

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION PRACTICES AMONG RURAL SELF HELP GROUP MEMBERS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the Bio Psycho Social Influences of Body Image and Self-EsSelf help groups (SHGs) are formed in large scale in India. SHGs of women have become very common in villages of Karnataka. Large numbers of rural women have been enrolled into SHGs by both government and non government organizations with the aim to empower women. Self help groups are homogeneous groups of poor. The number of members in the group ranges from 10 to 20 members. The objective of SHG formation is not only economic empowerment but also integrated empowerment by focusing on enhancing skills, knowledge, capacities and awareness generation. Self help groups are the platform to discuss various issues like environment, health and hygiene, child development, women empowerment and so on. Environmental conservation is need of the hour. The degradation of environment can be checked with the intervention of rural women SHGs. The aim of the study is to assess the level of environmental conservation awareness among rural SHG members. The data for the study is collected from 46 SHG members by using interview schedule. The interview schedule consisted of information related to personal and family profile of the respondents, environmental conservation practices and suggestions of the SHG members to conserve environment. The study revealed that very few SHG members have higher level environmental conservation practices.

Key Words : Self Help Groups, environmental conservation, empowerment,

INTRODUCTION

Self help groups are formed in large scale in India especially of women. NABARD (National agricultural Bank for Development) started micro-finance activity for rural poor in India in the year 1992 through MYRADA (Mysore Resettlement and Development agency) a NGO by organizing self help groups of rural people. MYRADA has adopted the self help groups as the appropriate people's institution which provides the poor with the space and support necessary to take effective steps towards greater control over their lives in private and in society. The self help group is not a static institution; it grows on the resources and management skills of its members and their increasing confidence to get involved in issues and programmes that require their involvement in the public and private spheres (Aloysius Fernandez, 1995). The objective of SHG formation is not only economic empowerment but also integrated empowerment by focusing on enhancing skills, knowledge, capacities and awareness generation. Siddiqui (2008) mentions the objective of self help group is to provide knowledge about how to receive help, give help and help yourself. Self help groups are the platform to discuss various issues like environment, health and hygiene, child development, women empowerment and so on. The degradation of environment can be checked with the intervention of rural women SHGs. Women as the important educators for children can stimulate change in the behaviour that can lead to savings in food, water, energy consumption and ultimately in the protection of natural resources and bio-diversity (Dash, 2005). Women can take up any kind of developmental activities if they get direction, support and opportunities. Improved awareness regarding environmental conservation is a key to environmental protection.

The term 'environmental conservation practices' refers to general conservation awareness, perception and attitude and pro-environment practices or actions. Actionable awareness regarding environmental conservation is very much essential. Actionable awareness refers to practically what people do or take action to safe guard the environment. Environmental conservation is the process of safeguarding the environmental aspects such as Air, Water, soil, Biodiversity etc., from recent one decade the environment is becoming more vulnerable due to the selfish activities of human.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There is enough literature regarding self help groups but studies on assessing environmental awareness among SHG members are very limited. Effort is made to incorporate few studies on environmental awareness. Om Prakash Tripathy (2003) defines SHG as a homogeneous group of rural poor, voluntarily formed to save whatever amount they can conveniently save out of their earnings and mutually agree to contribute to a common fund of the group to be lent to the members for meeting their production and credit needs. Devasia Leelamma (2001) through her study mentioned that women's empowerment is not only in financial terms but also in terms of socialization, attitudinal and motivational changes. It was found that 80% of women worked more than 12 hours per day, mostly for the welfare of the family. From the survey it is found that all the women contacted had a positive attitude towards change and not satisfied with the existing state of affairs. Murugan, K.R. (2007) highlights the importance of SHGs in protecting the environment. The author mentions that the environmental protection process can be strengthened with the help of rural SHG women.

Asuamah, Samuel Yehoah (2012) made a study to understand student's perception and attitude towards sustainable environment using Likert scale. The researcher found that the respondents have excellent knowledge about sustainable environment and understood the role of various issues in sustainable environment. Sengupta, Madhumal (2010) conducted a study on "Environmental Awareness and Environment Related Behavior of 12th Grade Students in Kolkata: Effects of Stream and Gender". The result showed that science student's scores on environmental awareness and behaviors were less than that of arts students.

Aim of the study : The study aims to understand the "Environmental Conservation Awareness of rural SHG members

Objectives of the study:

- To study the personal profile of the respondents.
- To study the actionable environmental conservation awareness among the respondents
- To find out the suggestions of the SHG members to conserve environment.

METHODOLOGY

Statement of the problem: Environment conservation is the need of the hour which should be discussed at each and every platform. Self help groups are one such platform provides opportunity for the members of the group to discuss various issues. Hence this study focuses on assessing the environmental conservation practices among SHG members.

Research design: The study adopted a descriptive research design. There were very limited research studies related to assessing the awareness level of SHG members about environmental conservation.

Universe and sampling: The Universe of the study is 23 SHGs formed in Kadkola village of Mysore taluka and Mysore district of Karnataka State by Srinivasan Services Trust, CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) wing of TVS Motor Company Mysore. Two members each from 23 SHGs were randomly selected for the study with the consent of the respondents. Hence a total of 46 respondents formed the sample of the study.

Tools of data collection: A self constructed structured interview schedule was developed to study the socio demographic background. The schedule also consisted of 3 point scale to assess the awareness level

and suggestions given by the respondents for conservation of environment. In order to assess the awareness level a norm table was formed and chi square test was applied to find out the significance of difference .

Process of data collection: Data for the study was collected personally by interviewing the SHG women after taking their consent. The data collected was coded, tabulated and analyzed.

Limitations of the study: The study is limited to only 46 SHG members of 23 groups

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Personal and Family Profile of the Respondents

Age of the respondents	Age	Frequency N=46	Percent
	19	1	2.2
	24	7	15.2
	25	1	2.2
	26	4	8.7
	28	3	6.5
	29	4	8.7
	30	4	8.7
	31	2	4.3
	32	1	2.2
	33	1	2.2
	34	3	6.5
	35	2	4.3
	36	1	2.2
	40	1	2.2
	43	1	2.2
	45	1	2.2
	49	1	2.2
	50	3	6.5
	52	1	2.2
	55	1	2.2
	60	2	4.3
	70	1	2.2
Education	Illiterates	10	21.7
	Primary	2	4.4
	High school	30	65
	PUC	4	8.7
Income	Below 10,000	2	4.3
	10000.00	10	21.7
	12000.00	8	17.4
	13000.00	2	4.3
	14000.00	3	6.5
	15000.00	15	32.6
	16000.00	4	8.7
	20000.00	2	4.3

The respondents of the study fall between the age ranges of 19 years to 70 years. Most of the respondents belong to the young and middle age group. It is interesting to note that one of the respondents is 70 years old; the interest of the woman to join SHG at this age is appreciated.

Most (65%) of the respondents covered under the study have studied up to High school, 8.7% of the students completed PUC and 21.7% of them do not have formal education.

As for as annual income of the respondents is concerned, it was told by the respondents, that, they do not have enough annual income. In majority cases SHGs are formed for the poorer sections of the society. The very purpose of self-help groups is integrated empowerment of the members.

Table 2: Environmental Conservation Practices

	Reponses	Percentage
Keeping the surroundings importance of clean	17	23.61%
Protection of trees.	19	26.39%
Relationship between disease and environment.	6	8.33%
Children should be educated regarding environmental protection and problems	2	2.78%
Planation of trees.	7	9.72%
Limited use of water.	6	8.33%
Using of dustbin's.	4	5.56%
Less use of plastics.	4	5.56%
Use of toilets Programme.	7	9.72%
	72	100.00%

Various questions related to environmental conservation practices were asked to the respondents in order to assess the pro environmental practices. As for as cleanliness of surroundings is concerned only 23.6% of them told that they clean their surroundings regularly. 26.39% of the respondents are involved in the protection of trees. 8.33% reported that bad environment can give way for the diseases. Only 2.7% of the respondents agreed that children should be educated in environmental protection and environmental problems. 9.72% plant trees regularly. 8.33% use the water economically. 5.56% reduce the use of plastics and 9.72% use toilet. The percentage of people having environmental practices is very less. Self-help group promoting institutions (SHPIs) need to focus on generating awareness among the members with regard to various issues. Environmental conservation is one such area need to be focused. Environmental degradation is continuing day by day due to various reasons which need to be checked. Awareness generation is crucial at individual, group and mass level otherwise it would be very difficult for the present and future generation to lead a healthy life.

Table 3 : Environmental Conservation Practices among the respondents

Norm Table: $\mu=14.33$. $\Sigma=2.84$

Σ - scale	Class	Level	Frequency	Percent
$\mu- 30, \mu- 10$	<12	Below average	18	29.1
$\mu- 10 \mu+10$	12-17	Average	20	43.5
$\mu+10 \mu+30$	>17	Above Average	8	17.4

Calculated chi-square: 4.0 (at 5% level) Table chi-square: 5.991

Since calculated chi-square value was less than table chi-square value, the test was not significant at 5% level i.e. the level of environmental conservation practices follows uniform distributions at 5% level. Majority of the respondents do not have higher level of conservation practices.

Table 3: Suggestions to conserve environment

Suggestions	Frequency	Percentage
Plantation of trees.	26	56.52
Environmental conservation education to children.	2	4.34
Limited use of water	6	13
Use of dustbin	1	2.17
Limited use of plastics	4	8.6
Use of toilet.	7	15.2
Total	46	100.00

Respondents have given various suggestions to conserve environment. Majority (56.52%) of the respondents have recommended for plantation of more and more trees. Other suggestions are like environmental conservation education to children (4.34%), limited use of water (13%), use of dustbin (2.17%), limited use of plastics (8.6%) and use of toilet (15.2%). Though environmental practices is not up to the mark among the respondents, majority of them know that plantation of trees is essential to protect and safe guard the environment. The percentage of respondents who gave other suggestions like environmental conservation education to children, limited use of water, use of dustbin, limited use of plastics and use of toilet is not satisfactory. Self-help group is a platform to generate awareness, enhance skills and knowledge. This platform should be effectively used by the governmental and non-governmental agencies to transform the attitude, enhance knowledge and pro environmental practices. Women are one of the important target groups who can be transformed easily if proper training is given to them

CONCLUSION

Environmental conservation is the responsibility of every individual and every individual should have conservation awareness. This particular study focused on assessing the environmental conservation awareness among Self help group members. It was realized that percentage of SHG members having environmental conservation practice is very low.

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WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION: A STUDY IN RELATION WITH PRESENT SCENARIO

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ABSTRACT

"When girls are educated, their countries become stronger and more prosperous".

Indian Higher Education has crossed many Historical Milestones. Women Enrollment in all important segments equalized and disparity between Women and Men reduced to the maximum extent. Higher education in India has witnessed a phenomenal - both in Quantitative and Qualitative terms, since Independence. The Government has been steadily increasing the budgetary allocation for Higher Education and Women Empowerment. Education is key yardstick by which the growth and development of a country can be delineated and as such it has occupied on honored place in the society.

In this paper authors tried to highlight on a present scenario of Higher Education in India and Women participation in it. Detailed statistical survey has been done in 4 reputed Colleges, two from Dakshina Kannada District and two from Mysore District. Final effort has been made to interpret, conclude and suggest for the actualization of real meaning of Women Empowerment. Present paper would be used by researchers, post graduate students and other readers to explore and exploit further modified research opportunities in this field.

Key Words : Higher Education, Infrastructure, Government Initiative, Women Empowerment, Women Enrolment.

INTRODUCTION

Women constitute 48.16% of India's population. They are a valuable Human resource. Women empowerment means emancipation of women from vicious grips of social, economical and political, caste and gender-based discrimination. It means granting women the freedom to make life choices. Women empowerment does not mean 'deifying women' rather it means replacing patriarchy with parity. The term empowerment indicates a process of giving to developing conditions for generating power within. Therefore conceptually the term empowerment has multi-dimensional focus and can be discussed as a process wherein a group or individuals are ambled to enhance their status in the society on the hand and overall participation and growth in the other. Empowerment is an active multi-dimensional process which enables a woman to realize their identity, position and power in all spheres of life. Empowerment provides greater making process at home and in matters concerning society and freedom from customs, beliefs and practices. Or in other words, Women empowerment is empowering the women to take their own decisions for their personal dependent. Empowering women is to make them independent in all aspect from mind, thought, rights, decisions, etc., by leaving all the social and family limitations. It is to bring equality in the society for both male and female in all areas. Women empowerment is very necessary to make the bright future of the family, society and country. Women need clean and more capable environment so that they can take their own right decisions in every area whether for themselves, family, society or country. In order to make the country fully developed country, women empowerment is an essential tool to get the goal of development.
