

Bio-Profile – Dr.S.Seethalakshmi (Usha)

Currently an independent Researcher & Consultant based in Hyderabad, South India. My broad areas of Interest and work include Gender, land rights and rural livelihoods, especially land based livelihoods.

Academic background: Doctorate degree (Ph.d) in Regional Studies from the Hyderabad Central University.

Work Experience: For the last 20 years, i have been working with various local, National and international Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) as well as various people's organisations in various capacities (both as a full-timer, advisor/consultant) on a broad range of issues related to rural livelihoods. I have also worked on different assignments as a consultant for international organisations such as Inter-Cooperation NGO Program in Orissa and AP, DFID, Oxfam-GB, Actionaid, UN Women (a united nations entity) etc. I also regularly collaborate with government organisations such as the National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD) and the National Agriculture Management, Extension and Training Institute (MANAGE) as a resource person and trainer in their various programmes around mainstreaming gender in agriculture and allied sectors. As part of my recent Action Research work on Gender Budgeting in Agriculture Sector with UN Women, i have also trained key officials of Agriculture and Horticulture Departments on Gender Responsive Budgeting in Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh (two large States in Central and Southern India)

Major Areas/Focus of Work: Over the last 8 years or so, the primary focus of my work has been around land and land rights where i have been engaging with issues related to land acquisition and the politics of dispossession, farm land diversion to non-farm purposes and its impact on food security, and more specifically understanding the phenomenon of Special Economic Zones and industrial corridor projects and its various impacts in parts of South India and elsewhere in India (i have written extensively and published on these subjects). More recent focus of work involves examining Land Rights for Women in the changing Agrarian Context in South India, a research project i completed through support from actionaid.

I am a key member of the national facilitation team of Mahila Kisan Ahikaar Manch (MAKAAM), a nation-wide alliance of more than 90 individuals and organisations of farming women, women farmers' collectives, civil society organisations, researchers and activists from 18 states in India, who are working to secure due recognition and rights of women farmers in India.