



SHG Membership and Awareness about Social Issues- A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

Self Help Groups enhance the equality of status of women of participants' decision makers and beneficiaries in the democratic, economic, social and cultural spheres of life. SHGs have an inbuilt mechanism where emphasis has been over capacity building of women through developing their dialoguing skills. The study was conducted in four districts of North Karnataka covering 100 SHGs and 400 members has revealed some significant trends regarding the membership of Self Help Groups in creation of awareness about the social issues. The awareness about the social issues among the members of the SHGs has been of a high order as the responses indicate about the different social issues. Higher majority of women members of SHGs are in favour of abolition of child labour, removing illiteracy among women and about mobilizing public opinion against alcoholism among men, Similarly major percent of them have favored women empowerment, abolition of dowry, and removal of gender discrimination in employment, wages etc. The positive impact of SHG membership is highly pronounced with regard to awareness about social issues.

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Introduction

In a patriarchal Family system women in India hardly set an opportunity to develop awareness about the social issues facing the women in our society. Membership of voluntary organizations like Self Help Groups provides an opportunity for women to come out of the barriers against social mobility and interact with others on issues of social and economic relevance. Memberships of such groups provide them an opportunity to learn from group discussions and out side exposure the mutual problems faced by them and the various measures initiated by the government to extricate the women folk from the domestic bondage and exploitation. Associating with such organizations is helpful in equipping women with necessary boldness and freedom to address their domestic problems and to transform their age old attitude of surveillance and subjugation.

Hence Self Help Groups have been greatly instrumental in eradicating the social evils of women exploitation, dowry harassment, women illiteracy, and child labour etc. Women develop the courage to resist these social evils through their group membership. The present study was undertaken with the following

Objectives:

1. To study the impact of SHG membership and awareness about social Issues.
2. To assess the participation of SHG members in social services.

Methodology: The study conducted in four districts of North Karnataka, Respondents (400) have been obtained from 100 selected women members of SHGs in each district of Bidar, Dharwad, Gadag and Raichur. Simple random sampling method was used for selection of districts and the samples also. The statistical tools like chi-square, percentages, frequency were used to analyze the date.

Results and Discussions:

Member of SHG and Awareness about Social Issues

It was observed from the table 1 that, significant association is found between the members of the study area towards awareness of social issues like women empowerment and gender discrimination in employment. And there was non significant association with respect to abolition of child labour, dowry system, removing illiteracy among women, creating awareness about alcoholism among folk.

Membership of SHG has helped 339 members (84.8%) in creating awareness about the abolition of child labour. However in case of 61 members (15.3%) the SHG membership did not help them in this direction. A large number of 316 members (79%) expressed the view that their membership of SHGs helped them in creating awareness about the women empowerment while small number of 84 members (21%) did not subscribe to this view. A large number of 319 respondent members (79.8%) felt that their SHGs membership helped them in creating awareness about the abolition of dowry system while 81 members (20.2%) did not concur with the majority view.

Membership of SHG has helped large majority of 322 respondents (80.5%) in creating awareness about the removing of illiteracy among women while 78 members (19.5%) did not concur with the majority opinion.

Awareness has been created in relation to gender discrimination in employment, wages and in other social and political areas consequent to the membership of SHGs according to majority of 315 respondents (78.8%) while 85 respondents (21.3%) did not subscribe to the majority opinion.

Further the membership of SHGs has helped majority of 328 respondents (82%) in creating awareness about mobilizing opinion of the public about alcoholism among men folk while a small number of 72 respondents (18%) differed from the majority opinion.

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Table 2 indicates that majority of the respondent members of the SHGs covered by the study have participated in a few social services. Responses of the majority of 247 members (60.5%) have affirmed that they participated in helping people affected by natural calamities like floods, earth quake epidemics etc. However a substantial number of 158 respondents (39.5%) did not involve in these social services.

A large number of 230 members (57.5%) have participated in the social activity of organizing orphanages while a substantial number of 170 respondent SHG members (42.5%) did not participate in such activities. A good number of 234 SHG members (58.5%) participated in organizing old age houses while 166 members (41.5%) did not involve themselves in such social activities. A majority of 229 SHG members (57.3%) participated in rehabilitation of sex workers while 171 members (42.8%) did not take part in such social works. A good number of 243 SHG members (60.8%) took active part in protecting the interest of harassed women in the families while 157 members (39.3%) did not participate in such activities. Significant association is found between the members of the selected areas with respect to participation in social services.

Participation of SHG Members in Cultural Activities to Highlighting Social Issues

Significant association was observed between the members of the study area with respect to participation in cultural activities to high light social issues like child labour, women empowerment, women reservations, women harassment in the families & also child marriages, dowry practice, adult education except in family planning & welfare activities.(table-3)

Self help group members organize cultural activities like drama, street plays, folk songs etc to high light social issues like family planning, child labour, women empowerment, child marriages, dowry practices etc. such cultural activities have positive impact on the people and awareness is built up in society about such social evils and the ways solving them. Responses of the members of the selected SHGs have been obtained through personal interviews during the field survey.

Family Planning and Welfare: Responses of large majority of 323 SHG members (80.8%) indicated that the members participated in cultural activities highlighting family planning and welfare. However a small number of 77 members (19.3%) did not participate in such activities and non-significant association was found among the respondents.

Child Labour: Large majority of 308 members (77%) participated in cultural activities highlighting the issue of child labour though lesser number of 92 SHG members (23%) did not associate with such activities.

Women Empowerment: Majority of 304 SHG members (76%) associated with cultural activities highlighting the issue of women empowerment. A lesser number of 96 SHG members (24%) did not participate in such activities.

Women Reservation s: Large majority of 313 members of SHGs accounting for 78.3% of the total participated in cultural

activities to highlight the need for women reservations. However a good number of 87 respondents (21.8%) did not participate in such activities.

Women Harassment in the Families: Cultural activities for highlighting the social the social issues of women harassment in the families involved large number of 314 SHG members (78.5%) while lesser number of 86 members (21.5%) did not participate in such activities.

Child marriages: Majority of 281 SHG members (70.30%) participated in cultural activities for highlighting the social issue of child marriages. However a substantial number of 119 SHG members (29.8%) did not participate in such activities.

Dowry practice: Participation in cultural activities to highlight the social issue of dowry practice was indicated by majority of 279 SHG members (69.8%) while a substantial number of 121 SHG members (30.3%) did not participate in such activities.

Adult Education: Majority of 299 SHG members (74.8%) has participated in cultural activities highlighting the issue of adult education. whereas substantial number of 101 members (25.3%) did not participate in such activities.

Conclusion:

The awareness about the social issues among the members of the SHGs has been of a high order as the responses indicate about the different social issues. Higher majority of women members of SHGs are infavour of abolition of child labour, removing illiteracy among women and about mobilizing public opinion against alcoholism among men, Similarly major percent of them have favored women empowerment, abolition of dowry, and removal of gender discrimination in employment, wages etc. The positive impact of SHG membership is highly pronounced with regard to awareness about social issues.

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Table 1 Member of SHG and Awareness about Social Issues**N=400**

Respondents	Awareness about Social Issues					
	Abolition of child labour		Women empowerment		Abolition of dowry system	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Bidar (100)	84 (84.00)	16 (16.00)	82 (82.00)	18 (18.00)	81 (81.00)	19 (19.00)
Dharwad (100)	88 (88.00)	12 (12.00)	87 (87.00)	13 (13.00)	88 (88.00)	12 (12.00)
Gadag (100)	86 (86.00)	14 (14.00)	72 (72.00)	28 (28.00)	74 (74.00)	26 (26.00)
Raichur (100)	81 (81.00)	19 (19.00)	75 (75.00)	25 (25.00)	76 (76.00)	24 (24.00)
	Chi-square=2.0700, df=3, p=0.5580, NS		Chi-square=2.83180df=3 p=0.03989, S		Chi-square= 7.2290 df=3 p=0.06496, NS	
Total (400)	339 (84.80)	61 (15.30)	316 (79.00)	84 (21.00)	319 (79.80)	81 (20.30)
Respondents	Awareness about Social Issues					
	Removing illiteracy among women		Gender discrimination in employment, wages & in other social & political areas		Mobilizing the opinion of the public about alcoholism among men folk	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Bidar (100)	85 (85.00)	15 (15.00)	85 (85.00)	15 (15.00)	82 (82.00)	18 (18.00)
Dharwad (100)	86 (86.00)	14 (14.00)	81 (81.00)	19 (19.00)	87 (87.00)	13 (13.00)
Gadag (100)	74 (74.00)	26 (26.00)	66 (66.00)	34 (34.00)	78 (78.00)	22 (22.00)
Raichur (100)	77 (77.00)	23 (23.00)	83 (83.00)	17 (17.00)	81 (81.00)	19 (19.00)
	Chi-square=6.6890 df=3 p=0.08252, NS		Chi-square=13.4300 df=3 p=0.00380, S		Chi-square= 2.8460 df=3 p=0.41607, NS	
Total (400)	322 (80.50)	78 (19.5)	315 (78.80)	85 (21.30)	328 (82.00)	72 (18.00)

Note: (Figures in the parenthesis indicates percentage) *Participation of SHG Members in Social Services*

Table 2 Participation of SHG Members in Social Services N=400

Respondents	Participation of SHG Members in Social Services					
	Helping people affected by natural calamities like flood, earthquake epidemics		Starting orphanages		Old age home	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Bidar (100)	69 (69.00)	31 (31.00)	63 (63.00)	37 (37.00)	63 (63.00)	37 (37.00)
Dharwad (100)	69 (69.00)	31 (31.00)	67 (67.00)	33 (33.00)	69 (69.00)	31 (31.00)
Gadag (100)	48 (48.00)	52 (52.00)	46 (46.00)	54 (54.00)	48 (48.00)	52 (52.00)
Raichur(100)	56 (56.00)	44 (44.00)	54 (54.00)	46 (46.00)	54 (54.00)	46 (46.00)
	Chi-square=13.4320 df=3 p=0.00379, S		Chi-square=10.8440df=3 p=0.01261, S		Chi-square= 0.7510 df=3 p=0.01316, OS	
Total(400)	242 (60.50)	158 (39.50)	230 (57.50)	170 (42.50)	234 (58.50)	166 (41.50)

Contd...

Respondents	Participation of SHG Members in Social Services				
	Rehabilitation of sex workers		Protecting the interest of harassed women in the families		
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Total
Bidar(100)	63 (63.00)	37 (37.00)	67 (67.00)	33 (33.00)	100 (25.00)
Dharwad (100)	68 (68.00)	32 (32.00)	70 (70.00)	30 (30.00)	100 (25.00)
Gadag (100)	46 (46.00)	54 (54.00)	50 (50.00)	50 (50.00)	100 (25.00)
Raichur (100)	52 (52.00)	48 (48.00)	56 (56.00)	44 (44.00)	100 (25.00)
	Chi-square= 12.3700 df=3 p=0.00622, S		Chi-square= 11.0190 df=3 p=0.01163, S		
Total (400)	229 (57.30)	171 (42.80)	243 (60.80)	157 (39.30)	400 (100.00)

Note: (Figures in the parenthesis indicates percentage)

Table 3 Participation in Cultural Activities to Highlight Social Issues N=400

Respondents	Participation in Cultural Activities to Highlight Social Issues					
	Family planning & welfare		Child labour		Women empowerment	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Bidar	84 (84.00)	16 (16.00)	81 (81.00)	19 (19.00)	78 (78.00)	22 (22.00)
Dharwad	84 (84.00)	16 (16.00)	91 (91.00)	9 (9.00)	86 (86.00)	14 (14.00)
Gadag	74 (74.00)	26 (26.00)	66 (66.00)	34 (34.00)	66 (66.00)	34 (34.00)
Raichur	81 (81.00)	19 (19.00)	70 (70.00)	30 (30.00)	74 (74.00)	26 (26.00)
	Chi-square= 4.2940 df=3 p=0.23142, NS		Chi-square= 21.5700 df=3 p=0.00008, S		Chi-square= 11.4040 df=3 p=0.00974, S	
Total	323 (80.80)	77 (19.30)	308 (77.00)	92 (23.00)	304 (76.00)	96 (24.00)

Respondents	Participation in Cultural Activities to Highlight Social Issues					
	Women reservations		Women harassment in the family		Child marriage	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Bidar	82 (82.00)	18 (18.00)	82 (82.00)	18 (18.00)	74 (74.00)	26 (26.00)
Dharwad	85 (85.00)	15 (15.00)	86 (86.00)	14 (14.00)	83 (83.00)	17 (17.00)
Gadag	68 (68.00)	32 (32.00)	68 (68.00)	32 (32.00)	56 (56.00)	44 (44.00)
Raichur	78 (78.00)	22 (22.00)	78 (78.00)	22 (22.00)	68 (68.00)	32 (32.00)
	Chi-square= 9.6800 df=3 p=0.02150, S		Chi-square= 10.6060 df=3 p=0.01407, S		Chi-square= 18.4100 df=3 p=0.00036, S	
Total	313 (78.30)	87 (21.80)	314 (78.50)	86 (21.50)	281 (70.30)	119 (29.08)

Respondents	Participation in Cultural Activities to Highlight Social Issues			
	Dowry practice		Adult education	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Bidar	78 (78.00)	22 (22.00)	78 (78.00)	22 (22.00)
Dharwad	83 (83.00)	17 (17.00)	85 (85.00)	15 (15.00)
Gadag	50 (50.00)	50 (50.00)	62 (62.00)	38 (38.00)
Raichur	68 (68.00)	32 (32.00)	74 (74.00)	26 (26.00)
	Chi-square= 30.1790 df=3 p=0.00000, S		Chi-square= 14.7690 df=3 p=0.00203, S	
Total	279 (69.80)	121 (30.30)	299 (74.80)	101 (25.30)

Note: (Figures in the parenthesis indicates percentage)