



At The Same Table™ (ATST), hosted by EdelGive Foundation, is an equal platform for free and frank discussion on issues and ideas that collectively concern the funding community.

AT THE SAME TABLE™

HYDERABAD, 21ST NOVEMBER, 2018

On 21st November 2018, EdelGive hosted its first At The Same Table™ in Hyderabad, on the causative and preventive factors that are significant in helping women to **break the cycle of vulnerabilities** they face in their personal and professional lives. The conversation that stemmed from the context of [#metoo](#), saw representation from corporate, non-profit sectors and academia, with participants voicing views on the different connotations men and women associate with 'empowerment' of women.

EdelGive COO Naghma Mulla cited women's right to have a choice and the freedom to make that choice denotes one way of how 'empowerment' results. Jameela Nishat, the founder of Shaheen Women's Collective, emphasised that the journey of empowering women needs to start with women acknowledging that men as exploiters and women as the exploited is an aberration that needs to be corrected.

Participants highlighted the importance of facilitating creative conducive spaces and resources for women to acknowledge and address the challenges they face. Participants also shared experiences, illustrating the role of collectives in driving this journey and the significance of reshaping the roles of women and men to prevent discrimination. Insights from the *Philanthropy for Impact in Andhra Telangana* – a knowledge paper on the human development gaps prevalent in the states and status of Government and CSR spending, were shared at the convening.

Other key highlights of the conversation are shared below:

- Violence and discrimination against women take multiple forms and are common to women across class, caste and religion barriers. Their manifestations differ, but the havoc they wreak on a woman's self-esteem and sense of security cut across all differentials.
- Without support systems within families, communities, workplaces to back them, women who choose to speak out against violence they face often face social boycott and stigma.
- The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 instituted systems for women to access Government mechanisms to report and get redressal from violence within their family. Women survivors of violence have the potential, sensitivity and capability that may be honed to assist other women in similar situations to speak out against exploitation.
- Working with the oppressor is as crucial as working the oppressed. In addition to working with women as victims and sensitising men about masculinity being beyond a show of power through violence; one also needs to be address women's role too as perpetrators of discriminatory attitudes and actions - too - as mothers, sisters and wives.
- Values of equality, justice, fairness and mutual respect between sexes need to be inculcated in childhood and is the responsibility of parents and families. Inclusion and mutual self-respect comes from observation and experience.
- Measuring empowerment in economic value alone is erroneous. Women may have financial resources at their disposal, but if they do not have control or a choice on availing them, these tools of liberty may end up being another source of disempowerment.
- Women empowerment is a function of women's transition from individual to collective agency and a result of social spaces to engage and interact. When women are part of a group, their ability to analyse and negotiate change and access mobility is augmented.

The session concluded with a consensus that in order for gender justice or equity to result; short term changes in attitudes and actions - at the individual level, and more strategic and sustainable changes at the systemic and societal level, are essential.



EdelGive Foundation

EdelGive Foundation is the philanthropic arm of Edelweiss Group of companies. It is a non-profit company registered under section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956 (now Section 8 of the Companies Act, 2013), engaged in philanthropy, and promotion and development of public charitable activities.

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