



Feminist Participatory Action Research

Our Journey from Personal Change to Structural Change
APWLD Breaking Out of Marginalisation FPAR Programme
2012 - 2014

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Writer: Kate Lappin, Aizhamal Bakashova, Alma Sinumlag, Vernie Yocogan Diano, Trimita Chakma, Bipasha Chakma, Thran Thi Thoi, Kulsuwarak Poyee, Alyas Rahmat, Sunnia Sadiq, Srijana Pun, Anisha Luintel, Dewi Amelia Eka Putri and Fitri Ramdani

APWLD Editorial Team: Wardarina, Aileen Familiara

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Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD)

**In memory of
Anchalee Phonklieng**

Who taught us passion,
wisdom and indigenous women's struggle.
You will always be remembered

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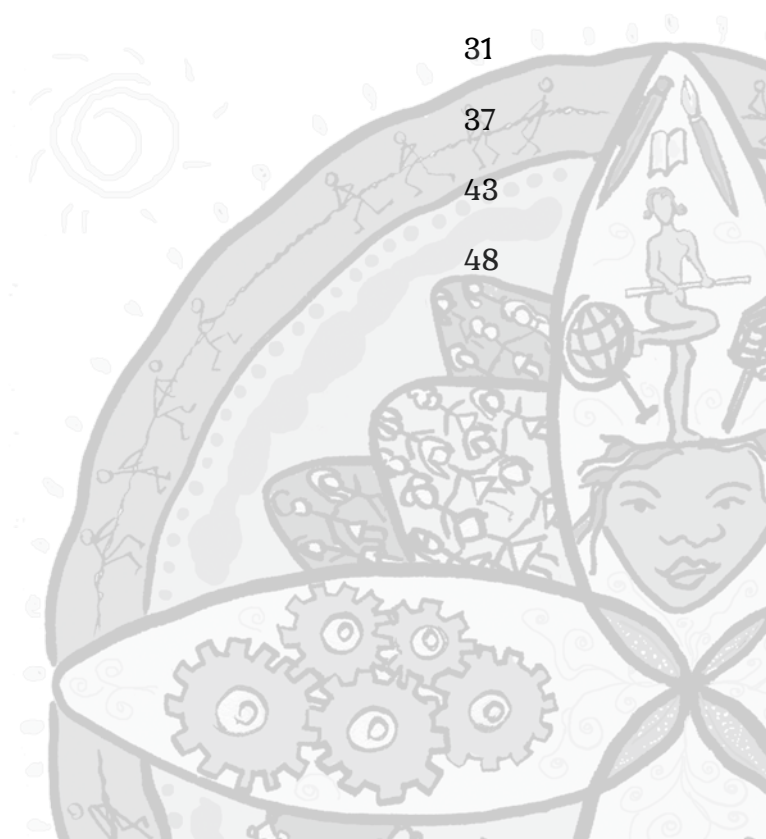
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Foreword

Our journey from personal to structural changes - is not just a report, it's a story of us.
Us, the young women activists who seek for structural change.

Sadly, we still live in the world where discrimination still defines lives of majority of women and girls in the Asia Pacific region. We live in the world full of inequalities and income disparity due to neoliberal economic model that evidently has failed rural, indigenous and migrant women.

In order to challenge these inequalities, strong movements of rural, indigenous migrant women are needed and they must be supported to build capacity, evidence and engage in advocacy to bring about just and sustainable solutions. We believe that one of the ways to build movement is through Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR).

Our journey of FPAR is a story of a democratic, non-hierarchical mutual learning process and part of our struggle for social transformation. FPAR emphasizes on local knowledge, while share and develop knowledge and skills based on experiences of participants. It looks at the power relations in our daily lives and society and challenges the gendered power asymmetry. It is strong combination of theory and practice which strengthens knowledge and helps to gain skills for further advocacy for structural changes.

Breaking Out Of Marginalization (BOOM) FPAR program gives opportunity to 8 grassroots young women from 8 countries to build their capacity, confidence, establishing leadership roles and aspirations for social change. We came with different backgrounds and perspectives, but during FPAR have gone through process of personal change and grow together. Through Feminist participatory Action Research, we, young women researchers, gained capacity on rights based approach, feminist framework, skills to facilitate and organize women in the community, and skills to conduct effective advocacy and campaign.

Together with rural, indigenous and women workers in the community, we were able to conduct research and advocacy. At the end of the programme, we can see, feel and know that we have evolved. Together we hold hands and do collective actions to challenge patriarchy and unjust development policies and practices.

Our Journey from Personal to Structural Change, is not a research report.
It's a story of our reflection on our own journey.

Aizhamal Bakashova

Focal Person of APWLD Breaking Out of *Marginalisation Programme*
Young Feminist Researcher – Kyrgyzstan



[illegible]

Our principal purpose of doing FPAR is to change systems and structures to improve the lives of marginalised women. We interpret 'Change' as 'Structural Change' or change to structures and systems of oppression particularly patriarchy and the fusion of patriarchy with globalisation, fundamentalisms and militarism. The participants are not objects on whom research is conducted but rather the subjects of the inquiry who set the agenda, participate in the data collection and analysis, and control the use of the outcomes, including deciding what future actions to take or directions to go.

Our FPAR Principles

- **PURPOSE IS STRUCTURAL CHANGE:** the purpose of our research is to bring about structural changes that women identify as critical to their enjoyment of human rights;
- **AMPLIFIES WOMEN'S VOICE:** the research gives voice to women as the experts and authors of their own lives and policy decisions. It strategically places them as researchers and experts and promotes them into policy dialogue;
- **OWNED BY THE COMMUNITY:** research decisions are made by the community of women who are the stakeholders of the research project;
- **TAKES AN INTERSECTIONAL APPROACH** to identity and experiences of discrimination, exclusion and marginalisation: recognising the diversity of women's experiences, identities and power;
- **AIMS TO SHIFT POWER:** the research seeks to reconstruct traditional power imbalances such as researcher / subject and also aims to challenge and shift gendered sources of personal, political and structural power;
- **FOSTERS MOVEMENT BUILDING / COLLECTIVE ACTION:** the research process itself should be seen as a collective process that strengthens solidarity but in addition the research aims to empower women to work collectively for long-term structural change;
- **BUILDS CAPACITY OF ALL:** FPAR always involves capacity building but also recognises that capacity building and learning is a collective, political action of all the players involved;
- **FREE PRIOR INFORMED CONSENT** of all participants is prioritised in FPAR;
- **SAFETY, CARE AND SOLIDARITY** with participants is essential;

Background

FPAR builds on research methods developed as Participatory Action Research (PAR) but integrates feminist perspectives and processes. Feminist and PAR are natural allies as both are fundamentally interested in challenging entrenched, unjust power relations.

PAR has been described as

“...a method of social investigation of problems, involving participation of oppressed and ordinary people in problem posing and solving. It is an education process for the researcher and participants, who analyze the structural causes of named problems through collective discussion and interaction. Finally, it is a way for researchers and oppressed people to join in solidarity to take collective action, both short and long term, for radical social change. Locally determined and controlled action is a planned consequence of inquiry”. (Maguire 1987, 29)

Multiple Impact Objectives and FPAR

APWLD works to bring about structural change and build movements. We have identified key areas of change that are required to do that and the use of FPAR allows us to include those multiple ‘domains of change’. The change areas are:

- Developing Capacity and skills of our movement
- Fostering knowledge, data, tools and resources for women’s movements
- Securing space for advocacy to change laws, policies and practices
- Creating movements and collective pressure for structural change



Capacity Building should be incorporated throughout the process and involves all steps. It is important to acknowledge that all stakeholders are part of collective capacity building. FPAR challenges the notion that the communities of study are devoid of knowledge and passive objects of study. In FPAR, any external researchers similarly develop capacity through the process and learn from the community researchers and participants. Collective learning relationships should be articulated from the start of the process. Through

FPAR Communities may develop deeper analysis of the problem being analysed, may develop documentation skills, may develop advocacy and campaigning skills and may

develop leadership and movement building capacity.



The 'knowledge' or research that evolves from the project should be collectively authored and owned by the community. It is made clear in the FPAR process that the research is being developed for a reason and the data and tools developed as a result are designed to bring about change. The knowledge production is strategic and publications and materials produced as a result should be similarly designed.

The authorship of the research gives the community a platform to advocate for change. As such the community researchers become advocates and through FPAR we locate opportunities to utilise the knowledge and engage in evidence based policy debates.

No long-term structural and sustainable change comes about without the support of communities and movements. The largest global study on violence against women found that the most critical criteria for bringing about progressive changes to laws and policies on violence against women was the existence of autonomous feminist movements.* An essential element of FPAR is to foster collective movements for change.



Methods



We recognise the political nature of methods. Knowledge and method is not separated from researchers, our politics and beliefs and nor is it separated from the structures in which we operate which are gendered, racialised, embedded with meaning from globalising and colonial practices.

FPAR methods should evolve through the participatory process. Decisions about methods should be made by the community.

We recognise that methods need to change to the context of the community. In some cases participatory methods with groups may be selected, in others

* Mala Htun & Laurel Weldon 2012. 'The civic origins of progressive policy change: combatting violence against women in a global perspective, 1975-2005' American Political Science



individual discussion and interviews. What FPAR methods have in common is that they are designed to give the strongest voice to the community and illustrate the experiences and structural barriers they experience.

As such common FPAR methods include focus group discussions (FGD), narration of personal histories and use of diaries, cognitive mapping of problems (or participatory problem structuring), power mapping, community mapping. Methods are selected that are most meaningful to the community so in a community with limited literacy imagery, graphics and oral histories may be prioritised.

Pre-research community consultations

All FPAR projects should start with community consultations before the research has been designed and commences. There may need to be a series of consultations with various stakeholders. FPAR almost always includes consultations with women in women only space to ensure that discussions of gendered power relations and of issues that may not be easy to speak about in front of men are explored.

The objectives of pre-research community consultations should include

- Gaining the support, collaboration and ownership of the community / stakeholders
- Forming a research team with community researchers
- Identifying the problem to be the focus of the project
- Designing methods for the research, questions and objectives
- Developing advocacy plans for long term change (on-going throughout research process)

Resource links

GAATW Labour Migration from a Human Rights Perspective: The story of migrant domestic workers in the Netherlands http://www.gaatw.org/FPAR_Series/FPAR_RESPECT.2010.pdf

The 'F' in FPAR

A feminist analysis is central to FPAR. While feminists have been more likely to recognise the authors personal history as relevant, feminist research is not immune from the criticisms of mainstream research. Feminist research may also privilege 'expert researchers' and much feminist research is inaccessible and not designed for advocacy and movement building.

While not all members of the research will identify as feminist, FPAR aims to empower women as advocates and authors of policy solutions thus challenging patriarchal systems.

A feminist approach ensures that gendered power relations at all levels are interrogated. A feminist approach means that we recognise and validate women's experiences and the researchers similarly share and contribute to the knowledge of gendered experience. A feminist approach means that we consider the practical barriers to women's participation in the project and take steps to ensure all are able to contribute.



Philippines



Cordillera Women's Education Action Research Center (CWEARC)

Title of Research: Indigenous Women's Participation in the Struggle against Chevron Geothermal Energy Project in Western Uma, Lubuagay, Barangay, Philippines

Researcher: Alma B. Sinumlag

Mentor: Vernie Yocogan-Diano

This research was conducted by CWEARC from August 2012 – July 2013 in Western Uma, Lubuagan, Kalinga. The Philippines is the second largest producer of geothermal electricity after the United States. In the Kalinga Province, the 100 megawatt Chevron Kalinga Geothermal Project began in 1976. In 2010, Chevron signed a farm-in agreement to develop the geothermal power plant in partnership with Guidance Management Corporation-Aragorn Power Corporation (GMC-APEC). GMC-APEC owns the concession, covering 25,682 hectares.

Indigenous people in Western Uma, Kalinga, suffered negative impacts from mining in the 1970s/80s, and indigenous women particularly are resistant to further violation of indigenous people's rights to land and resources in their ancestral domains. As a result of the research, the women of Western Uma were able to dispute Chevron's claim on indigenous people's free prior and informed consent (FPIC); and to document evidences of the important role of indigenous women in the struggle for access to natural resources. During the research period, they drafted two petitions and organised a peaceful dialogue with military troops on January 19, 2013. CWEARC and indigenous women in Kalinga launched their research result on 15 October 2013 and were featured in *Baguio Chronicle* article: "Research Highlights IP Women as Frontliners in Corporate Energisation Battles". The research findings were presented at a meeting of indigenous women: "Kalinga Indigenous Women Workshop on Corporate Energy" and used for an evidence-based position paper that gained endorsement from other indigenous communities. These indigenous women then went to the Provincial Capitol and had their position paper received by *Sangguniang Panlalawigan* (SP) office and NCIP (National Commission of Indigenous Peoples).





A journey of demystifying neutrality in research

By: Alma B. Sinumlag
CWEARC, Philippines

A journey of learning, sharing, understanding and growing

As a young activist who is pretty new in the Cordillera women's movement and being a young staff of the Cordillera Women's Education Action Research Center (CWEARC), the framework of feminist participatory action research (FPAR) in research is equally new. CWEARC uses women participatory action research (WPAR) having come from a bad experience on the divisive and confusing influence of western feminist ideas creating some setbacks in the Cordillera women's movement.

More or less, I have a deeper exposure for the participatory element of this framework when I began my activism in cultural work and eventually in my practice of grassroots media. As per my experience, being participatory is learning, enabling and working with the people including women and the young. In my past as a young activist in cultural work, my colleagues and I developed scripts and performances which reflected the realities of indigenous peoples. As a media practitioner, I wrote from the perspective of the poor, oppressed and

struggling communities.

When I first heard of FPAR, I thought it was all about gendered perspective in research. However, during the Regional (7-country trainings) conducted by Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD), I came to be enlightened that this framework of research is not just about gender and sex. It also looks into the class, hence shifts power from the class point of view of women being peasant women or workers. It considers the context of women and it has a bias in favor of the poor, oppressed and marginalized women. It is about a process that enables women to participate in a non-hierarchical way compelling the facilitator or the researcher to be very keen on power relations within the community and wider social systems. I also came to realize that this framework does not detach the researcher from the participants as compared to other frameworks of research that compels researchers to be detached with the participants to justify their neutrality.

Moreover, I appreciated this framework being integrated with action. It differs with most academic researches that are only conducted for the sake of increasing their knowledge banks. FPAR or women's participatory action research (WPAR), as I learned is a process of empowerment, a tool that leads to collective actions of women and therefore a tool for building women's movements.

Other research frameworks would likely

focus in the data gathered more than the process. Using FPAR/WPAR however taught me that process is as important. From my experience, the process required the need for immersion with the community and women so as to get the best quality of data that reflect perspectives of women. The process enables active participation of women thereby giving them the ownership, not only of the result but of the whole experience. With my practice, being immersed with the women and their communities remove the barriers and apprehension, build trust and partnership and directs the research effort to movement building. In the community, I am seen as a sister, their daughter and not as an outsider. And so, it became my journey of learning, sharing, understanding and growing together.

A journey of learning

The trainings I underwent along with other young women researchers and mentors made me learn about the issues and experiences of rural, indigenous and working women on access and control to land and natural resources, living wage and decent work, peace and human rights and women's voice and democratic participation. I came to understand what fundamentalism is for indigenous women in Bangladesh and women in Pakistan. My understanding of globalization and militarism is broadened by the different and similar faces of globalization and militarization, how rural women in other

countries of Asia are oppressed by the trinity of globalization, militarization and fundamentalism, on the other hand I am enlightened on the actions of empowerment or resistance of women.

Back to my home base after each FPAR training, I felt more confident with my practice. As I facilitated the research process on the participation of indigenous women of Western Uma in the community struggle against the Chevron geothermal geothermal energy project, I felt that I learned more than they have learned from me. Immersing in the daily lives of Uma women made me part of them as I have become part of them.

A journey of sharing

This is also a journey of sharing with fellow young women researchers, mentors and with the community we are working with. During breaks from regional trainings, sharing with other participants ensued. It is a learning of good practices on the methodologies in data gathering and data analysis. It boosted my confidence to share my insights on issues and share inspiring experiences in our respective field work. Consultations with my mentor every now and then specially after fieldwork to appraise and interpret the data made me grow, too. Her rich experience in endeavors like this is always enlightening for me especially when I am in turmoil with data and I also get the needed advise in handling issues in the field.

The process of sharing our journey in the three regional trainings synthesized my 1-year experience as a young researcher. It increased my appreciation on research as CWEARC's contribution to the women's movement that I am part. My experience tells that a good process facilitates production of quality data and good interaction.

A journey of understanding

It was a journey of understanding. I came to understand rather than impose my own understanding on women issues. I became a listener rather than the talker. The experiences of the indigenous women in the defense of land, life and resources are truly inspiring for me as a young member of the Cordillera women's movement. With the activities conducted in the field like community meetings, focused group discussions, as well as key informant interviews, I can say that I did the right choice in joining the women's movement. I also became appreciative of my gender and my ethnicity as I embraced the class of indigenous peasant women that served as my teachers and source of my inspiration. I am impressed on the empowering contribution of the research activities as acknowledged by the Uma women in Western Uma and in neighboring villages.

On the other hand, it is a journey that broadened my view in connecting a local experience and situation of Western Uma

to the particular but similar situations and experiences of six other grassroots women organizations from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Kyrgyzstan, Thailand and Indonesia. My understanding on the integrated attack of militarization, globalization and fundamentalism to the human rights of grassroots women, is made more concrete and broadened.

More so, I saw in this whole experience the framework of CWEARC of putting women in the center of its community development work in the context of movement building and changing structures. The feudal-patriarchal and colonial-decadent culture against women in the Philippines is perpetuated by the semi-colonial and semi-feudal system in the country. As such, women are regarded of lesser value than men, on the other hand are exploited to contribute more profits for the business or are made to serve as ornaments for programs of economic and political value to the state and business. CWEARC's participatory approach and action-orientedness reflect on vivid stories of indigenous peasant women on the empowering contribution of CWEARC to their organizations and to them as individuals since 1987.

A continuing journey of growing

It still is a continuing journey of learning. The framework has made me grow as a researcher, as an activist and as an

indigenous woman human rights defender. Experiencing the perils of militarization in the course of field work made me firmer as a young woman development worker. My community immersion was my protection, I stood firm for the work I was doing despite the harassment and tactics to scare me by soldiers operating in the community. A soldier who is also from my tribe encouraged me to stop relating with organizations which have connections with the New Peoples Army including the Ag-agama Community Organization (AGCO) and Innabuyog Uma. That is demonization in concrete terms. With my guardians, the Uma women leaders, I confronted the soldier of every violation that their troop committed since they encamped in the village.

To end, I would like to share that taking part in this research journey strengthened my belief to a quotation from Elie Wiesel that demystifies neutrality. It says, "I swore never to be silent whenever and wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation. We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim".

My reflections as a research trainer-mentor

By: Vernie Yocogan-Diano,
CWEARC, Philippines



I learned research while doing it. A structured research orientation and training is definitely the needed beginning. I learned from experience that theoretical knowledge is useless if not practiced at all. With practice, the theory is also enriched. I also learned that theoretical knowledge may come easy but the practice could be difficult.

My experience in research began when I first worked with a human rights resource center for indigenous peoples right in the Cordillera. This was further enriched when I was based in communities and worked more closely with indigenous peasants, women and youth. My research experience then supported directly organizing and movement building. Data gathered were readily used in discussions for activists or communities. I was introduced to women's participatory action research when I became part of the indigenous women's movement in the Cordillera, being a key leader of Innabuyog, an alliance of indigenous women's organizations in the Cordillera and while being a program staff and eventually head of the Cordillera Women's Education Action Research Center (CWEARC). It was when I was in the women's movement that my experience in research was more systematized.

The Cordillera indigenous women's movement does not characterize itself as feminist. This is from an experience that the orientation the women's movement applied were filled with western feminist

ideas that almost ruined the long work in women's movement building. The feminist ideas bore an anti-male content being over-emphatic on men as the cause of women's oppression and female supremacy than building solidarity in the community. The use of feminist ideas failed to look into the structural cause of women's oppression, it failed to look into the power relations.

When we used feminist participatory action research (FPAR) as framework in this APWLD effort, the content is clear in integrating sex, gender and class; traces the roots of women's oppression and gender inequality to social structures and systems, context-based and provides a historical perspective, intersects social conditions and ultimately empowering or liberating for women specially the marginalized and excluded sectors but least heard in decision-making, public affairs including in sharing of benefits. In FPAR, we also contextualized the application of democracy and inclusiveness as principles to support empowerment of women but at the same time taking precautions that these principles are used to allow the creeping of power structures.

The APWLD-initiated evidence-based advocacy that employed FPAR provided an opportunity for me as a research mentor and trainer to share my knowledge and practice to young women researchers who are involved in women's movement building of rural, indigenous and

migrants women. Being a mentor-trainer, I found it empowering and inspiring as we were conscious in breaking gaps between the trainers and mentors with the young women researchers and created an open sharing of knowledge and experience. In the conduct of three trainings, the development of each of the young woman researcher was observed. The evaluation of the final FPAR training acknowledged the confidence that each young researcher gained- they were more expressive and not as dependent to their mentors to speak for them like in the first two trainings. The design of the trainings was prepared in such a way that the varying levels of experiences of the participants are bridged. Some are new in research while some are more experienced. The establishment of respect and rapport provided a comfortable environment of learning. The young researcher found each exercise engaging. In between the FPAR trainings is the practice and immersion of the young researchers in their own research projects. Hence, the next training was an anticipated event to share their new learnings in the field. On the part of the trainers, we also gained insights on a better organization of the training topics.

Nepal



Women forum for Women Nepal (WOFOWON)

Title of Research: *The situation of Women Working in Entertainment Sectors in Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, Lalitpur – Nepal*

Researcher: Anisha Luintel
Mentor: Srijana Pun

In 2008, the Supreme Court of Nepal issued a verdict and procedural guidelines giving protection against economic and sexual exploitation to women and girls in the entertainment sector. The directive has not been implemented. Entertainment work is not fully recognised as work by the state, so women who work in dance bars, duet restaurants, cabin restaurants, massage parlors and open restaurants in urban Nepal are vulnerable to exploitation and earn far below minimum wage. WOFOWON worked together with women who work or have worked in the entertainment sector in the cities of Kathmandu, Ghaktapur and Lalitpur. 400 women participated in the research, 69% of whom are from ethnic groups.

Due to the research, women working in the entertainment sector gained a collective awareness of their women human rights leading to a formalised women's movement on this issue. They are now able to take a stand to get recognition of their work, and assert the right to work with dignity. They established a trade union and initiated the formation of the committee by themselves. They had the initiative to form a Cultural Campaign Group to change the negative attitudes of society towards their work. To ensure the sustainability of their Cultural Programme, they initiated the "1 Rupee Campaign". The launch of the nationwide cultural campaign was done at an open stage in Kathmandu with was observed by 2,000 people. Women workers are trying to establish their identity in a unique way and creating pressure on stakeholders to provide them with legal protection and recognition of their work. Many women workers now want to take legal action regarding the violence perpetrated against them by reporting their cases to the newly established Trade Union, With advocacy work, they now gained support from the National Women Commission on the recognition of their work.



Mentor and Researcher's Refections

By: Srijana Pun
Anisha Luintel

On Prior Knowledge

MENTOR: I did not have any knowledge about the research before the research. I was unaware about the factual reasons why women migrate and come to cities and also about how their realities are embedded in every social and political form and what sort of lifestyles they have, what are the problems and challenges in their family. Before the documentation program of APWLD had come into my work and life, I did not have much information about working by deeply understanding the inner desires and feelings of women from feminist thinking. But after the research, I have gained knowledge about what really are women's rights, what are their aspirations, desires and how do they want to forward their lives, what are the things they want and how much have they understood and felt about their rights, and despite of what kinds of violence and exploitation, women are forwarding their lives. This has made me gain wholesome knowledge about the situation and it made me realize that many campaign based works are yet to be done with feminist thought. It has also increased my mental strength that now I can take into consideration the things like free mobility of women as well as every aspect related to women, evaluate them in a feminist



frame and be able to face problems and challenges.

RESEARCHER: I was a student and was volunteering in a youth organization before the APWLD Documentation Program came into my work as well as life. I wanted to do something in society. Living in a society where people are not equal, with a lot of gap between rich and poor, so called upper and lower class, touchable and untouchables, I was not comfortable with the injustice imposed by social institutions, structures, rituals, religion, superstitious beliefs, etc. Many people always have less access to everything than the others. And women, having born in either situation always have less access in comparison to their male counterparts in family, society, state, as a whole; dominated and restricted in many ways. Being a girl, I had faced the discrimination in direct and indirect practices in the society. The situation bothered me and used to think this should be ended. But I didn't how. The society seemed problematic in multiple dimensional. I was not being able to figure out a way to put an end to the visible unfair culture and situation in the society. Then, the affiliation with WOFOWON and the documentation program of APWLD came together into my life.

Is FPAR new for you? What is your knowledge of FPAR before the research?

MENTOR: The research is totally



new for us. Before the research, I used to think, women also don't understand about violence and so they are making themselves backward; that's why giving them orientations will solve all the problems. Had a habit of conducting programs without getting to the depth of any problem. But starting to do the research by being affiliated with APWLD, I feel that in every sector of women, structures of society and patriarchal thinking have controlled over all the rights as well as body and work of women and have made women backward. So, the issues of women of every sector should be viewed from a feminist thinking and only should be brought to conclusion.

RESEARCHER: Yes, FPAR was new for me. I only had theoretical knowledge about researches, some of the methodologies, data, survey, the theoretical framework, etc but did not have practical knowledge. In my understanding, participatory research meant a research with the direct participation of the community being researched about. I had learned about feminism as a lens that helps to see and analyze the underlying structures in the society, institutions, language, and literature and to find out how women have been imposed as the second gender and discriminated. But I did not know that a research can be done in a feminist framework. The second training helped me understand FPAR for the first time.

The knowledge that guides their practice

MENTOR: The original knowledge that guides my practice firstly is my understanding and thinking. After this, having attended various trainings has increased the capacity of critically describing realities of things.

As the work of women is not given the value of labor, through WOFOFON, we were working to provide the value of work, by uniting women workers, discussion and interaction workshops with various stakeholders and related institutions are organized and various mass awareness programs are conducted to raise and recognize the issues of women workers. And during the research, the programs

were conducted by recognizing the issues of women by the process of evaluating how women have been migrated, what is their family backgrounds, how was their past and present. Now we will also be working by deeply analyzing the life stories of women and cross comparing the answers given by women in the survey questionnaires and the answers given by stakeholders during interviews.

RESEARCHER: Personal experience, learning from home and the field of study were the original source of knowledge that guided my thinking and understanding and practice alongside. It has changed. I used to think, every person if they work at individual level, can help make a change in society. But only after being associated with WOFOFON, I have realized the importance of team/group work and collective movement. The research has also promoted the deep understanding of the issues of women workers in the entertainment sector and has directly helped in raising the issues more effectively.

Personal change

MENTOR: After the research, there have been many changes at organizational level as well as personal level. There has been a capacity building in understanding the things that should be considered while doing a research. I have understood that while working for the rights of marginalized people, first of all, their real problems should be found

out. The research has brought a change or increment in my skill of evaluating and understanding what are the things that actually effect the violation of women's human rights and labor rights. Now, knowing about the real experiences of women in their lives has been a strong source of knowledge that is guiding me to forward my work.

RESEARCHER: I did not know about women working in the informal and entertainment sector. But I knew there was a negative stigmatization towards them and their work in the society as the media also portrays them negatively. If it was a year ago, if I knew that someone was working in a dance bar or a dohori restaurant, I would have said, really! Why? It is not a safe place; wouldn't you like to do some other work? But the thinking has drastically changed with the process of learning during the research. Now I'm friends with the women who I feel like my sisters and I speak up for their right to work. During the process of research, I got to meet many new people, listen from them and the learning through the research has been knowledge for my life.

New knowledge

MENTOR: I have gained the knowledge that to solve the problems of women, there should be a feminist thinking, and a new learning that to face the challenges of women, women themselves should be made aware to move forward to get

rights. It also has made me learn that every woman should be viewed as equal to men as well as other women. I have also gained the skill of bringing forth the stories of real experiences of women in their lives and going to the community and understanding them and their realities. I gained new information about the real lifestyles and the reason behind them being back grounded is the lack of proper law addressing the labor in the sector.

Through the research, knowing the humiliation from their families and the condition of childhood of women had been a new learning among the all round violence being experienced by women in daily lives; and what women have wanted in the present situation has been clear for me. With this new learning, it has made me think that women labors should be more effectively united and more pressure should be created to pressurize the government to formulate proper law.

RESEARCHER: Doing the research all along has been a learning process and an emotional journey. Participating in the second regional training on documentation, various legal and other trainings along with other programs of WOFOWON with research activities has changed my perspective towards viewing the violation of women's human right in a right based approach. Beginning with writing the life stories of women, I had this amazing opportunity to see smiles, sadly but more tears, rage and protest,

light of independence, sense of revolution and then helplessness as well. And it was such an experience to listening to someone recalling their whole lives. Made me realize how deep rooted unnecessary patriarchal values, social structures and culture, religion, customs, ideologies all build on the grounds of this woman dominating system have brought so many unnecessary troubles, restrictions, pain in women's life and made them victims. Doing the research in feminist framework has made me clear that these structures should be brought down to upraise the condition of women in our societies.

I could gain new knowledge of existing laws, international laws, the gaps in laws, policies, existence of social discrimination against women in all fields, extreme in the informal and entertainment sector of work. It has helped me try to understand what a person is feeling, and what she wants to do about it. I have learned new skills of formulating research questionnaire, talking to people more as well as the research has also helped developing my interviewing skills.

Change in views/perspectives

MENTOR: The research has personally helped me understand how a person wants to deal with agony and problems in her life and how she have pressed the pain of having her rights violated constantly, deep within her hearts. It has been an important learning from feminist perspective that if the women start expressing their feelings outside then the discrimination imposed to

the whole class of women, making women back grounded, can be put to an end. It has also helped in searching the realities of women in-depth. It has also helped in understanding and generating ideas on how the problems of women can be solved from a feminist thinking. The program has shown a path to forward other programs to change the social rituals that have been violating women's rights by making this issue an issue of identity, access and the subject as an agenda at policy making levels and addressing it with changes in policies.

RESEARCHER: It has increased my personal understanding about the issues of women working in entertainment sector in Nepal. I have been inspired in my life by seeing how even by going through such hardships in their lives, women have constantly struggled and are so up to fight for their rights. I have developed a sense of immense respect to the women who have had the guts to leave behind the violence and exploitation back home, came to completely new places like Kathmandu and courageously started working for themselves, I respect them even more who are working day and night for themselves and their children. However, I also realized the necessity of decentralization by feeling hazardous effects of centralization of resources and facilities in city areas in the lives of people living at remote villages.

MENTOR: The research program has brought conceptual clarity on right based

thinking to change the society and increase awareness and made me feel and learn that to bring forward a sustainable movement, we should also pay attention towards increasing self capacity alongside.

RESEARCHER: Perspective wise, the program has shaped my vision towards analyzing things from feminist perspective. Superficial changes in policies cannot alone bring changes at grass root level, an intensive awareness program and an evidence based advocacy is necessary for this. It has been a learning and learning by doing process. I have learned that women's voices should be raised more strongly, and we should fight more collectively to end the situation of violence.

Personally, I was inspired by meeting prominent feminists; women right activists from various parts of the world who are dedicated to work for women's rights. Knowing that problems of women differ from one country to another but basically are the same and realizing that through APWLD, wide waves for change have been moving in the eight countries at the same time is a more inspiring feeling. I am hoping to learn more about analyzing the findings of research in the next training.



Vietnam



Centre for Social Research and Development (CSRD)

Title of Research: Resettlement of Women from the River
Community Displaced by an ADB-funded Hydropower Plant
in Phu Loc District in Vietnam

Researcher: Tran Chi Thoi

Mentor: Nancy McColl Bowen

Construction of the Ta Trach Reservoir forced 3,978 people, Van Kieu minority and Kinh, to resettle to other areas of Phu Loc District in central Vietnam in 2004. They have struggled to rebuild their lives. One resettlement site is a hillside with 20-40% incline. Agreements that each household would be given at least one hectare of land for accommodation and agriculture, as well as some forested land, have not been met 10 years later.

The FPAR with women of Phu Loc District has significantly strengthened women's voice in decision makings and led to the birth of an organised women's movement at the local level. Before the research, women in Phu Loc district were rarely involved in any decision making process and none of them had heard of women's rights or human rights. Through the project they decided to establish a Women's Union. The Women's Union meets regularly had discussions on many aspects of women's human rights violations and articulating solutions for the change they want. In one of the meetings, the Women's Union had an initiative to invite the female deputy of the Department of Justice in Phu Loc District to teach them how to write a complain letter. With this knowledge, women are able to lead the other community members to make collective actions to address their situation. Currently, many families in the hamlets are drafting complaint letter on the lack of productive land in the resettlement area.



REFLECTIONS OF THE RESEARCHER

By: Tran Chi Thoi

Personal learning

This research project has taught me a great deal about human rights. Prior to this, I did not know much about human rights, because in Vietnam, the authorities do not like people to discuss this topic.

After attending APWLD training courses in Nepal (9/2012) and Thailand (12/2012), I have learned how to conduct research using the feminist, participatory approach, and I have seen the positive and practical effects on the women and the community. I did not know FPAR before I started the project. I understand now how effective it can be.

The positive effects of the APWLD training have spread to my office's staff and volunteers who have assisted me on community visits and in training sessions. They also have used the research tools, and have learned about human rights and the violations which have occurred during the resettlement process.

I now understand that human rights violations are occurring throughout Vietnam. I also know that human rights are violated frequently in many countries around the world. Each country has different issues, and different levels and forms of violations.



Today, in Vietnam, more hydropower plants are built, and millions of people living beside the rivers are losing their land and their livelihoods. The Vietnamese government restricts their right to express their opinion, the right of the media to inform everyone about what is happening, and the right to meet together to discuss their grievances in a non-violent way. Concern about Vietnam's human rights record has been expressed internationally as recently as April 17 2013 at a meeting of the European Parliament when a Resolution was passed calling on the Vietnamese Government to respect human rights, and to restore freedom of expression including internet freedom (Source: <http://www.rfa.org>).

Raising the awareness of Phu Loc resettlement women about their human rights is a small but worthwhile action I have been able to take to improve the lives of Vietnamese women.



Thailand



Indigenous Women of Northern Thailand (IWNT)

Title of Research: The rights of indigenous Women in Natural Resources Management in Local Authorities Organisation (LAO) in Houi Ai Kang and White Hmong Community, Northern Thailand

Researcher: Kulsuwarak Poyee

Mentor: Chatchaya Pongsopa

Gender inequality remains a large problem among indigenous communities in Northern Thailand. It is reflected in political structures and political participation that are not welcoming to women's voices and prioritise those of men.

This research among Hmong and Karen peoples from the Ban Huay E-kang Village and Ban Pa Pai Villages in Mae Wang District, Chiang Mai Province of Northern Thailand. It is part of a movement that strives for indigenous women's participation in local political activity at, but not limited to, the sub-district administration organization where they: gain knowledge of their basic rights and Thai civics; participate in voting in all elections; have an interest in politics; participate in the establishment of groups that support and promote women; voice political opinions; and join in policy advocacy.

In both research communities women have organised themselves into different women's groups that give them a certain autonomy from men. Both Ba Pai and Huay E Kang women's groups have large participation, and Huay E Kang also has a women's savings group and a child care group. Importantly, all groups can feed information into the main community meetings and decision making processes.

These women's groups provide mentoring or support for members and non-members, eg accompanying Indigenous women to the local hospital where they may face racial and gender discrimination.



From a Research Assistant, then become a real Feminist

By: Kulsuwarak Poyee,
IWNT, Thailand



Before I had conducted this research, I was a research assistant that only collecting and gathering data for the research from the research's target groups. Even I had learnt about PAR when I was studying in my bachelor degree in Community Development majoring, I could only understand about the method.

When I had started to work with IWNT and I known that I would take responsibility in FPAR, not only wondered that what is FPAR, "Is it the name of research topic?", but also, had struggle in IWNT's transition period, because the previous research coordinator had severe sickness (Cancer) and she quitted job without anytime to transfer any information and train me. So, I as a researcher coordinator and our community researchers feel so confused and had no confident to carry on.

After I participated in the second FPAR regional workshop with APWLD and I had chances to meet and exchange the knowledge and various valuable experiences with others organizations within this region countries, I gained more understanding, impression and confident to continually implement the research in my community. I went back to community and started to discuss with our community researchers to make mutual understanding and re-design our research plan. All of us felt more confident and encouragement to continue our research.

While we were conducting the research with many methods; questionnaire survey,

Interview, and focus group discussion, I realized that the most important feeling that I had been gained from women in community was "TRUSTING". From women's trusting as I was their friend and family, they felt acquaint to talk about their opinion, their true feeling, their personal issues. We had felt that we shared the same story and the same mind, and then the participation and ownership from the women to our research would also come at the same time of trusting.

Another important big change in my perspective was I had more interesting and focusing on women's participation in every occasion that I had been participated. In the past, I just think only about me myself not as women representative, but now I realize the women's participation is very important. I felt that in every public forum should have more women participants. In every meeting/forum/workshop, I always speak on behalf of women's representative, especially IP women. I try to pass on all women's opinions and concerns towards every issues. I need to support and strengthen the women's voices, so sometime I play my role as coordinator to coordinate and provide the chances for women in community to speak up in the public. I wish that their voices will strongly enough to be heard.

Moreover, I found that one of FPAR technic is very useful for our organization. It is power mapping. It can be used for every project, I can easily identify that which

one are the key person and which one are very supportive our work. So that made me work easily, smoothly, proficiently and effectively.

Indonesia



Seruni

Title of Research: Rural women claiming land rights in the military owned plantation area in Sampalan Land, West Java, Indonesia

Researcher: Fitri Ramdani

Mentor: Dewi Amelia Eka Putri

Rural people cultivated all of the Sampalan Land until the 1960s, when the Suharto regime military conflict with the Indonesian Islamic Army (DI/TII) forced people to migrate. After the conflict, the military did not return the land to peasants and instead developed agricultural production in cooperation with rich farmers and landowners. In the 1970s several local government companies gained control of large land monopolies. The struggle of the Sampalan Land movement stems from the people's hardship and an urgent need for change. The peasant farmers formed an organisation, raised awareness and carefully set up plans for a land reclamation campaign. They formed Forum Tani Pangalengan in 2004.

Rural women experience multiple discriminations, lacking access to: *land ownership, as men head households, *agricultural capital from banks and the government, which require permission from a husband or parent, *agricultural produce and earnings, controlled by men, *village decision making, and *equal wages, earning 25% less than men. This is changing with land reclamation in Sampalan, as women see their earnings and control over resources increasing.

The FPAR has strengthened women's movement in their struggle for their land rights in Sampalan, West Java; and significantly strengthening Seruni as a membership-based feminist organisation working with grassroots rural women.

Due to the research, Seruni was able to improve their narrative on women and land rights and expanded their campaign in the national level. In some areas, such as Jambi, Riau, Sulawesi and West Java there were significant improvements and changes on the view of mainstream farmers' movement which was highly male-dominated.



Mentor and Researcher Reflection

By: Dewi Amelia Eka Putri and Fitri Ramdani

Before the research

Before the research we already do our works as activists and organizer. In doing our works we usually do what we called as social investigation, mainly by doing live-

in in a community. This social investigation conducted in order to understand the situation of communities and to draw plan of organizing. This social investigation conducted without certain methodology that is written and have time frame. Social investigation is looking at the situation of a community directly. Usually, in the process of doing social investigation we also do what we call as building contact and raising awareness.

When we think the data is enough or there is a “hot” issue that can be campaign to consolidate and organized the women, then we will have internal discussion and draw our plan.

Aside of direct social investigation, we also do our works based on call from upper organization. The call from upper organization usually came as program of organization and have time frame, such as conducting capacity building of the women member, recruiting new member to expand the organization, collecting monthly member’s dues, doing advocacy in certain issues in community or in solidarity to other community and organization and also doing mobilization.

As community organization we also have our own program and issues and supported by upper organization.

FPAR was very new to us. We don’t have any idea of research before. We knew about doing research and especially FPAR after we conducted the research and joint



APWLD training on FPAR.

Our original source of knowledge that guides our practices is come from the organization documents, education and programs. These documents come from the discussion of various grass root women's organization that involved in establishment of Seruni.

We can say participatory as our method, we always involved as many as women in every works and activity. For example, we want to do capacity building program. This program will come from members that ask to have discussion on several issues or in doing various things. Then we will discuss it in the community, identify the need and then draw the plan and execute it.

Participatory approach and talking about issues that exist in the community and draw effort together to solve it, make changes. Raising awareness, organizing and campaign make changes to the women and society.

Personal Affects

APWLD documentation program introduce about research and FPAR to us, perspectives of women human rights and feminism. We also learn about theory of change, power mapping and critical pathway as part of planning and assessment. We learnt a lot of new thing.

Now we understand on feminism, women's human right and also increased self

confident that women can do research and documentation. We also have wider look in seeing women's problem. We become more focus to women's issues.

Doing research make us understand deeper to the problems of local women. This matter educated and trained us to be more patient and discipline. Understanding the problems of women drive us to be more appreciate to the women, to what they do, they thought and their rights.

Doing research also teach us to be time discipline, have to finished works at time



and making research planning and implementation, which is very challenging. We learnt that doing research have to be discipline and make a good own note. We also learnt about the concrete condition of Sampalan Women that need to be change.

The background of the researcher, that comes from the community and involved in the struggle help in faster understanding the problems and also help to finished work faster and also more participatory.

In doing works, it's usual to us to meet with challenges. In doing this research works, we also met with challenges. Our challenges are on data that is hard to get, less detail that cause us extra work. Sometime our target respondent is not there so we need to come several time to the respondent place. Sometime the information is not based on the respondent knowledge, but from other person. So we need to contact the other person to clarify and confirm the data. Other problems, that caused also frustration is accessing data from government institution. The government institution not supportive to our research and seems like don't want to share the data to us. These problems cause us to learn about the public information act and mechanism, and try to do it. Other challenges are in data processing and writing the findings and report. From these experiences we learn that we need to keep our spirit and never surrender in effort to get data and also in process the data and also in write it down. Passion to always learn have to be always maintains.

From the research work, we understand

about research and the function of research to women and society, especially research as part of the movement and changes.

Concepts and Framework

From our research, we consider land as the vital object in rural area. Lack of access and control of land and resources especially by women have caused poverty and hard life. In our research site, majority of land controlled by Perhutani and PTPN VIII while majority of the people works as farm worker and control small scale of farm land.

During our research and also reflect in the findings, we saw the condition of women affected by land monopoly and land grabbing. Feudal patriarchal view that is rotten in rural area was also caused by feudal relation in work place of women. Women farm worker get lower paid than men and in the farm land consider as helper to her husband.

Doing observation and then continued with the documentation, we understand deeper on the problems of women. These findings confirm our view and make us stronger in doing our works.

APWLD documentation program was really useful to us. This program introduce us to research, educated us to become researcher and during the research the process educated us to be more patient and give more appreciation to women.



Kyrgyzstan



PA Shazet

Title of Research: Women's limited access to civil rights and livelihood due to unregistered and early marriage practice

Researcher: Aizhamal Bakashova

Mentor: Olga Djanaeva

Kyrgyzstan's independence in 1991 led to an economic crisis. Many people no longer can afford bride prices, and 40% of marriages post-independence are from kidnappings, which enable men to avoid paying bride prices or costs of ceremonies. Underage marriages are common particularly in rural areas. Neither forced or underage marriages are legal, and therefore marriages (many blessed in Muslim nikhah ceremonies) are not registered. In cases of divorce, women and their children are not entitled to social services, welfare, payments from former husbands, or an equal share of property.

This research was conducted by Shazet (Public Association) from Sept 2012–Sept 2013 in 5 villages, a small town in Ysyk-Ata district and 2 villages and a small town in Sokuluk district. The research result by PA Shazet and rural women was used as an advocacy tool against bride kidnapping and forced marriage. In 2012, PA Shazet jointly with other women's organisation and women-deputies of the National Parliaments successfully advocated the amendments of the Criminal Code no 155 and 156 related to the sanctions of Bride Kidnapping from 1-3 years to 5-7 years; and forced marriage with underage girls up to 5-10 years.



Young researcher and mentor reflect

By: Aizhamal Bakashova and
Olga Djanaeva



Before the research

Previously I was involved in different research activities, but documentation research experience was the first time. Trainings and consultancy of APWLD helped me at great degree as I understood the sense of evidence based documentation and got the idea what to do at what stages of the research. For example, previously I used methods of participatory rural appraisal (PRA) and I was wrong thinking that it is almost the same with FPAR. But later I recognize that FPAR is more intelligent way to see and know different issues from feminist perspective. It was discovery for me. It means that the topic of the research was unregistered marriages, we talked with communities and discussed within the organization before we got this issue to research. Frankly speaking I thought that the problem is just about women's legal right protection, but using FPAR methods and remembering about "our realities as feminist" I understood the hidden roots of this issue.

Personal effect

I had a brilliant opportunity to participate

both documentation trainings; both of them were full of information and new knowledge. I think the most important methods I got are: power mapping and critical pathways and FPAR for structural changes.

My colleagues several times said that my understanding and way of doing were changed. I suppose it is based on the cases when I insisted to change some strategies or research stages applying for training materials. I was able to conduct trainings for colleagues, partners and community leaders with the attempt to pass them knowledge I got at APWLD trainings. Hopefully I succeed as during research we were one team doing one work. Also trainings of APWLD gave me opportunity to step back and look at the whole women's' movement in Kyrgyzstan and start to talk about necessity of structural changes not just about immediate and temporary changes in daily lives. I mean we can look and use power relations in our daily lives to construct changes in society misbalance (in the angle of women's positions in the communities). Also documentation research helped me to better understand background and me. I can explain that with the fact that now I better understand why we choose the issue of unregistered marriages while it seems for many as not so serious issue. One of threats and dilemmas for me was the topic of the research itself. After training in Nepal, after question of participants like "why are you against of religious marriages?" or "don't you think

that you can apply for changing the goal, i.e. recognizing religious marriages as well as official ones?" during the induction period I conducted research with special predilection as I was in doubt whether we choose the right topic and the right goal. But again using research methods and analyzing collected information from feminist approach I became sure that the issue is not just about marriage or religion, issue about structural (or even cultural) practices which are oppressed and discriminate women. Most threatening issue is that these patriarchal norms are strengthened by religion and young women and girlchilids are main victims of such practices.

Concepts and framework

New development framework developed by APWLD helped us to better identify problems and solutions. Rural women, especially young women, usually excluded from policy debates, i.e. they stay voiceless at different important stages of their lives. During research we came to the conclusion that four key areas identified for APWLD to focus on sustainable development goals are very much correlated with each other.

Concepts presented by APWLD on gender equality and women's empowerment in creating sustainable development goals and policy needs, as well as theory of social change, helped me and Shazet to better understand how unsustainable development practices impact on

marginalized young rural women. Obtained skills in identifying gaps in the current development model of Kyrgyzstan will help top develop advocacy for marginalized young rural women and their communities in transforming this model towards more just and sustainable development.

Within our organization we came up to the conclusion that documentation should be a process of systematical collection of data and information using various methodologies for social change.

Most useful and effective concept and methodology of FPAR was a big jump in capacity building of Shazet and mine, as far as FPAR is an action which can break the distance between researchers and rural communities, thus helps to strive for social transformations. I am sure that further using of FPAR will help to develop rural women's leadership for changes in their lives.

For me it was very much interesting to learn situation of women in other countries from our international team of researchers. It was very useful to know better about APWLD and get deeper insight into BOOM program. It was completely new for me to learn the analytical tool on how sex, gender and class influence on the human rights conciseness of women. It was really useful while my research activities. Another tool of social mapping of local context in social, cultural, economical and political aspects was also useful for

better understanding of globalization, militarization, fundamentalism and their implication on women's' human rights. It was very important for me to learn about human right framework: the scope of the basic human rights, concepts and principles, key international human rights instruments and to obtain skills to analyze – who are HR duty bearers? Who are HR holders? Who are the violators? But while I tried to use this tool in the communities it was rather difficult for women to voice their rights and to identify who are real violators and see linkages of various rights and power structures which make the violations happen.

In fact it was very exiting experience for me, I feel increasing of my leadership skills and I was really empowered by having an opportunity to share my knowledge and skills with PA Shazet and communities. With our small group of young researches we feel very inspired as we are sure that we managed to unpack very delicate, but at the same time very social serious issue in terms of violations of women's human rights – the issue of violations that create early unregistered marriages and to reveal most vulnerable group – rural girls and young women.



Pakistan



Community Healthy Advocacy Network At Nation (CHANAN)

Title of Research: From Domestic Servant to Domestic Workers: Human Rights Violations of Women Domestic Workers in Pakistan

Researcher: Sunnia Sadiq
Mentor: Alyas Rahmat

The majority of domestic workers in Pakistan earn less than one dollar a day. This is 3 times less than others doing similar work. Survey data from Punjab Province shows 56% of domestic workers earn PKR 1000-2000 (10-20USD) per month. Domestic workers sustain families. Due to a poor economy, the majority of their spouses are out of work. In Punjab 80% of domestic workers are Christian women working for Muslim employers. They face religious as well as gender-based discrimination. Home-based work means that abuses are hidden.

While National Policy on Home Based Workers sets suggested standards for conditions in domestic work, it is ineffectual until Provincial governments pass legislation and implement policy. Punjab Province is the only province to have done this thus far. In 2012, the Punjab government passed the Punjab Home-Based Workers Act, and in March 2013 the Punjab government adopted the Home-Based Workers Policy. The Punjab Act and Policy include the major elements of the Draft National Policy for Home-Based Workers in Pakistan, recognizing home-based workers as ‘workers’ entitling them to social protections available to other workers - protection facilities in the event of sickness, maternity, unemployment, injury or death, as well as legal backing for settlement of any labour disputes.

CHANAN conducted the research from Aug 2012 – July 2013 in 5 Punjab districts: Lahore, Multan, Faisalabad, Sialkot and Kasur.



Deepening My Understanding on the Protection of Women Domestic Workers

By: Sunnia Sadiq
Chanan, Pakistan



Before APWLD Documentation program I was doing work as an activists on the advocacy of the women domestic workers. I was not very much familiar with their issues and their rights at their work place. FPAR is new for me and my knowledge about FPAR before was to involve women in research to find out the accurate data.

This research makes me able to understand the different kind of issue's faced by the women domestic workers and enhance my understanding level as well. APWLD FPAR Programme introduce me how to design tools for research, how to conduct research, what questions need to ask and how should be ask. This program brought new information for me and made me enthusiastic to know the number of domestic workers and their situations and challenge they faced. Not only that, it has also built on my communication skills and confident too.

The Rights-Based Approach of FPAR:

From Domestic Servant to Domestic Workers

By: Alyas Rahmat,
CHANAN, Pakistan



I was doing work in the NGO world since 1999 when I was a student of Class 9th and I was always very passionate for the empowerment of women and youth. I was involve with some other organization for some research activities and project for the age of student.

By faith I am Christian, and we are minority in Pakistan, being a minority and Christian there are lot of human rights issues directly linked with Christian in Pakistan, and I am also belonging to the Poor family background, my mother and sisters were also domestic worker and a lot of my relative are akso domestic workers, I have always observed and see the issues of domestic working in my family which always force and encourage me to work for the empowerment of domestic workers.

From 2009 my organization CHANAN

also started working for the human rights of women domestic worker in Pakistan, as this group of women found to be much neglected in all fare of life.

Basically research and the research-based interventions are not new for me but the FPAR is new for me, as this is related to the all kind of work and efforts for the women empowerment is directly with Feminist Participatory Action Research FPAR. FPAR gives me lot of new knowledge and capacity not only the research point of view but how to take action on the basis of research on women issues. The most interesting thing for me in the FPAR is Monitoring and Evaluation in the reference of FPAR as below.

The APWLD FPAR program is fully equipped with Research Tools and Techniques, Practical work as well as what kind of Action and How to take action after strong interaction with community via research activities and methodologies. There are lot of tools and techniques are new for me i.e. power mapping exercise is very important, that is useful for other programs. The four dimension theory and the M&E method is also very important and work a lot to the FPAR and other other organizational work in future.

This research and the programme's ca-

capacity building trainings affects me directly, I was also working for the empowerment of women, but I have never use the word Feminist as I was not clear enough, But After APWLD Program came into my life Now I always feel myself as FEMINIST, and introduce at many places that I AM FEMINIST.

Another major change was, before this research my organization use the term Domestic Servants, as the common term used in Pakistan. But due to FPAR, we gained more understanding on the rights of women domestic workers and now consistently using the term domestic working women.



Bangladesh



Kapaeeng Foundation

Title of Research: *Justice Delayed; Justice Denied: Sexual violence against indigenous women and girls in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and their access to justice*

Researcher : Bipasha Chakma

Mentor: Trimita Chakma

There have been no prosecutions of perpetrators of sexual violence against indigenous Jumma women and girls since the 2008 establishment of formal courts in the three hill districts of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).

Indigenous people make up half the population of the CHT. In the 1970s their calls for regional autonomy were rejected, and the government started a trans-migration programme that settled 400,000 Bengali people in the CHT, displacing indigenous people from their land and aiming to assimilate them into Bengali society. Troops deployed to counter armed elements of the indigenous movement. 1/3 of the Bangladeshi army remains deployed in the CHT. 96% of perpetrators of sexual violence in the CHT are Bengali settlers. Of those, 10% are military personnel. There is provision for traditional courts to operate in the CHT, but they lack jurisdiction over criminal cases. All cases of sexual violence in formal courts have met significant barriers, and women lack access to justice.

The study looks at cases from Jan 2007-July 2013 in Chittagong Hill Tracts.



FPAR is essential to grow indigenous women rights movement and to combat against VAIW in CHT

By Bipasha Chakma



Although I have been doing research on many development issues from the very beginning of my professional career, Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR) is really new concept as well as frameworks to me. It gave me a new idea, new exposure, solidarity to women and a deep understanding and knowledge when I started a practice at grassroots level. My motivations for FPAR and Sexual violence were inspired by my heart to work for indigenous women, practical work experience in the community development sector in last 10 years at national and international level.

One of the biggest issues in the CHT as well other districts of Bangladesh is the increasing sexual violence against indigenous women and the absolute impunity perpetrators enjoy due to lack of access to justice. The FPAR helped me lot to analyze actual root causes of VAIW, and the gaps of access to justice for indigenous women in CHT. Moreover, FPAR methodology guided me to understand the principles of inclusion, participation, action, social change when I worked with the research community in person. I got an opportunity to attend in a series of training program organized by APWLD on the research methodology, documentation, feminism, patriarchy so on which assisted me to realize a profound knowledge on the particular research issue. As my research is a part of APWLD's FPAR program in 8 countries, I learnt many development issues n sufferings from other countries simultaneously while we attended together

in different programs of APWLD.

While the sexual violence against indigenous women is a widespread issue in CHT, there is a very few data that have been recorded previously on the issue. I believe this FPAR research methodology can be a pioneer to keep data systematically on sexual violence at local levels by media and local women rights activists/ NGOs. Simultaneously, the FPAR methodology helped to be empowered the local women who were involved in the research process in FGDs, individual interviews, data collection which is absolutely needed to CHT women to grow up their movement towards establishing their rights.

One of the aims of FPAR is to change systems and structures to improve the lives of marginalized women. The concept of 'Structural Change' to structures and systems of oppression particularly on patriarchy and the synthesis of patriarchy with globalization, fundamentalisms and militarism is very much relevant to overall situation of indigenous women in CHT, because the indigenous women are predominantly living in remote areas under heavy militarization CHT. The women are often being attack by the Bengali settlers and government's security forces due to land grabbing and gender based violence. Also they are particularly vulnerable to such violence within their own communities. Domestic violence against indigenous women is increasing, and the patriarchal society is the root

cause of domestic violence.

FPAR allows being open and encouraging showing solidarity instead of concentrating only on only research topic. In this research process participation of the research community was central organizing a day-long pre-research induction workshop with the research community including human rights defenders working in women's rights issues, particularly dealing with violence against women (VAW) in CHT. The concept of FPAR was introduced to the research community at the workshop. The participants were engaged in the power-mapping and critical path analysis exercise which formulated the basis of this FPAR in using research particularly in it advocacy work. They identified the significant stakeholders to discuss on the issue from CHT. FPAR in CHT created a strong bondage and connection among researcher and the research stakeholders while applying its tools and techniques at grassroots level. The community people became beneficial gaining knowledge from a practical exercise on some of FPAR tools.

Personally, I became a feminist analyzing the realistic situation of gender, patriarchy, theories and definition of feminism from various APWLD trainings. It was an amazing opportunity to meet global feminists in CSW57 session in UN head quarters NY while I attended there in person as a part of APWLD team. This experience enriched my experience to continue a lobby and advocacy for my indigenous women at national and international levels.

Overall, FPAR helped me to be closure with my community women. It created a commitment inside me that I will continue my optimum supports to marginalized peoples whose lives are defined by struggle and survival in whether from the remote or in city from the perspective of feminist.

I gained a good quality of knowledge about my community when I was roaming around CHT for the purpose of research. The analytical power on subtle views has been enhanced, also the FPAR made me empower and confidence to carry on next activities on women's rights.



The journey of FPAR needs to continue for marginalised women

By: Trimita Chakma



The issue of violence against indigenous women in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) is not new but evidence based documentation in this area has been very limited. As an indigenous women's rights activist I was interested in an evidence based research methodology to document the cases of sexual violence of indigenous women of CHT and came across APWLD's Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR) opportunity under the Breaking out of Marginalization (BOOM) program.

Although I was familiar with the concept of feminism and traditional research methodologies, FPAR was new to me. I had a good understanding of the issue of sexual violence against indigenous women and girls in the CHT and the political agenda behind it, but I was struggling to figure out how we should approach to combat it.

After the second regional training, FPAR seemed like a perfect methodology for approaching this issue, as the purpose of FPAR is not limited to only evidence based documentation but also to help empower the women involved in the research, grow women's rights movements and to advance women's human rights- which is much needed for the indigenous women of the CHT.

The interpretation of 'Structural Change' which aims to change structures and systems of oppression patriarchy and the fusion of patriarchy with globalization, fundamentalisms and militarism is very much applicable to the situation

of the marginalized indigenous women of CHT, given their situation of living in a colonized enclave of decolonized Bangladesh, where they are violently targeted based on their gender, ethnicity, religion and economic situation on a regular basis.

One of features of FPAR that I found intriguing and different from other research methodologies was is how it gives agency to the participants of the research instead of treating them as mere subjects, in the process of which it empowers the participants to foster movement building and take collective action. Our research experience with the indigenous women of CHT helped us to take collective steps to identify stakeholders involved in the issue and their roles, and build an advocacy plan for bringing long-term structural change. But above all it helped strengthen solidarity amongst us which is essential for giving momentum to an existing movement. Some of tools of FPAR framework such as the power mapping exercise, critical path analysis and theory of change helped us enhance our strategic skills. Using these tools in our local communities has been an empowering experience both for the research team and the participants which helped generate new knowledge.

On a personal level it has been a rewarding experience for me to take this initiative with APWLD, be involved with the research as a mentor, observe the researcher grow to become an active indigenous women's rights defender and to see the outcome of the research work getting attention at a national level.

Through the training process the theories and definition of feminism has become clearer to me which has helped me reconfirm to identify myself as a feminist.

Getting to know the APWLD team, the research teams from seven other countries and their work has been motivational. I believe the solidarity that was built amongst us through this journey is unparalleled.

This experience has also given us the opportunity to meet the women holding high level positions in UN mechanisms. Their experience and depth of knowledge on women's issues around the world, their humility despite their powers and active commitment to improve the lives of women has been inspirational.

Overall, this FPAR experience helped me understand how to approach women's rights issues from the feminist perspective and link it to structural changes. I understood that to improve women's lives we need to shift the power dynamics of women in the economic, social, environmental and political spaces. Violence against marginalized women is a global issue and an area that needs much work. The journey of FPAR needs to continue for marginalized women to break gender inequalities and create more balanced societies.

