



Report  
on  
“State Level Workshop on Women Land Rights”  
on 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2009

at  
The Institute of Development Studies,  
Jaipur, Rajasthan



Organized by  
IPAC (Shivi Development Society (SDS),  
New Delhi

## **Introduction:**

A one- day State Level Workshop was organized on the issue of 'Women Land Rights in the state of Rajasthan' at the Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur (Rajasthan) by Shivi Development Society (SDS)-IPAC on 20<sup>th</sup> of March. This workshop was a follow up of a study undertaken on the issue in the month of June-July 2008.

There were around 45 participants for the workshop who had gathered from not only the state of Rajasthan but also MP, Bihar, and Delhi. The participants were mainly from the Civil Society Organizations working on women livelihoods, gender justice and land issues; subject experts, academicians, lawyers, government representatives and media persons. The workshop was more on the principle of participation and collaboration of all, where each got the opportunity to share their views matters of concern. This report lays emphasis on the objectives for the workshop and the outcome of the meeting. The language used in the workshop was both Hindi and English.

## **Session I**

### **Inaugural Session:**

The workshop started with a welcome speech by Ms. Anjali Pandey (team member of SDS-IPAC). Following this, Dr Surjit Singh Director IDS, delivered the inaugural address and shared his ideas with the participants. The speakers in this session Mr. Narender Kumar and Mr. Lakshmi Narain also joined Dr. Singh in the panel. Mr. Narender Kumar welcomed the participants and invited them to introduce themselves. After introduction of all the participants, Mr. Narender Kumar invited Dr. Surjit Singh, to enlighten the audience with his opinion on women land and resource rights and what can the civil society gain through this state level workshop.

### **Dr Surjit Singh:**

Firstly, Dr Surjit Singh congratulated SDS-IPAC for their contribution regarding Women Land Rights, an issue untouched by many organizations. Dr. Surjit Singh emphasized that there was a need for attitudinal change towards being more sensitive to the rights and concerns of women. In India, the awareness levels among women about their rights is very low; If some of them are aware, they don't claim them because they believe and consider their property as a family resource. The patriarchal society of India also forces them not to speak on such matters. Through examples of women in agriculture, their voting rights and many such instances of women in everyday lives, Dr Singh threw light upon the fact that the society need to take care of these micro issues and further glance through the macro issues. He also added that he expects that this workshop can be of importance if it can develop an action plan for future.

After the inaugural speech, Mr. Narender Kumar briefly told about the study report on women land rights in Rajasthan. He told that Indo Global Social Service Society (IGSSS) had commissioned SDS-IPAC to draft this report. The objective of the study on women land rights is to find out the present status of women in terms of land and property rights in the state of Rajasthan and to suggest a way forward in increasing the resource base of women. The study involved the learning process that included research on the internet as well as libraries of different institutes i.e. Institute of Development Studies, Centre for Dalit Rights (Rajasthan), interviews, field trips and participatory discussions to arrive at learning analysis for the study. Further, Mr. Narender Verma and Mr. Lakshmi Narain also gave a welcome note.

### **Objectives of the Workshop:**

In the same session, Mr. Narender Kumar also discussed about the two specific objectives of the workshop. First is to present and discuss the findings and analysis of the study report made by SDS-IPAC, with the experts and non-government organizations actively working in this field, and the other objective is to develop an action plan with all the partners for securing the women land and property rights in the future to launch a mass campaign in the State. After the panel spoke, Mr. Narender Kumar invited Ms. Shivani Bharadwaj from Sathi all for Partnerships, to give a concept note on the overall equitable distribution of women and property rights.

### **Shivani Bharadwaj: 'The Overview of Women Resource Rights Work'**

Ms. Shivani Bhardwaj stated that a person can access the resources from family or by the rules of inheritance, by government policy procedures, land transfers, credit and housing grants and by buying from the market. Of all these, women mostly prefer market and people have to understand that the reason behind this is that the other means like family, government etc are not helping and supporting a woman in her rightful claims. While carrying out the work at the policy and the law level, focus should be on basic data collection, therefore there is a need to strengthen the attitude shift right from each of our houses to the policy making level.

Some of the steps that civil society can take in regard to women rights on resources are taking efforts to know about what are the activities presently undertaken by different organizations in context of women rights. The information that is already collected and also the activities that are under process to increase the knowledge base should be shared at the state level among different organizations and interest groups. At the same time, organizations can also develop their own plan of intervention or a campaign.

Shivani further informed that significant changes have taken place after the year 2005 in the area of securing women rights. For working on women resource rights, the possible strategies are; first build constituencies of women and human resource for this work. Secondly, civil society can prepare the lobby agenda on this issue with the lobbying partners like SDS-IPAC and then negotiation skills should be developed to lobby for the interest effectively. In this way the political would be built on the larger scale in favor of women rights. Thirdly, continuous research should be undertaken for tracing and finding out more options and strategies. Finally, the issue of women land and resource rights could be developed as an addition to the already existing efforts or if it is important, a separate independent process of work could also be developed.

In this regard, presently ten different kinds of global campaigns have been launched. The issue of women resource rights can gain momentum if it can be linked with other campaigns like food security, other government schemes like Widow Pension, NREGS and Wage Equality, and so forth. Ms. Shivani requested all the participants for taking steps in the direction of assuring women resource and property rights by starting from their own homes. She suggested that civil society in Rajasthan can take some examples of work from organizations like Consult for Women and Land Rights like steps in building Muslim Women's Mosque, negotiation of land transfer from Suzlon, work on tribal community rights, inheritance in agricultural land, finding women spaces in urban plans, for single women's property rights, Aaroh Campaign women and agriculture and land rights, resource rights for women of unorganized sector, and land agenda for Dalit women. In the end Ms Shivani requested all the participants to start this charity from their homes and add this task in their 'to do' list.

## **Discussion:**

After this, the floor was thrown open to discussion. Some of the important questions asked were: what is the opinion about the role and transformation of men and women, and what can be done in this regard? What steps can be taken for the attitude transformation of people? How the issue of migration is linked with the issues of women rights on resources? In what ways the discrimination of women in the distribution of resources can be minimized? What is the legal framework on women resource and property rights both at the national and international level?

Ms. Shivani answered for the first question that we can not specify roles for both women and men. There is nothing like black and white or right and wrong. No one can decide that which role is assigned just for men and which one for women. And therefore, even women should also be independent in performing leadership roles like income generating activities. Property management is also the kind of skill that women can perform very effectively. For attitudinal change and women's discrimination, right from very beginning there is a need of educating children from their school time. Education through family system is also very important for bringing the attitudinal change and also for minimizing the discrimination in the resource distribution. On migration, she replied that in case the need for migration emerges, it becomes very tough for single and deserted women to claim their rights on property and land. Thus, the probability of migration should be checked and migration tracking should be done. She told the participants that for legal provisions, they can find the study report on Land Rights for women in Rajasthan.

## **Panel Discussion II:**

There were five members in the Panel Discussion. They were namely; Ms. Sunita Satyarthi (lawyer), Mr. J.P. Sharma (MLA and social activist from Rajasthan), Mr. Tarun Tonk (Editor of the journal IT Voice), Mr. Brij Kishore Chaurasia (District Action Group), and Mr. Malay Kumar (Prayatan Sansthan, Rajasthan). This panel discussion was moderated by Mr. Laxmi Narain.

### Ms. Sunita Satyarthi:

The panel discussion started with Ms Satyarthi's mentioning about the need for a fundamental change in the field of women rights which can only be brought about by women representation in the Indian Government at all levels from local to the national. Also, if the government is based on gender friendly policies, women can enjoy their fundamental rights. She told that the worst affected sections of society are the women from SCs and STs. Feudal lords capture the lands of these people leaving them landless. Speaking from a legal point of view, she said that the patriarchal traditions and ceremonies like 'Mrityu Bhoj' in which the role of son is of prime importance also restricts daughters for claiming their rights on any piece of land and property. He claims land and with the support of Panchayat, he becomes a master of it. Panchayat's role in such circumstances is very negative. She also traced the example of the tradition of dowry, in which if continuous gifts do not come from a woman's natal family then she does not claim her rights in her husband's family also. She thinks that all the resources of land and property should be owned by her sons. This is a matter of their right. She gave the example of an OBC woman named 'Dhapu' and her family. She filed a case for illegal possession of her property. Firstly, her family didn't support her in the case. For hearings also the opposite party used to come fully armed while she could not go with any man for support. Likewise, she affirmed that there are a lot of crimes being done by people against women for land and property that needs to be checked and we as CSOs should work for such women.

Mr. J. P. Sharma:

Mr. J. P. Sharma shared women's alienation from society by disassociating them with land and said that many women are unaware of their rights. When they know they don't claim and make use of it. He therefore suggested an attitudinal change that comes through awareness generation and educational activities which is a gradual process. The basis of attitudinal change is liberal thinking. He told that time is changing so fast. Indian Constitution has also given equal rights to both men and women. In some of the schemes and acts if there are some drawbacks they are also changed with the amendments like the Hindu Succession Act.

Mr. Tarun Tonk:

Tarun Tonk spoke about the prevailing status of women and their rights and the role of media in it. He laid stress on the need of education of children about the Indian Constitution from the primary level for building law based thoughts and work according to the law of the land. He also said that at family level we should start utilizing our information and knowledge. He complained that media both electronic as well as print, has a dubious role today as it displays many things which are fatal to the current existing system. Many programmes on the television promote a lot of superstitious and wrong belief which should be banned while gender friendly and awareness building programmes should be given emphasis.

Mr. Brij Kishore Chaurasia:

Mr. Brij Kishore had the opinion that there is a threat of global warming on the whole world. Women were always in the forefront whenever there emerged the need of movements. Chipko Andolan was also such a movement. Medha Patekar is the leader of the Narmada Bachao Andolan. He said that we should consider woman like a river which is free flowing and independent about her rights and resources. We should recognize our strength and women's capability of leadership. Local women should also realize their strengths by utilizing their rights in their own region. Thus, he supported the whole idea of this workshop and hoped that it can show Rajasthan rural women some way forward.

Mr. Malay Kumar:

Mr. Malay gave his opinion by saying that in a woman's lifecycle, we find a clear discrimination right from the very beginning in the form of sex determination, female infanticide, abortion, etc. and the paradox continues her whole life. In India the widening gap in the sex ratio is a matter of great concern. In our government mechanism too, there are ninety percent male professionals leaving minimal scope for female candidates. As far as the matter of land owning is concerned, although women have a piece of land in her name, utilization of gain by women remains a myth. The situations like natural disasters have increased the vulnerability of women more as far as the question of women's land and property is concerned. At times she can not fulfill the legal formalities and her own family members try to occupy her land. He suggested that we have to find out our own strengths as the civil society try to find new ways in dealing with the situations that are against women. Because of number of reasons the issue of protection of women, land and resources rights is not the interest of funding agencies that is why we have to develop our own strategies strongly and try to find out our own resource base.

Summation of the panel discussion: Mr Lakshmi Narain disclosed that in the whole of Rajasthan slums, the last state government of Rajasthan distributed labels -'Pattas' of land to the people residing in these slums. But not one Patta has been done in the name of men and women jointly. In such circumstances, where is the place for a woman's interest? He said that only the existence of good

laws in India would not do any good but rather an implementation of these laws will help the society. He favored the point put by Mr. Sisodia that when in need, women have always stood by all. Women should not request or ask for their rights, but rather grab their rights.

## **Session II**

The session after lunch focused on the achievable or what collective action can be taken in this regard by all the organizations present there was looked at.

### **Group Work:**

The objective of this group work was to develop an understanding of the issue of women resource rights and come up with some ideas on the basis of which future action plan can be formulated for women land rights in the state of Rajasthan. Ms Shivani Bharadwaj was responsible for this session. She gave three questions to all the participants and asked them to divide themselves in groups of four to discuss together for answering the questions and prepare for a presentations jointly. The three questions were:

1. Who are those women you want to work with?
2. What kind of work your organization wants to do with these target groups?
3. With whom does your organization want to appeal for the accomplishment of your demands?

All the participants later were divided into four groups. They discussed among themselves the answers of these questions and prepared presentations on the basis of their discussion. After a discussion in between the group for 30 minutes, one representative from each group made a brief presentation on the questions raised and ways in which they can contribute in these gaps.

### **Group One:**

Group one said that they want to work with the women in need who are dalits, victimized and the women farmers. The efforts that they will make will be educating the masses on this issue, increase the awareness level, work with panchayat especially with gram panchayat for providing security for women rights, and also at the policy level by lobby and advocacy with the decision makers. For betterment of the role of media, they also want to work with media partners at the local level. Also, they would like to provide knowledge base of laws to youth, women, and form committees at the national level. At the organization level, they will work hard upon attitude transformation of the organizational team itself. They would also appeal to the families, government for policies and with the other organizations as well.

### **Group Two:**

Group two told all the participants that they want to work with all women in need in rural and urban areas. They will work by means of awareness generation on education, health, income generation with the help of self-help groups, women and land rights related matters, the use of BPL Cards and other government schemes and benefits. They will appeal to all the governing bodies, NGOs, Women Rights Commission and regional organizations.

### **Group Three:**

The third group would also work with the needy women from both the Rural and Urban Communities. In rural Communities they will focus on village chaupals and panchayat. They will work in Angan wadis, informal educational centers, schools and madaras to cover the population of urban region. They will specially work with victimized, illiterate, workable and with women Farmers. They will initiate steps to make a women friendly environment to work with the people by organizing group discussions, street plays, Posters/pamphlets distribution, holding competitions and rallies, Training sessions and seminars and by organizing income generating Training camps. They will like to appeal to government, and people's representatives, women commission, minority commission, Human Rights Commission and to other NGOs for an Act or law for women rights and its effective implementation.

#### **Group Four:**

Group four gave some new ideas. They were from three different districts in Rajasthan namely Jaipur, Dausa, Alwar. The Dausa participants want to work with commercial sex workers and female sex workers as these are one of the vulnerable groups in the district. In Alwar, organizations willing to work with Self-Help Groups on the matters of increasing source of livelihood, and also awareness generation on government schemes. They would work collectively with the women groups to form women friendly zone. The Jaipur participants told that the participants on the 26-27 March, will organize a women empowerment workshop on property rights. Collectively the group members have decided that they will work for radio campaigning and networking process. They will appeal to the Directors of the partnering organizations, district magistrate and even to the Information and Broadcasting ministry.

After the group presentations, Mr. Narender Kumar took over for the concluding session. He invited Mr. Narinder Verma, to give an overview on the exercise and give some suggestions on how one can proceed further with this.

#### **Mr. Narinder Verma:**

Mr. Verma congratulated SDS for organizing such a workshop in the time of need when a lot of discrimination is going on with women all around in our country. He further said that we can see that domestic violence in families starts happening if women start claiming their rights. And in some cases, domestic violence is initiated by the family members if a woman shows her right on her land and property rights. That needs to be checked. Rights sacrificed by women are often glorified. It is very true if it is commented by many participants that discrimination in a woman's life is every where and through out her life. Role of media is also very important where it is a prime factor in the opinion building. All the participants need to work collectively for this issue.

#### **Mr. Laxmi Narain:**

In his concluding remarks Mr. Laxmi Narain said that there is a dire need for a joint Programme that can be taken forward collectively with all the partner groups that are ready to collaborate on this issue in Rajasthan. Large network will also result in good lobbying, the onus of spreading it massively will rest on SDS-IPAC for future.

#### **Conclusion/Resolution:**

Thus, the participants collectively came to the conclusion that all the partnering organizations that are ready to support each other in working for women rights on land and resources will launch a

campaign called, '[Rajasthan Action on Women Land & Resource Rights](#)' (RAWLRR). For initiating the campaign some of the steps were discussed in the workshop. Like in the beginning, Mr. Malay from Prayatn proposed that they would like to organize the similar kind of two days residential workshop in which participants will be able to discuss about what they have thought of doing in their respective areas. Mr. Jayesh Joshi from Vaagdhara proposed financial help worth Rs. 20,000 from his side. Similarly, Mr. Adil Bhai from MMBA proposed that he would like to add up to Rs. 50,000 for this purpose after consulting with his board. Ms. Shivani proposed that she can also form an email group by which she can be in continuous touch with all the support organizations and share the latest developments in this regard. The responsibility for running this email group was readily taken by SDS-IPAC. Mr. Narender Kumar, finally, gave the assurance to the group that SDS-IPAC would be always ready for lending support to all the organizations that were present in the workshop and even others who are willing to work for women land rights at any stage of their work.

#### List of the Participants of Workshop:

S.N.	Name of the person	Organization	Email Address and PhoneNo.
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6.	Mr. Manisha Arora	PMUS (Alwar)	parmarthsansthan@yahoo.com
7.	Mr. Pusa Ram Bagdi	Sangharsh Sansthan	9414207872
8.	Mr. Ganesh Lal Meena	Vaagdhara (Banswara)	9983928038
9.	Mr. Saroj Soni	Vaagdhara	9001384491
10.	Mr. Ramesh Majoka	PMUS	9828235239
11.	Ms. Khushbu Pavnami	Cuts International	9918367692
12.	Mr. Mahesh Dausa	GVPS	9414338218 gveps@rediffmail.com
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14.	Mr. Manish Singh	Aravali	9928033443
15.	Mr. Gungun Thanvi	Aravali	9783115315
16.	Ms. Roshit	CDR	9482246330
17.	Ms. Rachana Mishra	VANI Jaipur	9352502430
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25.	Mr. Anand Singh	Adarsh Gyan Mandir Sansthan	<a href="mailto:agms_org@yahoo.co.in">agms_org@yahoo.co.in</a> 9828405168



26.	Dr.Farzana	HSDRC	9460945433
27.	Mr. P.M.Sharma	SRS	9828493015
28.	Ms. Mamta	CDR Jaipur	9460875955
29.	Dilip Kumar	Teacher	9783180753
30.	Mr. Tarun Tonk	Editor in	
31.	Mr. J.P. Sharma	MLA in Rajasthan	
32.	Mr. Sadiq Khan		
33.	Mr. Jayesh Joshi	Vaagdhara	vaagdhara@gmail.com

**Resource Persons:**

1.	Dr. Surjit Singh	Director, IDS Jaipur	
2.	Ms. Shivani Bhardwaj	Sathi all for Partnerships	9810536717
3.	Mr. Laxmi Narain	Ek Vishwavidyalaya	9928322395
4.	Mr. Narinder Verma	Gram Chetna Kendra	9829059209
5.	Ms. Sunita Satyarthi	Lawyer	9414779608
6.	Mr. Narender Kumar	Shivi Development Society - IPAC	

**Organizers:**

1.	Ms. Anjali Gupta	SDS - IPAC	
2.	Ms. Astha Gupta	SDS - IPAC	
3.	Ms. Sanvia Danish	SDS - IPAC	
4.	Mr. Hanuman Sahay	SDS - IPAC	