

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: EMPOWERING RURAL WOMEN.

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Sustainable development deals with a plethora of issues and looks into overall and continuous development of mankind by encompassing economic, socio-cultural, ecological, political, technological and scientific discoveries.

Rural women empowerment can be achieved by capacity building through skill development and transfer of appropriate technology. Achieving wealth creation in rural areas should aim at reducing poverty, creating gender equality and to bridge the gap between rural and urban disparities.

The challenge at present in India is its digital divide between urban and rural areas, Where rural per capita income is Rs.40,772 per annum against Rs.1,01,313 in urban areas. India with its cultural diversity and digital divide between urban and rural areas should plan for sustainable development using appropriate scientific techniques.

Another challenge in India is literacy rate of women in villages, which is 57.03% against 79.8% of their urban counterparts. This will affect their participation in economic, social political issues. Further it will show its impact on their health, infant mortality and their life expectancy.

Another challenge is how to reach them in their own villages, as the ratio of villages to the cities is very high. Empowering them through appropriate technology, one has to utilize latest advances in science and technology. One of the possibility is to use the smart phones, which already reached common man. Along with smart phones, new technologies such as IOT, ICT, ITES and WiFi. These technologies already created awareness among the rural youth and women in various areas such as rural farming and allied areas like diary, food processing, post- harvest technologies etc. Most of the farmers started using these tools to sell their product in the market at remunerative prices.

Economically developed countries widely used Science and Technology for their development. In general, the Science and Technology aims at better standard of living, increasing life expectancy, reducing infant mortality. Taking this into consideration, India should take appropriate technologies to rural areas.

Awareness among rural women about their rights is created by educational institutions, Government, and non- government organizations. Now rural Women are actively participating in economic activity by becoming a member of DWACRA, co-operative societies or micro finance organizations to improve their financial position. This is enhancing their income at household and at National level, leading to sustainable development.

The life expectancy of women in rural India is lower than the life expectancy of women in urban India, 68.4 (73.2). To increase the life expectancy of women in rural areas, effort has to be made using IT and ITES. However, there is a positive impact on infant mortality. This has decreased from 34 for thousand births in 2015 to 31 for thousand births in 2016.

After learning that organic farming is better to protect the environment and to get better prices for their own produce, farmers are once again switching over to organic farming.

Most of the Indian villages are highly sensitive towards the governance. However, to empower the rural women to participate in decision making, their political rights have to be protected and implemented.