

Self Help Group: an Effective Approach to Capacity Building Women in Arid Rajasthan

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ABSTRACT

Capacity building of women can be the valid option for the empowerment of women. Mobilization and formalization of SHG of women remain a valid option to take the benefit through the group effort. Being in a group builds up the confidence level, capacitates them and raises the awareness. The present study addresses the capacity building of rural arid women of Rajasthan through participation in Self Help Groups. The research has been carried out in the Pokaran block and jaisalmer block of Jaisalmer District, Rajasthan, India. Field data were collected through survey cum interview and focus group discussion with 240 rural women based on their working pattern. Around 73.88 per cent of the respondent had the skill of freely & frankly speaking in SHG meetings without any hesitation followed by keeping accounts of SHG. Capacity building of women in terms of writing minutes of SHG meetings and speaking during public meetings were also encouraging.

Key Words : SHG, Capacity building, Skill

Self Help Group (SHG) is a small voluntary association to form a group. It is recommended to be informal to keep them away from bureaucracy, corruption, unnecessary administrative expenditure and profit motive. In fact, it is a home grown model for poverty reduction which simultaneously works to empower and shape the lives of its members in a better way. Women constitute nearly half of the nation's population and play an important role in household and agricultural activities. But majority of the women living in rural areas are illiterates and are below poverty line having poor economic status. Hence there is need to change their capacity to work, increase knowledge, enrich their skills and improve their economic status by providing them the required resources. From this point of view the present investigation was taken in Jaisalmer district of Rajasthan State with the following objectives

1. To analyze the capacity building of women through Self Help Group
2. To study the area of activities of the members of the sample SHGs
3. To find out the association between selected variables and capacity building of women through Self Help Group

In this study, capacity building was looked into from general skills required to function as an effective group member and management of SHG, and skill

development training programmes for initiating income-generating activities. The general skills studied were communication skills, leadership qualities, self esteem and confidence, and other skills required for effective management of SHGs like maintenance of accounts, writing of reports, handling bank transactions etc.

METHODOLOGY

Multi-stage, simple random sampling method was used for selecting the SHGs and respondents. Thus a total of 100 SHGs and a sample of 200 members representing the sample were selected for the study. Interview schedule was used for primary data collection. Case studies and Focus Group Discussions were conducted to supplement the data and information.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The change that has come about capacity building is measured by using a five-point scale as "Very High", "High", "Same", "Low" and "Very Low". There was negligible response against Low and Very Low. The following Table gives the number of respondents whose general skills have increased either high or very high and same after becoming a member of SHGs. The last column gives the total increase, and the rest of the respondents remained in the same level as before they joined the SHG

Table 1
Increase in general skills of respondents

Sr. No.	General Skills	Very High		High		Same		Low		Very Low		Overall (% Increase)
		No	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	
1.	Teaching & training someone else	17	8.5	105	52.5	35	17.5	20	10.0	23	11.5	59.75
2.	Speaking during public meetings	23	11.5	117	58.5	30	15.0	14	7.0	16	8.0	65.13
3.	Presenting cultural programme in public meetings	15	7.5	78	39	68	34.0	12	6.0	27	13.5	56.75
4.	Freely & frankly speaking in SHG meetings	29	14.5	149	74.5	12	6.0	08	4.0	02	1.0	73.88

5.	Taking leadership positions in the SHG	30	15.0	93	46.5	37	18.5	21	10.5	19	9.5	62.50
6.	Writing minutes of SHG meetings	37	18.5	119	59.5	29	14.5	11	5.5	04	2.0	70.38
7.	Keeping of the accounts of SHG	39	19.5	129	64.5	18	9.0	09	4.5	05	2.5	73.50
8.	Performing bank transaction	19	9.5	89	44.5	57	28.5	16	8.0	19	9.5	60.63
9.	Going to Government office / police station	21	10.5	93	46.5	49	24.5	18	9.0	19	9.5	60.38
10.	Talking to Government officials / police	23	11.5	97	48.5	47	23.5	17	8.5	16	8.0	62.38

A very impressive increase in general skills was noticed in majority of respondents except in the skill for presenting cultural programmes in public meetings. It might be because they had no chance for such opportunities. Highest increase was seen in communication skills. A great majority (73.88%) of the respondents showed the increase in freely and frankly speaking in SHG meetings, in teaching or training others (59.75%) and speaking in public meetings (65.13%).

As regarding skills for proper management of SHGs, the increase was found remarkable in keeping the accounts of SHGs (73.50%), writing minutes of the SHG meeting (70.38%), and going to banks and performing bank transactions (60.63%). The increase in self-esteem, self-confidence and fearlessness were seen in the response against going to government offices and police station (60.38%) and talking to the officials and policemen (62.38%). Women who were afraid of these offices and people are getting the confidence through the SHG. This was a sign of their social empowerment. Mohanty, Dasb and Mohanty (2013) also observed that their decision-making has been enhanced with mobilization of women in organized collectives as SHGs and their participation in micro enterprises.

Area of activities of the members of the sample SHGs

Table 2
Distribution of activities among the members of the sample SHGs (in percentage)

Sr. No.	Activity	Percentage of SHGs	Rank Order
1	Agriculture	16.5	III
2	Animal Husbandry	31.5	II
3	Weaving / handloom and textile	46.5	I
4	Other Activity	5.5	IV
	Total	100	

Table 2 shows that in 46.5 per cent of the total SHGs, members have engaged in weaving / handloom and textile. This includes methods like knitting, lace making, felting, and braiding or plaiting. The Mean per cent score distribution of activities also clearly shows that out of the total 31.5 per cent of SHGs members take

animal husbandry as their primary activity. The animal husbandry practices basically include dairy, goater, poultry, camel rearing etc. The 16.5 per cent members are engaged in agriculture and in the rest of the SHGs, it has been observed that members are disbursed among other activities.

Association between selected variables and capacity building of women through SHG

The capacity building of women through SHG is a unit act but a complex process involving sequence and thought of action. The action of individual woman is governed by personal and socio-economic attribute with their level of capacity building. These were worked out by calculating correlation of coefficient. The result in this regard is depicted as under.

Table 3
Association between the attributes of SHG members and their extent of capacity building through SHG

S.No	Independent Variables	Correlation Coefficient
1	Age	0.105 NS
2	Education	0.094 NS
3	Size of family	0.034 NS
4	Land holding	0.026 NS
5	Occupation	0.069 NS
6	Mass media exposure	0.248**
7	Extension contact	0.207*
8	Social participation	0.222*
9	Economic motivation	0.236**
10	Risk orientation	0.201*

* = Significant at 5 % level of probability

** = Significant at 1 % level of probability

The figures resulted in Table 3 revealed that the extent of personal attribute of SHG members towards capacity building was observed positive and significant with their mass media exposure, extension contact, social participation, economic motivation and risk orientation, while rest of variables like age, education, size of family, land holding and occupation had positive and non-significant relationship with their skill towards capacity building for empowerment. Thus, it can be concluded that those respondents / who had regular habit to contact extension agents, inclination towards

mass media, interest to participate in different social activities and elevated level of experience favored to participate in SHG activity, as uses and benefit of skills might have raised their concern with regards to feel the positivism about empowerment to sustain their occupation economically and socially protected. It was seen that changes in capacity building was not influenced by their age, education, occupation and land holding up to mark. These findings / were in support of findings reported by Christian and Chauhan (2013)

CONCLUSION

The outcomes of the investigation conclude that about two third of the respondents had build their

capacity by forming a Self Help Group. It was found, Self Help Group (SHG) becomes synonym of empowerment of women economically and socially in arid region of Rajasthan. Through this SHGs, women involves themselves to get help, to give help and learns to help themselves as well as sharing their experiences and knowledge. The independent variable viz., mass media exposure, extension contact, social participation, economic motivation and risk orientation have established positively and highly significant association with their capacity building.

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