

# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Quarterly (English)

ISSN 2320 - 9283

Vol. 3

Apr. - Jun., 2015

Issue 2

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## **Women and Livelihood :** **Reflections on entitlements, opportunities & challenges**

Md. Israr Alam\*

### **Abstract**

Women experience multiple identities and intersectionalities based on gender, caste, class, ethnicity, age and many more. There are several hidden social constraints that inhibit women's free choice of what they want to do. The same is the condition with their participation in income generation activities and struggle for livelihood.

The paper talks about livelihood of women as active agent in income generation activities. It is a reflection based on field level engagements in PRADAN (Professional Assistance for Development Action), a development organization. Here an attempt is made to develop a conceptual understanding from two vantage points. Firstly, process of livelihood intervention involving women and the subterranean inertia and obstruction from the patriarchal social structure. Secondly, to argue how strong and effective mechanism could foster empowerment of women leading to their effective participation in the process of not only income generation but also in decision making.

### **Introduction**

*"Livelihoods are our human right. This concept is in our heart, it is our culture, it is our land and it is the environment. It is the basis of our human existence."*

*Tran Thi Lanh, Social Policy Research Ecology Institute*

The provision and entitlement of livelihood is considered to be an imperative component under the Social Security and Human Rights framework of creating and promoting livelihood. It is right to peruse a dignified life. In its essence, the right to livelihood offers people the opportunity to realize other rights with dignity (Discussion paper: PWESCR; No 3, July 2011). Also the UN Declaration of Human Rights does mention livelihood in relation to social security concern for all. Article 25 (1) states that "everyone has the right to standard of living adequate for the health and well being of himself and his family, including... food

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