

EXAMINING THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC ADVANTAGES OF PARTICIPATING IN SELF-HELP GROUPS: A STUDY ON WOMENS EMPOWERMENT CONSEQUENCES

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ABSTRACT

Since the poverty rate is disproportionately high among indigenous women, their status and progress have lagged behind those of males. The federal and state governments must provide enough financial and moral assistance if poverty is to be eradicated at its source. Self-Help Groups (SHGs) are one of the most effective strategies for elevating their social standing and giving them more agency. For women to advance economically, save more, invest more, generate more assets, take more choices, and eventually become more empowered, there has to be massive encouragement and support for creating organizations and offering backup support and services in every community. As a result of the support and inspiration provided by Self Help Group Promoting Institutions, more and more women are becoming entrepreneurs and venturing into previously uncharted economic territory. This research was grounded on a field study that surveyed 30 SHGs across three districts in Arunachal Pradesh, with 10 from each district and 10 members from each SHG.

KEYWORDS: *Women Empowerment, Savings, Investment, Operating Business, Self Help Group.*

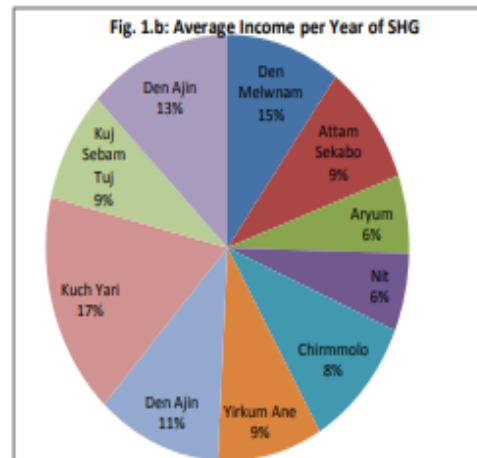
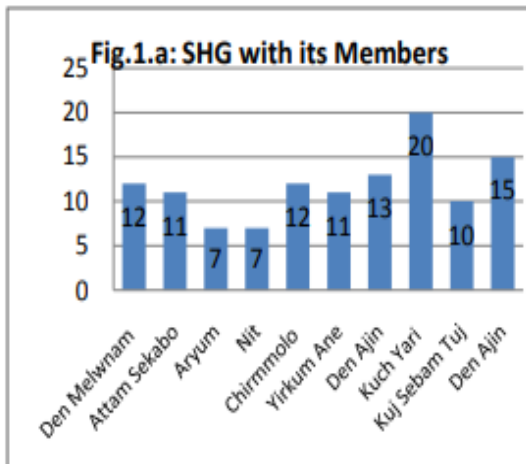
Introduction

The rise of women's economic independence and female entrepreneurs is a significant step forward in women's liberation and the establishment of their rightful role in society. Self-Help Group Promoting Institutions have been crucial in empowering and encouraging women to pursue economic independence and independence from males. The urge to break free from economic dependency is a major motivator for women to start their own businesses, as is the opportunity to put their skills and expertise to use. Women's economic empowerment is seen as a potential catalyst for a new age of honest commerce. This report profiles a selection of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and their members to assess their functioning and economic status. The study investigates the function of SHGs in boosting members' economic standing through collective saving, borrowing, and enterprise. Field research is used to examine the levels of performance of 30 SHGs across districts (10 SHGs).

Materials and Methods

The research aims to identify the needs to participate in the SHG approach and understand the background of respondents. The sample size and sampling strategy were stratified, with a total of 30 SHGs in each of the three districts. The finalized interview schedule was reviewed, validated, modified, and statistically organized. The Women's Empowerment Index (WEI) and activity-by-activity improvement in women's empowerment were evaluated alongside straightforward numerical calculations to round out the report.

S. No.	Name of SHGs	Village	No. of Member	Date of Formation	Economic Activities of the Group	Promoting Agency
1	Den Melwnam	Balijan	12	2006	Saving and Loan, Catering	Jomo Yaka and supported by Sericulture Department, SIRDA and IDEA(NGO)
2	Attam Sekabo	Gai New	11	2007	Saving and Loan, Sericulture	SAARA,SIRDA
3	Aryum	Chimpu	7	2003	Saving and Internal Lending	SAARA,SIRDA
4	Nit	Chimpu	7	2004	Saving and Internal Loan	AIDA, SIRDA, DRDA
5	Chirmmol o	Hawa Camp	12	2004	Saving and Loan, Piggery	SIRDA, AIDA
6	Yirkum Ane	Durpa	11	2002	Saving and Loan, Piggery	ICDS
7	Den Ajin	Langper	13	2012	Saving and Loan, Handicrafts	NABARD, SIRDA, Horticulture Dept.



Number

of Members, Date of Formation, Group's Economic Activities, Annual Income, and Promoting Agency for Papumpare District are shown in Table 1. The average annual revenue of SHGs and the number of members in each SHG are shown in Figures 1.a and 1.b, respectively. Among the ten SHGs in the sample, the annual revenue of Den Ajin SHG is the greatest at Rs. 70,000/- (or 20%), while the annual income of Nit SHG is the lowest at Rs. 10,000/- (or 3%). The bulk of a group's efforts go toward collective saving and lending, both inside and outside the organization in the form of micro loans offered at an interest rate of 5% per month. All SHGs engage in these sorts of activities. Aryum and Nit in Chimpu are two of the few SHGs that adhere to SHG standards by lending solely between group members at 3% interest each month. Den Ajin SHG in Khamir has started an innovative Honyir (local spice) garden, while Chirmmol o and Yirkum Ane SHG in Kimin have taken up piggery. Earnings from piggery and honyir garden averaged Rs. 30,000 and Rs. 70,000 annually, respectively.

Self-Help Group Dynamics

SHGs are a type of member-based microfinance intermediary in the financial market, consisting of informal players like moneylenders and collectors and formal actors like microfinance institutions and banks. These groups are formed by micro-business owners from similar socioeconomic backgrounds, who voluntarily save a small amount of money weekly to cover unexpected expenses. Financial security is achieved through pooling resources, with members eventually becoming self-employed through borrowing from the pooled funds. Collective knowledge and social pressure help members use credit responsibly and make timely payments.

SHGs are similar to solidarity lending, which eliminates the need for collateral and uses flat interest rates for loan computations. Well-run SHGs lead to significant personal growth and development, positively impacting the whole family. Mahatma Gandhi believed that educating the country, first, should be done by educating women. SHGs provide loans and income to members during their children's schooling, easing the financial burden of financing their education. To operate smoothly, the group requires regular meetings, which must be completed at least once every month. Training provides knowledge that can inform future efforts to improve economic and political standing..

Findings

Members of SHGs shared a similar practice of setting aside money each month and reinvesting the proceeds via loans made both inside and outside the organization. Earnings were pooled and distributed to members so they could engage in income-generating activities and deal with unexpected challenges. Their only options for making a living were the skills they had been handed down, such as farming, gardening, raising livestock, managing businesses, etc. No one in the organization or among the members decided to enter the industrial industry. A small number of SHGs in Papumpare and Lower Suban siri have experimented with it, but there is a severe lack of basic materials. If the raw materials supply chain is established, the project has a good chance of succeeding in the future. Women were growing more aware of their place in society, their legal rights, and their professional environments. Women in the study region expressed a desire for economic autonomy. More and more women were entering the corporate world with plans to launch their own companies. They were open to having their confidence boosted by hearing about the successes and failures of other women company owners.

The women were making headway in a traditionally male-dominated field. Women, empowered by their education and training, now do all traditionally male-dominated tasks as well as, or even better than, their male counterparts. The educated women have become ambitious through the years, gaining experience, competence, and confidence in their abilities.

Conclusion:

From this profile, researcher may infer that the members of the sample SHGs made sincere attempts to carry out their responsibilities. They are now valuable assets to the community. They have attained economic dominance. Reduced reliance on her spouse for financial support. Most SHG participants continued to pay for basic living costs like food and child care, as well as larger expenses like higher education. They were playing critical roles in family decision-making. It was evidence that their sense of agency was growing. After joining SHGs, women often altered their behavior in positive ways. It was determined that the respondents' level of living, as gauged by their possession of consumer durables, was acceptable with respect to the women who participated in the survey. Having these long-lasting possessions was highly dependent on the success of the businesses run by these respondents. Having more breadwinners in the household boosts the family's total income and, therefore, its buying power.

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