ABSTRACT

Strengthening Human Rights of Rural and Tribal Women by Promoting Green Technologies:
Hands on Experience At Barli Development Institute For Rural Women Indore.

to be presented at

International Conference   '*Human Rights: Transforming Dimensions*',

organized by Panjab University Chandigarh Feb 15-16, 2010.

by Jimmy McGilligan*

Barli Development Institute for Rural Women Indore, during the last 25 years, has empowered more than 5000 rural and tribal women from500 villages in India by training them in sustainable community development with an integrated approach. Use of   green technologies for socio-economic and environmental development is one of the essential components of their training.It has shown measurable positive results towards strengthening of their human rights, specially covered under Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights relating to science, technology and environment.

Being a Baha'i-inspired NGO, spiritually committed to environmental conservation, the Institute has developed an environmental friendly campus . Sustainable life –style enables the trainees to learn to grow vegetables, lentils, fruit, herbs and natural methods of composting the farm wastes including vermin-composting; re-used wash and sewerage water, rainwater harvesting and re-charging. They   become aware of saving of electricity :using CFLs and other energy efficient devices, turn waste paper into briquettes, rice and flour sacks into artistically embroidered strong ethnic and stylish carry bags. Cutting and tailoring scrap is turned into useful items like glass- holders, for hot tea, mobile phone bags and gift –packing pouches etc .Used batteries are turned into paper weights .They even learn to use their fallen hairs to make brushes for painting the wax on fabric.

Barli Campus has the world's only Solar Storage cooker, installed in the first solar community kitchen built in Central India that cooks 300 meals a day (including chapattis) for 100 inmates 300 days a year . During their six months training, they gain skills in using solar driers, Scheffler and parabolic SK14 , for cooking, baking, frying, running a *dhaba,* tea stall, water distilling, water

1

heating, boiling drinking water, textile work, ironing the clothes preparing natural dyes and melting wax for batik printing. The Institute has also installed 5 solar kitchens in tribal areas.

400 SK 14 parabolic cookers are in use in villages of the Institute graduates including microcredit groups .It has strengthened their human rights while preserving the environment. These include earning income by selling solar cooked food and tea , saving of 4-5 hours per day of collecting wood, 300 to 400 rupees per month buying wood, kerosene, cost of lighter or matches. Improvements in quality of life expressed "sunlight is free" "no more tears from smoke;" user-friendly "no blackening of utensils, kitchen and surrounding areas" "does not require frequent attention" "retains flavours and nutrients, food tastier " prevents toddlers and children getting burns"" no risk of gas leaks or explosions." 'boilng -water prevents water- borne and smoke-related diseases, reduces infant and female mortality rate" gender-friendly " as the husband /father-in-law /brothers started cooking in the process of demonstrating to the male visitors, guests, relatives, and officials." Above all, they now feel much safer, as they no longer need to face the danger of illegally searching firewood making them vulnerable to be harassed by forest/ police officials as well as the risk of rape and abuse.

Transfer of technology is recommended "only by choice", accompanied by systematic training in local understandable language and follow –up support...

. .

.

----

*James R McGilligan (Jimmy) OBE, is Manager of the Barli Development Institute for Rural Women, Indore since 1988 and Heads Technology, Science, Engineering and Environmental Education email barli@sancharnet.in /http://www.barli.org