

PROBLEMS OF SELF HELP GROUPS MEMBERS IN HILL STATION- EVIDENCED THROUGH VALPARAI

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1. Introduction

Globalization has brought substantial benefits around the world, but in many of the developing countries it is fostering higher levels of growing disparity, between the rich and the poor. In a country like India the structure of the economy is dualistic. Here one could visualise the growing companies, booming stock markets and soaring profits, making the rich; the richer and on the one hand, curtailing incomes and wages in the fields of agriculture and allied activities in making the poor, poorer. The rural poor were reeling on informal credit channels such as local money lenders, market vendors, shopkeepers and others, including friends and relatives. Credit in the informal system is usually available in plenty, when and where required, and often without collateral and lengthy documentation formalities, because of the personal intimacy. However the interest rates are not only extremely high, but sanctions often include conditions like verbal and written, which are heavily loaded in favour of the lender and are detrimental to the interest of the borrowers.

In India the self help group (SHGs) through microfinance institution (MFIs) made beginning with the National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development (NABARD), funded project on "savings and credit management of self help groups" of Mysore resettlement and development agency (MYRADA) in 1986-87. Again in 1988-89, NABARD undertook a survey of 43 NGOs spread over eleven states in India, to study the functioning of self help group and possibilities of collaboration between banks and SHGs in the mobilization for rural saving and improving the delivery of credit to the rural poor. The survey results were encouraging, which made NABARD to impress upon Reserve Bank of India (RBI), in response to that Reserve Bank of India, on July 1991, advised the commercial banks and cooperative banks, to extend credit to the SHGs under the pilot project of NABARD, where in 500 SHGs all over India were covered. Since then SHGs became a regular component of the Indian financial system. Further in

1994 RBI constituted a working group to formalize the device to large extent and to review the functioning of NGOs and in intensifying and deepen their role in the rural sector. In response to the recommendations, RBI advised the bank lending to SHGs through MFIs be considered as an additional segment under priority sector.

1.1 Self Help Group

Women constitute around fifty percent of the total human resources in our economy. Yet women are the more poor and under privileged than men as they are subject to many socio-economic and cultural constraints. The situation is more severe in the rural and backward areas. Women development activities must be given importance to eradicate poverty, increase the economic growth and for better standard of living. Self Help Group (SHGs)-Bank Linkage Programme is emerging as a cost effective mechanism for providing financial services to the "Unreached Poor" which has been successful not only in meeting financial needs of the rural poor women but also strengthen collective self help capacities of the poor, leading to their empowerment. Rapid progress in SHG formation has now turned into an empowerment movement among women across the country.

The origin of Self Help Groups (SHGs) is the brainchild of Grameen Bank of Bangladesh, founded by Prof. Mohammed Yunus in 1975, who tried out a new approach to rural credit in Bangladesh. Grameen gave loans without asking borrowers either to provide collateral or engage in paper work. In India NABARD initiated SHGs in the year 1986-87 but the real effort was taken only after 1991-92 from the linkage of SHGs with the banks. A SHG is small economically homogeneous affinity groups of the rural poor consist of 10 to 20 persons (However, in difficult areas like deserts, hills and areas with scattered and sparse population and in case of minor irrigation and disabled persons, this number may be from 5-20) voluntarily coming forward to save a small amount of money regularly, which is deposited in a common

fund to meet the members' emergency needs and to provide collateral free loans decided by the group. The SHGs have been recognized as useful tool to help the poor and as an alternative mechanism to meet the urgent credit needs of poor through thrift.

1.2 Women Empowerment and its Components

Empowerment is about people-both women and men-taking control over their lives: becoming conscious of their own situation and position, setting their own agendas, creating space for themselves, gaining skills, building self-confidence, solving problems and developing self reliance. It is not only a social and political process, but an individual one as well and it is not only a process but an outcome too. Empowerment of women is a pressing need of the day. Unfortunately it is least understood. It is therefore very essential to define empowerment for the benefit of all partners.

Woman is a powerful segment of the society who contributes more on the development of civilized society of the country. We can achieve the socio-economical goal with sustainable manner. Hence, every part of the world, women issues become popular and concentrate more to their Socio-economic, Education, Political and Legal Empowerment. Women development activities are witnessed and implemented with innovative strategies to attain the almost achievement of women society. The country can be full-fledged and independent when the women development programmes are implemented and evaluated.

Empowerment is a process, by which women gain greater control over material and intellectual resources which will assist them to assert their independent rights and challenge the ideology of patriarchy and the gender-based discrimination against women. Women empowerment consists of the following components.

❖ Social Empowerment:

To create an enabling environment through various affirmative development policies and programmes for development of women besides providing them easy and equal access to all the basic minimum services so as to enable them to realize their full potentials.

❖ Economic Empowerment:

To ensure provision of training, employment and income generation activities with both forward and backward linkages with the ultimate objective of making all potential women economically independent and self-reliant.

❖ Educational Empowerment:

Develops the personality and rationality of women qualifies them to fulfill certain economic, political and cultural functions-improves their socio-economic status.

❖ Political Empowerment:

Is participation, right to vote, contest, campaign, party membership and representation in political affairs at all level and effectively influences decisions thereby leading to political empowerment.

❖ Decision Making Power:

Empowerment is mainly related to their participation in decision making with regards to raising and distribution of resources i.e., income, investments and expenditure at all levels.

Barriers to Women Empowerment

❖ Social barriers:

The society is still not in position to digest the concept. The son is for life time asset and daughter is life time liability is the thinking style, the women are for family work like kitchen, cleaning, washing clothes, etc., they are not openly and freely access to education, society and other such aspects.

❖ Dominating Male Attitude:

Often male members of family are in higher position and women are dominated on various grounds like gender, economic, decision making, participating in rights and family work.

❖ Political parties:

The agenda of political parties on paper and in practice it differs. The women representation is not equal to share age. A Lok Sabha seat was merely 6 up to 14th Lok Sabha election in India.

1.3 Need of the Study

Economic development in the country has brought significant changes in the outlook and life style of women. A major development since mid 1960's is the formation of mutually helping groups called self help groups. Self Help group's(SHG's) have over the years, grown in number and their success rate, with several innovative ways, their experience and evolution have drawn their attention of researchers to draw lessons for their sustainable development.

Earlier development efforts are in contrast that stressed economic growth. They aimed at changing the conditions of women's way of living rather than their position. It is a challenge process of modifying and exploitation. It is essential to observe changes in these contexts, which had occurred in some women who were given a chance to break old style of power structure and social system through self help groups

and micro finance, large number of non government organization use self help groups as a major activity, government agencies also promote self help groups. Empowerment of women is one of the major items in all the development projects today. It describes the process where the powerless or disempowered women acquire greater share of control over resources and decision making.

Though a large number of studies have been conducted on self help groups and its related areas, very few were on empowerment of women who are in hill stations. And also none of the researcher made an attempt on problems of women self help group members in hill station in Coimbatore district. It may be due to the various constraints like.. Lack of time, cost, personal constraints and difficulties of approaching the self help groups.

1.4 Objectives of the Study:

The study entitled "Problems of Self Help Groups members in Valparai (Hill Station)" has the following objectives

1. To identify the common problem faced by the members of women self help groups.
2. To find out the main obstacles that affect members to run self help group successfully.
3. Main obstruction that prevent from taking part in decision making process
4. To find out the main problems that solved by self help group.
5. To suggest better ways and means to resolve the women related problems through self help group

1.5 Methodology:

For the present study, Valparai (Hill station in Coimbatore District) was purposively selected due to their abundant problems both personal as well as work too. There are more than fifty tea estates and almost 90 % of them are working in those estates. For the convenient to collect the reliable first hand data, the place was divided in south, north, east and west. For the purpose of this empirical research study, the respondents (626) were chosen from all the direction of the study area by make use of stratified random sampling method.

2. Self Help Group Members Problems:

Table 2.1. Common problem faced by the members of women SHG in Hill Station

The above Table shows that most of them faced community related problems since they attached with self help group. and also it is keenly noted that majority of the respondents were used the self help group as a mechanism through which their personal as well

as community problems can be resolved. Thus it can be concluded that there is no any notable common problem faced by members of self help group.

Table 2.2 Main obstacles facing by members to run SHG successfully

The above Table shows that majority of the self help group members felt improper cooperation of members is the main obstacles to run self help group successfully, the second main obstacles could be lack of family support, Lack of bank support and lack of community support could be third and fourth obstacles respectively.

Table 2.3 Main obstacles that prevent from taking part in Decision Making Process

From the analysis it is concluded that there is highly significant association was found between the demographic variables Age, Education level, Occupation, Monthly Income, Marital status, Size of family & Position in group and Main obstacles that prevent from taking part in decision making process.

2.4 Opinion about the problems solved by SHG

It could be noted from the below table that among the 10 factors (Problems solved by self help group) "Children's Education" was ranked first. It is followed by the "Making earnings" "Un employment problem" was ranked third and the reliability is 0.787.

Table Friedman Test- Problems solved by SHG Findings:

- ❖ It is noted that 32.27 % of the self help group members (Women) fall the age group of above 40 years.
- ❖ It is found that 41.37 % of the respondents were completed only primary education
- ❖ Through the analysis it is observed that 84.66 % of the self help group members are working in Tea estate as labour.
- ❖ 67.25 % of the respondent's earning only between 2500-5000.
- ❖ Majority 79.23% of the respondents are represent from Hindu religion and 73.64 % of the respondents are belongs to schedule caste.
- ❖ Most of the respondent's came to know about the self help group through friends.
- ❖ 53.04 % of the respondents agreed that they used to conduct the meeting once in a month
- ❖ It is found that 80.83 % of the members stated that Main issues that mostly discussed in the meeting are about Loan related.
- ❖ 3/4th of the SHG's are not linked with business activity.
- ❖ Since the member of self help group Majority of the women faced community related

problems.

- ❖ Majority of the self help group members felt improper cooperation (39.3) of members is the main obstacles to run self help group successfully, the second main obstacles could be lack of family support (18.2), Lack of bank support (18.1) and lack of community support (17.4) could be noted as third and fourth obstacles respectively.
- ❖ From the analysis it is found that there is highly significant association was found between the Age, Education level, Occupation, Size of family and obstacles prevent them to take part in decision making process.
- ❖ Regarding the problem solved by self help group to its members, it is found that "Children's Education" was ranked first. It is followed by the "Making earnings" "Un employment problem" was ranked third and the reliability is 0.787.

Suggestion

- ❖ Since it is a hill station and also most of them belong to scheduled caste, the state government and NGOs shall give some unique scheme to such members, and it facilitates more interest to get involve in self help group(because they used to conduct meeting once in a month and discussed about loan) .
- ❖ Self help group is a tool through which the poverty can demolish.here most of the women faced community related problems, so the government and NGOs can start more number of men associations in hill station.
- ❖ Most of them were discussed about loan issue in their group meetings. This can be amicably resolved by linking SHGs to Regional Rural Banks and other commercial Banks in hill stations. Thus, the SHGs credit needs are to be catered by the banks which are obliged to do so as the SHGs have shown a very high rate of repayment.
- ❖ Social participation of respondents in hill station was very low due to lack of social mobility so the Developmental agencies should educate the family members using different media and also create awareness about advantages of participation in social institutions. Formal and non-formal leadership should help to encourage the women of lower strata to participate in social institutions.
- ❖ To facilitate them to engage with business through SHG, women cooperative society can

be formed in hill stations and run exclusively by women, social recognition and rewards should be more for the innovative activities of SHGs.

Conclusion:

In the history of human development, woman has been as important as man. In fact, the status, employment and work performed by women in society are the indicator of a nation's overall progress. Without the participation of women in national activities, the social, economical or political progress of a country will be stagnated. Plantation is the only industry in valparai and the whole town depends on it. As there is no sign of getting higher wages, poor workers have been leaving the town for the last couple of years (50,000 people had left the hill station over the past five years). This study is a prospect to express the problems of women who are being take part in the self help groups in valparai.hope the mentioned suggestion feasible to implement,

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Table 2.1. Common problem faced by the members of women SHG in Hill Station

S.No	Common Problem	Yes		No		Total
		N	%	N	%	
1	Ever been felt bad to be a member of SHG	35	5.59	591	94.41	626
2	Since the member of SHG have ever faced problem in family	50	7.99	576	92.01	626
3	Since the member of SHG have ever faced problem in the community	81	12.94	545	87.06	626
4	Ever addressed personal / community problem in the SHG	446	71.25	180	28.75	626

Table 2.2 Main obstacles facing by members to run SHG successfully

Demographic Variables		Main obstacles that are facing to run shg successfully										Total	
		Improper cooperation of members		Lack of family support		Lack of community support		Lack of bank support		Others		N	%
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Age	Above 40	98	15.7	35	5.6	44	7.0	20	3.2	5	0.8	202	32.3
Education	Primary Education	105	16.8	47	7.5	40	6.4	55	8.8	12	1.9	259	41.4
Occupation	Tea estate Worker	217	34.7	104	16.6	83	13.3	83	13.3	43	6.9	530	84.7
Income	2500 - 5000	182	29.1	77	12.3	73	11.7	62	9.9	27	4.3	421	67.3
Marital Status	Married	211	33.7	107	17.1	92	14.7	94	15.0	41	6.5	545	87.1
Family Size	Four	99	15.8	56	8.9	45	7.2	56	8.9	14	2.2	270	43.1
Position in the group	Member	95	15.2	38	6.1	48	7.7	41	6.5	17	2.7	239	38.2
Total		246	39.3	114	18.2	109	17.4	113	18.1	44	7.0	626	100.0

Table 2.3 Main obstacles that prevent from taking part in Decision Making Process

S.No	Profile of the respondent	Value	df	p	Sig.
1	Age	140.86	16	0.000	Highly Significant
2	Education level	105.98	16	0.000	Highly Significant
3	Occupation	142.17	12	0.000	Highly Significant
4	Monthly Income	68.09	12	0.000	Highly Significant
5	Marital status	58.24	12	0.000	Highly Significant
6	Size of family	47.15	16	0.000	Highly Significant
7	Position in group	83.12	12	0.000	Highly Significant

Table Friedman Test- Problems solved by SHG

S.No	Problems solved by SHG	Mean	SD	Mean Rank	Reliability
1	Un employment problem	4.02	1.05	6.10	0.787
2	Making earnings	4.17	1.01	6.27	
3	Meeting personal expenses	3.89	1.14	5.59	
4	Inferiority complex	3.67	1.16	5.11	
5	Ever dependent	3.71	1.21	5.12	
6	Education for children	4.33	0.89	6.59	
7	Indecisiveness in family matters	4.10	0.98	6.08	
8	Children's marriage	3.90	1.16	5.61	
9	Community facilities	3.36	1.29	4.51	
10	Sexual harassment	3.03	1.50	4.01	