

Training and development in women self-help groups in erode district of tamilnadu

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ABSTRACT

Training and Development function plays a significant role in energizing and empowering human resources by increasing their skills through innovative and productive programmes. Women self-help groups are at present playing a vital role in the personality and skill development of women in India. But Indian women are generally far behind men in aspects such as entrepreneurship skills, managerial skills, marketing skills etc. A self-help group is a voluntary association of poor women which empowers them in almost all spheres of life.

*The study was undertaken to measure the impact of training and development on the women self-help group members of Erode district based on eight basic factors namely **personality, self-concept, administration, knowledge, public relations, responsibility, attitude and flexibility**. Stratified, & convenience sampling was the methodology used in the study. The total population is 1, 08,244 (SHG members) and the sample size is 500 respondents. Both primary and secondary data were collected.*

The researcher employed traditional and modern statistical tools for analysis and interpretation of data. The study revealed the impact of training programmes on women self-help group members in the district.

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Introduction

The basic function of personnel management is the management of manpower resources by utilizing, directing and developing human energies for attaining individual, group and organizational goals effectively and speedily. Training and development is a vital function in this regard. Development function is concerned with the personnel development of employees by increasing their skill through training so that job performance is properly achieved. It includes preparation and implementation of training and development programmes for employees at all levels of the organization, holding of seminars and discussions, provision of education facilities and vocational counselling, appraisal of employee performance and potentialities.

Women self-help groups

A Self-Help Group is defined as a voluntary group valuing personal interaction and mutual aid as means of altering or ameliorating problems perceived as alterable, pressing and personal by most of its participants. Women empowerment is an active, multi-dimensional process, which enables women to realise their full potential and powers in all spheres of life. SHGs are concerned with development of women in all respects along with a sound knowledge about their rights and duties. Voluntary membership, participatory planning, education and training, resource

mobilisation, self-management, anti bureaucracy, empowerment building, linkage building, process extension and movement building, monitoring and self-evaluation, sustainability are some of the characteristic features of Self-Help Groups.

Objectives and research design

The Government and the NGOs have implemented various training and development programmes for the upliftment of women Self-Help Group members. The study was undertaken to measure the impact of training and development programmes on the self-help group members of Erode district based on eight basic factors namely personality, self-concept, administration, knowledge, public relations, responsibility, attitude and flexibility.

Personality

The personality of a person is defined as the nature, quality, temperament, spirit and moral attitude of an individual. Certain concepts such as positive approach, level of stage fear, influence on people, sentimental feelings, shyness level, tension, confusion, laziness, frustration, are taken into consideration in this regard.

Self-concept

The self-concept of a women SHG member is defined as the way in which she thinks about the

whole environment. Queries were raised with the respondents regarding democracy, equality, dowry system, child marriage, friendship, optimism, exposure to public etc.

Administration

Administration deals with managing policies, plans, procedures, people, materials, machine, finance and the whole organization. Leadership qualities, resistance power, counselling skills, problem facing capacity etc. are considered here.

Knowledge

Knowledge refers to the information, awareness and understanding of the multi-faceted environment. World knowledge, women's rights awareness, study about people are considered here. SHGs are concerned with development of women in all respects along with a sound knowledge about their rights and duties.

Public relations

Public relation is the attitude of a person to deal with other people. Communication skills, speaking talent, marketing skill etc. are taken for the study. SHG members have up graded themselves in their public relations scores since they have more exposure to the society.

Responsibility

Responsibility of a person can be defined as the liability or duty to be performed well in time as per schedule. Job satisfaction, morale, social responsibilities are dealt here. Generally responsibility goes in par with authority.

Attitude

Attitude of a person can be defined as the interpretation about himself. A positive change in the attitude could alter the current submissive image of an Indian woman since she is treated as a reproductive tool and a homemaker. Factors like cleanliness, dressing sense, self-motivation etc. are considered in this regard.

Flexibility

Flexibility can be defined as the adaptive nature of a person with changing environment. Generally some sensitive women SHG members are not ready to accept changes. In due course of time, based on their age and experience, they gain this factor.

Based on the factor scores before and after joining SHGs (pre and post SHG periods) under four and six point scaling, their empowerment level have been measured. The design of the study is displayed in Table - 1.

TABLE – 1 DESIGN OF THE STUDY

S.No.	DESIGN OF THE STUDY	PARTICULARS
1	Methodology	Stratified & convenience sampling
2	Collection of data	Primary and secondary
3	Period of the study	2004-2007
4	Statistical tools used	Percentages, mean, correlation etc.
5	Population	1,08,244 SHG members
6	Sample size	500 respondents

Women SHGs in Erode District

Erode district is one of the developed districts in the State, though it was carved out of the erstwhile composite district of Coimbatore. Self-Help Groups in Erode District were started on 01-05-1998 under Phase-II of MATHI initiated by the Government of Tamilnadu. The SGSY scheme initiated by the Government of India also joined hands with TNCDW in bringing poor families above the poverty line. There are 20 blocks in the district to promote, develop and regulate Self-Help Groups. It constitutes around 5 % of the total SHGs in Tamilnadu and holds fourth place with regard to the number of SHGs. The researcher has undertaken the study for highlighting the role of training and development programmes in empowering SHG women in Erode district of Tamilnadu.

Nature to Business

Apart from regular savings, SHGs are engaged in business activities to uplift themselves financially and economically. Women SHG members have taken risky businesses too in par with men. Self-Help Groups in the district are engaged in handloom weaving, palm-products making, livestock rearing, sanitary napkin manufacture, rope manufacture, tailoring and garments, rock collieries, waste management, pickle manufacture, cloth centres, ration shops, grinder stone cutting, sericulture, mushroom cultivation, medicinal plant cultivation, agriculture using natural waste, coconut leaves thatching etc. The DRDA has constructed a marketing complex called 'Poomaalai' at an estimate of Rs.28 lakhs for the purpose of marketing SHGs products.

Entrepreneurship Training

Entrepreneurship training for women is given in order to motivate women to start their own enterprises and proceed successfully. Women had come forward now-a-days to start business of their own for their financial upliftment. The training imparts entrepreneurship qualities like eagerness, utilisation of opportunities, time management, proper planning, quality in work etc.

Membership Training

Membership training teaches SHG women the way of starting and running an SHG, conduct of meetings, disbursement of loans, accounts books maintenance, social service etc. SHG management, general hygiene, environment consciousness, women and the law etc. are dealt here.

Skill Training

SHG members in Erode district are provided with training programmes to develop their personal / managerial / technical skills. Initially they are given practice in reading, writing and speaking followed by leadership qualities, computer skills, communication skills, marketing skills, register maintenance skills, collective bargaining skills etc.

Other Training Programmes

Apart from the above training programmes, SHG members are given practical orientation in Desktop Publishing, Photo Shoppe, Embroidery etc. Youth skill training was launched to provide technical skills to rural youth in areas such as typewriting, motor coil rewinding, two-wheeler mechanism, electrical works etc. Stipend and other allowances are also paid in this regard.

TABLE – 2 MEAN SCORES AND STANDARD DEVIATION AMONG THE RESPONDENTS

S.No.	FACTORS	MEAN SCORES			STANDARD DEVIATION		
		<i>Pre - SHG period</i>	<i>Post - SHG period</i>	<i>Percentage of increase</i>	<i>Pre - SHG period</i>	<i>Post - SHG period</i>	<i>Percentage of decrease</i>
1	PERSONALITY	24.47	40.09	63.83 %	07.39	4.75	35.72 %
2	SELF-CONCEPT	33.64	41.41	23.10 %	03.99	2.24	43.86 %
3	ADMINISTRATION	21.05	32.91	56.34 %	08.33	5.43	34.81 %
4	KNOWLEDGE	22.34	36.79	64.68 %	10.45	5.90	43.54 %
5	PUBLIC RELATIONS	12.43	18.97	52.61 %	04.89	3.03	38.04 %
6	RESPONSIBILITY	09.07	14.80	63.18 %	03.93	2.26	42.49 %
7	ATTITUDE	10.37	15.11	45.71 %	03.64	2.05	43.68 %
8	FLEXIBILITY	05.11	07.40	44.81 %	02.02	1.23	39.11 %
	AVERAGE	17.31	25.94	49.86 %	05.58	03.36	39.78 %

Source: Computed

Major Findings of the Study

The study is a social cum managerial research and has brought out major outcomes which are depicted in Table-2.

The findings reveal that the mean scores and standard deviation among the sample respondents have shown a positive trend after joining SHGs. It discloses the role played by SHGs in the district in women empowerment through training and development programmes.

Suggestions

The researcher has given the following concrete suggestions based on the study undertaken in the context of women development through Self-Help Groups in Erode District of Tamilnadu.

- Educational institutions may offer Personality Development Programmes to the SHG members so that they develop a right and positive attitude within themselves and also towards the society.
- Free education could be offered through distance education programmes which will develop the knowledge, attitude and job opportunities of SHG women thereby making them more assertive of their rights and duties.
- It is suggested that the women SHGs of various geographical areas such as rural,

semi-urban and urban should have a proper networking system to share their technical knowledge and acquire good public relations scores.

- The NGOs and Government authorities may offer proper HRD programmes to the SHG members to enrich their knowledge and administrative skills and to curtail ego clashes between them.
- It is suggested that adequate technical skills and finance should be provided for the interested women entrepreneurs and the products produced by them should be assisted with proper marketing support through the Government.
- Women should be positioned in large numbers at top levels for significant and effective exercise of power and they need to be equipped with suitable means to shoulder these responsibilities.
- The Government may enact a common legislation for SHGs and women empowerment, which would serve the present scenario needs of women.

Conclusion

SHGs in Erode district are concerned with development of women in all respects along with

a sound knowledge about their rights and duties. Women in the district are to be given more exposure in social, economical, political, educational and technical aspects. The literacy rates and labour earnings of women are generally lacking behind men. They are in a recessive condition as far as a family is concerned. Training and development programmes offered through SHG operations in Erode district play a vital role in the economic and personality development of women in the district. The present scenario paves a way for the overall upliftment of women in India.

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Annexure

Acronyms used in the study

DRDA	- District Rural Development Agency
HRD	- Human Resource Development
MATHI	- Mahalir Thittam
NGO	- Non-Governmental Organization
SHG	- Self-Help Group (of Women)
SGSY	- Swarna Jayanthi Swarozgar Yojana
S.No	- Serial Number
TNCDW	- Tamilnadu Corporation for Development of Women Ltd.