

Rural Technology Syllabus And Girls Education – Our Experience

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We have a Rural Technology course being given here to 14-20 years age youth, in the formal and non-formal systems. The main objectives of this broad spectrum technical course is a) to stimulate the intellect b) Give skills and problem solving orientation, c) Give services to the community, for which they pay. The services are given through students.

These are as relevant to girls as for boys and about 25% of the formal students are girls. The course is designed so that every student in the rural area will find it relevant in whatever field he/she works later in life. The skills cover water resource development, construction, workshop technology, energy and environment, agriculture, animal husbandry, and Home-Health-Sanitation. (see core syllabus)

In the initial stages, the girls in the formal system did not like to do workshop jobs, but did construction work and agriculture enthusiastically. On the other hand girls in the non-formal group, who were older, did not even want construction and agriculture. However in later years, the prejudices in the formal course are breaking down and this year about 13 girls (all in the TX std) have opted for workshop jobs and do surveying (of land), construction work (brick and RCC), electrical etc.

Considering the present situation, we believe the following have good opportunities for income generation by women. : Engineering Drawing; Tyre-tube vulcanising for mopeds/scooters; painting;(particularly white washing) Pest control service; Dairying; Goat raising; Poultry; Intensive Green House cultivation of vegetables; besides traditional skills like sewing, knitting, food preservation, education etc. Among the new possibilities are the plastics, electronics, and medical lab testing. We are exploring to introduce these in the curriculum.

However the girls doing it in the classroom and actually taking up as a vocation are entirely different. The social environment does not still encourage girls to take up any of these non-conventional vocations. – Even staying away in a hostel is not easily accepted by parents.

A large proportion among the girls and young women coming to us have been deserted by their husbands and need to stand on their own legs. It is here that the main problems and opportunities lie. If they are induced to take up non-conventional vocations, we will have achieved something. This still looks distant but a worthy goal.