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IMPACT OF SELF HELP GROUPS (SHGS) ON THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF LEPROSY AFFECTED IN ANDHRA PRADESH



Shirish Shendgaonkar¹ and K.Pradeep Kumar²

INTRODUCTION :

SHG's promoting sustainable livelihood is a multidimensional process, which should enable leprosy affected persons/groups to realize their identity in spheres of life. It consists of greater access to knowledge and resources, greater autonomy in decision making to enable them to have greater ability to plan their lives or to have greater control over the circumstances that influence their lives and overcome from pressure imposed on them by custom, belief and practice. Livelihood outcomes are the goals to which people aspire. The result of pursuing their livelihood strategies are described as :

- 1.Reduced vulnerability
- 2.Increased economic resilience and social well being
- 3.Improved food security

ABSTRACT

Self-help groups are recognized as a community group that play pivotal role in transforming the lives of the poor. They are known not only to promote economic growth but also can prove to be powerful instrument in ensuring access to rights for those denied the same.

According to D'souza the SHGs are basically small informal groups, characterized by voluntary memberships, a democratic and consultative structure of governance, economic participation of members, autonomy, education and training and concerns for the poor. Apart from a number of things, the members do as a group, they pool their savings and lend within the group to meet the credit needs of the members.

Creation of a common fund by regular contribution of members and insurance of loan with minimum documents and often without any security are, in fact, the key features of SHGs.

KEYWORDS : Self Help Groups (SHGs) , democratic and consultative structure .

SHORT PROFILE

Shirish Shendgaonkar is working as a Programme Manager at Leprosy Mission India, Miraj.

Andhra Pradesh. The overall goal of the project was "Enhanced Socio-economic and political empowerment of vulnerable communities specially affected by Leprosy and disability.

The activities under the said project have given rise to action for establishing 102 SHGs Group providing livelihood activities. New

4. More sustainable use of natural resources

The objectives of the SHGs go beyond thrift and credit and include the overall development of members in the social, political, cultural and economic areas thus the SHGs are 'credit plus' institutions (Fernandez, 1998).

Project relevance to Research Study.

The Leprosy Mission initiated a project Empowering Communities in 2011 to address the issues of leprosy affected and marginalized group in Vizianagaram and Vishakhapatnam district of

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livelihood opportunities were created by promoting enterprises such as chicken flesh center, cow, buffalo rearing, goat rearing, and vegetable selling.

The study aims at appraising impact of SHGs activities in promoting livelihood outcome. Livelihood programme is a process of human life which enables an individual / people to create an environment in which social-economic, political needs for livelihoods are taken care of with sustained efforts and empowerment begins in spite of all odds and devastating environments.

This research aimed at knowing whether SHG's have been instrumental in securing livelihood outcomes for its members affected by leprosy and to know its impact on Quality of Life.

Objectives of this project are.

- a) Advocacy for targeted communities to increase organizational strength and effective leadership.
- b) Women Empowerment of women to organize themselves sorting out critical issues and gain organizational strength.
- c) Income generation the people in the target areas make rational use of local resources, public services and opportunities for creating assets and improving their livelihoods by 2014.
- d) Health and Education :- The people in the targeted communities gain access and improve their knowledge, attitude and skills to seek better health care and education services, thereby making improvement in their overall health and education by 2014.

Hence the research has the following objectives:

1. To assess the Quality of Life of the Leprosy affected.
2. To know whether the self help groups have made any impact on the Quality of Life of the leprosy affected.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY –

Universe and Selection of Sample: The self help groups and its members constitute the universe of the study. Out of 102 self-help groups,

20 SHG's from two districts from four blocks Viz , Denkada, Vizianagaram, Anantpuram and Padmanabham. were selected as 'Sample' in the first stage for the study. The beneficiaries of these project are 65 % Leprosy affected people and 35% people affected by general disability. However only the leprosy affected beneficiaries of the Self help groups were included in the study. There were 282 leprosy affected in the selected self help Groups in these districts and all were included for the study.

Tools of Research utilized for study:

1. Interviews (In-depth)
2. Field Visits
3. Focus group discussion
4. Observation, with staff and Target groups

In-depth Interviews of Self-help Groups:- In depth interviews were conducted among the beneficiaries of 40 SHG's .

Data Analysis:- Data collected were classified, checked and processed through computer . The collected data were analyzed and interpreted by using simple percentage. The following are the results of the study.

Findings.

Table No 1:

Sr No	Parameters of Quality of Life	Percentage
01	Psychological well being dignity, self esteem	45 %
02	Interpersonal relationship acceptance in society (Increased social status)	40 %
03	Personal Development in terms of Education and Life Style	55 %
04	Improvement in terms of Leadership, voicing opinions	65 %
05	Physical well being in terms of Health care	48 %
06	Material well being in terms savings and expenditure	40 %
07	Human Rights lobbying and advocacy	40 %
08	Adoption of new policy strategy	40 %

The above table shows that beneficiaries of SHG's function and project intervention created 45 % drive towards psychological wellbeing. 40 percent showed increased scale towards leadership development. Health care awareness shows 48% changes. Forty percent showed increased economic wellbeing. Human

rights awareness shows 40 % increase. Tendency towards adoption of new policy strategy recorded to the extent of forty percent.

Table showing types of training and their impact on livelihood activities.

Table No 2:

Sr No	Impact on livelihood activities	Percentage Change benefited
01	Human Right's awareness	45 %
02	Banking Habits and record Keeping	85 %
03	Income generation on awareness and action	45 %
04	Panchayat Raj – awareness and action	40 %
05	Resource Management / Rights entitlements awareness and action	60 %
06	Leadership – awareness and action	55 %
07	Advocacy, Identification Issues and finding solutions	60 %
08	Health care Management – awareness action	60 %

1.The above table shows that, the highest benefit of training is on banking habits and - of SHG, record keeping. 45 percent clients agreed that this training was immensely useful and they had acquired strength to access their rights and they were educated for it.

2.Eighty five percent beneficiaries disclosed that the training on banking habits and book keeping had enabled them to keep the records up to date.

3.Forty five percent respondents agreed that income generations training was helpful but for others seed money was a big problem and they are in the process of starting income generation activities.

4.Training on Panchayat raj had brought about confidence among 45 percent of the people to

communicate, co-ordinate their needs to chit funds, organization and became cautious about their rights.

5.Sixty percent respondents agreed that they were motivated, educated for resource management and rights for entitlements.

6.One half agreed that they were enthused and educated for creative leadership.

7.Sixty percent people revealed that they were able to identify their own issues and are trying to find solutions on the problems of livelihood. The advocacy programme was very useful to bring themselves in the mainstream.

8.Sixty percent have started making use of health care programmes towards physical well being.

Table No 3 Showing effects of various stress management process on the community (targeted leprosy affected and people affected by disability) due to Training and Livelihood activities.

Table No 3

Sr No	Livelihood activities	Percentage Change benefited
01	Reduced Vulnerability	45 % (Psychological Well being)
02	Reduced Economic Resilience & social well being	40 % (Income Generation)
03	Improved food Security	55 % (Economic Material)well being
04	Sustainable use of natural Resources	65 % (Material well being)
05	Increased Assets	48 % (Material well being)
06	Family Decision Making Status	46 % (Social well being)
07	Entrepreneurship Development	40 % (Economic well being)
08	Sustenance against odds devastating environment	40 % (Economic well being)
09	People's organization and policy change / adjustment	55 % (Social well being)

The above table shows that the training programmes, Livelihood programmes implemented under the project have proved useful and effective.

1. Forty-five percent beneficiaries expressed that it has reduced vulnerability.
2. Forty percent beneficiaries disclosed that training helped them to get motivated and SHG could provide them impetus to take up income generation activities.
3. Fifty-five percent beneficiaries said that food security was attained due to increased income.
4. Sixty-five percent conveyed that training on environmental balance created a high degree for environmental awareness and created a new attitude towards careful use of resources.
5. One half of SHG members feel that their assets have increased.
6. Though the trainings and motivation was given to all the beneficiaries only 40 percent have developed attitude to take unanimous decision.
7. Forty percent of the leprosy affected members have undertaken entrepreneurship development activities.
8. Sustenance against odd and devastating situations is marked positively by 40 % interviewed clients.

9. Fifty five percent clients from interviewed SHG's responded that the training helped them to (a) get organized, (b) increased awareness, and (c) undertake actions for better leadership and people's organization.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. Due to various training programmes and interventions income generating activities through SHG's Members have started Poultry, Cow, Buffalo rearing activities (Pictures follow) and vocational skills are being updated.
2. Motivation and process of health awareness, self-care, and cure have been rejuvenated due to health awareness programmes.
3. Attitude towards, dignity and self-esteem have been kindled due to awareness and advocacy programme.
4. The process of economic resilience has begun. However economic impetus is necessary through seed money/motivation of institution to support some economic activities.
5. Clients (members of SHG's) are motivated to save, increase assets and make rational use of natural resources and add to their economic conditions.
6. Livelihood outcomes are also promising due to the effects of leadership training, vocational

skills development programmes and environmental education.

7. Stress management against calamities and odds of disaster capabilities are slowly increasing and self-help group have started the campaign of social-economic, political resurgence.

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