



DISCUSSION ON MADAN SARA FILM SHOW
BY WOMEN AND HEALTH TOGETHER FOR THE FUTURE



A film screening by WHTF on the 29th of August, 2021, 13:00 – 14:30 UTC

Panelists:

Dr. Bette Gebrian, WHTF Member, Haiti

Prof. Judy Lewis, Board Chair, WHTF, USA.

Prof. Godwin Aja, Treasurer, WHTF, Nigeria.

“The women known as Madan Sara in Haiti work tirelessly to buy, distribute, and sell food and other essentials in markets through the country. Despite the obstacles faced by the women working in a sector that lacks investment, infrastructure and state assistance, the Madan Sara continue to become of the most critical parts of the Haitian economy” _ Quotes from the film producer.

INTRODUCTION

The Madan Sara documentary tells the stories of indefatigable women in Haiti who work tirelessly to buy, distribute, and sell food and other essentials in markets through the country. This film amplifies the calls of the Madan Sara as they speak directly to society to share their dreams for a more just Haiti. The age range of these women is between 39 to 65 years. They include the mothers, Sisters, Aunties, living in Haiti. Amidst of the COVID-19 pandemic, they faced other obstacles like political instabilities, earthquakes, financial difficulties, and limited resources, etc. Despite facing intense hardship and social stigma, the hard work of the Madan Sara puts their children through school, houses their families, and helps to ensure a better life for generations to come.

FILM SCREENING BY WHTF

Women Health Together Forever established the facts that The Madan Sara are on the forefront of the battle for a more robust and inclusive economy in Haiti.

IMPORTANCE OF MADAN SARA FILM

Madan Sara film, show the importance of women in Haiti and in the global society. They are optimistic about the future despite their limitations and obstacles. It is believed that women are the pillars of the Asian economy and also in other parts of the world such as India, Nigeria, and Egypt. There are some similarities of Madan Sara in Haiti with other countries like Nigeria, and Egypt. For instance, in Nigeria, evidence show that women contribute to up to 70-80% of the Agricultural labour force, in food processing, production, and in many other areas. The Igbo tribe in Nigeria, have a keen similarity with Madan Sara. Women in Nigeria are linked with what they do and what they are known for. For example, some of them are called '*Mama Godwin*' (Godwin's mother), '*Mama Akara*' (The Mother selling Akara). The women in Haiti, despite their small population, and challenges, and miseries, they strive hard to take care of themselves, their children, husbands,

making sure they prepare food as early as possible in the morning, take their children to schools, go to farms, plant seeds, harvest the farm produce, processing this produce, and distributing them to the consumers. They also value their family members, striving to become doctors, lawyers, etc. in the society.

CHALLENGES FACED BY MADAN SARA

Some of the challenges faced by Madan Sara include: COVID-19 pandemic, Earthquakes, political instabilities in the country, terrified horrors, gun fire, and uncertainty sadness. Aside the COVID-19 pandemic which started two years ago, Madan Sara experienced earthquake, which occurred on the 14th of August, 2021. Due to the earthquake, Madan Sara lost their properties up to 300 dollars, two banks were destroyed out of the three major banks in the state, causing them to lose their money, forcing them to burrow loans, and rise in goods and services, making them to pay between 25-30% Bank interest.

The political instabilities caused them to lose their homes, shops, and resources. Their markets were burnt, they stopped going to their farms, and the rivers to get the necessary things needed for their survival. They were faced with incessant starvation, malnutrition, and diseases. They could not have adequate sleep, peace, and rest of minds. Life was extremely difficult for them to bear.

In addition to some of the above problems, Madan Sara could not properly take their children. They could not enroll their children to school, they could not provide adequate nutrition, shelter, and clothing for them. They were faced with terrors, seeing dead bodies in their rooms, having recurrent nightmares, and no safe passage for them to leave the state. They also faced damage to their friends and families in the communities.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SESSION

During the discussion about the film, some of the questions and concerns raised were; if the men in Haiti take advantage of the competition organized by women, what really led to the burning of the market? Do Madan Sara have a union, and how do they organize themselves? What could have led to the problems of inflation in the prices of commodities? Any influence of the government on the challenges faced by Madan Sara?

The answers given to the above questions and concerns were quite convincing in the sense that, there is a formula used by Madan Sara in trying to solve their problems by themselves. They kind of build union among themselves, they advocate for what they need, and talk about the issues. Burning of the market was assumed to be caused by the political rivalries in Haiti among the various political parties. And thus, some unofficial political groups went to burn the market.

In addition, the inflation in the prices of commodities was due to the destruction of two banks out of the three major banks in Haiti as a result of the Earthquake. So, most of the women could not have access to their money even though they have money in the banks. Part of the problems was that, a lot of people have a lot of needs before the earthquake, and get worsened due to the natural disaster.

Furthermore, there is a strong influence of the government on the challenges faced by Madan Sara in the sense that there is political instability in Haiti. Most of the businesses owned by Madan Sara were not supported by the government as compared to other countries like India, Nigeria, and Egypt.

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

The group believed that the challenges faced by Madan Sara is a multiple insult that we all have to work together in order to move forward not only in Haiti only but across the globe. Some of the proposed solutions and strategies suggested by the focus group discussions include: Recognition of the women in the society through unionism, there is need to do some basic assessment, establishing community-based programs and interventions to empower the women globally, and advocacy for a better life for the women through reaching out to organizations, institutions, and political leaders in the states.

CONCLUSION

Madan Sara is a conversation that will continue to be discussed from now till future. Women are inspiration to all of us. We all have work to do in making the world a better place for all of us especially for the women and children. Thus, all hands must be on the desk.

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