class, amongst others. Women are entering and altering the masculine way of functioning when they enter the NTL sector. There is thus a need to take into account two key frameworks while looking at NTL, firstly breaking gender norms and secondly, ensuring social justice.
- It is crucial to understand the shift from traditional to non-traditional sector for women. Is it reflecting the deteriorating position of women due

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<sup>11</sup>Livelihood practices include the dimensions of production of goods and services as well as marketing.

to which now they are forced to enter into a hitherto closed space? Does it mean that they have become more empowered to challenge social norms? Have women been able to alter the work environment to their advantage? Is it a need for society?

- By promoting NTL, the network is not undermining skills in the traditional sector—it is not making any value judgment. It is a political position that the network has taken which is contextualised in a particular time and space. The definition of NTL made by the network is therefore dynamic, could vary across time and will depend on the particular cultural, social and economic context. That is why no categorisation of jobs into water tight compartments as traditional sector and non-traditional sector was attempted.

It was suggested that a preamble be made of the NTL definition, as each word can be a guiding principle in itself; it will be better to explain it more broadly. A point of caution was raised with respect to what all the network would take into its ambit. The scope of work of the NTL network should be in line with its stated objectives. The need to look at global economic and market trends to understand demand and re-assess the extent and type of skill training accordingly was also discussed.



### **Building the NTL Network –Governance, Values and Membership**

Taking forward the discussion on the process initiated at the April 2016, members worked in small groups to take the following decisions related to the governance of the NTL network.

#### **Governance**

- **Purpose of network:** A two-fold purpose was envisaged for the network:
  - a) Advocacy campaigns on NTL
  - b) Knowledge building – collective sharing of learning's on NTL
- **Role of members:** The major role envisaged for members was knowledge sharing amongst each other, learning from best practices, challenges and ways to overcome them. One of the suggestions was that the knowledge sharing could be done on the basis of specific NTL trades also, such as organisations working on NTLs of women such as driving, masonry, etc.
- **Frequency of network meetings:** It was decided that the network would meet once annually. The theme of the meeting would be decided as per the need/s of that time.
- **Structure:** The network would be coordinated by a *Secretariat*, hosted by one of the network organisations. The network would have a core group that would strategise the network activities in consultation with all the network members (who form the general body).

The secretariat would be responsible for logistics and administration, while the latter would work as a think-tank for the network. The secretariat

would be accountable to the core group and core group to the network as a whole. The core group would effectively provide leadership to the secretariat.

➤ **Secretariat:** It was proposed that the secretariat would be housed within one network organisation for atleast three years. At the end of the second year, a transition to another organisation may begin. To start with, Azad Foundation would host the network secretariat. The proposed role of the secretariat would be as follows:

- ✓ Advocacy efforts for the network
- ✓ Knowledge collation and sharing
- ✓ Membership Expansion
- ✓ Facilitating cross-learning
- ✓ Amplifying the work of the network members
- ✓ Fundraising- to sustain the secretariat and some network activities

➤ **Core Group:** The following decisions were taken with respect to constituting the NTLN Core Group.

- ✓ To include 5-9 members (minimum 5, extendable upto nine members, based on the needs of the network).
- ✓ Minimum tenure of two years and maximum tenure of four years.
- ✓ 50% of the members to retire every 2<sup>nd</sup> year.
- ✓ Three meetings of core group to be organised each year.



The core group formation was done at this September 2017 meeting. Keeping in mind the geographical spread across the country, various organisations were nominated and some volunteered to be core group members. The nominated organisations were given a choice to join the core group or withdraw their nomination. It was decided that one person from the secretariat would be a de-facto member of the core group. The final constitution of the core group included the following member organisations:

1. Azad Foundation- Delhi
2. Akshara - Mumbai
3. Jabala - West Bengal
4. Samman - Indore
5. Archana Women's Center- Kerala
6. Nirantar - Delhi

The role of the core group was determined as follows:

- ✓ Finalising the name of the Network and logo
- ✓ Preparing the NTL Network charter
- ✓ Developing expansion and mobilisation plan - to expand network membership
- ✓ Identifying thematic areas for the network to engage in
- ✓ Planning the next annual network meeting- Agenda/Theme

It was discussed that conflict of interest between the network and the individual institution should be avoided specially in the case of funding, when raising funds for the network it should be done in consultation with the network members.

### Values

Member organisations adhere to separate institutional values and separate values as a network. However, in line with the network’s purpose and objectives, it is important to have a lowest common denominator with a list of certain non-negotiable values.

- Dignity - Personal, Social and Professional
- Social justice & Inclusion – Empowerment focused, Non- Binary
- Authenticity - Collaborative space to reflect on failures as well
- Transparency

### Membership

The proposed membership format was as below, with two types of membership:

<b>Individual</b>	<b>Institutions</b>
Full Member: Organisations or individuals who are NTL practitioners or are helping in creating an enabling environment for the furthering of NTL for women	Affiliate Member: Those who have an interest in pursuing NTL for women or furthering the idea of NTL. Other Affiliate members can be Government Organisations, Corporates, Funding Organisations, Media Organisations
<b>Eligibility</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Believe in core values of the network</li> <li>2. Experience/Interest in NTL or may strengthen the work on NTL</li> <li>3. Age - There were discussions on whether network members should be above 18 years, though this should not be a limiting factor for groups such like youth clubs. No decision was taken on these criteria.</li> <li>4. Reference- Should be endorsed by three members</li> <li>5. Fees- Should pay the membership fee</li> </ol>	
<b>Fees</b> (to be revised every 3 years)	
Rs. 500 per year	Rs. 5000 per year
<b>Rights</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Right to Participate in the Network</li> <li>▪ Right to information on Network functions &amp; finance</li> <li>▪ In the future, right to vote will be given only to full members</li> </ul>	
<b>Role</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Members should participate in minimum 1 Network activity per year</li> <li>▪ Members should submit required documents to the secretariat</li> <li>▪ Information Sharing with the Network</li> </ul>	
<b>Exit</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Non-fulfillment of fees and other minimum criteria</li> <li>▪ Non-Attendance in meetings</li> <li>▪ Voluntary exit by the member</li> </ul>	

On the issue of membership of organisations with expertise in training, gender, literacy, documentation, etc. as network members or external experts, a word of caution was raised that even though it is useful to have a cross-fertilisation of expertise across domains; in this case, it was important that the centrality of

non-traditional livelihoods in the network is not diluted. Similarly, in order to ensure that differing ideologies did not dilute, control or take over the network and it is broad-based and inclusive, every new member needed to commit to some basic non-negotiables, as below:

- Network members to be active gatekeepers and any new member to be endorsed by three organisational/ individual members – criteria of endorsement to be defined and formulated in the network charter.
- All network members need to sign the charter
- Purely financial donors to be affiliate members and donors who implement projects in India to fulfill the above two criteria - on a case to case basis and as per discretion of the network, can be inducted as full-time members.

### **Role of the Network**

The members decided that in its first year, the NTL network would focus on the collation and facilitation of knowledge sharing, build evidence for NTL and visibilising the network. From the subsequent year, it was expected that the network would have enough evidence to advocate on NTL with external stakeholders. Taking these decisions forward, the following **activities** were envisaged for the first year:

1. Develop Advocacy paper on status of NTL in India (could be based on the 2015 learning journey and secondary literature)
2. Document the NTL work of member organisations
3. Update NTL directory- NGOs, Government organisations, Corporates
4. Build virtual space for the network
5. Capacity building of member organisations on NTL

Some discussion was held on identifying the thematic areas of learning about non-traditional livelihoods for women among network members—rural and urban based NTL and skill based NTL (e.g. construction/driving etc.). However, the members felt that this needed more discussion as also the network's strategies and the communication model to be adopted.

In order to cater to the immediate needs of the network and ensure ownership by every member, three working groups were formed with specific tasks. It was decided that each working group would develop a two-page ideation report and share the same with the core group. The responsibility of finalising the focus and implementation of network activities would subsequently be decided by the core group.



<b>Working Group on Needs Assessment for Capacity building of each organisation</b>	<b>Working Group on Updating Directory- NTL</b>	<b>Working Group on Paper on current status of NTL</b>
<b>Objectives</b>		
<i>To suggest a basic format for conducting a needs assessment of the network</i>	<i>To update the existing NTL Directory created by Azad Foundation in 2014-15. To review the definition of NTL prepared by the Network and suggest a preamble for the definition</i>	<i>To review the current status of NTL for women in the context of practitioners as well as policy</i>
<b>Members</b>		
Kruti (Saath) - <b>Convenor</b>	Poulomi (Magic Bus) - <b>Convenor</b>	Sumedha Sharma (iPartner) - <b>Convenor</b>
Nasreen Rustomfram-TISS-CLL	Kulsum - iPartner	Vandana - Srijan
Padmakshi Badoni - Azad Foundation	Mamta - Humsafar Trust	Sujatha Gothoskar, Independent Consultant
Gurjeet - Janvikas	Nandita Shah - Akshara	Poulomi- Magic Bus
Nitin Pranjape - Abhivyakti	Padmakshi Badoni - Azad Foundation	Archana Dwivedi - Nirantar
Josefina Oraa, Independent Consultant		Adil Ali, Independent Consultant
Rukmini - CARMDAKSH		Meenu Vadera - Azad Foundation

### **Research Study: Financing options for Skills for Work of Marginalised Women**

As part of context building on non-traditional livelihoods for women, Azad Foundation and ASPBAE had initiated a research study titled, 'Financing Options for skills for work of Marginalised women', to be completed by December 2017. The objectives, methodology and progress of this study were shared with the network members at this meeting<sup>12</sup>. Participants shared their reflections and feedback on the proposed research focus, as also the participants and partnerships for completing the research:

“What are the policy, governance and financing options required to include/ provide skills development and adult education for decent work and economic and social wellbeing to marginalised women in the Asia Pacific region – given the perspectives of ‘no one left behind’ and social justice.”

The study included a secondary literature review of international and national policies, frameworks, conventions as well as relevant national data. Key informant interviews (KIIs) and Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) with government and CSOs working in the field of skilling; and women who were currently part of a skill development programme were important components of

<sup>12</sup> More details on the discussions held are available in the September 2017 meeting report.

this research. This included 16 FGDs with women workers associated with various members of the NTL network and KIIs with eight network partners. The study is now available at [http://www.aspbae.org/userfiles/july19/Financing\\_options\\_for\\_skills\\_for\\_women\\_and\\_work\\_India\\_Aspbae\\_June2019.pdf](http://www.aspbae.org/userfiles/july19/Financing_options_for_skills_for_women_and_work_India_Aspbae_June2019.pdf)

### **Next steps**

At the end of this meeting, the following timelines were determined for the NTL network:

- Core Group Meetings:
  - ✓ end-November/ early-December 2017 (Virtual)
  - ✓ April 2018
  - ✓ August 2018
- Annual Network Meeting: August 2018
- Working Group Timelines: Submission by end February 2018



## ***Setting Network Agenda's and Activities***

### **First Steering Group (SG) Meeting (April 2018)**

With the networks' background and planning phase reaching fruition, the steering group (earlier called the core group) met in April 2018 in New Delhi to take stock of the preparatory work and plan the network agenda for the future.

This meeting was attended by representatives of the six member organisations—Archana Women's Centre (AWC), Jabala, Samaan, Akshara, Nirantar and Azad Foundation.

### **Agenda**

- Be updated about the activities undertaken by the network secretariat from September 2017 to April 2018.
- Review the outcomes of the working groups (needs assessment, study on the status of NTL for women in India and updating the NTL directory) and take decisions on next steps.
- Finalise the network charter, name and logo.
- Plan activities for the year ahead and discuss how the network should progress
- Be updated about the upcoming International conference on NTL and the networks' partnership in the same.
- Finalise the dates for the next general body and SG meeting of the network.
- Discuss any other concerns or suggestions raised by the Steering Group.

### **Updates on Network Activities**

1. Nine member organisations collaborated with the consultants for the ASPBAE-AZAD led study on 'Financing options on Skills for work by Marginalised Women'—reaching out to different kinds of marginalised women in their contexts. The consultants visited one of the organisations for directly conducting the FGDs and KIIs. The rest of the FGDs were conducted by the member organisations with their target group of women, with guidance from the consultants. The

second draft of the study was ready as of this meeting and the final version would be shared with the network upon completion. Members discussed how the outcomes of the study should be disseminated and used for advocacy.

2. A proposal for the NTL website had been drafted along with its content plan.
3. The NTL network was invited and represented by the secretariat at various forums, including the launch of the Global Health 50/50 report in 2018.
4. Exploratory visits for potential members for the Network based on other members' suggestions were conducted. Report of the same was circulated to the Steering Group. Among the organisations which hosted the visits were Akshara (Mumbai); Quest Alliance (Delhi); Etasha (Delhi); Bright Future India (Maharashtra); Yuva Parivartan (Maharashtra); ICRW (New Delhi).
5. Collation and sharing of the work being done on non-traditional livelihoods across the globe is being done by the Secretariat through regular e-mailers.

#### *Additional agenda items*

- Nisha Dhawan from Empower and Nasreen Rustomfram from Centre for Lifelong Learning (CLL), TISS were noted as individual members of the network.
- The steering group pointed at the need for all network members to make an effort in collating and circulating knowledge and news on NTL along with the network secretariat—this would make it more participative.
- New members to be taken into the network only after the current members have signed the Charter and made their membership official.
- Set up criteria to include new members to the network, to keep focus.

#### **Outcomes of the Three Working Groups**

Since the working groups set up at the September 2017 meeting had not been able to take their agenda forward, it was decided to do so without any further delay:

- *to conduct a needs assessment of the network*
- *to develop a directory on NTL organisations in India*
- *to undertake a study on the status of NTL for women in India*

#### **Network Charter, Name and Logo**

It was decided that the Network would be called "The Non-Traditional Livelihoods Network". Members suggested that the logo could be simply designed with the acronym of the networks' name. It was also decided that the core group would be renamed the Steering Group.

It was decided that the secretariat would undertake the following tasks to speed up the network activities:

- develop a draft of the network's charter
- create options of the network logo for member acceptance
- ideate on building a virtual space (website, etc.) for the network
- Identify various capacity building options.

### **Planning the year ahead**

The members discussed the possibility of organising peer to peer visits, hiring of a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) consultant, setting up the network website and how the network should progress in its agenda on promoting non-traditional livelihoods for women.

### **International Conference on NTL and Women – Ideas for Partnership and Collaboration**

Azad Foundation put forth its rationale and plan to organise an international conference for NTL for women and invited the network members to consider partnering with it. Focusing on Sustainable Development Goals 4 and 8, the international conference would aim to advocate for women working in the non-traditional livelihoods space, visibility for the NTL movement and practitioners in India. The tentative dates proposed for this conference were 20-22 December, 2018. An Advisory group constituted of Suneeta Dhar, Nisha Dhawan and Ravi Verma had been formed to help plan the conference.

The participation of atleast 100 people (including representation of CSOs and government, academicians, practitioners) from across the globe was expected at this conference.

*The SG members made the following decisions vis-a-vis the conference:*

- The Network would be a partner in the International Conference. The nature of this partnership would be either in the form of logistical support, inviting participants, holding panels and anything else that the group together thought to be useful and appropriate.
- The NTL Network name and logo will be used in all conference branding.
- Archana Women's Centre offered to help contact women construction workers in the USA and explore a possibility of a panel with them.
- India Habitat Centre was seen as the most appropriate venue and the first choice.
- Additional financial resources would be needed to be accessed for the conference. Some available funds from the Royal Netherlands Embassy would be used by Azad Foundation for the conference and other funders would be approached to support the costs of some participants.
- Empower and ASPBAE have also been approached for potential partnership.
- Partners could be approached to play different roles, for example, funding partners, learning partners, co-hosting partners and media partners.

*Organisations/ Individuals to be considered as potential conference participants:*

- |                                |                                 |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| • CEDAW                        | • University of Western Ontario |
| • Shashi Panja (West Bengal)   | • NRLM & NULM                   |
| • ILO                          | • Sapient                       |
| • Geraldine Forbe              | • Rajiv Gandhi Institute        |
| • UN Women                     | • Mahindra                      |
| • SEWA                         | • Dalit National Network        |
| • Ford Foundation              | • Yunus Social fund             |
| • Jan Sahas                    | • Access Development Services   |
| • Ambassador of Netherlands    | • Shiv Shankar Nair (Kerala)    |
| • Vedica scholars              | • Niti Aayog                    |
| • National Commission of Women | • Plan International            |

*Suggestions on conference design and sessions:*

- Discuss the (positive) impact of non-traditional livelihoods on women
- Emphasise intersectionality and inclusivity as topics of discussion.
- Practitioner led panels to be encouraged along with learning visits
- Translators to be available for the conference sessions given local to international participation
- Policy makers and other important stakeholders to be strategically invited for different sessions.
- Organise a panel on corporate social responsibility (CSR) and on working with men.

**Planning for the next GBM and SG meeting**

It was discussed that both, the General Body and the Steering Group meetings would be organised at a mutually acceptable location for all network members - preferably in central India. Potential locations for these meetings could be Bhopal and Mumbai (due to presence of host member organisations in these cities). The dates proposed for the GBM were 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> August, 2018. It was suggested that a one-day steering group meeting could be held either on 16<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> August 2018.

**First Annual General Body Meeting (August 2018)**

The second Annual General Body meeting (AGBM) of the NTL Network was held in Bhopal, on the 17th-18th of August, 2018. It was attended by 25 existing members and three new organisational members<sup>13</sup>.

Along with a content focused presentation on women's workforce participation by Namita Bhandare, this meeting identified challenges faced by organisations and advocacy asks that the NTLN would focus on. Participants reiterated the need to look at Non-Traditional Livelihoods through the lens of family/ community, skill building (addressing stereotypes at this level), mainstreaming gender and life skills in education, role of the market, government and policy makers. The importance of having enabling systems and structures for bringing women into NTL and other livelihoods was discussed, as also the social, economic and infrastructural investments needed to bring women into the NTL space. The role of the NTL network in foregrounding empowerment of women and adopting a skills++ model (access to jobs, market linkages, safe working spaces, etc.) was highlighted as a potential game-change in the non-traditional livelihoods sector. The following six advocacy areas were identified as a way forward for the NTL network:

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<sup>13</sup>For details, please refer to the Report of the Bhopal AGBM, August 2018

<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Advocacy Ask</b>
1.	Government to take a proactive role in promoting NTL (creating markets through reservations/ incentives/ finance etc.)
2.	Taking the Skill++ approach in NVEQF for women at central and state levels and making NTL training available to women and other marginalised groups in ITIs and other programmes (like PMKVY etc.)
3.	Public Awareness Campaigns led by government and civil society on gender division of labour at home and the workplace
4.	A comprehensive policy on NTL, including mechanisms and resources
5.	Interventions in mainstream education, to develop perspectives on NTL
6.	Creating enabling ecosystems for women in NTL (Infrastructure, Safety, Transport, Hostels etc.)

An important component of this meeting was a session led by ASPBAE on the networks’ engagement with global advocacy platforms, such as the SDG review and the High Level Political Forum (HLPF)—with its focus on non-traditional livelihoods for women.

The International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW) shared the progress on its research on women and non-traditional livelihoods, which would benefit the network’s agenda. Azad Foundation made a presentation on the proposed International Conference titled “Making Non Traditional Livelihoods work for the Marginalised”—which would include plenary and practitioner sessions to give visibility to successful NTL initiatives that work to reduce gender and social inequalities. The decision of the network’s steering group to partner with this conference was also shared at the AGBM and members were invited to join in as speakers or participants at various sessions.

Some administrative issues vis-a-vis the network were also discussed at this meeting. This included the adoption of the 2017 AGM minutes and the NTLN Charter with some changes, including the addition to the NTLN objectives, i.e. To create a body of knowledge on new avenues of NTL of women and strategies to access them. This was a crucial meeting in the journey of the network’s formation from an idea into an entity, as members made organisational commitments to take the network forward:

- **ICRW:** With its focus on evidence based research, it would help in knowledge sharing within the Network and also involve the Network at various stages of the women and NTLs research.
- **SAATH:** Provide concrete, grassroots data for research on women in non-traditional livelihoods; undertake advocacy with the state and local government to help implement the networks’ advocacy agenda.
- **Azad Foundation:** Through the International Conference being hosted in January 2019, it will enable visibility to the collective. Azad will also share

its feasibility studies about two other NTLs which, it is currently doing, with the Network.

- **iPartner:** Will suggest partners to take on non-traditional livelihoods work and push for CSR investments to implementing organisations.
- **Jabala:** Visit government and private training centres in their area of work, document the challenges and start a dialogue with the local government.
- **Quest Alliance:** Interested in leveraging its content, methodologies and digital skills' set for the benefit of the NTL network. The organisation would like to see how more NTL trades can be incorporated in the women ITIs that it works with.
- **Sakha:** The organisation will share its data on the impact that women are making in the NTL space through its own work. It will represent the network at the upcoming CSW with collective advocacy agenda on non-traditional livelihoods for women.
- **Centre for Lifelong Learning, TISS** (represented by Nasreen Rustomfram): Introduce the Network to those who work on livelihood issues at TISS; assist in curriculum development and work towards making care-giving courses more dignified.
- **ASPBAE** (represented by Susmitha): Will share information on the regional and global advocacy initiatives with the Network.
- **Sujata Gothoskar:** Would like to participate in the research and documentation work vis-a-vis women's skills and work generally, and with NTL specifically and share the outcomes with the network. Bring in learnings from her work with trade unions and women's organisations to support the network's understanding and agenda on non-traditional livelihoods for women.
- **ETASHA:** Provide capacity building inputs to partner NGOs in offering career guidance courses to their target group.
- **Adil Ali:** Can assist partners in strategising/ designing their training curriculum on NTL for women. Contribute to the panel on 'Financing Options for skills for work of marginalised women' at the International Conference.
- **Magic Bus:** Will share the learnings and challenges of its NTL programme with the Network. The organisation would also reach out for the networks' support in specific work sectors such as plumbing, electrical work, etc.
- **Bright Future India:** Will share its data and experience of working on career development with young adults in Mumbai's resource-poor communities.
- **Akshara:** Will share its knowledge on gender and empowerment in skills training, and working with the government to demand enabling infrastructure for women.
- **CARMDAKSH:** Will share the implementation challenges it faces in their context.
- **Josefina Oraa:** Enable networking within and outside India; share funding opportunity alerts and be accessible for an exchange of ideas.

## Second Steering Group (SG) Meeting (August 2018)

The steering group of the NTL network met after the AGBM (on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2018) to discuss the action points that emerged from the meeting and plan the next steps.

The seven participants included one representative each from Jabala, Akshara, Azad Foundation, Nirantar, Samaan Society and Archana Women's Centre and the coordinator of the NTLN secretariat.

Reflecting on the AGBM, the members shared that the session by Namita Bhandare was very useful and such issue-based or relevant subject discussions should be included in every annual general body meeting of the network. It would also be useful to create spaces for sharing collaborative experiences between network members at the AGBM. With respect to the giving commitments made by the network members at the AGBM, the secretariat would collate member responses and report back to the SG every quarter.

The secretariat reported on the following agenda points decided at the April 2018 SG meeting, for review by the steering group:

- i. **Website:** Quotations from different vendors for developing the networks' website were shared with by the secretariat, some more contacts would be explored and a final decision would be taken via email consent from the SG. Members spoke about the possibility of having a networking portal on the website and a blog linked to it that could be regularly updated.
- ii. **Needs assessment:** While some members favoured investment of time and resources of the network on advocacy and capacity building, the SG decided to go ahead with the needs assessment that had been proposed previously as it had the potential of giving new directions to the network activities. The secretariat presented the SG with proposals from two consultants, but the members suggested that someone better should be identified and entrusted with the task of designing and conducting the needs assessment of the network members.
- iii. **Process documentation:** The secretariat updated the SG that the process documentation consultant had not yet been hired despite interviews with some applicants. Members made some suggestions of possible consultants for the secretariat to follow-up. The SG also suggested that the secretariat look into the possibility of having the same person for the needs assessment and process documentation.
- iv. **Peer to peer learning visits:** A collated response of members' interest in peer-to-peer learning visits, presented by the secretariat was also discussed by the SG members. Since most members had expressed interest in Delhi and Mumbai based organisations, the network could consider organising two learning visits. The secretariat was expected to identify dates and coordinate this plan with host organisations. On the issue of funding, both internal and member-based resources would be assessed to cover the costs. From a logistical perspective, a four-day visit with a maximum of two members per organisation could be planned to allow for effective learning and usability back in the field.
- v. **Advocacy issues:** Based on the advocacy asks identified at the AGBM, the secretariat would compile relevant studies that provide a perspective/ evidence on these issues and NTL (for example, the ASPBAE-AZAD study on Financing Options for Skills for work of marginalised women; the regional scoping paper by Sujata Gothoskar; a World Bank paper and Akshara's note on development plan infrastructure, etc.). Network members would be asked to volunteer to work on one of the six advocacy asks and each group would identify a person to lead the process of developing a two-page note detailing the following:
  - ✓ Why this issue?

- ✓ What is the objective?
- ✓ What will be our strategy?
- ✓ What are our demands?
- ✓ Who are the stakeholders?
- ✓ What is the evidence we already have?

It was suggested that, similar advocacy efforts could be taken up by the network members working in different states and at the international level (especially around SDGs and NTL for women).

- vi. **Governance and decision-making:** With a view to enhance efficiency in the functioning of the network's secretariat, the SG decided that some protocols would be followed especially with respect to decision-making in given timelines.
- vii. **Minutes and next meeting:** The SG passed the minutes of the April 2018 meeting and decided that the next meeting would take place post the January 2019 International conference (since the SG members would be available there).

The August 2018 AGBM and SG meeting marked a critical juncture in the genesis of the NTL network, as it grew both in content and numbers, member motivation and agenda setting to take the collective efforts on promoting non-traditional livelihoods for women ahead.



### **NTL Network at the International Conference on 'Making Non-Traditional Livelihoods Work for the Marginalised'**

As a result of rising inequality, existing structural barriers, gender disparities in education and gendered labor markets worldwide, women's participation in the workforce is limited to a very narrow set of jobs, which are often low-skilled. Being in low skilled jobs limits women's opportunities for future training or upskilling to meet the demands of digitisation and automation, putting them at a high risk of unemployment in the changing labour market conditions. Further, the stagnation of jobs, declining economic and wage growth also negatively impact women's job prospects as they lack the relevant technical skills and exposure to modern information and communication technology (ICT) to get decent employment. Women's productive potential continues to be under-utilised due to the entrenched inequality against women and the prevalence of gender-based segregations in the job market. In the event of challenges like stagnating job market and rising unemployment levels, enabling women to access non-traditional livelihoods has become important.

Recognising this context, Azad Foundation in partnership with NTL network organised the International Conference on 'Making Non-Traditional Livelihoods Work for the Marginalised' from 15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> January 2019 in New Delhi—with the aim of creating an enabling environment for NTL at the macro-level. This conference visibilised the issue of non-traditional livelihoods for women on a global platform and gave the network a headway on the issue. The conference was attended by over 200 people including members of civil society, policy makers, corporates and international organisations from 20 countries. The participation of 25 women working on non-traditional

livelihoods from five countries enriched the conference as they spoke of their journeys as professional drivers, carpenters, masons, electricians, trekkers, etc.



Several panels were led by or included panelists from the NTL Network which was one of the key partners of this conference. Four of the six plenary were moderated by NTLN members and had at least one speaker from a network member organisation; and four parallel sessions had panelists from network member organisations. This was not only meaningful as a learning opportunity for the members but also an opportunity to showcase and promote the network on this international platform.

The conference created a platform to deliberate on how to overcome existing gender disparities in learning opportunities and skills to ensure equitable technical and transferable skills (Target 4.4 of SDG 4), access to employment and decent jobs (as outlined in SDG 8). It visibilised various non-traditional livelihoods for women, through women's voices, as such occupations constitute a challenge to gendered notions of work and skilling, create remunerative incomes, enhanced mobility, and a sense of identity and dignity for women workers. The conference served as an important platform for advocacy around NTL and the need for enabling an ecosystem, through deeper engagement with international and national stakeholders.

The key themes of the conference included:

- Women and Work participation
- Why Non-traditional Livelihoods disrupt the gender norms of work
- The diversity of Non-Traditional Livelihood options
- Creating an Enabling Environment and Gender Sensitive Markets for sustaining women at the workplace (especially women from diverse and marginalised contexts)
- Engaging Men to create a gender just society
- Advocacy to "reach the last first" - Women and Work through the lens of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Interconnections between SDGs for "Decent Work" for Marginalised Women

Some of the key issues that emerged from the conference discussions relate to the access to skilling opportunities and jobs for women, providing counselling support to women to negotiate with their families for the support required to pursue livelihoods of their choice. It was also emphasised that governments need to invest substantially in contextual skills training for women and formalise skills training curriculums. An important advocacy agenda was to have learning and work environments that are free of sexual harassment, discrimination and social prejudices, and put in place social protection policies and conducive social infrastructure that ensures women workers (in the formal and informal sectors) a life of dignity.

For members of the network, the international conference became a significant learning point in their individual and organisational understanding and expansion of work on non-traditional livelihoods for women, as articulated in the needs assessment feedback<sup>14</sup>.

*"Participation in different platforms and conferences (NTL conference, Annual General Body Meeting) has provided some insights into the discourse and practice on gender-just life skills on the one hand, and on women's work and employment on the other."*– Sharmishtha and Poulomi, International Centre for Research on Women, New Delhi

*"The International workshop was a great platform for us to learn, contribute and share further on NTL."* – Sumedha Sharma, iPartner India

*"The Network provided a platform to organise a dialogue on the NTL ecosystem during the international conference."* - Nandita Shah, Akshara Centre, Mumbai

*"The visit by the International delegates during the International conference to our centre and the interaction they had with our trainees/ members, has increased their motivation levels."*–Anindita Kar Gupta, ETASHA Society, New Delhi

As the network grows in strength of numbers and focus on non-traditional livelihoods for women, the international conference outcomes and other network activities are to be used to strengthen the advocacy efforts of the NTL network and engage with the macro policy environment that impacts how resource poor women relate with the world of work, both nationally and internationally at relevant SDG and UN forums.<sup>15</sup>

Through five years of collective energies and commitment to form the Non-Traditional Livelihoods Network (NTLN), it can be said that the journey towards empowerment and dignity for women in non-traditional livelihoods across India has only just begun—as the NTL network strengthens its capacities, networking and advocacy agendas in this important area of women and work.

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<sup>14</sup>The needs assessment of network members was conducted in May 2019 and will feed into ongoing process documentation of the NTLN.

<sup>15</sup> The conference report is available separately.



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