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Profile and group dynamics effectiveness of women SHG members in Nagpur district of Maharashtra

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Abstract

Self-help groups (SHGs) provide an important platform for women to work collectively, improve their livelihoods and strengthen their socio-economic position. The effectiveness of SHGs largely depends on the quality of interaction, cooperation and collective functioning among their members. The present study was undertaken to assess the group dynamics effectiveness of women SHG members and to examine the influence of selected socio-economic, social, communication and psychological characteristics on their group dynamics effectiveness in Nagpur district of Maharashtra. An exploratory research design was adopted for the study, and 120 SHG members were selected from Hingna, Kamptee and Kalmeshwar talukas. Data were collected through a structured interview schedule and analysed using frequency, percentage, correlation and multiple regression analysis. The findings revealed that the majority of respondents were middle-aged, had secondary-level education, belonged to the small landholding category and had medium levels of source of information, social participation, extension participation, economic motivation and achievement motivation. Most respondents exhibited a medium favourable attitude towards SHGs, collectivism and group decision-making. Overall, 73.33 per cent of the respondents exhibited high to very high levels of group dynamics effectiveness, the findings suggest that continued efforts to enhance participation, extension linkages, collective decision-making and cooperative functioning may further improve the effectiveness and sustainability of women's self-help groups.

Keywords: Self Help Groups (SHGs), Group Dynamics Effectiveness, SHG members

1. Introduction

Self Help Groups (SHGs) are small, informal associations generally consisting of 10-20 members from similar socio-economic backgrounds. These groups are formed voluntarily to encourage regular savings, mobilize financial resources, and support the economic and social development of their members through collective efforts (NABARD, 2018). SHGs are also viewed as voluntary organizations of individuals sharing common social backgrounds, traditions, caste, or occupations, who unite to achieve shared objectives and improve their overall livelihood (Kumar, 2011) [8].

Group dynamics refers to the interactions and relationships among individuals within a group and the forces that influence these interactions (Lewin, 1936) [9]. It encompasses the internal functioning of a group, including its formation, structure, processes, functioning, and influence on individual members, other groups, and organizations (Lewin *et al.*, 1960) [10]. Despite its importance, the dynamics of self-help groups (SHGs) have received comparatively limited attention. Therefore, it is important to examine the functioning and dynamics of SHGs to understand whether their formation represents only a temporary trend or whether they can sustain their activities and effectiveness over the long term.

Various socio-economic, communication and psychological characteristics of SHG members may influence the effectiveness of group dynamics. In the present study, variables such as age, education, annual income, marital status, farm size, source of information, social participation, extension participation, economic motivation, achievement motivation, attitude towards SHG, attitude towards collectivism and attitude towards group decision-making were considered as independent variables.

These characteristics were examined to understand their relationship with the overall group dynamics effectiveness of SHG members.

The study of group dynamics provides an understanding of the internal functioning of a group and the forces that influence its effectiveness. These interrelated factors play an important role in shaping the functioning and performance of members within self-help groups. Therefore, examining group dynamics is essential for understanding the effectiveness and sustainability of women's self-help groups. In view of this, the present study was undertaken to assess the group dynamics effectiveness of women self-help groups and to identify the socio-economic, communicational and psychological variables associated with and contributing to their overall group dynamics effectiveness in Nagpur district of Maharashtra.

2. Methodology

3. Results and Discussion

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to profile of SHG members

Profile characteristics	Categories	respondents (n = 120)	
		Frequency	Percentage
Socio-economic Variables			
Age	Young (Up to 35 years)	35	29.17
	Middle (36 - 50 years)	62	51.67
	Old (above 50 years)	23	19.16
Education	Illiterate	00	00.00
	Primary school	10	08.33
	Middle school	10	08.33
	Secondary school	59	49.17
	Higher Secondary School	28	23.33
	College/ Graduation	13	10.84
Annual income	Up to 2,00,000	46	38.33
	2,00,001 to 4,00,000	62	51.67
	Above 4,00,000	12	10.00
Marital status	Married	99	82.50
	Unmarried	07	05.83
	Divorced	00	00.00
	Widow	14	11.67
Farm size	Marginal (Up to 1.00)	28	23.33
	Small (1.01 - 2.00)	63	52.50
	Semi - medium (2.01 - 4.00)	20	16.67
	Medium (4.01 - 10.00)	09	07.50
	Large (Above 10.00)	00	00.00
Sources of information	Low	28	23.33
	Medium	71	59.17
	High	21	17.50
Communication variables			
Social participation	Low	12	10.00
	Medium	88	73.33
	High	20	16.67
Extension participation	Low	27	22.50
	Medium	73	60.83
	High	20	16.67
Psychological variables			
Economic motivation	Low	14	11.67
	Medium	76	63.33
	High	30	25.00
Achievement motivation	Low	20	16.66
	Medium	74	61.67
	High	26	21.67
Attitude towards SHG	Un-favourable attitude	00	00.00
	Less favourable attitude	17	14.17
	Medium favourable attitude	78	65.00
	High favourable attitude	25	20.83
Attitude towards collectivism	Un-favourable attitude	00	00.00
	Less favourable attitude	19	15.83
	Medium favourable attitude	76	63.34
	High favourable attitude	25	20.83
Attitude towards group decision making	Un-favourable attitude	00	00.00
	Less favourable attitude	19	15.83
	Medium favourable attitude	78	65.00
	High favourable attitude	23	19.17

The SHG members were distributed into different categories based on their selected profile characteristics and the results was presented in the Table 1.

Age: More than half of the SHG members (51.66%) belonged to the middle-age group, followed by young (29.17%) and old-age (19.17%) groups. This may be because middle-aged women generally possess greater social experience, family responsibilities and awareness of group activities, which may encourage their participation in self-help groups. This finding is supported by Varun Raj (2023) ^[18] and Dorisa (2023).

Education: Nearly half of the SHG members (49.17%) had secondary-level education, followed by higher secondary (23.33%), graduate and above (10.84%), middle (8.33%) and primary (8.33%) levels. This may be attributed to limited access to higher educational facilities, financial constraints and early family responsibilities, which may have restricted women's education beyond the secondary level. This finding is supported by Patil (2019) ^[15] and Dorisa (2023).

Annual income: More than half of the SHG members (51.67%) had an annual income of Rs. 2,00,001 to Rs. 4,00,000. This may be because most members depend on small-scale farming and supplementary income-generating activities, which provide moderate household income. This finding is supported by Varun Raj (2023) ^[18].

Marital status: A large majority of the SHG members (82.50%) were married, followed by widows (11.67%) and unmarried members (5.83%), while none were divorced. This may be because married women constitute a major proportion of the adult female population and actively participate in SHGs to support their families and improve household economic well-being. This finding is supported by Rawat (2014) ^[17], Nimisha and Arumugam (2019) ^[14] and Dorisa (2023).

Farm size: More than half of the SHG members (52.50%) belonged to the small landholding category, followed by marginal (23.33%), semi-medium (16.67%) and medium (7.50%) categories. This may be because landholdings in the study area are generally fragmented and limited, with most households depending on small-scale farming and allied activities for their livelihood. This finding is supported with Bariya (2016) ^[3] and Patil (2019) ^[15].

Sources of information: More than half of the SHG members (59.13%) had a medium level of source of information, followed by low (23.33%) and high (17.50%) levels. This may be because members have moderate access to information through fellow SHG members, extension personnel, mobile phones and mass media, but their exposure to diverse and regular information sources may be limited. This finding is supported by Manasa (2016) ^[11] and Nair *et al.* (2021) ^[13].

Social participation: A large majority of the SHG members (73.33%) had a medium level of social participation, followed by high (16.67%) and low (10.00%) levels. This may be because SHG membership provides women with regular opportunities to interact with other

members, participate in group activities and engage in community programmes, resulting in moderate social involvement. This finding is supported with Arunkumar (2015) ^[1] and Dorisa (2023).

Extension participation: More than half of the respondents (60.83%) had a medium level of extension participation, followed by low (22.50%) and high (16.67%) levels. This may be because SHG members have moderate opportunities to interact with extension personnel and participate in training programmes, demonstrations and other extension activities related to their livelihood. This finding is supported with Bariya (2016) ^[3] and Dorisa (2023).

Economic motivation: Nearly two-thirds of the respondents (63.33%) had a medium level of economic motivation, followed by high (25.00%) and low (11.67%) levels. This may be because most members join SHGs with the objective of improving household income and livelihood opportunities, while their economic aspirations are influenced by their existing resources and family responsibilities. This finding is supported by Bhatt (2010) and ^[2] Dorisa (2023).

Achievement motivation: Nearly two-thirds of the respondents (61.67%) had a medium level of achievement motivation, followed by high (21.67%) and low (16.66%) levels. This may be because SHG members have a moderate desire to achieve better economic and social outcomes, while their motivation is influenced by their available resources, experience and opportunities. This finding is supported with Bariya (2016) ^[3] and Goswamy *et al.* (2023) ^[9].

Attitude towards SHG: Nearly two-thirds of the respondents (65.00%) had a medium favourable attitude towards SHGs, followed by highly favourable (20.83%) and less favourable (14.17%) attitudes. This may be because regular participation in SHG activities provides members with benefits such as savings, access to credit, mutual support and income-generating opportunities, resulting in a generally favourable attitude towards SHGs. This finding is supported by Jeba (2012) ^[7], Patil (2019) ^[15], and Dorisa (2023).

Attitude towards collectivism: Nearly two-thirds of the respondents (63.34%) had a medium favourable attitude towards collectivism, followed by highly favourable (20.83%) and less favourable (15.83%) attitudes. This may be because SHG activities encourage members to work collectively, share responsibilities and support one another, resulting in a moderately favourable attitude towards collective action. This finding is supported by with Pragya (2022).

Attitude towards group decision making: Nearly two-thirds of the respondents (65.00%) had a medium favourable attitude towards group decision-making, followed by highly favourable (19.17%) and less favourable (15.83%) attitudes. This may be because regular SHG meetings provide members with opportunities to discuss issues, share opinions and participate in collective decisions, thereby developing a favourable attitude towards group decision-making. This finding is supported by with Pragya (2022).

Table 2: Distribution of respondent according to overall group dynamics effectiveness

Overall group dynamics effectiveness	Categories	Respondents (n = 120)	
		Frequency	Percentage
	Very low	00	00.00
	Low	00	00.00
	Medium	32	26.67
	High	67	55.83
	Very high	21	17.50

Overall group dynamics effectiveness: More than two-thirds (73.33%) of the respondents exhibited high to very high levels of group dynamics effectiveness, comprising 55.83 per cent with high and 17.50 per cent with very high effectiveness. The remaining 26.67 per cent of respondents had a medium level of group dynamics effectiveness, while none belonged to the low or very low categories. This may be because regular interaction, cooperation, participation in group activities and collective decision-making among SHG members contribute to effective group functioning and strengthen group dynamics. This finding is supported with Darji (2018) ^[4] and Patil (2019) ^[15].

4. Conclusion

The findings of the study revealed that the majority of SHG members were middle-aged, had secondary-level education and belonged to the small landholding category. More than half of the respondents belonged to the medium-income group, while a large majority were married. Regarding social and communication characteristics, most of the respondents had medium levels of source of information, social participation and extension participation. Similarly, medium levels of economic motivation and achievement motivation were observed among the majority of the respondents. The respondents generally exhibited a medium favourable attitude towards SHGs, collectivism and group decision-making. Overall, more than half of the respondents exhibited high to very high levels of group dynamics effectiveness, indicating effective participation, cooperation, interaction and collective functioning among the SHG members.

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