

## Empowerment of Rural Women through Self Help Group

Tekale V. S.<sup>1</sup>, J. D. Jadhav<sup>2</sup> and J. I. Shaikh<sup>3</sup>

1. Professor Extension Education, College of Agriculture, Nagpur-440 001. India

2 & 3. Ex-M.Sc. (Agri.) Students, Extension Education Section, College of Agriculture, Nagpur-440 001. India

Corresponding author e-mail : vishmukantt@rediffmail.com.

### ABSTRACT

*The study Empowerment of rural women through self help group was conducted in Mauda tehsil of Nagpur district. The sample consisted of 100 rural women members of SHG's from 10 SHG's of 10 villages who were selected randomly. Majority (90.00%) respondents were increased their self reliance and self confidence up to (88.00%) after joining SHG's. More than half (57.00%) respondents were empowered to interact with male outside the family. About same percent i.e. 74.00 per cent in relation with empowerment in access to modern technology and increase in self education by the respondents. The respondents get opportunity to economic development was (86.00%) after joining SHG's. The respondents had increase in awareness was 71.00 per cent in awareness about political institution. Due to participation in SHG's change in women empowerment were in descending order as women empowerment psychologically (79.82%) followed by economically (66.21%), socially (52.77%), politically (45.98%) and last culturally (28.17%), respectively.*

**Key words :** *Self Help Groups, Rural women, Empowerment*

You can tell the condition of a nation by looking at the status of its women. The need for women empowerment is felt in India long back. One of the powerful approaches to women empowerment and rural entrepreneurship is the formation of Self Help Groups (SHG's) especially among women. The concept of empowerment is often used in the context of the differential power that exists between genders and often expressed in terms of ownership of, and control over resources, rights, and freedom. Empowerment is a process of change by which individuals or groups gain power and ability to take control over their lives. The term "SHG's is operationally defined and used for the purpose of the present study "Self Help Groups are usually informal groups whose members have a common perception of need and importance towards collective action. It was expected that, formation of SHG's will encourage and empower the rural women and other too. The need of present study is an outcome of thinking that rural women do not have the capacity for saving and starting any enterprises. In the present investigation following specific objectives were studied,

1. To study the sub item wise empowerment of rural women on main indicators through self help groups
2. To study the extent of empowerment of women on main indicators.

### METHODOLOGY

The exploratory design of social research was used for the study. The investigation was carried out in Mauda Tahsil of Nagpur district of Vidharbha region of Maharashtra during the year 2010-11. The sample consisted of 100 rural women members of SHG's from 10 SHG's of 10 villages who were selected randomly. The data were collected with the help of personal interview method through structured interview schedule. The scale developed by Vidya Tayde (2006) was used for measurement of women empowerment.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Women empowerment on sub items of main indicators.

The results with regards to sub item wise empowerment of rural women on main indicators through self help groups have been furnished in Table 1. By subtracting the values of each of the sub items on main indicators main indicators of women empowerment before and after joining the SHG's by the respondents, the pre cent change was calculated for each sub items on main indicators. The distributions of respondents according to sub item wise empowerment of rural women, through SHG's have been furnished in Table 1.

#### Psychological empowerment

It was observed from Table 1 that the great majority of respondents were (90.00%) found change in self reliance, followed by 88.00 per cent in self confidence, 84.00 and 70.00 per cent change observed in case of ambition in business and increase self image. Whereas 65.00 per cent change where observed in courage and feeling of security in family, respectively. The present findings are supported by finding of Vidya Tayde (2006).

#### Cultural empowerment

In case of cultural empowerment, after joining SHG's 57.00 per cent of respondents were found change in freedom to interact with male outside. The 39, 35, and 36 per cent of changes in respondents were observed in freedom to taking a kind of food, liberty to attained marriage and freedom for attending pilgrim, respectively. The 34.00 per cent of them were actually participation in festival and 24.00 per cent had freedom for wearing a kind of dress. The 14 and 21 per cent change was observed in freedom for performing festivals ceremony and freedom for deciding food menu, respectively. The present findings are supported by findings of Vidya Tayde (2006), Vengutesan and Govid (2007) and Mankar, et al. (2007).

**Table 1**  
**Distribution of respondents on each of the sub items of women empowerment.**

Sr. No.	Indicators/items	Responses					
		Before joining SHG's		After joining SHG's		Change	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
<b>A)</b>	<b>Psychological empowerment</b>						
1.	Self confidence	12	12.00	100	100	88	88.00
2.	Courage	30	30.00	95	95.00	65	65.00
3.	Self reliance	10	10.00	100	100	90	90.00
4.	Feeling of self security in family	35	35.00	100	100	65	65.00
5.	Career ambition	07	07.00	91	91.00	84	84.00
6.	Self image	20	20.00	90	90.00	70	70.00
<b>B)</b>	<b>Cultural empowerment</b>						
1.	Freedom to interact with male outside the family	30	30.00	87	87.00	57	57.00
2.	Freedom for taking of food	57	57.00	96	96.00	39	39.00
3.	Actual participation in festivals	76	76.00	100	100	34	34.00
4.	Freedom for performing festivals ceremonies	77	77.00	98	98.00	21	21.00
5.	Freedom for wearing a kind of dress	20	20.00	44	44.00	24	24.00
6.	Freedom for attending pilgrims / religious place	55	55.00	91	91.00	36	36.00
7.	Freedom to deciding (food) menu	85	85.00	99	99.00	14	14.00
8.	Liberty to attend marriage ceremony	63	63.00	98	98.00	35	35.00
<b>C)</b>	<b>Social empowerment</b>						
1.	Increase in self education	16	16.00	90	90.00	74	74.00
2.	Get freedom to work outside the family	23	23.00	68	68.00	45	45.00
3.	Get freedom to visit hospital / doctor	65	65.00	99	99.00	34	34.00
4.	Get freedom for adopting practices for maintaining health	67	67.00	98	98.00	31	31.00
5.	Participation in decision about family planning (welfare)	26	26.00	70	70.00	44	44.00
6.	Participation in community action	18	18.00	84	84.00	66	66.00
7.	Feeling of social security	39	39.00	92	92.00	53	53.00
8.	Participation in decision about education of children	57	57.00	100	100	43	43.00
9.	Participation in decision about girls marriage	27	27.00	83	83.00	56	56.00
10.	Possessing desired social status	35	35.00	92	92.00	57	57.00
11.	Increase in/ making healthy social environment	57	57.00	98	98.00	41	41.00

12.	Appreciation by family members for significant contribution	32	32.00	97	97.00	65	65.00
13.	Get access to modern technology	11	11.00	85	85.00	74	74.00
14.	Get freedom to mix with (women ) friends	48	48.00	100	100	52	52.00
15.	Get access to water	65	65.00	98	98.00	33	33.00
16.	Get access to fuel / energy	72	72.00	100	100	28	28.00
<b>D) Economic empowerment</b>							
1.	Get opportunity for economic development	14	14.00	100	100	86	86.00
2.	Get freedom for selection of job	11	11.00	98	98.00	87	87.00
3.	Increase personal saving in the form of fixed deposit	16	16.00	69	69.00	53	53.00
4.	Able to operate personal account in bank	18	18.00	68	68.00	58	58.00
5.	Participation in decision about adoption of modern technology	25	25.00	94	94.00	69	69.00
6.	Participation in decision about purchasing building / house	21	21.00	93	93.00	72	72.00
7.	Participation in decision about marketing of produce	38	38.00	89	89.00	51	51.00
8.	Participation in purchase of input for family enterprise	32	32.00	92	92.00	60	60.00
9.	Get authority to employ labourers	22	22.00	95	95.00	73	73.00
10.	Get freedom for spending on entertainment of guest	52	52.00	97	97.00	45	45.00
11.	Get freedom for offering present to relatives	56	56.00	98	98.00	42	42.00
<b>E) Political empowerment</b>							
1.	Holding a political position at present	00	00.00	18	18.00	18	18.00
2.	freedom for participation in active politics	07	07.00	65	65.00	58	58.00
3.	About awareness of human rights	32	32.00	78	78.00	46	46.00
4.	Increase in awareness about legislation about women	23	23.00	72	72.00	40	40.00
5.	Increase in awareness of political institution	18	18.00	89	89.00	71	71.00

*\*Multiple choice responses.*

### **Social empowerment**

It was observed the positive change in descending order in respondents after joining SHG's viz., access to modern technology (74.00%), self education (74.00%), participation in community action (66.00%), appreciation by family members (65.00%), respectively. Social empowerment was also observed

in possessing desired social status (57.00%), increased their participation in decision about girls marriage (56.00%), feeling of social security (53.00%), and freedom to mix with women friends (52.00%) respectively. The changes in respondents were observed in increased participation in decision about family planning (44.00%), participation in decision

about education about children (43.00%) and healthy social environment (41.00%), respectively. The changes also observed after joining SHG's were 34, 33 and 29 per cent in get freedom to visit hospital/doctor, get access to water and access to fuel / energy, respectively. The present findings are supported by findings of Bharathamma, et al. (2006) and Vidya Tayde (2006).

### Economic empowerment

From the data in Table 1 the changes in large majority (87.00%) of respondents were observed in case of increase freedom for selection of job, 86.00 per cent in opportunity for economic development, and 73.00 per cent in authority to employ labourers, 69.00 per cent in participation in decision about adoption of modern technology in home respectively. The majority of respondents were also shows changes after joining SHG's in purchase of input for family enterprise (60.00%), able to operate personal account in banks (58.00%), increased personal saving in the form of fixed deposit (53.00%) and participation in decision about marketing of produce (51.00%) respectively. It was also observed the change in 45 and 42 per cent respondents in getting freedom for spending on entertainment on guest and get freedom for offering present to relatives after joining SHG's. The present findings are supported by findings of Mekee (1989), Chandre Gawada, et al. and Tejaswini, et al.

### Political empowerment

It was noticed from Table 1, that majority of respondents (71.00%) become aware about political institution and recorded freedom for participation in active politics (58.00%). These changes were observed in political empowerment. Whereas, 46.00 and 40.00 per cent of respondents were increase awareness about human rights and awareness about legislation about women, respectively. Only 18 per cent of respondents holding a political position in active politics after joining SHG's. These findings are supported by findings of Vidya Tayde (2006), and Mankar, et al. (2007)

### 2 Empowerment of women on main indicators

The mean difference for each dimension of empowerment through SHG's was calculated by subtracting the mean empowerment index before joining SHG's from the mean empowerment index after joining SHG's. Similarly the dimension wise ranking was done on the basis of mean difference in empowerment index in each dimension. The results are presented in Table 2.

The data in Table 2 shows that the mean indices representing the empowerment gained by respondents after joining SHG's were higher than the mean indices representing the empowerment gained by respondents before joining SHG's in all the dimension indicators of empowerment of rural women.

**Table 2**  
**Extent of empowerment of women**  
**on main indicators**

Sr. No.	Main indicators index	Mean empowerment index (%)		Mean diff. in emp. Index (A-B) (%)	Rank
		Before joining SHG's (B)	After joining SHG's (A)		
1	Psychological Empowerment	14.54	94.36	79.82	I
2	Cultural Empowerment	61.52	89.69	28.17	V
3	Social Empowerment	39.56	92.33	52.77	III
4	Economic Empowerment	11.02	77.23	66.21	II
5	Political Empowerment	07.86	53.84	45.98	IV

The differences between these two mean indices representing the increase in empowerment of respondents in each dimension. Appraisal of Table 2 shows that the extent of overall increasing empowerment varies from 28.17 to 79.82 per cent. It was observed that after joining SHG's women get empowered psychologically with 79.82 per cent mean difference in psychological empowerment and ranked as Ist, followed by economic empowerment with 66.21 per cent mean difference and it ranked as IInd. Social empowerment of respondents rank IIIrd with 53.84 per cent mean difference in social empowerment, followed by political empowerment with 45.18 per cent mean difference in political empowerment and ranked as IVth and at last in case of cultural empowerment with 28.17 per cent means difference in cultural empowerment and ranked as Vth.

It was also clear that the empowerment of rural women as a result of participation in SHG's by then was positive and concluded that there was an incremental increase in empowerment. This increase in empowerment can only be attributed to joining of SHG's by rural women.

### CONCLUSION

Due to participation of rural women in SHG's the changes observed in women empowerment were in descending order as women empowered psychologically followed by economically, socially, politically and last culturally. The SHG's play an important role in women empowerment like psychological, social, cultural, economic and political empowerment. There was a definite empowerment of rural women members of SHG's on all the dimension of the empowerment, so government agencies and private organizations should give due importance to SHG's, enroll more number of members and enhance activities of SHG's specially for women empowerment purpose.

*Paper received on* : May 1, 2014

*Accepted on* : August 5, 2014

## REFERENCES

1. Bharathamma, G. U. Angadi, J. G. Hirevenkanagoudar, L. V. Natikar, K. V. 2006. Empowerment of rural women through income generating activities. *Karnataka J. of Agricultural Sciences. 2006; 19(3): 600-602.*
2. Chandre Gowda, M. J., S.H. Adapur and R. Sudha, 2003. Extension through women and group – An innovative approach of KVK, Gadag, Karnataka. *Manage. Extn. Res. Rev. 4(2):93*
3. Mankar, D.M.; S.R. Khonde; N.R. Koshti and U.R. Chinchmalatpure, 2007. Empowerment of rural women through self help groups. *Research Review Committee report : 3-17.*
4. Mekee, K. 1989. Microlevel strategies for supporting livelihood, employment and income generation of poor women in the third world: *The challenge of Significance World Development. 17(7) : 998-1006.*
5. Tejaswini, A. and Veerabhadraiah, S., 1996. Knowledge assessment of rural women on DWCRA and their problems. *Kurukshetra, 51 (4) : 46-47.*
6. Tejaswini, C.N.; C.N. Chandra; V. Shekhar and K. Narayan Gowda, 2004. Performance of farm women in agriculture and income generating activities. *Manage Extn. Res. Rev. 5 (1) : 68-73.*
7. Vengatesan, D. and Santha Govind, 2007. Psychological profile of women SHG members. *Mysore J. Agric. Sci. 41(3) : 371-378.*
8. Vidya Tayade, 2006. Empowerment of rural women in Marathwada region of Maharashtra state. *Ph.D. Thesis (Unpub.), MAU, Parbhani.*