

Economic Changes Among Women Self Help Groups of Rewa District in Madhya Pradesh

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Abstract

India is a land of villages where more than 70% of the population lives in rural area. Economic empowerment is a necessary condition for enabling women to seek justice and equality. Without economic strength, women cannot be able to exercise their guaranteed rights. Keeping these in view government of MP launched MAPWA project (Madhya Pradesh Women in Agriculture) with the financial help of Denmark Government on 19 November, 1993 in seven districts (Jabalpur, Rewa, Shahdol, Narsinghpur, Mandla, Chhindwara and Raisen). The present study was an attempt to assess the economic changes occurred among women self help groups through MAPWA project. The investigation was carried out in Rewa district. The data were collected through a pre-tested interview schedule. The study revealed that the majority of the members of self help groups (40.74%) were in high incremental income category. There were promising changes observed in the annual income, employment and saving of self help groups. The saving generated by self help groups, increased tremendously (214.75%) over the base period.

Key words : Self help group, Empowerment, Incremental income, Employment, Saving generated.

India is a land of villages where more than 70% of the population lives in rural area. Economic empowerment is a necessary condition for enabling women to seek justice and equality. Without economic strength, women cannot be able to exercise their guaranteed rights. It is, therefore, necessary to seek participation of women as equal partners with men in all fields of work, equal access to all positions of employment, equal opportunities for work related training and full protection of women at work place. Economic empowerment of women, including reduction of female poverty require programs that focus on identifying, developing and promoting alternative approaches to increase women's access to and control over the means of making a living on a sustainable and long term basis (1—5). It necessitates supporting their existing livelihood, widening choices and building capacity to take advantage of new economic opportunities. However, due to improved awareness in the last two decades, on the role that women play in agriculture and that agriculture continues to remain a very important source of livelihood for women,

special programs have been initiated and targeted at women in agriculture. India has also implemented several women in agriculture programs. These programs have conclusively proved that women, when given access to improved information and resources could increase agricultural production significantly. However, to make sustainable improvements in the livelihoods of rural women, their access to credit and opportunities for employment, enterprise development and income generation opportunities also have to be improved. Keeping these in view government of MP launched MAPWA project (Madhya Pradesh Women in Agriculture) with the financial help of Denmark Government on 19 November, 1993 in seven districts (Jabalpur, Rewa, Shahdol, Narsinghpur, Mandla, Chhindwara and Raisen). The present study was an attempt to assess the economic changes occurred among women self help groups through MAPWA project with the following objectives : To assess the extent of incremental income among rural women of self help group, and to analyze the incremental income and generation of employment and saving among

Table 1. Distribution of respondents according to their incremental income.

Extent of incremental income	Frequency	Percentage
Low	27	25.00
Medium	37	34.26
High	44	40.74

rural women of self help group.

Methods

Rewa district comprises nine development blocks. Out of these block Rewa block was selected purposely on the basis of numbers of SHGs. The list of organized self help groups functioning in the selected 10 villages of this block was prepared with the help of personnel of Department of Agriculture. From each selected village two self help groups were selected on the basis of longevity of the group. Proportionate random sampling procedure was used to make a sample size of 108 respondents. The data were collected through a pre-tested interview schedule. The data were classified and tabulated based on the fulfillment of the objectives. Keeping in view the objectives of the study and to draw logical conclusion, statistical tests i. e. a frequency, percentage were used for analyzing and enterprising the data.

Results and Discussion

Incremental Income of the Members of SHGs

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents according to their incremental income. It shows that the majority of the members of self help groups (40.75%) were in high incremental income category followed by medium (34.26%) and low incremental income category (40.74%).

Incremental Income, Employment and Saving of Members of Self Help Groups

Table 2 reveals that there were promising changes observed in the annual income, employment and saving of self help groups. With regard to annual income it accounts for (50.43%) annual incremental increase in current year over base year, their by showing a

Table 2. Incremental income, employment and saving of members of self help groups.

Particular	Base year	Current year	Change	
			Absolute change	Percentage change
Average annual income (Rs)	34497.11	51895.24	17398.13	50.43
Average employment (days)	145.79	257.79	112.00	76.82
Average saving (Rs)	4131.48	13003.70	8872.22	214.75

positive and significant contribution of income due to functioning of self help groups in study area. As regards the employment generation, it also showed positive and significant contribution in generation of employment days among self help groups. The proportion of available employment days in base year was observed as 145.79 days and showed incremental change of 76.82% after the functioning of SHGs. The saving generated by self help group, increased tremendously (214.75%) over the base period.

Implication

The study exhibits the significant economic impact due to functioning of SHGs under MAPWA project as promising changes observed in the annual income, employment and saving of self help groups.

The study has developed many suggestions for development of farm women as under self help group. Better recognition and status for women in agriculture and other allied activities sector is of paramount importance to improve the economy of farm-family. Special arrangements for training and education for farm women in different aspect of crop production, dairy management and other allied occupation should be made for enhancement of employment generation and income efficiency at village level.

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