A STUDY ON THE WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH SELF-HELP GROUPS (SHGs) IN CHENNAI DISTRICT, TAMIL NADU.

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Introduction

In order to improve the socio-economic conditions of the population of any country, it has become indispensable to empower the women folk by enhancing and ensuring their role to the optimal level. And, the women empowerment is the stepping-stone for societal equality. Indian society accords the highest regards and respect to women but they are yet to make progress to keep pace with their men counterpart. Swami Vivekananda said, “As a bird cannot fly on one wing, no society can make progress unless its women too join in all activities” and it is quite relevant even today with reference to India\(^1\). Women Empowerment refers to increasing the spiritual, political, social or economic strength of Women. Government has been launching and implementing various programmes for the women empowerment and development. One of the programmes is women empowerment through SHGs. It is indispensable to understand the women development and their empowerment through SHGs in Chennai District of Tamil Nadu also, where a large number of poor women population needs development and empowerment. Therefore, the researcher has made an attempt to analyse the Empowerment of Women through SHGs in Chennai District of Tamil Nadu. On the background of these ideas, the following objectives are formulated for the present study.

Objectives of the Study

1. To know the level of Social Empowerment of SHG women members in Chennai District of Tamil Nadu.
2. To study the level of Economic Empowerment of SHG women members in Chennai District of Tamil Nadu.
3. To understand the extent of awareness and development of SHG women members in Chennai District.
4. To analyse the opinion of women members towards the functioning of SHGs in empowering women in Chennai District.
5. To offer suggestions for the efficient functioning of SHGs resulting in women empowerment.

Methodology

The researcher randomly selected 15 self-help groups from each of the zones of Chennai District namely Tondiarpet, Basin Bridge, Puliyanthope, Ayanawaram, Nungampaakam, Kodampakkam, Saidapet, Adayar, Kilpauk and Ice House. Therefore the total number of SHGs selected comes to 150. From the each of the randomly selected SHGs of all zones of Chennai District, four women members were selected randomly. The necessary data were collected with the help of well designed questionnaire. The nature of the study is the combination of analytical and descriptive study. Therefore (total number of respondents) the sample size is 600.

The study is presented in six chapters. A brief description of contents of these chapters namely introduction and design of the study, profile of the study area, concepts and review of literature, formation and management of SHGs and different schemes and programmes, analysis and interpretation of data, and summary of findings, suggestions and conclusion is presented.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

The study proved that the members who are in the age group of below 40 years are interested in their socio economic empowerment and prompted to joining and promoting SHGs.

Respondents who are member of SHGs, on an average, are getting very low income which stimulated them to become the members of the SHGs with an aim to improve their socio economic condition and attain empowerment.

The nature of the houses where the respondents are residing is of thatched one, which stimulated them in becoming membership of SHGs seeking socio-economic empowerment. They ascertained SHGs as the best module.

The SHG members’ satisfactory level towards education, entertainment, use of transport, scope for increase in expenditure on clothing and possibility of asset creation results in empowerment.

Respondents’ income has increased after their membership reasonably in comparison with economic condition before their membership, resulting in economic empowerment.

SHG members’ responses towards knowledge on schemes, knowledge on rights and privileges, knowledge on development, knowledge on employability and knowledge on integration and survival show that members are highly satisfied which results in empowerment.

All the hypotheses formulated are tested

CONCLUSION

The members of SHGs in Chennai district have witnessed a lot of new dimensions for the successful running and functioning of SHGs. It is understood that the root cause for economic and social empowerment of women member of SHGs is their awareness towards SHGs. It is very much indispensable to undertake certain steps like opening up of Bank extension branches in the near proximity to the SHGs which would help to overcome all the avoidable problems and achieve women empowerment.