

AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF SELF-HELP GROUP TOWARDS WOMEN EMPOWERMENT PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OF KAMRUP DISTRICT IN ASSAM

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ABSTRACT

The paper presents a paper as an empirical study of self-help group towards women empowerment participation in local community development of Kamrup district in Assam. The study aimed at assessing conflict management strategies adopted by women empowerment through self-help group constitutes an emerging and fast-growing trend towards social and economic development of the nation. A survey method was adopted for conducting the paper, by the investigator especially for this purpose. The study was primarily qualitative in nature; a historical and analytical methodology was adopted while preparing the study. The sample of the study was conducted in Garoimari sub-division in Kamrup district of Assam. Therefore, the present work is aimed at studying the changing narrative of identity construction among Self Help Group (SHG) is one of the innovative and much needed concepts to accelerate the women entrepreneurship, women self-employment and women empowerment. The present study was conducted to explore the impact of women Self Help Group on women empowerment through income generation, increased communication skill, decision making ability and awareness and enhanced social status. The purpose of the present study is to impact for achieving quality, quantity, equality of opportunity with respect to nature of human rights. Hence, achieving balanced participation of women in political, public decision-making and also achieving gender mainstreaming in all policies and measures. However, gender equality in politics is not merely achieving an equal share of seats and positions. The major micro-enterprise the women SHG members associated with is related to agriculture. The major problem of the women SHG members in the study area is improper training facility. Thus study the suitable recommendations for enhancing the plan and its remedies.

KEYWORDS: Empirical, Self-Help Group, Women, Empowerment, Participation, Local Community, Development.

INTRODUCTION:

Constitutional provision for equality of women such as to study the position of women before independence period, it is necessary to discuss the position of women during the Vedic period, post-Vedic period and medieval period. Undoubtedly, the position of women during the Vedic period was glorious on account of freedom and equality. The globalization is at the centre of diverse intellectual and political agendas, raising ousted questions about what is widely considered to be the fundamental dynamic of our time an epoch defining set of changes, that is radically transforming social and economic relations and institutions in the 21st century. It is an ideology that currently dominate thinking, policy making, profession of teaching and political practice. A glimpse of his view on education, un touch ability, women, village Swaraj and Panchayatiraj which means power to people, is presented here. Gandhiji said on one occasion, "I have nothing new to teach the world".

A nation is marked as progressive and successful if it is able to provide equal status to all of its citizens regardless of their class, caste, sex etc. Since the ancient period we know that politics is generally dominated by men folk and even in the matriarchal societies women could hardly play a dominant role in the decision making process. But it does not mean that they do not have interest in it. The basic fact is that the patricidal society does not favour their participation and assigned entire household works to them. In Indian society women are often describe from two sharply contradictory aspects. In some aspects they are treated as the mother goddess with multiple visages, identities and functions and even worshiped in the male dominated society. Lifelong learning has emerged as one of the keys to improving the quality of life in the twenty-first century. Women are nearly half of the human capital in the society. They also play varied role in the society. Progress and development is human centered process. Without women equal involvement development process at every level will be inadequate. Swami Vivekananda said that "there is no chance for the welfare of the world unless condition of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly only with one wing." Human

resource development applies equality to women and men. The advancement of women is the most significant fact in modern India.

Women empowerment is a critical aspect of societal progress and inclusive development. It encompasses enhancing women's economic, social and political status enabling them to actively participate in decision-making processes and enjoy equal rights and opportunities. In the context of Rural India, where gender disparities persist, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) plays a significant role in promoting women empowerment. In Assam, a state known for its diverse rural landscape and economic challenges provides a compelling setting to explore the impact of the MGNREGA on women empowerment. The rural employment enacted in 2005, guarantees 100 days of employment to every rural household in India. It aims to address poverty, unemployment and underdevelopment in rural areas by providing wage employment opportunities. However, gender equality in politics is not merely achieving an equal share of seats and positions.

Concept of Empowerment:

The term "Empowerment" which is now in wider use in developed circles and is a relatively recent development concept has remained under defined till now. A review of the literature suggests that while there has been much debate at the theoretical level as to what Empowerment comprises of and how best it can be achieved, there has been little primary research at the grassroots level to contribute to our understanding of what empowerment means in every day terms. According to the Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus the word "Empowerment" means "Give Power" or "Authorize" or "license". According to the Cambridge International Dictionary, the "Empowerment" means to give (someone) the official legal authority or freedom to do something. 'Empowerment' means to authorize. In the context of the people, they have to be authorized to have control over their own lives. When applied in the context of development of the particular segment of population, the women have to be 'empowered' to have control over their own lives to better their socio-economic and political conditions. Thus, women empowerment can be interpreted as totality of empowerment including political, social, cultural, and other dimension of human life as also the physical, moral and intellectual. Empowerment of women unlocks the door for modernization of any society. Participation and control over resources of power are critical indicators in the process of development. Women especially in rural areas possess the least proportion of these resources and are therefore dependent. Thus, the question remains that will empower them and how to empower them. Ideally speaking no one empowers any one and the best way is 'self-empowerment'. Thus true empowerment is the self-empowerment and self-empowerment is not a result or end product rather, it is a process and an important goal to be achieved by an individual or group of individuals. According to this approach, to be informed is to be empowered and to be ignorant is to be impoverished. Hence the primary end of development in a society is to remove these freedoms and provide substantive freedom which plays a fundamental role in enriching human life.

Concept of Local Community Development:

Local community development with the development of youth has become one of the central areas in today's research literatures. Community development is a way of achieving a higher standard of living and more equitable conditions for poor people; to ensure their fundamental needs, and to be involved in political decisions which determine the way society develops. It is a process where local people create more jobs, income, and infrastructure which enable their community to manage changes properly. Local community development is a social process by which individuals become more competent to live with and gain some control over local conditions and the changing world with the aim to improve local living standards, productions, and the village environment. It consists of strategies to make people involved in improving their community and increasing local citizens' capacity to solve local problems with the ultimate goal of achieving a quality life. In community development, main actors gain due to opportunity to control local conditions and to harness resources effectively. Local communities can serve their own needs through local development initiatives since national-global enterprises and state capitalists alone cannot bring economic and social development. Deepening participation at grass roots levels can strengthen the exercise and assimilation of democratic principles on the public life since local democracy and local development are inseparable. Accordingly, all over the world, many development policy makers have shifted their development paradigms from bureaucrat-oriented to community oriented. According to Oxford Dictionary and thesaurus the word "Development" means "stage of growth" or "advancement" or "extension" or "improvement". It means the

effect of most recent education system of the state on women empowerment and rural development. Empowerment is a positive concept. It requires affirmative state action in support of those, who are to be empowered. Rural development is a strategy design to improve the education, economic and social life of the specific group of people lives in the rural areas. It is estimated that young people accounts almost one-third of the world's population who increasingly taking as central stage in discussions of sustainable socio-economic developments.

Review of Related Literature:

A review of related literature to a problem is very essential to clearly understand the problem and to make prediction regarding the outcome of manipulation of variables. Several studies have investigated the cultivation effect of women empowerment (Bauer, 2005; Grabe & Drew, 2007); women participation on politics (Zhu, 2001 & Lee, 2004); Empowerment of women in Panchayatiraj system in Assam (Idris & Khaleque, 2019; Reber & Chang, 2020); Reimer & Rosengren, 1990); some aspects of the women participation in the rural politics (Ray, 1999; Scheepers, 2010). He asserts that the focus on the general assumption that the rural area is the main focused empowerment of women. Ansari (2019) Feminist theory and the study of gender and education noted that overall empowerment and gender treatment of women can be best described as narrow women are rarely portrayed as rational active. Kumar (2017) in his study rural development of women empowered as per the planning commission, the average participate of women in self-help group towards women empowerment and much less than participation on election of Panchayat level. Aeker (2019) women empowerment in Orissa, the history of women's participation in Indian politics dates back broadened the concept of participation through universal adult suffrage and paved the way for the formal induction of women in the political process both in reserved and general seats.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

In the changing social perspective, the need of the hour is to improve the economic and social status of the women folk in the rural areas to develop an appropriate strategy for women empowerment. The act of mobilizing people around common concerns to harness the 'power of the group' to solve their problems can be emphasized through collective actions. Problems and challenges are synonymous with human existence whether one is a man or a woman. The most significant changes occurred after the fifth five year plan from which the department for women and child's development. The purpose of the paper was to stages of still women are becoming the victims of various kinds of exploitation like domestic violence, rape, sexual harassment at the work place, child trafficking etc. The government of India declared 2001 as the "Year of Women Empowerment" and ministry of human resources and development released the "National Policy for the Empowerment of women 2001". It is to bring about advancement, development and empowerment of women specifically includes. The enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedom by women on equal basis with men in all spheres political, economic, social, cultural and civil and also equal access to participation and decision making of women in social, political and economic life of the nation. Our constitution also guaranties right to equality to all. The government of Assam introduced the most important gender mainstreaming in the financial year 2008-2009 under the 12 departments having schemes with 100% allocation for the benefit of women. In the context of rural and essential quality of good underrepresented groups in north-east development of Assam. However, because of corruption and mismanagement of allocated money, many of the above mentioned projects have not reached those women and girls who are actually in need. The study of women empowerment is useful only it incorporates with its fold, a discussion of the women working of different political life on comparative basis. The empowerment played a significant role in the women's liberation movement through critical writing on the role of women in society and their contributions, the gender difference, the hierarchical frameworks of patriarchal society, positioning muscularity in the top order, polarization evoked the outbreak of equality and liberty. In Assam, a state known for its diverse rural landscape and economic challenges provides a compelling setting to explore the impact of the MGNREGA on women empowerment. This study reveals that, it could be argued that almost every other trend is dependent on empowerment access and women's participation in politics mainly hinder the factor like male domination of politics, political parties and culture of formal political structure etc. often male domination political parties have a male perspective on issues of normal importance that disillusions women as their perspective is often ignore and not reflected in the politics of their parties. This study will also focus in the facilities provided for women empowerment and rural development in different parts of conducted in Garoimari sub-division in

Kamrup district of Assam. Therefore, in the light of the above discussion of the significance of the study, the title of the present study has been fixed as, “An Empirical Study of Self-Help Group towards Women Empowerment Participation in Local Community Development of Kamrup District in Assam”. This paper identifies the policies and the need as issue can to really get addressed, determined and equal participation of women and men in politics is an important condition for effective democracy and good governance. Therefore, women’s political participation in the context of patriarchal political systems is a particular focus of study.

Statement of the Problem:

The following is the area of research entitled is, “An Empirical Study of Self-Help Group towards Women Empowerment Participation in Local Community Development of Kamrup District in Assam”.

OBJECTIVES IN THE PRESENT STUDY:

The main objectives of the present investigation are as follows:

- i) To find out the women empowerment towards Self-help Group understanding of rural development.
- ii) To identify the Self-help Group and women empowerment.
- iii) To find out the problems associated with the Self-Help Group (SHGs).
- iv) To find out the women empowerment towards understanding of rural development.
- v) To identify the gender studies and women empowerment.
- vi) To identify the equal access to participation and decision making of women empowerment in social, political and economic life of the state in Assam.
- vii) On the basis of the study findings make suitable recommendations for enhancing the plan and its remedies.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY:

The present study has been carried out some limitations as following:

- i) The present study has been confined to the variables- Self-Help Group and women empowerment.
- ii) The study has been confined to the 21-55 years women only.
- iii) The study has been delimited to rural development only.
- iv) The study was cover only sub-division namely- Garoimari in Kamrup district of Assam.

METHODOLOGY:

A survey method was adopted for conducting the paper, by the investigator especially for this purpose. The method is essentially descriptive survey type; survey research is a method of collecting response from the representative population through questionnaires, observation, interview etc. This study is based on both primary and secondary sources of data investigated.

Tools used

A questionnaire constructed by the investigator to assess the basic concepts in Self-Help Group operation.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS:

The present study revealed the following findings:

It can be understood from the present study is made to say the Self-Help Group (SHG), women empowerment and local community development in promotion and development of the socio-economic, education, political and cultural condition of the rural area with special reference to Garoimari sub-division in Kamrup district of Assam. The findings of the paper are as follows:

From recent past, several efforts were made by the Government of India to increase the role of women and to improve the status of women. Women constitute around forty percent of the total human resources in our economy. Yet women are the poorer and under privileged than men as they are subject to many socio-economic and cultural constraints. The situation is more severe in the rural and backward areas. Here, the collected data were analyzed and discussed in line with other related empirical studies. The solution such as it is critical to enhance the value of girls by investing in and empowering them, with education, life skills, sport and much more. Therefore the objective stated as, “To find out the problems associated with the Self-Help Group (SHGs)”. As already mentioned that the main ethnic groups of (Self-Help Group and women empowerment) empowering girls requires focused investment and collaboration; community development with youth participation has become one of the principal areas in today’s research. In this study, it has been found that empowering girls requires focused investment and collaboration. From the above analysis the discussion,

it is found that modern education and facilities have influenced much in women empowerment of women arose from the affirmation of the past and a gross neglect of the growth, development, the talents and opportunities of women in specific societies. Her work is a classical expose and a foundation for an intellectual empowerment of women and their rights to a different experience. Thus community development involves strategies where people involve in solving local problems with the ultimate goal of achieving a quality life for their community. It is highly believed that participation at grass root levels enables to meet community needs through local development initiatives since national-global enterprises and state capitalists alone cannot bring development. Various international, regional, and national authorities recognized that youth can play an important role in bringing development and hence have spearheaded policies, strategies and plans of action in the area of youth and development. It has been observed that lack of financial independence is the main reason for not having access to high-quality healthcare facilities. So, they are economically very weak. Primary problems facing of Kamrup district in Assam women such as lack of education and loss of control over natural resources. The participation of women in Self Help Groups (SHGs) made a significant impact on their empowerment both in social and economical aspects. SHGs are a viable alternative to achieve the objectives of rural development. SHG plays a pivotal role in social transformation and social economic betterment of rural women. Assam is a flood affected area where people cannot depend purely on agriculture all through the year. Moreover Assam is based on its agro-economic climate conditions. So the Self-help groups stimulate to raise the social economic and political conditions of women in Assam. Fruitful results for enhancement of village development of women through self-help groups and by following agriculture system adaption of portage behavior checklist were observed as follows:

Table No-1, Showing the Problems Faced by Women Self-Help Groups Members for Development and Management

Sl.no	Reason	Frequency	Percentage
1.	For Family Support Maintain Family Expenditure	39	39 %
2.	For promoting saving	30	30%
3.	For getting loan	15	15 %
4.	For Business	14	14%
5.	For other social purpose	12	12 %
6.	For growing money	10	10%
7.	For Repaying old debts	8	8 %
8.	For raising status in Society	7	7 %
9	Agriculture system adaption	6	6%

CONCLUSION:

In conclusions of this paper, with the prevalence of gender discrimination, and social norms and practices, girls become exposed to the possibility of child marriage, teenage pregnancy, child domestic work, poor education and health, sexual abuse, exploitation and violence. Many of these manifestations will not change unless girls are valued more. This study was intended to examine the major role of youth in community development and to scrutinize major challenges that affect their participation. On the other hand, the study showed that unemployment, low participation of stakeholders, depreciated moral values, regressive work habits are the main challenges that affect youth's participation in development activities which necessitate the involvement of all stakeholders to overcome such problems. Hence, the first objective read as, "To find out the women empowerment towards Self-help Group understanding of rural development", need to offer the conceptual theory necessary to participate fully in liberal capitalist democracy. So, the present study was conducted to explore the study of involvement is a condition of total participation of the self as a knower, organizer, observer, status seeker and as socialized being of women empowerment towards Self-help Group.

Hence the major third and fourth objectives stated as to compare motivational for studies of women empowerment of different areas and to critically analyzed the media role in constructing the images of women must be to perform the programmes relating to improvement of women's status that they are free to assert themselves as human beings, co-equal socially, morally and politically with men. There should be positive

portrayal of women taking note of their role in all facets of life. The impact of women Self-Help Groups (SHG) in terms of change in income, change in communication skill, awareness, decision making ability, empowerment and social status after joining women Self-Help Groups (SHG) towards women empowerment was the predicted or consequent or dependent variable in the present study. The principal intangible benefit of the women SHG members in the study area is removal of social exclusion. The major micro-enterprise the women SHG members associated with is related to agriculture. The major problem of the women SHG members in the study area is improper training facility. It also increases the self-employment opportunities for rural poor women towards women economic, social and political empowerment. But in case of improving the economic status of the women SHG members the access to media and other additive approaches may be restricted for the rural women. Among the other impacts the increased involvement in decision making process, awareness about various programmes and organizations, increased access to different organizations, enhanced level of communication skill among the women SHG members are worthwhile to mention. All these indicators build self-confidence, ensure better participation, enhance the ability to express feelings, increase the level of influence in family decision making and outside decision making. From the above analysis the discussion, it is found that modern education and facilities have influenced much women empowerment in Garoimari sub-division of Kamrup district in Assam only. The major micro-enterprise the women Self-Help Groups members associated with is related to agriculture. The major problem of the women Self-Help Groups members in the study area is improper training facility.

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