

Triple Role of Women in SHGs

Dr. R. Vasanthi

Assistant Professor of Sociology, Pasumpon Muthuramalinga Thevar College, Usilampatti- 625532,
Madurai District, South Tamilnadu.

ABSTRACT

Self Help Groups (SHGs) have emerged as a powerful mechanism for empowering women, particularly in rural areas. SHGs have significantly impacted women's socio-economic status. However, women face various challenges within and outside the SHG framework. These challenges include social obligations, taboos, and bureaucratic interventions. Additionally, marketability of their products and access to microfinance remain areas of concern. The study identifies triple role of women in SHGs. The study aims to analyze the impact of SHGs on women empowerment.

Keywords: SHGs, Women Empowerment

Introduction

Historically, women's issues were often treated as matters of social welfare rather than integral to development. However, recognizing the importance of women's participation and empowerment, policymakers and academics began exploring ways to link development programs with poor women. The concept of women's empowerment gained prominence, emphasizing their active involvement in social, political, and economic spheres.

Self-Help Groups (SHGs)

SHGs are community-based organizations comprising women who come together voluntarily to address common issues. These groups aim to empower women by fostering collective decision-making, skill development, and resource mobilization. SHGs operate at the grassroots level, promoting bottom-up approaches to development.

Triple Role of Women in SHGs

Economic Role

- SHGs encourage women to engage in economic activities, leading to skill development and resource accumulation.
- By enhancing the productive capacity of poor women, SHGs contribute to overall economic growth.
- Increased per capita output, savings, and investment are key outcomes.

Social Role

- SHGs create a space for women to interact, share experiences, and build social networks.
- They challenge traditional gender norms and empower women to voice their concerns.
- Social mobilization within SHGs fosters solidarity and collective action.

Political Role

- SHGs promote political awareness and participation among women.

- Women learn about their rights, entitlements, and civic responsibilities.
- As active participants, they engage in local governance and decision-making processes.

Impact of SHGs on Women's Empowerment

Economic Empowerment

- SHGs provide access to microcredit, enabling women to start income-generating activities.
- Economic independence enhances their bargaining power within households.
- Women gain confidence and financial literacy.

Social Empowerment

- SHGs challenge patriarchal norms by empowering women to question inequality.
- Collective action leads to improved access to education, health, and sanitation.
- Women become change agents within their communities.

Political Empowerment

- SHGs encourage women to participate in local governance and decision-making bodies.
- They learn negotiation skills, assert their rights, and advocate for gender-sensitive policies.
- Women's voices are amplified through SHGs.

Conclusion

SHGs play a crucial role in empowering women by addressing their economic, social, and political needs. These grassroots organizations contribute to sustainable development and gender equality. Recognizing the triple role of women in SHGs is essential for creating an inclusive and equitable society.

References

1. Anand, J. S. (2002). Self-Help Groups in Empowering Women: Case study of selected SHGs and NHGs. Kerala Research Programme on Local Level Development
2. Sreeramulu, G. (2006). Empowerment of Women Through Self Help Groups. Gyan Books
3. Kabeer, N. (2005). Inclusive Citizenship: Meanings and Expressions. Zed Books.
4. Bhatt, E. (2010). Women's Empowerment and Self-Help Groups in India. Sage Publications.