



SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF SELF-HELP GROUPS IN MEWAT DISTRICT OF HARYANA STATE

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ABSTRACT

The self-help group (SHG) is a small voluntarily formed group of people who have same poor economic conditions and low status of living preferably from the same socio-economic background. They come together for the purpose of solving their common problems through self-help. The present study was carried out to study the socio-economic profile of SHGs. The district Mewat was selected purposively for the study, as it has the history of SHGs work and has highest number of working women SHGs. Total sample size of 100 respondents was selected for collecting the data. The majority of the SHG members were middle aged and few of them were old aged members, it means that the involvement of the middle aged members in the group activities was more than the young and old aged members. It was found that above half of the respondents had middle level of education. Most of them were married and few were unmarried. So, the unmarried members should also be motivated and trained to acquire skills so that they can earn their own income. From the data of the self-help groups promoting entrepreneurship of the respondents, 75 % were the members of the self-help groups and 25 % as leaders of self help groups. Among the respondents, 81 % were formed through the self-effort of the members, while 19 % were formed through NGO motivation.

KEYWORDS: Entrepreneurship, Self-help group, Socio-economic profile.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of SHGs gained significance, especially after 1976 when Professor Dr. Mohammad Yunus of Bangladesh began experimenting with micro-credit and women SHGs. The strategy made a revolution in Bangladesh in poverty eradication by empowering the poor women. In India, the concept of SHGs can be traced back to the Gandhian Gram Swaraj Movement. It was mainly concerned with the poor people. The existence of traditional saving groups has long and successful history in India. Informal SHGs oriented to saving and credit functions are not a new phenomenon (Desai and Namboodiri, 2001). The concept of SHGs was introduced in India in 1985 by National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD). Most of the SHGs of the country are concentrated in southern India and about 29,000 are in Andhra Pradesh alone followed by Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Maharashtra (NABARD, 1999). The new concept on empowerment of women by organizing them into SHGs was initiated in the Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002). India has nearly 400 million people, living below or just above an austere defined poverty line. About 75 million households need micro-finance, nearly 60 million households are in rural India and remaining 15 million are urban slums. The current annual credit usage by these households was estimated in 1998 to be Rs. 4, 65,000 million or US \$10 billion. It is estimated that the number of small loans accounts from banks covered 40 million households in 2000. The remaining 35 million households are perhaps meeting their credit needs from the

informal sector (Fisher *et al.*, 2002). Statistics available from National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD, 2005) suggested that more than 8.67 lakh SHGs in India made successful functioning, while NABARD target of ensuring bank loans was extended to 1 million SHGs by 2008 with an average membership of 17, this would mean banks outreach to some 17 million members, the vast majority of whom would be women, with an average size of Rs. 1766 per family. Bank loans were made available to 11.6 million families in 2002-03. Besides the big donor agencies like NABARD, Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) *etc.*, there are 2800 partner NGOs working extensively in this field. Two specific programmes: Swayam Sidha and Sivashakti which envisage formation, stabilization and bank linkages of women's SHGs were quite important. Southern region has significant share *i.e.* 64 % in SHG bank linkage, while Central India (11%), Eastern India (13%), Western India (6%) and Northern India (5%) account for nominal share. North-eastern region has negligible share *i.e.* 1% in total bank linked SHGs.

The SHGs are not only transforming the faces of villages of Haryana in general and district Mewat in particular, but also strengthening the fabric of equality in society. The SHGs provide a forum for them to interact with each other, understand their common problems on agricultural activities, developing entrepreneurial skills, channel their savings and encourage education of their children. The SHGs help in creating group dynamics and help rural poor

to involve in income generating activities. To carry out income generating activities, members of SHGs must possess good entrepreneurial behavior and skills. Jerinabi (2006) rightly pointed out that SHGs had been crucial elements in increasing economic opportunities and empowerment. Therefore, the study was conducted to investigate socio-economic profile of self-help groups in Mewat district of Haryana.

MATERIALS & METHODS

The study was conducted in Mewat district of Haryana state. The district Mewat was selected purposively, as it has the history of SHGs work and has highest number of working women SHGs. Out of five blocks of Mewat district, four blocks (Nagina, Nuh, Ferozpur-Zhirka and Punhana) were selected purposively based on maximum number of SHGs. From each block, five SHGs were selected through random sampling and five respondents from each SHG were selected randomly. Thus, sample size of 100 respondents (4 x 5 x 5 in turn 100) was selected for collecting the data of the study. The primary data for the agricultural year 2013-14 were collected using survey method by conducting personal interview of the selected respondents with the help of specially designed schedules. The data were analyzed and tabulated after

applying suitable statistical techniques like frequency, percentage means, weighted mean and rank orders.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

A detailed study on the following independent variables viz., age, education, marital status, family type, family size, family income, extension contacts, risk orientation, activity performed by the self-help groups, information seeking behaviour of the respondents, member of the organization, participation in social activity, decision making ability, socioeconomic profile of the SHG and distribution of respondents in different dimensions of performance lays the decisive results as shown in the tables below. The findings on each of the variables are given below:

Age

The majority of the respondents (69 per cent) belonged to middle age group, followed by the young age group (29 per cent) and old age group (2 per cent) as given in Table 1. It shows that the involvement of middle and young aged group members in the self-help group activities was more than the old aged members. It was probably because of the fact that young and middle aged people were more energetic than the old people.

TABLE 1: Distribution of respondents according to their age (N= 100)

Sr. No.	Category	Frequency	Percentage (s)
1	Young (upto 35)	29	29.00
2	Middle (36 to 55)	69	69.00
3	Old (above 55)	2	2.00

Educational level

The data indicated that 43% of the respondents had middle level of education, followed by 32 and 16% of respondents having matriculation and senior secondary level of education, respectively. It was further found that 9 % of respondents were illiterate (Table 2). Notably, there was not any respondent who had graduate and Post-graduate

qualification. The low percentage of respondents possessing higher education level may be due to poor family condition, gender gap, lack of knowledge of education, non-realization of the importance of the formal education, poor motivation from family member, lack of educational institution in their locality and more involvement in household activities *etc.*

TABLE 2: Distribution of respondents according to their educational level (N= 100)

Sr. No.	Educational Status	Frequency	Percentage (s)
1	Illiterate	09	9.00
2	Middle	43	43.00
3	Matriculation	32	32.00
4	Senior Secondary	16	16.00
5	Graduate	0	0
6	Post Graduate	0	0

Marital status

It was observed that majority of the respondents (95 %) were married and this high marital status ratio due to

childhood marriage, while 5 % of the respondents were unmarried. Not a single respondent was reported widow/widower (Table 3).

TABLE 3: Distribution of respondents according to their marital status (N= 100)

Sr. No.	Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage(s)
1	Married	95	95.00
2	Unmarried	05	05.00
3	Widow/Widower	0	0

Family type

Data pertaining to family type revealed that 38% of the respondents had nuclear family, while 62% of the respondents had joint family (Table 4).

TABLE 4: Distribution of respondents according to their family type (N= 100)

Sr. No.	Family Type	Frequency	Percentage (s)
1	Nuclear	38	38.00
2	Joint	62	62.00

Family size

The data indicated that majority of the respondents (73 %) belonged to medium family size followed by 19 and 8 % of the respondents belonged to large and small family size,

respectively (Table 5). The average family members of the respondents were five members. It shows that most of the respondents were aware about the increased cost of living and difficulties in maintaining the large family size.

TABLE 5: Distribution of respondents according to their family size (N= 100)

Sr. No.	Family Size	Frequency	Percentage (s)
1	Small (upto 4 members)	08	8.00
2	Medium (5-6 members)	73	73.00
3	Large (above 7 members)	19	19.00

Annual family income

It was observed that the half (49 %) of the respondents belonged to high annual family income, while 37 % of the respondents belonged to medium annual family income and 14% of the respondents belonged to low annual family income (Table 6). The predominance of more number of

high annual family income respondents may be due to existence of mixture of household having well salaried government job employees to household having very low waged labourers. Puhazhendi and Badatya (2002) revealed that after joining the SHG the average annual income of the members increased from 6 to 35 %.

TABLE 6: Distribution of respondents according to their annual family income (N= 100)

Sr. No.	Annual Family Income	Frequency	Percentage (s)
1	Upto Rs. 1,00,000	14	14.00
2	Rs. 1,00,001-2,00,000	37	37.00
3	Above Rs. 2,00,000	49	49.00

Extension contact

Majority of the respondents (80%) had regular contact with opinion leader/local leader and 20 % of them had seldom contact with opinion leader/local leader. With respect to contact with extension worker, 59% of the respondents were in regular contact, while 33% of the respondents were in seldom contact and 8% of the respondents were found unaware. With respect to contact with NGO, 41% of the respondents were in regular contact, majority (59%) of the respondents were in seldom

contact and none of the respondents was found unaware. With respect to contact with ADOs, 35% of the respondents were in regular contact, majority (65%) of the respondents were in seldom contact and none of the respondent was found unaware (Table 7). The high percentage of respondents was regularly in contact with opinion leader/local leader which may be due to regularly repaying of loan in time and most of the SHG members increased in mobility and they relied on them.

TABLE 7: Distribution of respondents according to their extension contacts (N= 100)

Sr. No.	Extension Officials	Frequency of contact			Total weighted score	Weighted mean score	Rank
		Regular	Seldom	Never			
1	Opinion leader/local leader	80	20	0	280	2.80	I
2	Extension worker for village	59	33	08	251	2.51	II
3	NGO staff	41	59	0	241	2.41	III
4	Agricultural Development Officer	35	65	0	235	2.35	IV
5	DRDA/MDA	13	87	0	213	2.13	V
6	Private finance officer	12	88	0	212	2.12	VI

Source of information seeking behavior of the respondents

The weighted mean score of respondents in gained information from television was found to be (2.78), fairs and exhibitions (2.74), opinion leader/local leader category (2.73), neighbour category (2.68), friends/relatives category (2.66), and it may be due to reliability,

trustworthiness and familiarity with them, newspaper category (2.27), internet/ kisan seva kendra (2.11) followed by radio which was found to be (2.02), whereas a few number of respondents obtained information from radio (Table 8). Reason behind it may be that advance technology had come up and people had more interest in various advance mass media.

TABLE 8: Information seeking behavior of the respondents

(N= 100)

Sr. No.	Sources	Mass Media Exposure			Total score	weighted	Weighted mean score	Rank
		Regular	Seldom	Never				
1	Television	78	22	0	278		2.78	I
2	Fairs and exhibitions	74	26	0	274		2.74	II
3	Opinion leader/local leader	73	27	0	273		2.73	III
4	Neighbours	68	32	0	268		2.68	IV
5	Friends/relatives	66	34	0	266		2.66	V
6	Newspaper	27	73	0	227		2.27	VI
7	Internet/Kisan Seva Kendra	11	89	0	211		2.11	VII
8	Radio	02	98	0	202		2.02	VIII

Membership of the organization

The data revealed that after joining SHGs, it was found that majority of the respondents (80%) had no membership of any organization and 20% of the respondents had membership of the one organization (Table 9) like

panchayat member, mahilamandal and member of cooperative society in the villages. None of the respondents had membership of two or more than two organizations.

TABLE 9: Membership of the organization

(N= 100)

Sr. No.	Membership of organization	Frequency	Percentage(s)
1	Membership of one organization	20	20.00
2	Membership of two organization	0	0
3	Membership of more than two organization	0	0
4	No membership	80	80.00

Participation in social activities

The data revealed that after joining SHGs, it was found that majority of the respondents (53%) did not participate in social activities and about 47% of the respondents participated in social activities (Table 10). The SHG made a way to increase self-confidence, self reliance increase mobility. So, the SHG members increased and participation in different social activities. Sharma and Verma (2008) mentioned that SHGs were successful in

empowering rural women through entrepreneurial activities. It can influence increase in income, expenditure and saving habits of rural women. The SHGs had major impact on social and economic life of rural women. They reported an increase in self-confidence, self-reliance, decision making ability and independence of rural women due to the involvement in the entrepreneurial and other activities of SHGs.

TABLE 10: Participation of the respondents in social activities

(N= 100)

Sr. No.	Participated in any social activity	Frequency	Percentage(s)
1	Yes	47	47.00
2	No	53	53.00

Risk orientation of the respondents

The weighted mean score of respondents in 'regular habit of saving' was found to be 3.00 followed by 'I don't try my level best to maximize profit' (2.40), 'I never calculate

pros and cons' (2.12), 'I take up new activity from it' (1.76) and 'producing product without any awareness of the market demand' was found to be 1.65 (Table 11).

TABLE 11: Risk orientation of the respondents

(N= 100)

Sr. No.	Statements	Risk Orientation			Total weighted score	Weighted mean score	Rank
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided			
1	Regular habit of saving	100	0	0	300	3.00	I
2	I don't try my level best to maximize profit	40	60	0	240	2.40	II
3	I never calculate pros and cons	32	48	20	212	2.12	III
4	I take up new activity from it	16	44	40	176	1.76	IV
5	Producing product without any aware the market demand	5	55	40	165	1.65	V

Activities performed by different self-help groups

The members of different groups performed different activities like dairy production, poultry farming, fisheries, pickle making and candle making. The 26 %members

were involved in dairy production, 16 %in poultry farming, 22 %in fisheries, 18 %in pickle making and 18 %were involved in candle making (Table 12).

TABLE 12: Distribution of respondents according to their major activities (N= 100)

Sr. No.	Activities	Frequency	Percentage (s)
1	Dairy production	26	26.00
2	Poultry farming	16	16.00
3	Fisheries	22	22.00
4	Pickle making	18	18.00
5	Candle making	18	18.00

Socio-economic profile of the SHG promoting entrepreneurship

From the data of the self-help groups promoting entrepreneurship of the respondents, 75% were as members of the self-help groups and 25% as leaders of self-help groups (Table 13). 81 % were formed through the

self- effort of the members, while 19% were formed through NGO motivation. Also membership pattern of cent per cent self-help groups did not change. Self-help groups were indulged in the activities like providing skills (72 %) and helping needy people (28 %).

TABLE 13: Socio-economic profile of the Self-help group promoting entrepreneurship (N= 100)

Sr. No.	Variable(s)	Category	Frequency	Percentage (s)
1	Formation of SHG through	Self-effort of the members	81	81.00
		NGO motivation	19	19.00
		Govt. agency support	0	0
2	Members of SHG	5-10	100	100.00
		11-15	0	0
3	Membership pattern change	No	100	100.00
4	Social activities of SHG	Providing skills	72	72.00
		Calibration of national/international days	0	0
5	Position held by you in the SHG	Helping needy people	28	28.00
		Leader/Pardhan	25	25.00
		Member	75	75.00

Distribution of the respondents in different dimensions of performance

The weighted mean score of the respondents carrying out income generating activities was (2.69), taking loans from

the self-help group category (2.68), participating in group meeting category (2.35) and regular in returning loan in time was 2.20 (Table 4.14).

TABLE 14: Distribution of respondents in different dimensions of performance (N= 100)

Sr. No.	Statements	Performance			Total score	Weighted mean score	Rank
		Regular	Seldom	Never			
1	Carrying out income generating activities with the support of SHG	69	31	0	269	2.69	I
2	Taking loans from SHG	80	08	12	268	2.68	II
3	Participating in group meeting	52	31	17	235	2.35	III
4	Returning of loan in time	20	80	0	220	2.20	IV

CONCLUSION

The study revealed that the mean age of the respondents was found to be 40 years and majority of the respondents belonged to middle age group. In the district, immensely 91 % of the SHG members were literate and majority of the respondents were married. While the average annual family income of the respondents was found to be Rs.1,82,550 and most of them belonged to the high annual family income. The government should focus on providing higher education facilities and organize awareness programmes regarding child marriages and other social issues dominating in the area.

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