

IRU Connected

Indian Cooperative Network for Women (ICNW) - Working Women's Forum (India) (WWF-I)



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Our latest breaking news is ...

- Informal – formal sector continuum
 - Poor women members bestowed with “Corona Micro-entrepreneur Warrior’s Award”
 - Transformed from informal sector poor moving into the pre- formal sector





Our latest breaking news is ...

- **The International Network for Women in Cooperatives** with 1,000 members has been convened by WWF-ICNW to make people more aware of gender in cooperatives
 - Strengthen women’s leadership in the cooperative sector globally around the world in policy making.
- **Poor women control & create own supply chain during pandemic, lowest denominator in market**
 - Example, at Adiramapatnam Fisherwomen’s coastal cooperative branch
 - Link produce to market
 - Producer ownership empowers women to choose services and activities.



Description & Figures

Formation/Origin of WWF-ICNW

- **1970:** The club of Rome announced
 - “zero growth” trickledown theory
 - Poor growth rates.
- **1975:** 1st World Conference on Women.
 - Organized poor women in the informal sector
 - Long march to empower voiceless women in unorganized sector.
- **1978:** The Working Women’s Forum (India) formed with 800 women members.
- **1981:** (a) The Indian Cooperative Network for Women initiated, Promoted by WWF (I).



Description & Figures

- Provided more than 5 billion U.S\$ in small/petty loans to micro entrepreneurs (informal sector workers) in 276 occupations and enterprises (rural/urban) (90 % repayment) in 14 locations of South India.
- In touch with Cooperatives in about 60 countries.
- 200 full time staff, 90 part time staff in our H.Q., and volunteers/leaders in the 14 cooperative branches.

Services	Trainings
Credit assistance	Cooperative training
Micro-insurance	Financial Literacy
Shares	Leadership/communication
Fixed Deposits	Empowerment
Savings	Gender sensitization including gender based violence
Support service to Orphanages & Children's Home (CSR)	Health care
	Skill training

Current Situation

Concept:

- To achieve sustainable development poor women in the Informal sector, **WWF & ICNW** created a counter culture which challenged the pillars of Indian tradition in its manifestation as related to gender.
- Working conditions of poor women in Informal Sector – culturally different, powerlessness for women enhanced by the barriers of **caste, class and gender**.
- Demonstrating grassroots women’s, leadership in cooperatives through social protection, alternative financial inclusion, independent entrepreneurship, accessible credit and decent employment.
- **Growth Process: Gender and Equity Model** - highlights the transformation of atomized powerless women workers mobilized into a mass platform, as co-operators, trade unionists.



Current Situation

The ICNW/WWF model Process – Stages Accumulation at Base: Poor Women are Efficient

- Stage I: Moving away from indebtedness- WWF/ICNW credit strategy
- Stage II: Diversification/growth of enterprises, household food security, improved quality of living
- Stage III: Asset creation, education standards, sanitation, housing, social status, dignity, community leadership / management roles / generating civic demand
- Stage IV: Leadership by merit, Organizers represented as Office bearers and Governing Board (i.e. many poor fish sellers/fruit sellers are even Vice Presidents today).
- Innovative financial inclusion program



Current Situation

- WWF/ ICNW was able to make poor women members socially/financially independent.
- The WWF-ICNW, is a social movement and concerned with gender and poverty for women's development,
 - Where they proved if poor women are provided financial assistance, training alongwith other holistic inputs/opportunities,
 - They would not be poor anymore but move towards success.



Cooperation with IRU Members

- President, WWF/ICNW has been nominated (2016 -2018), as the 1st ever Gender Diversity Representative in 50 years on the Raiffeisen Board.
- In 2018, she has been elected the first women board member of the Global Board in 50 years of the International Raiffeisen Union, (IRU)
- WWF-ICNW has been the only successful women only cooperative organization in 50 years to be simultaneously elected to Senior positions both the oldest and largest global cooperative unions/alliances IRU and International Cooperative Alliance (ICA).





What does IRU mean to you?

- Describe in up to 3 words what you associate with IRU:
 - IRU is the true supporter of “Cooperation” Vs corporatization.
 - As the first “Women’s only Cooperative ” member of IRU (25 years ago) we value their network for our visibility globally.
 - The IRU is the first cooperative network that truly values Grassroots cooperatives.





Expectations

- What are your 3 expectations from IRU?
 - Strengthen the independent cooperative movement.
 - Spread higher the Raiffeisen values of spreading benefits to poor, women etc.,
 - Continue the networking of mass cooperatives in the independent sector with strong outcomes.



Let's exchange!



Q & A

Thank you very much!



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