Regional workshop on
Women, Energy and Enterprise Building

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TIDE projects for women focus on

- Entrepreneurship through energy access and innovative technology
- Mix of women creating energy products like smokeless stoves, end products using energy services like dried fish, and women delivering an energy service like sale of solar lanterns
- While the aim is to create an energy linked enterprise, TIDE is primarily engaged in creating options and offering choices depending upon conveniences and needs
- Also other enterprises like green house horticulture and vermi-composting
- Setting up a women’s technology park for women in enterprises
TIDE projects for women

• End users of energy services are women and households, end users of products are families

• Just one activity – women as household stove builders is poised for scale up with the forest department, GoK adopting the scheme in select districts

• Initiating brick making as an enterprise for women

• Also working on a project with school children teaching them to respect their mothers; involves building knowledge of women in energy and water conservation
Some typical projects

- Household stove construction
- Biomass stoves and dryers for food processing
- Neighbourhood level cashew processing
- Trade in energy efficient lighting, CFLs, solar lanterns, LED torches
The method of TIDE

• Awareness creation about technology options, energy enterprises, women’s empowerment

• Focussed group discussions with interested women on their aspirations, needs, constraints, time, health etc.

• Matching technology option to need, aspiration, ability, local resources etc.

• Generation of project proposals and receipt of funds
The method of TIDE

• Development of technical training and enterprise training materials; Selection of women entrepreneurs

• Launch of the enterprise
  – TIDE contribution usually training, trial production, marketing, establishing linkages, confidence building
  – Women entrepreneur contribution – time, labour, some financial contribution, usually SHG savings

• Trial phase – women manage data accounts, TIDE supports with marketing linkages
The method of TIDE

- Overcoming problems usually about quality control, excessive rejection, conflicts among women, some women drop out

- Stabilizing the enterprise – women book profits and comfortable taking loans

- Plans for expansion and growth - sometimes
What worked

• The process for identification of women entrepreneurs fairly stable and working
• Matching technology to user needs and constraints – technical competence exists but the basket of technology options currently very limited
• Mid course correction process understood
• Fund raising possible but up to a point
• Successful women entrepreneurs learn to manage their success without rejecting the society and family. Families learn to accept successful women
What did not work

• Excessive dependency of women entrepreneurs on field staff of TIDE.
• Ownership of the enterprise as that of the women and not a project deliverable of TIDE takes a long time to establish.
• Security of existing occupation as farm labour difficult to shrug off. Women try to combine both often unsuccessfully leading to conflicts.
• Social handicaps and pressures associated with marketing inhibit women from profitably engaging in sales.
• Most women seek easy options like beedi rolling.
• Trying to combine entrepreneurship with innovative technology is a challenge that must be overcome because except in food processing, conventional enterprise options not available to women.
Impact – financial

• Women stove builders construct 9000 stoves and earn labour costs

• Cashew processing groups process 1.5 tons of cashew

• The dryer groups process 17 tons of dried fish and 1 ton of other dried products

• Women sell 1300 energy efficient lights

• The combined profit of these enterprises is Rs 8 lakhs.
Impact – social

• The 46 women initiated by TIDE into enterprises
  – Are self reliant
  – Invest in the education of their children and children of other family members
  – Are eating better and so are physically stronger; do more work that most women
  – Are role models are motivate other women
  – They are good communicators and manage media and PR well
Impact – environmental

- CO2 abated is about 5000 TPA

- Awareness about environment and conservation is very high and they influence the community
Sustainability

• Sustainability is always a part of the project design but not always achievable because
  – Work with low budget and short term projects
  – The spirit of entrepreneurship needs to nurtured and nourished

• What drives entrepreneurship is
  – Aspirations of the women at the grass root, their trust and confidence in us
  
  TIDE’s commitment to sustainability
Some favourable policies

Kudumbashree programme of Govt. of Kerala

Karnataka forest department encouraging women stove builders for their household stove programme

NABARD supportive of women’s enterprises but thinks like a bank; normally does not factor in social impact as a criterion of entrepreneurship

An opportunity in the waiting is the new initiatives of the govt. on a stove policy and programme
Issues in replication and scaling up

Work of NGOs would remain isolated success stories with potential for replication unless

There is a buy in from govt. with
• Favourable policy
• Collaborative initiatives between different ministries with planned budgets for different components of the programme

There is also need for a lot of variety and flexibility in financing options for grassroot women in enterprises