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SETU Abhiyan

Strengthening Local Governance

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REDEFINING PROGRESS THROUGH WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

MAHILA NAGARIK JUTH: A PLATFORM FOR PROGRESS AND DEVELOPMENT

Mahila Nagrik Juth

SETUs as cluster level information centers emerged immediately post the 2001 earthquake to play a bridge role in coordinating effective relief and information needs. In these 15 years, SETUs curved its own niche – facilitating local people & external agencies towards strengthening communities to decide, negotiate and monitor for the kind & the pace of development that they need and can sustain. Over the time, SETUs realized the need to strengthen the local governance and thus reeducating the Gram Panchayats in governing their villages. Since 2004, SETUs thus focused on strengthening local governance more prominently through various innovations. innovations in both the urban and rural settings across 6 blocks in Kutch.

Objective

The Mahila Nagarik Juth was introduced by SETU in 2015-16. It sought to educate women about the 73rd Amendment of the constitution, their rights and provisions as per the constitution. The primary objective is to encourage active participation among women and equip them for more substantial leadership roles such as being part of the Gram Panchayat, as women have 50% reservation in local government bodies. It also aims to empower by enabling them to put forth their major concerns which they wish to address and find a solution for, and making the village women friendly and socially just and secure. This moves on to give them a platform in advocating for themselves.

As a result , 187 people became direct beneficiaries of the government schemes. This included Ayushman Card, Free bus service for disabled persons, widow pension scheme, Palak Mata Pita etc. The annual amount received by all the beneficiaries was Rs.18,75,000.

Molding Women Centric Development in Anjar

Anjar SETU provides the women citizen groups with leadership training, conducts knowledge building workshops. The Nagalpar Moti Gram Panchayat, the Mahila Nagarik Juth consisting of 15 women did an assessment within their village.

The assessment was on the vulnerable section of the village that included widows, orphans, disabled and old people. 2 women from the MNJ took the responsibility and initiative to fill the forms and collect all the required documents.

The Initiative

Through trainings, discussions and capacity building workshops, women acquire knowledge and a space is created for them to have discussions and implement strategies. SETU imparts knowledge about the various government schemes, GPDP planning process, social development perspective, importance of empowering adolescent girls etc. SETU further takes the initiative to arrange training programs for the newly elected female Sarpanch or female Panchayat members regarding their roles and responsibilities and how to best utilize their position to maximize women empowerment and resolve issues within the village.

Playing a new role in progress

- There has been more of a wider scope for discussion surrounding various topics that bring out the specific concerns and hurdles faced by women.
- SETU has been able to create a space for women to hold meetings and have discussions at the village level.
- Women have acquired knowledge and become conscious of diverse ideas that they can implement.
- More women are taking up leadership roles and greater initiative.

- Women are part of the GPDP planning process and are active stakeholders.
- Mahila Nagarik Juths help in identifying possible beneficiaries in the village and help in connecting them to various government schemes. (Widow pension, old age pension, support for orphans etc).
- Women have taken the reigns and understand the importance of local-governance and standing up for their rights and utilizing it.