

Self Help Group Among Oraon Women in Biswanath Chariali Tea Garden

Abstract

Self Help Group is an effective measure to alleviate poverty and empower women in rural areas. Various policies have been conceptualized, formulated and implemented for the development of the marginalized section of the society. This paper explores the role of SHGs in the empowerment of women of Oraon in Tea Garden of Biswanath Chariali of Assam. SHGs help in the achieving the economic development of women and helps in changing the women's status in the tea garden community.

Keywords: Women's Empowerment, Socio-Economic Status, Poverty Alleviation.

Introduction

Self-help group is an important alternative to accomplish the objective of rural development. It plays a very important role for the social economic development of the rural women. Under the self help group the members come together and solve the common problems through self help and mutual help. The goal of social economic development of a society can be achieved when women in a society have strong community participation and assert their own rights and social status in society. A proper training to the women is very important by providing them credit and financial assistance that they help to be economically independent and can financially support their family and can protect their own rights in the society. In order to have an organized self help group it is necessary to mobilize and organize the women through participatory process. This will enable them to actively participate in a group and coherent their hopes and aspirations in a society. The participatory process helps the women to have their own sense of dignity and have a confidence to tackle the problem and enhance cohesion to work together within a group and it ensures economic independence among them. In recent times, Government has focused on women for its overall development.

The National Commission has recommended various strategies to assist the poor women in rural area who are ignorant about the complexities of financial institution. It has recommended a credit policy for the poor and self employed women. The poverty in rural area is mainly depending on the ownership of productive resources and access to employment opportunities. The lack of productive resource, unemployment problem and poverty that mainly falls on the poor people in the village. The gap of income and consumption is bridged by loans from the friends and money lenders. In order to eradicate poverty the cooperative movement started in India but with due course it failed to achieve the objectives. In order to provide financial assistance to the poor self help group came into existence.

Objective of the Study

1. To promote cooperation among the members of the group and generate self attitude and encourage them for savings.
2. To create awareness among the members of self help group for all round development of the society.
3. To create consciousness among the members for work and human health.

Review of Literature

V. Puhazhendhi and K.J.S Satyasai have studied the "Economic and Social Empowerment of Rural Poor through Self-Help Groups" and focused its study on the role of self help group in social an economic empowerment among the poor people.

Kamal Vatta and Parminder Singh studied "The Performance of Self Help Group in Punjab: A Study of Hoshiarpur District (2000). In this study Vatta and Singh revealed that the little credit helps the poor to improve the income level.



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M. Manimekalai and G. Rajeswari on "Nature and Performance of Informal Self-Help Groups: A Case Study from Tamil Nadu (2000) studied the socio-economic background of self help group women in rural micro- enterprises, examined the factors that motivated the women to become self help group member and analyzed the nature of economic activities and performance in terms of employment, capacity utilization and identified the problems faced by the self help group women.

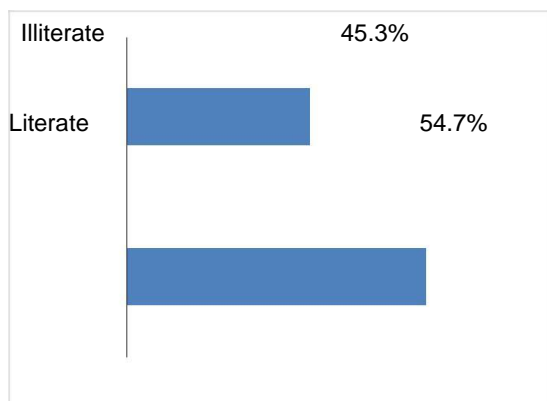
Methods

A community based cross-sectional study was conducted in the field area of Bishwanath Chariali of Assam. Out of 13 functioning SHGs group, 6 groups were selected by simple random method. 72 women from the selected group involved in SHGs were interviewed by pre-validated questionnaire.

Results

72 women who were involved in self-help group were interviewed. 54.7% were literates and 45.3% were illiterates as illustrated in the

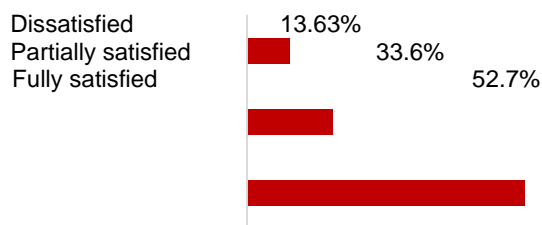
Figure 1.



Benefit from Self Help Group

Majority of respondents were benefitted from SHGs (52.7%) and had economic independence. One section were benefitted to some extent (33.6%) and other section is neither satisfied and nor dissatisfied (13.63%) illustrated in

Figure 2: Benefit from self health group



Education also determines the efficiency of a member in a group. It plays a very important role in decision making process and participatory process. Following table shows the education qualification of the member of self help group.

Table 1

Education qualification	No. of Respondent	Percentage
Illiterate	2	2.7%
Primary	45	62.5
Secondary	17	23.6%
Higher secondary	7	9.72%
Graduation	1	1.38%
Total	72	100%

From the above table it has been observed that most of the member are primary level which constitute about 62.5% and graduation constitute about 1.38% which is very less in compare to secondary and higher secondary educational status. To make the group more efficient it is necessary to make members educated so that decisions can be made efficiently and makes the group more strong and appropriate for empowerment of women in the society

Table 2: Illustrating the impact of self-help group on Health Awareness and Issues.

	Increase	No Change	Decrease
Pregnancy	52.7%	47.3%	--
Vaccination	61.9%	38.1%	--
Health and Hygiene	67.5%	32.5%	--
Infant Care	55.4%	44.6%	--

Table 3: Illustrating the Income Level of the Respondent

Income permonth	Before SHG	Percentage	After SHG	Percentage
Less than 1000	32	11.1%	5	6.94%
1000-1500	20	16.6%	21	29.1%
1500-2500	12	27.7%	31	43%
2500 and above	8	44.4%	15	20.8%
Total	72	100%		100%

From the above table it has been observed that the income level of women have increased after they created Self help group. The highest percentage has been observed in the income level of 1500-2500 and women can financially support their family and becomes self-independent.

Discussion

From the present study we can conclude that self-help group an important podium to help to enhance the women's economic status and health issues through knowledge and awareness. However no significant changes have been observed in health issues and therefore it's important to involve the entire community and involve the man for gender equality. Self help group encourage the women to be financially strong and insist them to understand their value and rights in the society. The active participation of women helps them to have solidarity within the group and have a strong decision making power in a society.

Conclusion

The participatory process helps the women to have their own sense of dignity and have a confidence to tackle the problem and enhance cohesion to work together within a group and it ensures economic independence among them. Through self help group women can improve their economic condition and acquire small assets. SHGs can play a very important role in creating awareness among women regarding health issues through meetings and by holding trainings for women for empowerment and health issues.

References

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