

ROLE OF SHGS IN RURAL WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN MYSORE DISTRICT

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Abstract

A self-help group is a village-based financial intermediary committee usually composed of 10–20 local women or men. A mixed group is generally not preferred. Most self-help groups are located in India, though SHGs can be found in other countries, especially in South Asia and Southeast Asia. Members make small regular savings contributions over a few months until there is enough capital in the group to begin lending. Funds may then be lent back to the members or to others in the village for any purpose. In India, many SHGs are 'linked' to banks for the delivery of micro-credit. It is evident from the study of Mysore district that SHG's have been playing a vital role in the empowerment of women. The number of women inclined towards SHG's is increasing which implies that women are aspiring for equality, self-confidence and self-respect. This SHG has been an instrument in empowering women in Mysore District. The study has been undertaken to know the women empowerment through SHGs in Mysore district. It has been noted that after becoming a member their socio-economic status has improved to greater extent. Micro credit through SHGs enhances the equality of status of women as participants, decision makers and beneficiaries in the social, economic and cultural spheres of life. Even SHGs empower women and train them to take active part in all aspects. This shows that women in Mysore district after they joined to SHGs the women have been empowered in all aspects. An attempt is made to analyse the Rural Women empowerment through SHGs in Mysore district in this paper.

Keywords: Women, Empowerment, Finance, Economic.

Introduction

A self-help group may be registered or unregistered. It typically comprises a group of micro entrepreneurs having homogeneous social and economic backgrounds, all voluntarily coming together to save regular small sums of money, mutually agreeing to contribute to a common fund and to meet their emergency needs on the basis of mutual help. They pool their resources to become financially

stable, taking loans from the money collected by that group and by making everybody in that group self-employed. The group members use collective wisdom and peer pressure to ensure proper end-use of credit and timely repayment. This system eliminates the need for collateral and is closely related to that of solidarity lending, widely used by micro finance institutions.

To make the bookkeeping simple, flat

interest rates are used for most loan calculations. Self-help groups are started by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that generally have broad anti-poverty agendas. Self-help groups are seen as instruments for goals including empowering women, developing leadership abilities among poor people, increasing school enrollments, and improving nutrition and the use of birth control. Financial intermediation is generally seen more as an entry point to these other goals, rather than as a primary objective. This can hinder their development as sources of village capital, as well as their efforts to aggregate locally controlled pools of capital through federation, as was historically accomplished by credit unions. India is predominantly a rural economy. Three-fourths of people of India live in rural areas. Majority of them are in absolute poverty. Most of the people (especially women) in rural areas of India are uneducated, poor, and unskilled, not participate in the economic development. So empowerment of women is necessary to improve the capacity of poor women. Empowerment “is a process of change where individuals or group gain power and ability to take control over their lives. It involves increased well being, access to resources, increased self-confidence, self-esteem and respect, increased participation in decision making and bargaining power and increased control over benefits, resources and own life”. (Prasant Sarangi, 2006). The Gender Empowerment Measure of India reflects the level of empowerment of women in India.

To empower women, reducing poverty and promoting the gainful employment is necessary “Self Help Groups” was introduced in 1986-87 initiated by NABARD. But the real efforts were taken after 1991-92 from the linkage of SHGs with the bank. It is a tool to remove poverty and improve the rural development. (Sabyasachi Das, 2003.) Self help groups plays a major role in poverty alleviation in rural India. A growing number of poor women in various parts of India are members of SHGs are actively engage in savings and credit, as well as in various other activities like income generation, literacy, child care and nutrition and many more. The savings and credit focus in the SHG is the most prominent element offers a chance to create some control over capital, albeit in very small

amount. The SHG system proved to be a very relevant and effective towards empowerment.

Self Help Group

NABARD explains that the Self Help Group is a group with “an average size of about 15-20 people from a homogenous class. They come together for addressing their common problems. They are encouraged to make voluntary thrift on a regular basis. They use this pooled resources to make small interest bearing loans to their members. The process helps them imbibe the essentials of financial intermediation including prioritization of needs, setting terms and conditions and accounts keeping. This gradually builds financial discipline in all of them. Once the groups shows in mature financial behavior, banks are encouraged to make loans to the SHG in certain multiples of the accumulated savings of the SHG. The groups own accumulated savings are part and parcel of the aggregate loans made by the groups to their members, peer pressure ensure timely repayment.” In other words SHG is a small economically homogenous affinity group of the rural poor voluntarily coming together to save small amount regularly which are deposited in a common fund to meet members emergency needs and to provide collateral free loans decided by the group. SHGs enhance the equality of status of women as decision maker, participants and beneficiaries in economic, social, democratic, political and cultural spheres of life.

Working of SHGs

SHGs are working in democratic manner. A self help group generally has members not exceeding 20 and each group selects among its members a leader called ‘animator’ and two members are selected as the representatives. The animator conducts two to three meeting in every month. The group members save a regular amount of Rs 20 – Rs 100 and more in every month. After complete stabilization in management of its funds, the group rotates the saved amount to its needy members as per requirements, at a specified low interest rate. The groups members meet every week regularly. They discuss about the group savings, rotation of sangha funds, bank loan, repayment of loan, social and community action programme.

It is clearly understood that SHGs are tools to promote savings and gainful employment. This shows that some changes have been taking place in reducing rural poverty. Therefore women members are socially, economically, politically and culturally independent. The present study is also focusing towards socio-economic improvement of women after they join the SHGs.

Methodology

The present study has covered all seven taluks of Mysore district like H.D.Kote, Hunsur, K.R.Nagar, Mysore, Periyapatna, Nanjungud, and T. Narasipur. These Seven taluks have been selected for the study, because of the SHGs in these taluks are functioning very successfully in all the activities. This study is compiled with the help of the primary data. The primary data were collected with the help of specially prepared interview schedule for the SHGs. The schedule included in the form of questions related to the general information about the SHGs members income, savings, loan etc. But more emphasis has been given towards the socio-economic conditions of the members. Even their status or changes has taken after they become the member of the SHGs. Total 175 respondents have been taken for the study. Out of 175 , 25 respondents from each taluk are interviewed by using simple random sampling method. This study is a descriptive study.

Occupation of the Respondents

Occupational structure is one of the most important factors which reflect the economic status of women. Respondents are engaged in different activities to generate income and uplift their socio-economic status. The following table represents the occupational structure in the study area. Figure 1 reveals the occupations of the respondents in the study area, Majority of the respondents are engaged as agricultural labourers with 43.4 per cent. About 30.2 per cent of the respondents engaged in business activities such as petty business, cloth making etc. About 23.8 per cent of the respondents were housewives and even some of them are doing business in home itself. And only 2.6 per cent of the respondents are engaged in other activities. Highest of the respondents as Agricultural labourers are findout in H.D.Kote with 60 per cent followed by T.Narasipur and Periyapatna with the share of 48 per cent and 44

per cent respectively. Only 32 per cent of the respondents found in Hunsur taluk. Nowadays women are engaged in business after they are enrolled as members about 42 per cent of the respondents are in Mysore where as Hunsur and Nanjungud occupies the equal share of 32 per cent each. Whereas 30 per cent of the respondents in Hunsur taluk are housewives followed by Periyapatna 28 per cent and Nanjungud 26 per cent. Only 2.6 percent of the respondents are engaged in other activities.

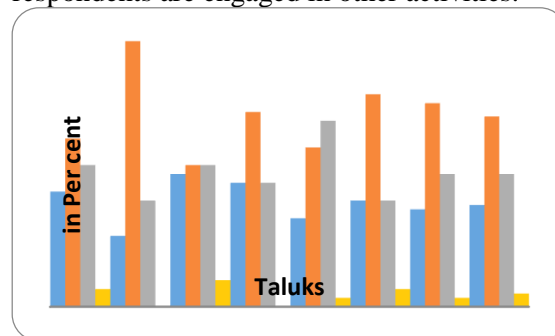


Figure 1: Occupational Structure of the members

Members of the SHGs are young and middle age group members can actively participate in the socio-economic activities in the study area. Total number of sample members of which 26 per cent were between 21 to 30 years, 40.6 per cent were 31-40, 24.6 per cent was in 41-50 years of age remaining 7.7 per cent were in the age group of 51 and above. This table indicates that among 32 per cent of the members in the age group of between 21-30 years were found in Hunsur and T. Narsipur taluks. About 50 per cent of the respondents in the age group of 31-40 years were found in K.R.Nagar followed by Hunsur and Mysore with the share of 46 percent and 21 percent respectively. Whereas 34 percent were identified in Periyapatna from 40-50 years, 30 per cent of the respondents are found in Nanjungud, H.D.Kote and Mysore. Only 7.7 per cent of the members in the age group are between 51 and above. In the study area 21-30, 31-40, and 41-50 age groups are actively participated in the SHGs activities, even they can also control and solve the problems arise in the groups.

Literacy Level of the Respondents

Education is one of the basic necessities for development. Therefore particular attention was paid to collect educational data. Education plays very pivotal role in human resource development. The level of education impacts on members in improving

their status, awareness, and also helps them to borrow credit and ability to make utilization of credit. The education level of the members as presented in the following table.

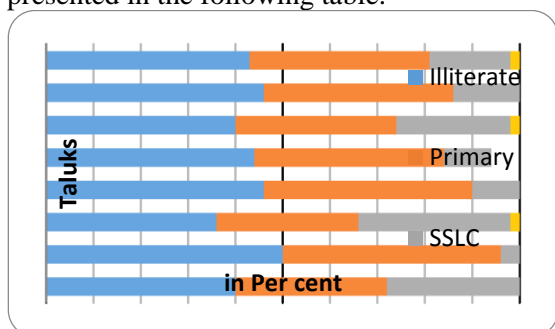


Figure - 2: Literacy Level of the Respondents

Table 2 reveals the educational status of the respondents in the study area. Out of 175 members about 43.1 per cent are illiterates, 38 per cent, 17.5 per cent, and only 1.4 per cent obtained education upto primary school, SSLC and Under Graduate level respectively. The sample members that is 50 per cent are illiterate in H.D.Kote taluk, 36 per cent members are illiterate in Hunsur taluk which is lower which compared to other taluks. 46 and 44 per cent obtained primary education is highest in H.D.Kote and Periyapatna taluks. 40 per cent each in Mysore and K.R.Nagar taluk respectively. Whereas 32 and 28 per cent obtained education upto SSLC in the taluks of Hunsur and Nanjungud. Only 6 per cent of the respondents obtained under graduation in Mysore taluk, there is no under graduate respondents in Nanjungud, H.D.Kote, Periyapatna and K.R.Nagar taluks.

Purpose of Loan borrowed by the Respondents

The SHG members mentioned that loan amount was utilized for various purposes such as consumption needs as well as productive purpose. The economic and social empowerment of the poor women is the only means to poverty eradication. Micro Credit ensures the poor women for employment and income. The maximum loan amount per members is decided by the general body meeting. The study reveals the loan borrowed by the respondents in the study area. Out of 175 respondents, 12.9 per cent have not taken loan from SHGs remaining all the respondents have taken loan for both consumption and productive purposes. Consumption needs like education, marriage, festival and health. For productive purposes like agriculture, business, home and

others. Out of 175 respondents 6.9 percent have taken loan for children’s education. Whereas 5.8 percent have borrowed loan for marriage, only 0.6 percent of the respondents taken loan for festival and 2.2 percent members borrowed loan for health purpose. Most of the respondents have not taken much loan for consumption purpose. Whereas for productive purpose highest percent of the members have taken loan for agriculture and business. Agriculture is the main occupation of the people so about 29.4 percent have taken loan for agriculture inputs, agriculture land, cultivation etc. K.R.Nagar has the highest loan of 50 percent. For business 31.1 percent of the respondents have borrowed loan for business activities like petty business, dairy, cottage industries, food processing units, cloth merchants, Tiffin centres etc. About 8.2 percent of the respondents have taken loan for Home repair, construction, patchworks etc. Only 2.9 percent have taken loan for other purposes like cattle rearing, sheep rearing etc. a notable significance of SHG reveals that there is no defaulter in repayment which indicates the spirit of SHG programme.

Opinion expressed by the Respondents

The status of the women in the study area has improved a lot. Most of the members have got some kind of freedom and also they participate in decision making process. Effective participation is an essential component for sustainability. Even in their family they are also getting respect and cooperation which results in women takes decision on major events in one’s own life.

Table 1: Opinion of women members in a SHGs

Status in a Family	Yes	No
Own Decision	90	10
Cooperation among the family	97	3
Spouse Cooperation	92	8
Freedom in the family	91	9
Education		
Children sent school	70	30
Benefits for your children for education	63	37
Anganwadi teachers help you to learn	74	26
Able to read and write	75	25
Awareness about Social aspects		

Face any problem as a member	1	99
Aware of Family Planning	72	23
Involved in Decision Making Process	88	12
Enjoy equal status in the Society	97	3
Discuss about Social Evils	91	9
Involved in preventing Social Evils	72	28

Source: Primary Survey – 2015

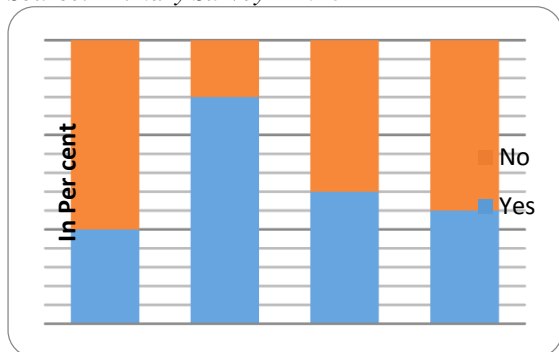


Figure 3: Opinion Expressed by the members

The table 1 and figure 3 shows that out of 175 respondents, about 90.6 percent of the members opined that they are also getting rights to participate in decision making process after joined to SHGs. Whereas 9.4 percent of the respondents has not got any changes. Even they are not participating in decision making. 97.1 percent of the respondents are getting co-operation in their family. Only 2.9 percent of the respondents are not getting much co-operation from the family respectively. One of the main aspect is spouse co-operation is very much important for every respondents in the study area. About 92.9 percent (members husband are encouraging the respondents to join for SHGs, only 7.1 percent respondents are not getting fully encouragement. 91.9 percent of the respondents has got freedom from their family to participate in social evils, awareness champs, programmes. Whereas 8.9 percent are not getting any freedom from their family. This shows that the status of the respondents has improved a lot. These respondents are ready to participate in all social, economic, political and cultural activities.

Pre – Primary Education system adopted by the members

While the level of education among the members in the SHGs may influence the level of awareness and understanding of management aspects of SHGs. Most of the parents are forced to send their children to work to keep them away from idleness, for the

available resources do not allow them to send all their children to school. SHGs are taking some steps for the members and their children to educate. The following table shows the details.

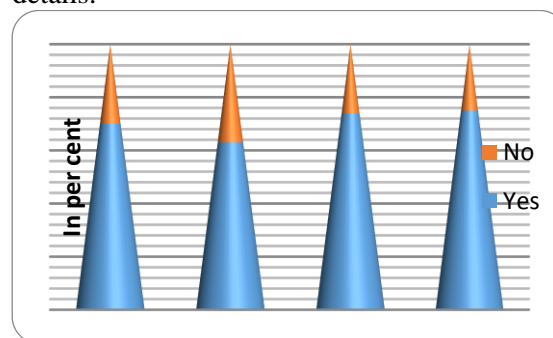


Figure 4: Pre – Primary Education system adopted by the members

The table 1 and figure 4 indicates that among 175 respondents that children’s are sent to school to learn, they should not sit idle in their home so about 70.2 percent of the respondents children are sent to school now, 29.8 percent are not going to school or college they are engaged in some works. 63.4 percent of the respondents says that they are getting benefit for their children from the government that is getting loan for education, even free books etc. Among this Anganwadi teachers are helping the members and their children to become literates. Most of the women are literates now to some extent they have learnt to put their signature and they can understand the rules and regulations made in SHGs. 74.2 percent are getting help from the Anganwadi teachers and 25.8 percent are not getting any help from this teachers. 75.1 percent of the respondents are able to read and write after become as a member and 24.9 percent are not know as much compare to other members. By these achievements has given them strength to run SHG as required.

Awareness about Social aspects by the Respondents

Awareness among poor women in rural India is very low as the majorities are illiterates. They are not aware of their basic rights, social rights, and political rights. Many awareness camps have been taken place to improve their living conditions. It may be social aspect, political aspect, economic aspect etc. the following table shows it

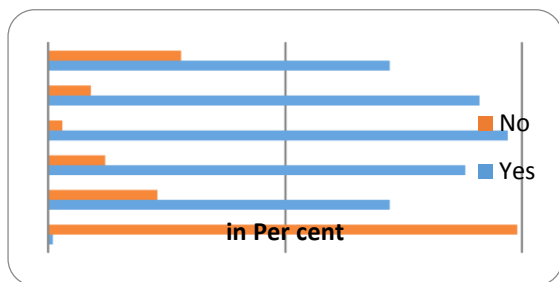


Figure 4: Awareness about Social aspects by the Respondents

The study highlights that the majority of the respondents are not facing any problem by joining as a member. Among 175, 98 percent of the respondents are enjoying by becoming member. Only 6 1.8 percent are facing some problems. Even though they are aware of family planning, nearly 72 percent of the members are know about family planning. Even many awareness camps have been attended by the members, so they have gained some knowledge about it. About 27.4 percent do not know much about it. 88.2 percent are involved in decision making process as mentioned before, and 11.8 percent are not. Every respondents wants to have equal status in the society, but they are getting it after becoming the member, it is almost 97.1 percent of the respondents are enjoying equal status, only 2.9 percent is not having it. Nowadays these members are discussing about social evils and also they are involved in preventing social evils, to protect the women from difficulty 72.6 percent are involved in social evils. 27.4 percent are not involving in this aspects. This shows that lots of status has been gained by the respondents in the study area.

Conclusion

The union government has implemented various schemes to reduce poverty and promote gainful employment opportunities. But the most attractive scheme with less effort is the "Self Help Groups". It is atoll to remove poverty and improve rural development. Self Help Groups (SHGs) can be defined as supportive educational and usually change oriented mutual aid group that addresses life problems or conditions commonly shared by all members. Empowerment is a multi-dimensional process, which should enable women or groupof women to realize their full identity and power in all spheres of life. The study reveals that the women empowerment through SHGs in Mysore district. It has been found that after becoming the member their

socio-economic conditions has been improved to greater extent. Even their status is changed. After joining the SHGs the women are able to work on their own and earn. About 31.1 percent of the women are engaged in business activities like petty business, cottage industries, dairy, cloth selling, catering etc. Even women are participating in decision making process that is about 97.1 per cent are involved in Mysore district. About 91.9 per cent of the respondents are enjoying freedom after they joined to SHGs. They are also participating in preventing social evils. This shows that after joining to SHGs the women members have been empowered in all the aspects. Thus SHGs have become strong instrument in empowering women.

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