



Research Paper

Impact and assessment of self-help groups in Amravati division of Maharashtra

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ABSTRACT : Comprehensive study on impact and assessment of self-help groups through problems faced by self-help groups and its members in Amravati Division of Maharashtra was carried out for year 2016-2017 for Amravati division. Study was undertaken in rural areas of Amravati division, 300 SHGs, which were engaged in selected agriculture based activities dairy, poultry, goatary, vermicompost, food processing and floriculture, olericulture and forest product. In order to analyse the objectives of the study primary data was collected with the help of personal interview of self- help groups. Those Self- help groups were selected for the study which should have an activity in existence of at least 10 years, collected data then tabulated according to need and purpose of study and calculated constraints and suggestions obtained from SHGs. The constraints analysis conclude that procurement of raw material was major constraints in production, the lack of social mobility. The major suggestion received from the SHG's members were analysed and it is observed that most of the members are of the opinion that rate of interest should be minimum, improving market facilities and loan should be release earliest possible, availability of raw materials and infrastructure facilities required for running of SHG's were the suggestion made by SHG's members.

KEY WORDS : Impact, Assessment, Self-help groups

Paper History :

Received : 19.12.2017;

Revised : 01.02.2018;

Accepted : 15.02.2018

HOW TO CITE THIS PAPER : Chopde, K.D., Deshmukh, R.G. and Kadam, M.M. (2018). Impact and assessment of self-help groups in Amravati division of Maharashtra. *Internat. Res. J. Agric. Eco. & Stat.*, **9** (1) : 175-180, DOI : 10.15740/HAS/IRJAES/9.1/175-180.

INTRODUCTION :

In India, majority of the people live in rural area and are engaged in agriculture, earning a subsistence wage. Women are vital part of the Indian economy and employment to build their empowerment. The self-help group has originated from Amravati division in Vidarbha. Women come together and formed SHGs for their economic development of rural poor. SHGs have no guidance from experts, so there was no market to sell their products. Now Maharashtra government is going

to guide themselves (SHG) and will make available market by expertise (market experts). Self- help groups of poor people in rural area of Amravati division established under district Rural Development Agency (DRDA), Mahila Arthik Vikas Mahamandal (MAVIM), NABFINS-NGOs, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, SHGs are engaged under economic activities or income generating activities. Steps would be taken by government very soon in strengthening the SHGs and achievement in different fields in the rural area of division. Self-help groups women members are involved in most of the activities in animal husbandry enterprise like dairy, poultry, goat rearing and

vermicomposting, Food Processing, Floriculture, Olericulture, Forest product. Rural Indian self-help groups women members are extensively involved in agriculture activities. However, the nature and extent of their involvement differs with the variations in agro-production systems. In rural India self-help groups play a vital role in the delivery of micro-financial services. Their members take decisions together on their savings, interest rates, provision of loans and their recovery. This helps them to develop the right set of attitudes and skills required for their sustenance. Members of these groups also learn to mobilize resources, build linkages which form the basis for their socio-economic empowerment. Self-help group members borrow from Banks, microfinance institutions and also within the group. The SHGs empower women and train them to take active part in the socio-economic progress of the nation and make them self-reliance, self-made and self-disciplined. The SHG enhances the earning capacity of women between 20 to 30 per cent. It ensures social security and economic independences which in turn uplifts their status in the economic front. Importance for identifying the SHGs various problems like marketing, production, economic and social problems, suggest the remedial measures to income generating activities SHGs for betterment of women's empowerment.

MATERIALS AND METHODS :

The study on problems faced by self-help groups in Amravati Division of Maharashtra was undertaken with the following objectives:

- To identify the constraints and suggest the remedial measures for betterment of women's empowerment in self-help groups

The data needed for the study was collected from the SHGs members by personal interview method using pre-tested schedule prepared for the purpose.

The activities taken up by SHGs in the study area were assessed and following six agricultural activities taken up by majority of the SHGs were selected as these activities have wider adoptability.

- Dairy
- Poultry
- Goat rearing
- Vermicompost
- Food processing
- Floriculture, olericulture, forest product.

Duration:

Three years data were collected for this study. 2013-14, 2014-15, 2015-16. Those self-help groups were selected for the study which should have an activity in existence of at least 10 years.

Analysis:

Simple Tabular analysis was adopted to compile the constraints faced by selected SHGs and SHG members which were engaged with selected agriculture based activities.

Garret ranking :

Ranking method was used for suggestions for the betterment of women's empowerment in self-help groups.

Garret ranking technique was used to rank the preference of the respondents on different suggestions of the study on scale 1 to 10. The rank 1 meant most important suggestion and rank 8 meant least important suggestion. The orders of merit given by the respondents were converted into ranks by using the following formula:

$$\text{Percentage position} = \frac{100(R_{ij}-0.5)}{N_j}$$

where,

R_{ij} stands for the rank given for the i^{th} suggestion ($i=1, 2, \dots, 10$) by the j^{th} individual and N_j stands for total number of ranks assigned by j^{th} individual.

The percentage position of each rank thus, obtained into scores by referring to the table given by Henry E. Garret. Then for each suggestion the scores of individual respondents were added together and divided by the total number of the respondents for whom the scores are added. These mean scores for all suggestion were arranged in the descending order, ranks given and most important suggestion identified.

RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS :

The results obtained from the present investigation as well as relevant discussion have been summarized under following heads :

Constraints faced by the SHG members:

Constraints faced by the SHGs It is clear from Table 1 that among the production problems 234 (78%) of them felt difficulty in procurement of raw material as a major problem, followed by 159 (58%) SHGs expressed lack

of infrastructure facilities for selected activities was moderate problem, 116 (39%) of SHGs expressed about complication in purchase procedure of materials and 108 (36%) of SHGs express about untimely supply of materials or inputs, respectively (Bhari and Badiger, 2009; Dhawane, 2007 and Singh, 1997).

Among the social problems about 194 (65%) of them felt lack of social mobility because of restrictions in the family, about 188 (63%) of SHGs felt conflict among the groups was a moderate problem conflicts may have raised due to few defaulters and caste system in the group village was opined by 29 (9.7%) of SHGs, respectively. It can be observed that caste system in village was not a severe problem. It might be because almost all the members of the same group belonged to the same caste.

Among economic problems profit margin is not

sufficient was opined as a moderate problem by 182 (61%) of SHGs, followed by problems in raw material procurement or training/skill needed opined by 174 (58%) of the SHGs, improper savings or procedure, loan repayment of members expressed by the 117 (39%) of SHGs and loan unavailable in time was expressed by 109 (36%) of SHGs. Profit earned and the problem of raw material procurement might be based on particular income generating activity the members have undertaken, non-availability of loan on time, improper savings, profit earned not sufficient and raw material procurement were found to be problems. Loan availability is based on their savings and the members prompt repayment and is not sufficient. Among marketing problems 207 (69%) of SHGs felt lack of transportation was major problem followed by product has no market was found to be

Table 1: Constraints faced by the SHG members

(n=300)

Sr. No.	Category	Number of SHG					Total	%	
		Dairy	Poultry	Goatary	Vermi-compost	Proce-ssing			Agri-culture
Production									
1.	Untimely supply of material/inputs	14	15	16	14	26	23	108	36
2.	Difficulty in procurement of raw material	38	42	40	40	36	38	234	78
3.	Lack of infrastructure facilities for selected activities	26	27	26	27	25	28	159	53
4.	Complication in purchase procedure of materials/inputs.	20	19	20	20	17	20	116	39
Social									
1.	Caste system in the group	6	5	4	4	3	7	29	9.7
2.	Conflict among the group members	28	35	32	33	30	30	188	63
3.	Lack of social mobility because of restrictions in the family	31	36	27	36	35	29	194	65
Economic									
1.	Loan unavailable in time	16	19	28	17	16	13	109	36
2.	Improper savings or purchase, loan repayment of members	18	21	24	16	13	25	117	39
3.	Margin of profit is not sufficient	29	31	31	29	28	34	182	61
4.	Problem in raw material procurement or Training skill needed	30	27	33	30	30	24	174	58
Marketing									
1.	Product has no market	34	29	36	32	31	36	198	66
2.	Lack of transportation	35	33	29	39	33	38	207	69
3.	Lack of storage facilities	18	16	5	25	29	25	118	39
4.	Lack of market information	33	32	36	31	32	29	193	64
5.	High marketing cost	19	23	4	31	33	37	147	49
6.	Lack of assistance from organizations	31	19	33	33	22	21	159	53
Family									
1.	Family adoption	10	14	16	13	12	13	78	26
2.	Conflict among family members	20	17	18	22	21	17	115	38
3.	Family economic status	13	14	16	15	12	10	80	27
4.	Family members Religious thought	27	24	23	27	25	21	147	49

moderate problem by 198 (66%) of the SHGs, lack of market information was expressed by per 193 (64%) of SHGs moderate problem, lack of assistance from organizations (SHG, NGO, Bank, BDO staff and Gram Panchayat) 159 (53%) and high market cost 147(49%) SHGs were the medium problem and lack of storage facilities 118 (39%) of the SHGs expressed, respectively (Geethamma, 2007 and Kore, 2005).

The distance from local market or town and non-availability of transportation facilities was opined as high by majority of the members. It is because some villages were located far from the town or local market. Lack of storage facilities and lack of market information were opined as moderate problems by majority of the members. It might be because of their illiteracy and less exposure to the society. High market cost is also one of the major problem because they were located far from the local market.

Among the family problems, family members religious thought was opined as high by 147 (49%) of the SHGs followed by conflicts among the family members was moderate by 115 (38%) of SHGs, family economic

status was felt as medium by 80 (27%) of SHGs and family opposition problem was felt by 78 (26%) of SHGs, respectively. Majority of members was from backward (BPL), illiterate family and living in village that's the reason affect families religious thought and conflicts between family members sum times oppose her decisions, engaged with income SHGs generating activities.

Suggestions obtained from the self-help groups members:

The suggestions elicited from members of self-help groups by garret ranking technique for the improvement of SHGs is reported in Table 2. It was evident from the table that a higher 285 SHG members suggested for reducing the interest rate was ranked 1st followed by 271 SHGs were suggested marketing facility to be improve was 2nd ranked, 266 SHGs members suggested quick release of loan that was ranked 3rd, about 264 SHGs suggested to provide infrastructure facilities for selected activities was ranked 4th. 234 SHGs suggested to increase availability of row material was ranked 5th, 213 SHGs suggested for improvement of loan arrangements was

Table 2 : Suggestions obtained from the self-help groups

(n=300)

Sr. No.	Suggestions/activities	Number of SHGs						Total	Percentage position	Scores	Total score	Mean score	Ranks
		Dairy	Poultry	Goatary	Vermi-compost	Proce-ssing	Agri-culture						
1.	Reduce the interest rate	50	50	48	42	48	46	284	4.55	83	23572	78.57	1
2.	Marketing facilities to be improved	48	45	40	44	50	44	271	13.64	72	19512	65.04	2
3.	Quick release of loan	40	48	44	43	46	45	266	22.73	65	17290	57.63	3
4.	Provided infrastructure facilities for selected activities	45	46	43	42	47	41	264	31.82	59	15576	51.92	4
5.	Increase availability of raw material	42	38	40	31	44	39	234	40.91	55	12870	42.9	5
6.	Improvement of loan arrangement	35	32	38	38	37	33	213	50	50	10650	35.5	6
7.	Increase in loan amount	38	29	36	32	41	32	208	59.09	45	9360	31.2	7
8.	Increase the repayment period	36	32	32	40	31	33	204	68.18	41	8364	27.88	8
9.	Co-operation between the members should be improved.	37	34	36	32	27	31	197	77.27	35	6895	22.98	9
10.	Number of days of training is to be increased	29	34	25	35	33	12	168	86.36	28	4704	15.68	10
11.	Supervision by higher authority on SHG	25	23	22	24	21	19	134	95.45	17	2278	7.59	11

ranked 6th, 208 SHGs were suggested to increase in loan amount was ranked 7th, 204 SHGs were suggested to increase the repayment period was ranked 8th, 197 SHGs were suggested for cooperation between the members should be improved was ranked 9th, 168 SHGs were suggested for increasing the number of days of training was ranked 10th and 134 SHGs were suggested that supervision by higher authority on SHG for effective functioning is required this was ranked last 11th.

This might be because of problems faced by the group members during selling of the produce without assured market outlets, lack of co-operation and team work among group members, resolving group conflicts, misunderstanding of group members that leaders benefit more and there were no economic intensive for being a group leader, less supervision by higher authority on SHGs, non-availability of raw material, inflexible management, unemployment problems, etc.

Overcoming all these problems is not in the hands of a single agency but through multiple agencies like District rural development authority, Department of Women and Child development in Rural Areas and District Social Welfare Department, where SHGs certainly take a lead role in the empowerment of rural poor women's. Similar work related to the present investigation was also carried out by Darling Selvi (2005) and Prita (2001)

Conclusion:

The constraints analysis indicated that procurement of raw material was major constraints in production, the lack of social mobility and conflict among the group members were the major social constraints, in sufficient profit margin and training scheme were major economic constraints, high marketing cost and inadequate market facilities were the major hurdles in marketing, the religious thought of family members and conflict among the family members are major family constraints.

53 per cent of the SHGs members informed that lack of infrastructure for marketing of the produce which includes difficulties in procurement of raw materials, no market for produce, no transportation available, no market information which was main hurdles in production and marketing of SHGs produce.

The major suggestion received from the SHG's members were analysed and it is observed that most of the members are of the opinion that rate of interest should

be minimum, improving market facilities and loan should be released earliest possible, availability of raw materials and infrastructure facilities required for running of SHG's were the suggestion made by SHG's members.

Policy implication:

Majority of the SHG members engaged in selected activities were middle aged. Any more rural women who come forward to start dairy, poultry, goatary, vermicompost, food processing and floriculture, olericulture, olericulture activities may be extended financial support by the bank. The SHGs by encouraging members to take up income generating activities have helped in increasing the employment opportunities. Hence, encouragement and support by the government to establish SHGs will certainly solve the problem of rural unemployment. An independent infrastructure may be created for marketing of SHG's produce, need to increase the SHGs access to the supply chain, linkages to markets and appropriate technologies. Infrastructure built for SHG's members is need of the day, government should provide infrastructure.

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