

Study on Impact of NGO Interventions on the Empowerment of Women

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Abstract:

Non-governmental organizations are playing a significant role in the empowerment of disadvantaged women, helping them stand on their own through such program as socio-economic program, vocational training and other similar programs. It is believed that providing programs to women has a multiplier effect. Thus this study is an attempt to study the impact of NGO interventions on the empowerment of women. The findings of the study show that NGOs were able to create a significant impact on the empowerment and development of the women beneficiaries. The study also concludes that the demographic variables age, education, monthly income and years of affiliation influences the level of empowerment of the respondents.

Keywords: Women, Empowerment, NGO (Non Governmental Organization), Empowerment, Vocational Training.

1. INTRODUCTION

Women play an important role in the family and society, but in all essential areas of life women are generally at a significant disadvantage as compared with men, whether in terms of education, income, partner choice, inheritance laws, property rights, decision-making processes, community organization, or access to leadership positions in education, business, or politics. The need for empowerment of women thus arises from this harsh social scenario. Women and their problems are being given much importance in our social milieu. Women have attained a great deal in the past few years but these are still areas of discrimination which exists. Work with and for women in the interest of “women’s empowerment” will continue to be one of the main tasks of for a long time to come. Non-governmental organizations are playing a significant role in the

empowerment of disadvantages women, helping them stand on their own through such program s as socio-economic program, vocational training and other similar programs. NGO’s intervene the needs of the women, contribute to their socio-economic empowerment, health awareness and general sensitization such as education, employment etc., and their role ranges from fulfilling the basic necessity of women to empowering them and lead to the development of their families. Literatures suggest that NGO interventions positively contribute to women empowerment (Ahsan Ullah, 2003).

It is believed that providing programs to women has a multiplier effect. It has a positive impact on the women and their households, as their living conditions - such as access to housing, sanitary facilities, health services, education and nutritional food - improve. Furthermore, it is claimed that NGOs not only means access to money for women borrowers, but also creates opportunities to achieve economic and political empowerment within their homes and their communities. It is worth examining the impact of NGO’s intervention for the development of women and the possibility of differentials with respect to certain socio-economic variables of beneficiary women in the areas under study.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- Anjugam (2007) that socially backward, landless and marginal farm house holds participate more in the self help group program. Possession of livestock and consumer goods by the member households has been found to deter the joining of group.
- Beck, Asli Demirguc-Kunt and Soledad Martinez (2005) Microfinance offers “hope to many poor people of improving their own situations through their own efforts”. This allows people to actively improve

their own lives, in contrast to some development activities that use a more top-down approach.

- Haider and Aktar, (1999) NGO interventions positively contribute to women empowerment. NGOs central goal is empowering the powerless women folk or helping them to bloom their hidden potentialities that is power of thought, power of word, and power of organization, with a view to helping them to participate in the socio economic development for their emancipation from less human condition to more human condition.
- Hashemi, (1996), studied on Bangladesh, the indicators of empowerment are empowerment in household and community spheres by taking the independent variable as microcredit participation and women contribution to household. Their findings are microcredit empowers women by giving them greater economic value to their life.
- Helvetas Nepal (2009) the mushrooming trend of NGOs is facing criticism from the people accusing them for not maintaining transparency, ineffective Programs and their long term impact, and nepotism and favoritism. It is claimed that women in Nepal still largely face social, economic, political and physical discrimination, exploitation and marginalization. So, it becomes pertinent to ask in general, whether various Programs run by these NGOs really empower women in Nepal.
- Jejeebhoy, (2000), have made a study on India in three dimensions like, role of economic decision making, role of child related decision making and the freedom from threat. The independent variables used were, religion, education, participation in waged work, dowry size, marriage endogamy, spouse age difference and household economic status. He found out that some dimensions of empowerment are more closely related than others.
- Mridula (1998) reported that women's education leads to reduction in family size, greater attention by mothers towards health, education and character building of their children, greater participation of women in labor market and greater per capita income and better quality of human capital. An educated woman is more likely to share in family decisions about how many children to have, how to bring them up and how to care her own and her family health.

- Niranter's (2007) raises the issue that the fact that micro-credit is focused almost exclusively on women highlights that women are targeted because they are the best re-payers of loans and are thus viewed as the most efficient means of making an impact on families and households. The needs of women are therefore not the central concern of micro-credit. By targeting women, it is the institutions, the family, and the economy that benefit from the poor women's own savings and resources.
- Saradha (2001) reported that half of the women were not clear about the importance of social-political participation of rural women. Further, 45.8 per cent women expressed that rural women were not having equal access to different sources of information as men and along with men.
- Snehalatha (1994) in her study on the impact of thrift and credit groups in improving the status of rural women observed that, lack of co-operation among group members mismanagement of accounts and difficulties in repaying credit within stipulated time were the major problems of the rural women.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the present investigation are:

1. To study the demographic profile of the respondents.
2. To access the level of empowerment among the respondents.
3. To access the level of empowerment before and after joining the NGOs.
4. To study the relationships between demographic variables and level of empowerment of the respondents.

4. HYPOTHESIS

H1: There is no significant relationship between age and level of empowerment of the respondents.

H2: There is no significant difference in the level of empowerment and educational qualification of the respondents.

H3: There is no significant relationship between years of affiliation and level of empowerment of the respondents

H4: There is no significant relationship between monthly income and level of empowerment of the respondents

H5: There is no significant difference in the level of empowerment of the respondents before and after joining the NGOs.

5. METHODOLOGY

Descriptive research design is adopted for the present study. The universe of the present study is the women beneficiaries of the selected NGOs in Chennai, India. Out of the total NGOs in Chennai three NGOs were selected for the study. The women beneficiaries of the selected six NGOs serve as the universe of the present study. A purposive sample selection /sampling technique was employed for the selection of the unit of analysis –women beneficiaries during the survey. The researcher used interview schedule as a tool for collecting data. The interview schedule consisted of four sections.

1. Demographic profile, and
2. Women empowerment scale.

The scoring has been obtained on a five-point scale, the range of which is 22 to 110. Higher score indicates greater empowerment. The researcher adopted Split-half reliability test for finding the reliability of the scale. The items on the scale are divided into two halves and the resulting half scores were correlated in reliability analysis by means of SPSS. The correlation value obtained was 0.75. The data were analyzed using various statistical tools like mean, standard deviation, independent t-test, paired t-test, coefficient of correlation and ANOVA.

6. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Less than one-third of the respondents (30 percent) belong to the age group between 36-40 years and more than three-fifth of the respondents (64.3 percent) was married. More than half of the respondents (51.4 percent) were residing in urban and more than one –fourth of the respondents (64.3 percent) were residing in semi urban. Nearly than three-fourth of the respondents (74.3 percent) was residing in nuclear family and less than half of the respondents (42.7 percent) were illiterates and one-fifth of the respondents (20.7 percent) were primarily educated. More than one-third of the respondents (34 percent) were technicians and more than one-fifth of them (20 percent) were self employed. Less than half of the respondents (42 percent) were earning an income below Rs. 2500, more than one-third of the respondents (37.3 percent) were earning an income between Rs. 25015000. Most of the respondents (94.3 percent) had the habit of savings and only few 5.7 percent of them did not have any savings.

7. LEVEL OF EMPOWERMENT

Social Empowerment:

The mean level of social empowerment of the respondents was 54.52. It is concluded that a moderate level of social empowerment was found among the respondents.

Economic Empowerment:

The mean level of economic empowerment of the respondents was 43.600. It is concluded that a moderate level of economic empowerment was found among the respondents.

Cultural Empowerment:

The mean level of cultural empowerment of the respondents was 25.093. It is concluded that a moderate level of cultural empowerment was found among the respondents.

Psychological Empowerment:

The mean level of psychological empowerment among the respondents was 21.073. It is concluded that a moderate level of psychological empowerment was found among the respondents.

Political Empowerment:

The mean level of political empowerment among the respondents was 7.480. It is concluded that a low level of political empowerment was found among the respondents. .

8. LEVEL OF EMPOWERMENT BEFORE AND AFTER JOINING NGO

Social Empowerment:

The t-value ($t=17.56$) shows that there is a significant difference in the level of social empowerment before and after joining the NGO among the respondents at 0.05 level. It is clear that the NGOs were able to have an impact on the social empowerment of the women.

Economic Empowerment:

The t-value ($t=19.75$) shows that there is a significant difference in the level of economic empowerment before and after joining the NGO. It is clear that the NGOs in both Addis Ababa and Chennai were able to empower their beneficiaries on the economic aspects.

Cultural Empowerment:

The t-value ($t=20.51$) shows that there is a significant difference in the level of cultural empowerment before and after joining the NGO. It is clear that the NGOs have empowered the women beneficiaries culturally.

Psychological Empowerment:

The t-value ($t=9.06$) shows that there is a significant difference in the level of psychological empowerment before and after joining the NGO. It is concluded that the NGOs intervention had a significant impact on the psychological empowerment of the beneficiaries.

Political Empowerment:

The t-value ($t=8.27$) shows that there is a significant difference in the level of political empowerment before and after joining the NGO. It is concluded that the NGOs intervention had a significant impact on the political empowerment of the beneficiaries.

Difference in the Level of Overall Empowerment Before and After Joining NGO.

Before and After Mean difference

T value Result Overall Empowerment 130.610
151.773 21.163 32.77 $P<0.05$ Significant

The t-test ($t=32.77$) shows that there is a significant difference in the level of overall empowerment before and after joining NGO among the respondents. From this it is clear that the NGOs interventions had a significant impact on the empowerment and development of the women beneficiaries.

9. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DEMOGRAPHIC AND LEVEL OF EMPOWERMENT

The coefficient of correlation value ($r=-0.443$) shows that there is a significant inverse relationship between age of the respondents and their level of empowerment at 0.01 level. It is interpreted that higher the age, lower is the level of empowerment. It is concluded that the age of the respondents influences the level of their empowerment.

The ANOVA value ($F=40.04$) shows that there is a significant difference in the level of empowerment of the respondents with respect to the marital status of the respondents at 0.01 level. The mean value shows that unmarried respondents had a better empowerment follow by divorce, separated, married and widow.

The ANOVA value ($F=7.032$) shows that there is a significant difference in the level of empowerment among the respondents of urban, rural and semi urban at 0.01 level. The mean values shows that rural respondents had better empowerment follow by semi urban and urban. The t-test value ($t=11.69$) shows that there is a significant difference in the level of empowerment between the respondents belonging to nuclear family and joint family at 0.01 level. The mean value shows that nuclear family respondents had better empowerment compared to joint family respondents.

The ANOVA value ($F=36.25$) shows that there is a significant difference in the level of empowerment among the different level of education of the respondents at 0.01 level. The mean value shows that

diploma holders had better empowerment follow by secondary, higher secondary, primary and illiterate.

The ANOVA value ($F=4.477$) shows that there is a significant difference in the level of empowerment among the different occupation of the respondents at 0.01 level. The mean value shows that self employed had better empowerment follow by technicians, administrators, professionals, and employees.

The coefficient of correlation value ($r=0.279$) shows that there is a significant relationship between the monthly income of the respondents and level of empowerment of the respondents at 0.01 level. It is interpreted that higher the monthly income, higher is the level of empowerment.

10. HYPOTHESIS FINDINGS

The findings related to the hypothesis shows that out of the 5 null hypotheses framed, the entire five hypotheses were rejected. The findings of the hypothesis show that there is a significant relationship between age, monthly income, years of affiliation and level of empowerment. There is a significant difference in the level of empowerment with respect to level of education.

11. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that a moderate level of empowerment was found among the respondents and there was significant difference in the level of empowerment of the respondents before and after joining NGO. The NGOs were able to create a significant impact on the empowerment and development of the women beneficiaries. The study also concludes that the demographic variables age, education, monthly income and years of affiliation influences the level of empowerment of the respondents.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the study results and discussion, the following recommendations were derived to the NGOs to help improve the performance of women beneficiaries:

1. NGOs should increase the amount of credit facilities available to women entrepreneurs so that women can access credit ranging according to their needs and requirements.
2. Training as an intervention on its own, should be extended through appropriate strategies so as to reach and benefit as many as 100% of the women entrepreneurs.

3. The NGOs have to more focus on the political empowerment of women, as the study found that political empowerment in both the selected areas were found to be low.
4. Even though women had undergone training, majority of respondents were lacking regular, proper and need based training which concentrate on utilizing local resources and local market. Hence, training programs should be organized by district rural development agencies, commercial banks and NGOs keeping in view the above mentioned factors.
5. Since women-owned businesses have become increasingly important to economic growth and employment more proactive, targeted policies are needed for women, where women have been identified as a target group for specific policy measures.
6. Besides governments effort NGO's should provide financial assistance to the families those who below the poverty line to grant household industries.
7. Finally, it is essential to say that women's labor remains disregarded areas, even if some efforts have been made recently. So that a great deal of research needs to be done in detail to provide necessary information to determine the factors influencing women's labour supply decisions in the area.

13. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE LINE OF WORK

1. A comparative analysis of the empowerment of women those involved in NGO activity with women not involved in NGO activity may be conducted.
2. A comprehensive study on impact of NGO activity on socio-economic aspects of the families of the women members can be taken up.

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