

THE ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SHARE IN VELLORE DISTRICT.

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Introduction

Non-Governmental Organizations plays an Important role in the national building process. They play a crucial role in Organizing and furthering human development. It supplements the functions of Government, where the government can't reach for various reasons like lack of resources or lack of Man-Power. They undertake a number of projects for the welfare of the people. There are many areas where the government needs collaboration and Co-operation from the Non-Governmental Organizations. Particularly in creating opportunity, facilitating empowerment and providing security to the poor, like wise in vellore district there are 52 Registered Non-Governmental Organizations for the upliftment of downtrodden people as well as tribal community.

Vellore District

The Vellore District has a very Interesting historic background and it played an important role in freedom struggle. It is a region of historic antiquity. North Arcot, which formed part of the region tondaimandalam in early days, was associated with many thrilling events in the history of South India; more particularly the vellore mutiny of 1806 is the forerunner to the great Indian Mutiny or the first war Indian Independence of 1857. Presently Vellore District lies between 12.50 and 13.50 Northern latitude and between 78.200 and 79.500 of Eastern longitude². The total area of the district is 6077 & 9.lms. It is bounded in the north by chittore district, of Andhra pradesh, on the South by Thiruvannamalai district on the west by Dharmapuri district. The East

Thiruvallur and Kanchipuram district. It consists three revenue divisions. Twenty-five villages. According to the 2001 census the total population of this district is 34,82,9203. Women Consist 49% of the total population.

Position of Women

Villages are all male dominated, Women exercises very little and sometimes no influence in decision making either at home or in the community. Culturally they are viewed as inferior to men and continue to be at their mercy freedom to move in the villages on their own, initiative and covers more castes. Dowry harassment, physical as well as psychological violence seem to be an integral part of the marital relationship and alcoholism is increasingly becoming a tool to perpetuate it and to institutionalize patriarchy. In other words, throughout her life, a woman is defined only in relation to men as daughter, wife, mother and eventually widow.

History of Share

Self Help Association for Rural Education and Employment referred as SHARE, is a non-profit, non-governmental organization. It was registered as a society under Tamil Nadu Government Society Regulation Act of 1975 in 19954. SHARE is the community based organization to women development in Vellore district particularly in Kaniyambadi, Vellore and Anicut blocks. It is women development organization towards self-help approach to self sustain. It is for the women, of the women and by the women.

Objectives

The objectives of SHARE are

- To improve women's working skills and enhance their Economic Status to enable them to take part in decision making both at the household and community level.
- To encourage saving habits to improve their purchasing power.
- To create a general awareness on gender issues development and national unity.
- To improve knowledge on women's rights in general and in particular aspects of local self Governance.
- To assist the craftsmen and other working women in their work.
- To provide opportunities to improve the education level of underprivileged children.

Empowerment Programme

SHARE started many empowerment programmes for Economic, Social and Political upliftment of the women in the targeted areas, the following programmes were stated below.

I. Income Generation Programme

Self Help Group formation.

Craft Development Center.

Dairy Programme

II. Skill Training Programme.

III. Political awareness programme.

I Income Generation Programme.

The main income for rural family comes from the income of the men folk. But only a part of their earning reach home as they are squandered on drinking and smoking. On the other hand the economic status of women is consider only as secondary source of income. She is mainly employed in agricultural sector, which is also seasonal, and yielded less wages. But due to the activities of the men folk it was only the money bought in by the women, which supported the family to the fullest extent. Therefore there was a need to generate more income to the women folk. Hence SHARE started many Income Generating Programme

Self Help-Groups

This SHG programmes, which was established in Bangladesh in mid 80s and has been incorporated in India, It was established by the Tamilnadu in the year in 1989 with the objectives of economic empowerment of women and improve the living standards of rural home holds. 367 women and youth self Help Groups have been formed and structured in the line of self help concept by the SHARE with the help of Tamilnadu Women Development Corporation and District Rural Development Agency vellore. The savings amount of these groups has come in the tune of Rs.91,18,781 and Rs. 6,71,49,100 have been rotated. Among the 367 groups 154 Groups have been brought under SGSY programs and also 10 youth self help group have been organized by the recommendation of present Tamilnadu Government.

Craft works

The primary craft of SHARE is palm leaf and sisal Fibre work the product of SHARE, is exported and sold through international agencies, namely The Alternate Trade Organization, U.K, Government of Germany, Federation of South Indian producers Association, Madras, Development commissioner Handicraft Govt. of India⁷. With the help of craft work, SHARE has made more than 2,000 poor women empowered socially and economically for generating monthly income of minimum Rs.2,000 each⁸.

Craft Development Center

The craft development center was sanctioned by the development commissioner, Handicraft Govt. of India New Delhi and funds to a tune of 7.5 lack grant and it was mobilized for various activities. The programme was stated on 2nd oct. 19949. A day care center was also started near the craft center development premises with simple play and games, which enable the women workers to look their children even when they are at work.

Dairy programmes

With a view to helping the non -craft individuals and families to raise their living standards SHARE was started in 1997 at a dairy programme with the support of the Presbyterian Hunger programme. Beneficiaries, who belong to the socially and economically underprivileged sections of the population, are given one milking cow as an income generating assest. The milk provides them with a regular monthly income and it initiates the process of economic independence and empowerment of women, which the family owns the cow. They have to give the female calf back to SHARE to benefit new families. This passing the gift scheme ensures the growth and self sustainability of the programmme, so for 58510 families benefited through this programmme.

Marketing of palm leaf and other products

The craft product manually palm leaf have been exported to various countries directly by SHARE

Major portion through SIPA chennai.

Year	Extent sale	Demmil Sale
	Amt. In Rs.	amt. In Rs.
2000-2001	15 lakhs	1,72,000
2001-2002	22 lakhs	4,00,000

2002-2003	25 lakhs	4,50,000
2003-2004	29 lakhs	5,00,000
2004-2005	34 lakhs	7,30,000
2005-2006	21 lakhs	7,00,00011

In the year 2005-2006 due to the lack of orders the product was not exported in sufficient level¹².

Skill training programmes

Palm leaf & sisal craft training

Under the Training programmes the women have been selected from the targeted area for palm leaf and sisal fibre skill training and they have been trained in the craft for three months duration, so far 1000 women have got training through SHARE¹³. With the sponsorship of Development Commissioner Handicraft, Govt. of India.

Tailoring Training

With the help of Aid to Artisans Agency 6014 rural women from three village groups were trained in tailoring skills with design technical orientation. Combination products like cloth plus palm leaf, Jute plus cloth, Fibre plus palm leaf and cloth were made in different designs. These trained women were given a specialized training women were given a specialized training in all the crafts packing basket etc. In order to remove the existing polythene problem, this training has helped rural women capable of making various baskets suitable to local market.

Entrepreneurial Development Programme

Every year rural women and youth were given EDP Training under the support of PRDA/BDO, TNWDC in targeted area. In the year 2005-2006¹⁵ 140 rural women youth participated. In this training the identification of activities, funds mobilization marketing techniques and business economics were taught by the trained resources persons.

Political Awareness programme.

Due to the lack of women representation in local panchayat, SHARE t organization he political awareness programmes for the SHARE self help group members. Twenty-one women contested in the in the 1996 election and nine won as ward members¹⁶. Likewise in 2006 election 30 women interestedly Contested in the election and 11 won ward member 3 won as the president¹⁷ this is the grant empowerment of the women in political sector. This was possible only because of the training given by the SHARE.

SHARE Participation

Their were 1918 exhibition participated non SHARE organized by DRDA, Mahalir Thittam, SIPA, Development Commission Handicraft Govt. of India, in 2005-2006 alone likewise privies years also SHARE actively participated and got the prizes.

Recognition

Within two years of its formation, SHARE was recognized by a central govt. agency¹⁹. The office of the development commissioner Handicraft govt. of India, Textile ministry of the govt. of India also recognized it's products .

International level recognition

Getting order on a regular basis from different foreign trading agencies, nearlyu ATO like OXFAM, Traidcraft and Body Shop in England, is a proof that SHARE has been recognized as a reliable trading

partner in International level²⁰.

The former secretary has participated as the only representative of India in the women entrepreneurs workshop on Environmentally sound testing held at in China in Dec. 1997²¹. There she presented paper on Natural dyes used in SHARE

The year 1997 witnessed the major international regognition as was Rani former secretary of SHARE, recognized an International award from the women's world summit foundation (WWSF) based in Genewa. This award is meant to regognised her creativity in rural life and SHARE's commitment towards empowerment of rural women.

In the year 1998 SHARE craftwomen has participated as a resources team member from India in the exposure visit to srilanka which was sponsored by the World Trade Organization in Genewa23.

Conclusion

NGO's have emerged as third sector today to framing the civil society, next to government and corporate sector in Tamil Nadu as well as in Vellore District. SHARE have multiple roles like, organising, educating, motivating, guiding awareness creating, training, capacity building, empowering to bring about the designed social development in the district. It not only provide temporary remedies but strive for ensuring sustainable solutions.

Endnotes

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10. Interview with Mrs. S. Sivasankari, Assistant Project Officer, SHARE, on 15.1.2007.
11. Annual Report of SHARE 2005-2006, p. 4.

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19. Women on the Move, Op.cit., p. 23.
20. Ibid., p. 25.
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