

A Study On The Impact Of Shgs On Political Empowerment of Women With Special Reference To Kanyakumari District

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Abstract

The World Bank has suggested that empowerment of women should be a key aspect of all social development programs (World Bank, 2001). Trickle-down theory has failed in tackling the problem of gender inequality and reducing poverty in India. Women in general are the most vulnerable gender in Indian society, though their status varies significantly according to their social and ethnic backgrounds. Still they are the most disadvantaged group in the Indian culture. Although efforts have been taken to improve the status of women, the constitutional dream of gender equality is miles away from becoming a reality. There are various poverty alleviation programmes that are being run by various departments and ministries for the development of women in India. SHG-Bank Linkage programme is one among them.

Introduction

Micro finance under the SHG-Bank Linkage programme grew at a tremendous pace during the last two decades at the national level. From its very inception, the programme has had major success in the region, while its performance has been poor in the other regions, particularly in the northern, north eastern, central and western region. The southern region, continues to occupy the leading position in the programme in terms of its credit share in credit linked SHGs as well as loan disbursement and outstanding.

Scope of the Study

The study examines the factors that influence the improvement in the political status after joining SHGs. The area of concern is the impact of SHGs on the different variables which decide the political empowerment of women.

Objectives of the Study

The present study has been carried out with a primary objective

- 1) To identify the factor influencing the political empowerment of SHG members in Kanyakumari District.
- 2)

Methodology

The study is descriptive in nature pursuing with an aim to analyse the impact of SHGs on political empowerment in Kanyakumari District. The analysis is based on primary data collected through semi-structured questionnaire consisting of a mix of factual and attitudinal questions. To analyse the collected data and thereby to draw inference factor analysis was used.

The Area of Study

Kanyakumari is situated in the southernmost part of the Indian peninsula surrounded by Kerala state in the west and north-west, Tirunelveli district in the north and east, Gulf of Mannar in the south-east, Indian Ocean in the south and Arabian Sea in the south-west. It is the smallest district in Tamil Nadu and has a total area of 1,684 sq km which is 1.295 percent of the total area of the state.

Administrative set-up of the district includes two revenue divisions, four taluk and nine blocks. The District has four Municipalities, six Assembly Constituencies and One Parliamentary Constituency. There are 97 village panchayats and 56 town panchayats. Nagercoil is the headquarters of Kanyakumari District.

Sample Design

As the research focus on the SHGs in rural areas the study excludes the SHGs belong to town panchayats and municipalities. The list of SHGs belong to village panchayat was collected from MahalirThittam office of Kanyakumari District.

Impact of SHGs on Political Empowerment

Political empowerment is necessary for women empowerment. There are eight popular factors which are necessary for the political empowerment. They are member of any political party, any responsible position in any political party, using the vote casting rights, the rights to cast your vote on your own, any idea about participating in politics in future, think giving 33 per cent to women in parliament is correct, think women participating in politics is necessary and aware of the women right policies. Political involvement makes the people know everything in the society. The analysis is made on the basis of SHG members.

The respondents are asked to rank the factors that are identified in limiting women empowerment. 'Garrett ranking technique' is used to find out the most influencing factors.

Table: 1 – Political Factors of Women Empowerment

Factors	Mean Score	Rank
Member of any political party	2.717	VII
Responsible position in any political party	3.300	I
Using the vote casting rights	3.217	II
The rights to cast your vote on your own	3.117	V
Any idea about participating in politics in future	2.967	VI
Think giving 33 % to women in parliament is correct	3.133	IV
Think women participating in politics is necessary	2.367	VIII
Aware of the women right policies	3.183	III

Source: Primary data

From Table 1 it is clear that the political factors differ from person to person. Active members play a very significant role in political for the study area. Responsible position in any political party factor has scored the first rank for political empowerment. Using the vote casting rights also plays a significant role in influencing political empowerment, for which this variable scores the second rank.

Aware of the women right policies is another factor that makes considerable impact on political empowerment. It has secured the third rank. Think giving 33 per cent to women in parliament is correct, the rights to cast your vote on your own and any idea about participating in politics in future are also important factors in the management empowerment and they occupy fourth, fifth and sixth ranks respectively. Think women participating in politics is necessary also affects political empowerment and this scores eighth position.

Findings

- 1) The age-wise classification of the sample respondents shows that majority of them belongs to 40-50 years which means middle income group.
- 2) The important factor which shows tremendous change is responsible position in any political party with 3.300 mean averages.
- 3) The last factor is the opinion about women's compulsory participation in politics. Majority of them opined that it is not necessary for women to participate in politics.

Conclusion

The study reveals that the mean age of sample SHG members is 45.35. This reveals that experienced middle age group women between the age group of 40 to 50 are taking active part in SHG activities. After joining the SHGs, the important factor which shows tremendous change is responsible position in any political party with 3.300 mean averages. The last factor is the opinion about women's compulsory participation in politics. Majority of them opined that it is not necessary for women to participate in politics. The study shows that even after joining in SHGs the impact on political empowerment is less than economic and social empowerment.

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