



Azim Premji University Colloquium Series

presents a lecture

"Businesses, not Projects: Large-Scale Promotion of Small Businesses for Poverty Reduction"

Speaker

Liby Johnson

Chief Operating Officer, Kudumbashree, Thiruvantapuram

Date: August 12, 2016 (Friday)

Time: 2.00 pm to 3.30 pm

Venue: 10th Floor Auditorium, Pixel A, Azim Premji University

Watch the live broadcast of the talk by clicking <http://lectures.azimpremjiuniversity.edu.in/>. It can be accessed from Android and iOS devices too.

About the Lecture

Poor families tend to have more than one source of livelihoods. It is the balance that they achieve between farm production, animal husbandry, wage labour and non-farm enterprises that will help the family step up to a dignified life, without distress. Intervention strategies that try to define livelihoods within sectoral limits thus miss the larger picture. Promoting non-farm enterprises in a project mode leads to sub-optimal business choices being made by the entrepreneurs. In case of the other livelihood sources, options are often made by default (crop raised, frequency of cropping, type of animal raised, type of wage labour obtained etc.). Non-farm enterprises is one area where a poor family can actually exercise choice, within the larger market constraints of course, in deciding what option to choose. This requires effective and user-friendly support mechanisms to be put in place. Efforts of governments such as the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) are making such efforts.

A question often raised is about the need to promote enterprises. Wouldn't anyone with entrepreneurial ability naturally tend to a business? This, and a host of issues related to capabilities and market limitations, remain the key challenges in the course of work in the domain of promoting self-employment for poverty reduction. In this context, the role of 'livelihoods professionals' also become important. The skill sets that young professionals bring to the table, in terms of supporting creation of viable businesses is an area that is not suitably appreciated. The talk aims to present some of the pertinent issues in the sphere of micro-enterprises and their role in large-scale poverty reduction.

About the Speaker

Liby Johnson is Chief Operating Officer of Kudumbashree-National Resource Organization (KS-NRO). Kudumbashree, the Poverty Eradication Mission of the Government of Kerala, is widely recognized as a pioneer in building community institutional network of poor women and supporting these institutions to take up interventions to address causes of poverty in a holistic manner. National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) has mandated the KS-NRO to support other States in India to learn from the experiences in Kerala and develop their own models. KS-NRO currently works with 10 States. Prior to this, Liby worked with the Kudumbashree Mission in Kerala in the areas of micro enterprises and urban poverty alleviation; with SIFFS, a cooperative institution of artisanal marine fisher people supporting post-tsunami rehabilitation in Tamilnadu and Kerala; with Gram Vikas in Odisha, working on land and forest livelihoods among *adivasis* and; in Santal Pargana region of the *then* Bihar on land and livelihoods of Santal women.