

## Gender Equality Approaches Through Greener Initiatives and Community Gardening - Women Empowerment Strategies

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**Abstract:** The present paper explores the significance of community green initiatives towards achieving gender equity and women empowerment. Green initiatives through community gardening assist to increase community ownership and community leadership there by supporting gender equity approaches. The greener initiatives or community gardening directly foster community gardens and foster the development of a community identity and spirit. Without any difference of gender, race, caste, community, community gardening assists women entrepreneurship and empowerment process. A wider variety of community stakeholders are supported by green initiatives to rejuvenate societal progression. Community gardening builds community leaders and supports community leadership as they offer a focal point in community organization through greater women participation. This directly influences the community based efforts to deal with other social issues in the community as well.

**Keywords:** Gender equality approaches, greener initiatives, community gardening, women empowerment strategies

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### I. Introduction

Women constitute nearly 50% of the total population and they form a great bulk of human resource. Government of India along with state governments is coming up with new approaches to empower women. Several schemes have been designed and implemented for bringing about women empowerment.

#### 1.1 Concept of community gardens

The concept of community gardens has been a tried and tested method in western countries. Community gardens are a part of community where a community or a group of people collectively utilize and share public land. These gardens offer fresh vegetables and agro based products to community members and instill a sense of community belongingness. Besides they offer an integration with surrounding environment and lead to neighborhood improvement. This concept is widely accepted in America and European countries. As the ownership access and management is in the hands of the community, there will be a clearer fostering of brotherhood and intimacy among all community members. These gardens offer fresh vegetables and agro based products to community members and instill a sense of community belongingness. Besides they offer an integration with surrounding environment and lead to neighborhood improvement. This concept is widely accepted in America and European countries. As the ownership access and management is in the hands of the community, there will be a clearer fostering of brotherhood and intimacy among all community members.

#### 1.2 Indian references to community gardening

Ancient Indian concept of collective living and community brotherhood has taken a new reflection in the form of community gardening. Women form 50% of the population and human resource. They can be employed gainfully towards sustainability and collective living. Indian society has been undergoing serious transformation in the position of women. Liberalization and globalization has changed the women status and situation. Women are working on par with men in industrial and entrepreneurship, service & hospitality sectors, business and management sectors. Urbanization had increased the problems of women and they are undergoing work pressure and careers demands. This is influencing their health and impact on their daily routine is being disturbed. Women are suffering from chronic illness caused due to urban pollution and contamination. All these factors are leading to her diminutive healthiness and physical wellbeing. Urban women and rural women are facing the impact of their demanding profession and digital revolution. Longer hours of working, late night nightshifts, changed food timing change in sleep time, change in rest sessions etc. Besides she is under constant threat of survival. Her security, her protection, her family relationship and professional pressures are consuming her identity. The issues relating to her individual care and support is under constant danger. This has necessitated the countries to think of parallel support strategies to motivate her to collective living and

supportive community living. Community gardening becomes further more supportive to women who wish to enhance their health and dietary awareness.

#### **1.4 Community garden and urban culture**

Community gardens become a part of urban culture in New Delhi and Mumbai where residents live in packed apartments. Space constraints motivated them to think of innovative space management. The dwellers started roof top gardens, pot gardens, balcony gardens and such other types of creative gardening. These initiatives were individual and family oriented. But using waste space for community gardening arose out of slum dwelling in Mumbai. The slum dwellers of Mumbai Ambedkar nagar in Mumbai innovate thought of strategies to convert heaps of waste into good use and started a community garden in the vicinity. This cleared mountain of waste and helped them to gain healthy living space in jam packed urban metro city. This paved for launching community gardens in India. This has become a metro life style and slowly is spreading to other urban centers.

#### **1.5 Community gardens and Crime Prevention**

Researchers have proven that community gardens also act effectively towards containing criminal activities. They act as a barrier to illegal use of parking places, apartment corners, sideway blocks, passages, conveyance areas etc which are crucial scenes of crime in urban rush. Women can be promoted to work in community gardens and look after the management of community garden to prevent crime. The reports of chain snatching, pick pocketing, harassment, stalking etc can be prevented considerable with community gardens. Women can be promoted to work in community gardens and look after the management of community garden to prevent crime. The reports of chain snatching, pick pocketing, harassment, stalking etc can be prevented considerable with community gardens.

#### **1.6 Community gardens and socializing**

Women can be promoted to work in community gardens as it can promote social entrepreneurship among women. Community gardening helps women to know each other better and build good neighborhood relationships. Urban life has created narrow minds, People fear to acquaint and know each other. The faith and trust in the neighbor is completely vanished. At this juncture community gardens create good platform for socializing and collectively working.

#### **1.7 Community gardens and environmental awareness**

Women can be promoted to work in community gardens as it creates awareness about environment and green initiatives. Women and children are the first target of environment crisis. The disaster risk reduction and disaster risk management caused by natural calamities often affect women directly. Hence awareness about utilizing space and small income towards collective green management can lead to supportive empowerment strategies.

#### **1.8 Community gardens and health care awareness**

Women can be promoted to work in community gardens as health and dietary imbalances are causing chronic situations. Diminutive health is influencing women status as women have been suffering from respiratory disorders, intestinal disorders, obesity and over weight problems, child bearing, reproductive health, early aging, skin related problems, baldness, sight problems, menstrual related problems, etc.

## **II. Conclusion**

Thus community gardening will help the empowerment strategies and strengthen the gender equality approach schemes. As the researches have shown community garden have helped to lessen the crime and anti social activities. Community garden support group involvement and team participation which further assist women in societal co-ordination besides adding beauty to the neighborhood it will cost very less in maintenance. Women empowerment strategies need to include community gardening as an integrative modus operandi to reach out to women needs. Community gardening enhances sustainability for all community members. It also supports secure public space utilization and provides enhances food security. It is best tried and tested method in augmenting health benefits for women in particular and whole community in general.

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