

Full Length Research Paper

Empowerment of women through Stree Shakti programme in Mysore

Akashraj D. P.

Abstract

Faculty and academic coordinator,
University of Mysore

E-mail: akashrajdp@gmail.com

There are a variety of understandings of the term empowerment due to its widespread usage. If empowerment is looked upon in terms of ability to make choices: to be disempowered therefore, implies to be denied choice. The notion of empowerment is that it is inescapably bound up with the condition of disempowerment and refers to the processes by which those who have been denied the ability to make choices acquire such ability. Thus, there could be statistical swells indicating improvements in indicators of gender equality, but unless the intervening process involved women as agents of that change, one cannot term it as '*empowerment*'. People who exercise a great deal of choice in their lives may be very powerful, but they are not *empowered*, because they were never disempowered in the first place. Empowerment cannot be defined in terms of specific activities or end results because it involves a process whereby women can freely analyze, develop and voice their needs and interests, without them being pre-defined, or imposed from above. The assumption that planners can identify women's needs; runs against empowerment objectives. Here we come to know the economic and social condition of women who are under the stree-shakti programme, to identify the working of stree Shakti programme and what is the impact of stree Shakti programme on its members. By the use of questionnaires and sampling techniques, the primary data is collected for data analysis. Here we are discussing about the empowerment of women through stree shakti programmes in Mysore district. Primary data has been taken into consideration to analyze the impact of stree shakti programme on the beneficiaries.

Keywords: Empowerment, Stree shakti Programme, Gender, Socio-economic welfare, Group A and Group B

INTRODUCTION

Empowerment is now increasingly seen as a process by which the one's without power gain greater control over their lives. This means control over material assets, intellectual resources and ideology. It involves power to, power with and power within. Some define empowerment as a process of awareness and conscientization, of capacity building leading to greater participation, effective decision-making power and control leading to

transformative action. This involves ability to get what one wants and to influence others on our concerns. With reference to women the power relation that has to be involved includes their lives at multiple levels, family, community, market and the state. Importantly it involves at the psychological level women's ability to assert them and this is constructed by the 'gender roles' assigned to her especially in a cultural which resists change like

India.

The questions surrounding women's empowerment the condition and position of women have now become critical to the human rights based approaches to development. The Cairo conference in 1994 organized by UN on Population and Development called attention to women's empowerment as a central focus and UNDP developed the Gender Empowerment measure (GEM) which focuses on the three variables that reflect women's participation in society – political power or decision-making, education and health. 1995 UNDP report was devoted to women's empowerment and it declared that if human development is not engendered it is endangered a declaration which almost become a leit motif for further development measuring and policy planning. Equality, sustainability and empowerment were emphasized and the stress was, that women's emancipation does not depend on national income but is an engaged political process.

Drawing from Amartya Sen's work on 'Human capabilities' — an idea drawn from Aristotle a new matrix was created to measure human development. The emphasis was that we need to enhance human well being flourishing and not focus on growth of national income as a goal. People's choices have to be enlarged and they must have economic opportunities to make use of these capabilities. States and countries would consider developments in terms of whether its people lead a long healthy painless life or no one are educated and knowledgeable and enjoy decent standards of living.

Women's empowerment in India is heavily dependent on many different variables that include geographical location (urban/rural), educational status, social status (caste and class), and age. Policies on women's empowerment exist at the national, state, and local (Panchayat) levels in many sectors, including health, education, economic opportunities, gender-based violence, and political participation. However, there are significant gaps between policy advancements and actual practice at the community level.

One key factor for the gap in implementation of laws and policies to address discrimination, economic disadvantages, and violence against women at the community level is the largely patriarchal structure that governs the community and households in much of India. As such, women and girls have restricted mobility, access to education, access to health facilities, and lower decision-making power, and experience higher rates of violence. Political participation is also hindered at the Panchayat (local governing bodies) level and at the state and national levels, despite existing reservations for women.

Among rural women, there are further divisions that hinder women's empowerment. The most notable ones are education levels and caste and class divisions. Women from lower castes (the scheduled castes, other backward castes, and tribal communities) are particularly

vulnerable to maternal mortality and infant mortality. They are often unable to access health and educational services, lack decision-making power, and face higher levels of violence. Among women of lower caste and class, some level of education has shown to have a positive impact on women's empowerment indicators.

Significance of the study

As women have been ignored for a very long time it is really important to make them aware about their rights and privileges available to them. Women have to be treated equally with the man in respect to economic and social aspects therefore in this project we to know the economic and social condition of women and the benefit from Stree Shakti programme

Objectives of the study

- 1) To study the economic and social condition of women under stree-shakti programme in the Mysore.
- 2) To identify the functions of stree –Shakti programme in the study area.
- 3) To know the impact of stree-shakti programme on its member.

Hypothesis identify

- 1) The programme will empower women
- 2) The programme will help to mobilize money
- 3) The programme will help to generate income

Statement of problem

The women are the group of people in the society who are facing the problem so we have to focus how they can be empowered effectively. This can be seen in almost all the parts of the world but there we are focusing to a particular area keeping time as a factor which is limited .women are facing problems in economic condition, social and political it has become a vicious circle for them to come out of its clutches .so now the main focus is to empower women through stree Shakti programme if done so then we can see a very good improvement in their economic condition and the rest follows meaning the social and economic condition can be improved if this is not fixed the vicious circle of women being the vulnerable to falling in the group of poverty, weak economic condition will continue . This has to be done through micro level to macro level all the policies set in national level has to have a real meaning in village level also only then it will make sense. If this problem is fixed then we can see a country developing in a faster rate because the

is equality ensured , full utilization of man power , greater standard of living can be ensured , corruption is reduced and at the end giving a real meaning to mankind.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study both primary and secondary data is been used. The Primary data is been collected through questionnaires, comparative study has been made between two groups to look into the differences, analyze, interpret and final suggestions is been given.

Limitation of the study

The area of the study is limited to only Mysore. The comparative study is done between two groups only. Time is very limited to cover a broader area.

Organization of the study

The project consists of five chapters which are divided as follows; in the first chapter we discuss the introduction, Introduction, Significance of the study, Objectives of the study, Hypothesis, Statement of the problem, Methodology, Limitation of the study. In the second chapter we can see the literature review from various authors and published articles. In the third chapter we can see the profile of the study area and stree shakti programme. In the forth chapter we can see the data analysis and interpretation. In the fifth that is the final chapter we can see the findings, suggestions and conclusion and at the end we can the appendix and references.

Review of Literature

These literatures have been collected from the published books, Journals, research reports and also from Internet.

Bhagyalakshmi (2004) says that Empowerment of women is a key element to achieve progress in all areas. To have a gender equality there are many conventions, programs and goals to help the women. According to her empowering the women in all spheres that are in decision-making process in social, economic, and culture. There will be programs for training the women in soil conservation, social forestry, dairy development and also allied occupations in agriculture like horticulture, livestock, animal husbandry, poultry and fisheries. They also got a support services like childcare facilities, educational institution, homes for the aged, creches at work place. She also finds that for empowering them they

get good education, health, nutrition, sanitation housing etc. to come forward in the society.

Chhabra (1998) in her work entitled "The invisible women workers" mentions about cleaning operations like removal of pebbles, dust and dirt of food grains; crop drying, carrying water and firewood along with household chores and child rearing are done by the farmwomen. According to her 'invisible workers' provide much of the 'unpaid family labor' in agriculture. Also she found that there is hardly any activity except ploughing in which women are not actively involved; rather contribute more in some activities than the men. Traditionally, women have no definite decision-making role in a majority of family affairs because of dominance of male members in the rural milieu.

According to the report of committee on the 'Status of women in India' (1974) Towards Equality- employment status of female was found to be differing in the various socio- economic strata. As the education level of the respondents increased their participation in agricultural activities rate will be decreased. Similarly the work force, the level of agricultural mechanization and the family income were negatively associated with the female work force participation.

Das (2003) in his work entitled "Stree shakti groups and micro credit" explains that in rural areas women, men and children are suffering a lot in earning income. Rural development includes social, economic, political development of the poor section of the society. Self-help groups have got a tremendous attention in micro credit. This is an alternative credit for the poor that is considered as non-bankable. According to him this system provides credit for small producers, landless farmers, and low-income women. It is aimed for their capacity building; SHGs indicates that weaker sections of the society are capable to sharpen their micro-entrepreneurial skills with the help of their own savings and additional bank credit. SHGs are meant for overall rural development as well as the poverty alleviation."

Das (2004) study entitled "micro finances through SHGs- a boon for the rural poor" gives an idea of poor, the credit that is a biggest need rather than cheaper rate of interest. The study deals with micro finance, which provides opportunities to the poor for getting sufficient amount of credit, which can easily start any income generating activity. He says that micro finance not only deals with saving but also an insurance part. Form this people are able to save some amount. It is considered as one of the most powerful weapons, which works for bringing the poor rural people into the mainstream.

SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

The following suggestions and conclusion have been made for the improvement of Stree Shakti Groups.

Table 1. Education

Education	No. of members in Group-A	No. of members in Group-B
Illiterate	1	9
Primary	4	4
Secondary	6	2
SSLC and Above	4	0

Table 2. Timing

Is the timings suited	No. of members in Group-A	No. of members in Group-B
Yes	14	5
No	1	10

Table 3. Extent of Loans

Extent (Rs)	No. of members in Group-A	Percentage	No. of members in Group-B	Percentage
Below 5,000	--	--	8	54 %
5,000-10,000	6	40 %	4	26 %
10,000-15,000	3	20 %	--	--
15,000-20,000	2	13%	--	--

Table 4. Fine collection:

Imposition of fine	Group-A	Group-B
Yes	✓	
No		✓

Table 5. Cooperation

Discussion with the members	No. of members in Group-A	Percentage	No. of members in Group-B	Percentage
Yes	12	80 %	6	40 %
No	3	20 %	9	60 %

Table 6. Purpose of the loan:

Purpose of loan	No. of members in Group-A	Percentage	No. of members in Group-B	Percentage
House	3	20 %	3	20 %
Education	4	27%	2	13 %
Education and Small Business	3	20 %	2	13 %
Small Business	1	6 %	5	34 %
Not Taken	4	27%	3	20 %

Education

In Group-B most of the members are illiterate. The program is helpful in giving education to the children of the family. It should be extended to the illiterate

members. So that awareness can be created and take part in all the activities of the program effectively. The failure rate in Group-B is high due to illiteracy, ignorance and lack of awareness. Therefore, creating awareness relating to the group and its usefulness is most essential.

Extent of loan

In Group-A the maximum extent of loan to each member is Rs. 15,000/-. Sometimes it is not enough for the members if there is a serious health problem for the family members. So the maximum loan amount should be extended. For that extra amount they can make use of the fund collected from the members through savings, interest etc.

In Group-B the members should take initiative to get a financial aid from the government. If they are successful in this they will get all the facilities that the Group-A members are getting.

Co-operation

In Group-B the co-operation between the members has to be increased. Already ten members have left this society and only five new members have joined within three years of its beginning. Now again nine members are not satisfied with this society. If it continues like this the society will be closed down. So the Anganwadi teachers, workers and the president should take care and convince every member and bring co-operation among the members.

Purpose of loan

In Group-A the loan given to members is only for health, small business and education of their family members. It should be extended to other various purposes like marriages, house construction or to create any other assets. Most of the members houses consisted of thatched roof huts. If the loans are given for the house construction with the government aid the group will be strengthened further.

Timings

In Group-A the timings to conduct meetings are suitable for the members. In Group-B the timings are not suitable for these members since it is conducted in the afternoons. It should be changed and scheduled in the evening because all the members will be free at this time and they can attend and participate in the meetings.

Fine collection

The Group-A members are effective in collecting fine from the members who come late or who does not attend the meeting. In Group-B they are not effective in collecting the fine. So measures should be taken to collect fine otherwise the members will not attend regularly and finally it leads to breakdown of the society.

Even though we can see some draw backs in this programme the useful is much found because after this programme has been introduced the economic condition has improved, the children were able to go to the school even they could make use of the savings made, In time of emergencies the health condition has increased because now they become more access to it by the mobilization of money , the people are now having a place to socialize every week here they come to know what is happening around they share their thoughts and ideas , tell about their graveness and even meetings are held to make the programme better.

REFERENCE

- Agarawal GK (1997). "Empowerment of Women through rural industrialization on Indian experience", National book review, Vol-13, No-1, Mumbai.
- Bhagyalakshmi J (2004). "Women Empowerment – Miles to go", Yojana a development monthly, Vol-14, No-3, Page 24–28.
- Das MR (2004). "Micro finance through SHG's – An book for the rural poor", Kurukshetra, A J. Rural Develop. Vol-53, No-8.
- Das S (2003). "Self-help groups and micro credit (Synergic integration)" Kurukshetra, A J. Rural Develop. Vol-40, No-13, Page-25, New Delhi.
- Gupta S (2003). "Strategy for empowerment of women", Indian journal of marketing, Vol-33, No-6, Page 12–16.
- Harper M, Berkhof A (2005). "SHG – Bank linkage, A tool for reforms in cooperatives", Economic and Political weekly, Vol-15, No-17, Mumbai.
- Jain R, RK Kushawaha (2003). "Socio-economic impact through self help groups", Yojana, A development monthly, Vol-47, No-7, Page 13–16, New Delhi.
- Ketan SJ (1993). "Working women and modernization" Vol-18, No-6, New Delhi.