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Topic 2: Empowerment of women as a transformative strategy for poverty eradication

***“The Core Methodology of Social Mobilisation in
Women’s Empowerment as a Transformative Strategy
For Poverty Eradication”***

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*** The views expressed in this paper, which has been reproduced as received, are those of the author and do not necessary represent those of the United Nations.**

1. THE EGM'S FRAME

The Aide Memoire situates the EGM's frame as a particular focus in the UN Commission on the Status of Women's work programme's priority themes for the period 2002 – 2006. This frame is derived from several reinforcing and interpenetrating strategic themes:

- i) Women and poverty, and the “ empowerment of women is a critical factor in the eradication of poverty” (Platform for Action, Beijing Conference on Women)

- i) “ Women’s empowerment ” being a protean concept with many meanings. Hence, it is a compulsion to clarify the notion of women’s empowerment focusing on its transformative nature.

- ii) It is essential to identify the key elements and principles of empow

sought to network South Asian action researchers, scholars, statesmen, activists and community leaders to focus on South Asian problems by going straight to the ground, participatory action resear

It is this over 25 year quest which has now entered the mainstream discours

- v) It presupposes a level of empowerment which liberates poor women from all dependencies and which confers them with new autonomous identities as part of mainstream civil society.
- vi) The empowering and liberating process is primarily value-driven and underpinned by an awareness of spirituality, ethics and culture.
- vii) Gender equity and equality are an essential dimension.
- viii) It is premised on building up knowledge bases by poor women based on positive elements in their own knowledge system and access to the many pools of modern knowledge.
- ix) It should be cost effective and nationally affordable.
- x) It should be a learnable and trainable ensemble of key elements w

Some of these elements will be visually illustrated through transparencies.

- i) Availability of trained External Facilitator. Who goes to live among the Poor with “ empty pockets “.
- ii) The External Facilitator enters the village and engages with the poorest of the poor.
- iii) In dialogue with poor groups, collectively and jointly begin a process of investigating the social reality of the village, which means analytical studying of consumption patterns, production relations, contradictions, knowledge systems, values, culture.
- iv) Small collective actions, followed by collective reflection – a graduating process, which continues through all the points below:
- v) Group Savings starts with formation of small groups and goes on until they begin to understand the new dynamics

- xi) Human development processes – health, education, housing. Local government, environmental, gender-equity, etc., are catalysed over time.
- xii) Asset bases improve and increase all round.
- xiii) Multiplication of the process into new areas. Donor support becomes useful.
- xiv) Over time, the poor enter the mainstream and demonstrate a capacity to negotiate

there, for meeting the costs of expanded programmes of Social Mobilisation as a fundamental component in the structure of the programmes.

- iv) Immediately identify institutional and other capacities for training trainers in the Core Methodology of Social Mobilisation and start expanded training programmes for trainers of social mobilisation. The necessary preparatory work will have to be thoroughly and rigorously done, if this exercise is to yield productive results; it cannot be technocratically or bureaucratically done.

Medium Term

- i) A carefully selected inter-regional critical mass of thinker-practitioners of Social Mobilisation and Participatory Development should be commissioned to do two connected assignments. First, a series of regional State of the Art in Social Mobilisation studies with special reference to poor women, for the regions of South Asia, Africa, Latin America, Middle East, South East Asia and Eastern Europe. This will be immediately followed up by a synthesis study for a Global State of the Art in Social Mobilisation. In each case, the objective is to look at success cases on the ground and come up with the strategic policy and programme option for the Core Methodo