

# Women Empowerment through Self Help Groups

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## ABSTRACT

*Empowerment can be viewed as a means of creating an environment in which one can take decisions and make choice either individually or collectively. It is the state of feelings of self-empowered to take control of one's own destiny. It includes control over both resources as well as over ideology. Women empowerment is a process in which women challenge the existing norms and culture, to effectively promote their well being. Self Help Groups which have emerged as the most vital instrument has made a significant impact in the process of participatory development and women empowerment both in social and economical aspects. Self Help Groups (SHGs) are progressively becoming a key method for arranging*

*women to make a move and change their condition. It is also seen that the empowerment of women through Self Help Groups would lead benefits not only to the individual women, but also for the family and community as a whole through collective action for development. The present study "Women Empowerment through Self Help Groups" was conducted to study the growth and development of women in society through SHG and analyze their standard of living. The study was conducted in few areas of West Tripura District.*

**KEY WORDS:** Empowerment, Women Empowerment, Self Help Groups, Participatory Development.

## INTRODUCTION

'Education' term is a very common and popular word that is uttered by many of us

but understood by a very few in its perspective. It is in one way or the other appears to be as old as a human race, through the course of time. Education is the process of facilitating, learning or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and habits. Women education is all form of education that aims at improving the knowledge, and the skill of women and girls which includes general education at the school and colleges, vocational and technical education, professional education etc. Women education encompasses both literacy and non literacy education. Educated women are capable of bringing social-economic changes. It is rightly said by *G.D. Anderson* that "Feminism isn't about making women strong. Women are already strong. It's about changing the way the world perceives that strength."

In India, majority women, especially in the rural areas, depend upon men for their livelihood and continue to be voiceless section, though economic value is not

attached to women's role. In bringing up the family, Women's contribution is most significant. Real empowerment of women would happen only by adding more value on their contribution to the family as well as the society. Women therefore are powerful part of social and economic setup of the country. Women empowerment could be studied in terms of their influence over economic resources of the family, participation in the household decision making in money matters and on the decisions pertaining to general welfare of the householders. Women empowerment also depends on self development which could be realized through the growth of personality in terms of ability of rural women to influence and participate in the decision making. Even now many Indians belong to below poverty line and their standard of living can be improved through the Self Help Groups Activities. Hence as of today, the role of Self Help Groups in the context of improving women

empowerment has become a vital one. Women empowerment through self help group constitutes an emerging and fast growing trend towards social and economic development of the nation. Self Help Groups are progressively becoming a key method for arranging women to make a move and change their condition. The quality of Self Help Groups is based upon the way that the individuals who are facing issues are likely to be the most dedicated to illuminate them. Self-help groups are at present playing a vital role in empowering women in all respects.

Self Help Groups is one of the buzz word in the present day which reflects innovative and much needed schemes to accelerate the women self employment and women empowerment. It has become the wise tool to improve the social and economic development. In order to study the growth and development of women in society through SHG and analyze their

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

standard of living the present study “Women Empowerment through Self Help Groups” was conducted. The study was conducted in both rural and urban areas of West Tripura District.

## **OBJECTIVES**

- To compare the educational status of women under SHG in rural and urban area.
- To analyze the working women under SHG in rural and urban area.
- To compare trained women in rural and urban area.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Descriptive survey method was opted for the study covering both urban and rural areas from Amtali, A.D. Nagar, Shabrum, Boroia and Kamalghat of West Tripura district.

## **TOOL**

The survey is done with the help of self prepared questionnaire consisting of 28 questions.

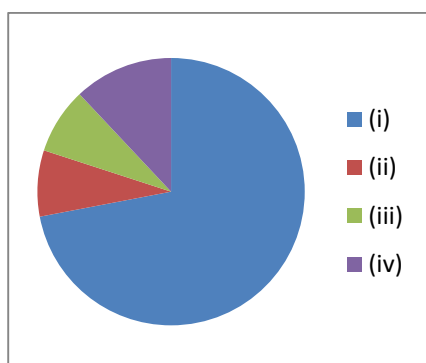
## Educational status of women under SHG in urban and rural areas

Table 1: Comparison of educational status of women in rural and urban areas

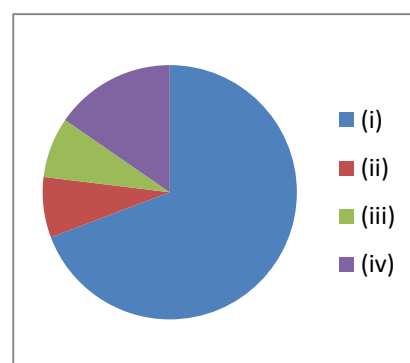
Locality	Uneducated Women	Unable to complete Secondary Education	Completed Secondary Education	Graduates
Rural	2	18	3	2
Urban	1	9	2	1

In order to compare educational status of women in rural and urban areas survey is done on 38 women engaged to SHG. There were 25 women belonging to rural area and 13 women in urban area under SHG. It is found from the above table 1 that 8% of women have no education, 72% of women

went to school but could not complete their secondary education and 8% of women were graduated. Whereas in urban area 7.6% of women are not educated, 70% of women could not complete their secondary education and 7.6% of women are graduated.



Educational status in rural area



Educational status in urban area

## Trained women under SHG in rural and urban areas

Table 2: Working women under SHG in rural and urban area

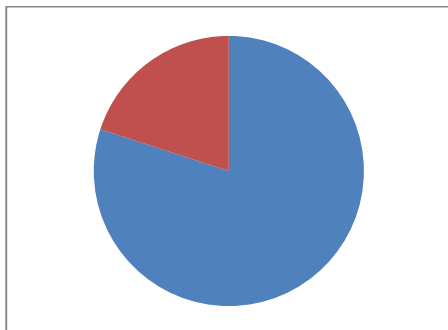
Locality	Women who work	Women who do not work
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Rural	20	5
Urban	3	10

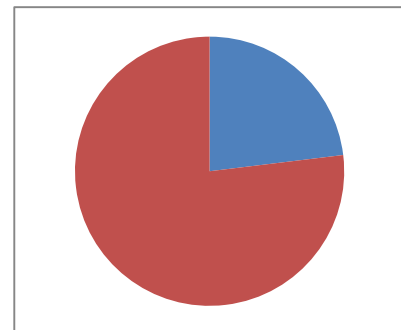
It is seen from table 2 that only 80% of the women engaged with SHG do work as rubber plantation, fish cultivation, jute craft, poultry farm, Handloom and keeping livestock. Whereas in urban areas, 23% of women under SHG work as making bamboo and crane crafts, packing of thermo coal and

tailoring. Rest of the women engaged with SHG provide loan to needy people at low interest.

So, this shows that women in rural area under SHG do much more work and are very active compared to the women in urban area under SHG.



Working women in Rural area



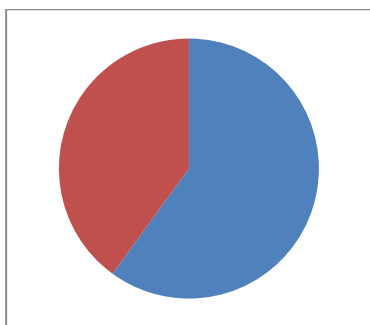
Working women in Urban area

### **Trained women under SHG in rural and urban areas**

Comparison of trained women in rural and urban area

Locality	Trained Women	Untrained Women
Rural	15	10
Urban	2	11

In the rural area, 60% of women are trained i.e. they have received training from government whereas in urban area only 15% of women are trained. It is evident that women from rural area are



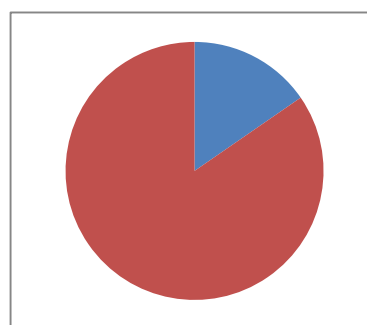
Status of Trained women in rural area

## FINDINGS

It is found from the study that there are less number of graduates with around 8%, and majority number of women with minimum education who were around 72%. It is also seen that women from rural area are much more engaged with SHG, do work and are serious towards their work when compared to that of urban area. So, this shows that women in rural area are very active compared to the women in urban area under SHG. Moreover 60% of women from rural area are trained i.e. they

serious towards their work when compared to that of urban area.

Above Data Analysis has been shown graphically using pie diagram in the page 9-10.



Status of Trained women in urban area

have received training from government whereas in urban area only 15% of women are trained. However the complete survey reflected the financial support through SHG, and helped the women to boost their self confidence. Finally SHG has been very fruitful to the women.

## SUGGESTIONS

It is found that women engaged to SHG in urban area are not showing interest in doing work.

As a result government also do not provide any training to the urban women. It is

found that a lady named Jyoti Shutrathar belonging to the group in urban area since 2005, is expert in making bamboo and cane crafts, and has got training from the government. Now she is very eager to teach techniques to other women of her group, but other women are not eager to learn. She instead visits rural area including tribal area to provide training to those women under SHG in rural area. It would be right to suggest that, women either it be rural area or urban area should actively participate in the Self Help Group. Government has given a golden opportunity for empowerment of women. Women must avail it as much as possible.

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