

Socio-Economic Profiling of Members of Women's Groups in Raipur District of Chhattisgarh

Payal Dewangan¹, S. Senthil Vinayagam² and K. K. Shrivastava³

ABSTRACT

In India, collective farming by Women's Groups (WGs) was introduced as a strategy to improve needy women's livelihood alternatives. The study was performed in Raipur district of Chhattisgarh. Three villages were chosen from two selected blocks viz., Arang and Dharsiwa, and five women groups were selected from each village. Most of the women members of women's groups were in the middle age category. More than one-third of the women members had education up to middle school level. About fifty percent of the women members had medium family size and almost ninety-six percent of the respondents were married. Nearly 70 percent of the women member of women's groups had marginal (<2.5 acres) landholdings. Sixty percent of the respondents had medium level of annual family income. Nearly sixty-eight percent of women members did not receive any training. Majority of the members of women's groups had medium level of participation in extension and mass media activities.

Keywords: Women Groups; Livelihood; Socio-economic Characteristics; Chattisgarh

In agriculture, the significance of the concept of cooperation arises in the context of optimizing the contribution of marginal and small farmers as well as mainstreaming women in agriculture. Another aspect is related to reforming agricultural extension, where group mobilization is perceived as an important strategy for making the extension system demand driven. An appropriate community-based structure women's groups i.e., Self-Help Groups (SHGs), emerged in the late eighties and early nineties around rotating mutual

savings and credit, as a stable and viable alternative. It was a development innovation in its own right.

Many Non-Governmental Organizations, SHGs, and financial institutions are working for increasing the socio-economic status of the rural people.

In Chhattisgarh, women's groups approach is reshaping initiatives that enhance livelihoods and ensure sustainability by enabling poor families to access effective economic and

1. PG Scholar & 3. Professor & Head, Dept. of Agricultural Extension, Indira Gandhi Krishi Vishwavidyalaya (IGKV), Raipur, Chhattisgarh. 2. Principal Scientist, ICAR-NAARM, Hyderabad

social development leading to empowerment. At present in Chhattisgarh state more than 1.5 lacs Self Help Groups are existing (www.nrlm.gov.in). A group is a collection of two or more people who communicate with each other on a reasonably continuous basis, recognize themselves as belonging to a special unit and share certain common operations and values. Women's group can be defined as a small and economically homogeneous group of rural poor people who are willingly created to save and mutually contribute to a common fund to lend to its members. Self-help groups are seen as means for a range of objectives, including empowering women, creating management skills, and providing micro-finance services to disadvantaged communities that were

otherwise hard to achieve directly through banks or other institutions.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Raipur district of Chhattisgarh state. From Raipur district, two blocks were selected on the basis of having highest number of women's groups and having lowest number of women's groups. The two blocks selected were, Arang and Dharsiwa. From each block three villages were chosen at random each, making a total of six villages (2 blocks x 3 villages). These were Baktara, Godhi, and Gujra (from Arang block); and Tekari, Mandhar, Dande-Kurd (from Dharsiwa block). Five groups from each village were selected randomly, thus making a total

Table 1

Distribution of Women respondents according to their Age, Education and Family size

Sl. No.	Categories	Frequency (n=120)	Percent	Rank
A.	Age			
1.	Young age (<30 years)	32	26.67	II
2.	Middle age (31-50 years)	81	67.50	I
3.	Old age (>50 years)	7	5.83	III
B.	Educational Categories			
1.	Functionally literate	6	5.00	IV
2.	Primary school	31	26.00	III
3.	Middle School	48	40.00	I
4.	High/Higher Secondary School	34	28.00	II
5.	Graduate	1	1.00	V
C.	Family size categories			
1.	Small Family (up to 4 members)	39	32.00	II
2.	Medium Family (5-7 members)	62	52.00	I
3.	Large Family (>7 members)	19	16.00	III

of 30 groups from all six villages. From each selected women's groups four respondents were selected, making the total number of respondents from both the blocks as 120.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The profile features of the respondents give a clear image of the background, living conditions, environments and property of the women, which, in turn, will assist to bring about suitable policy consequences based on the findings that have

been drawn. According to the results, Table 1 shows that more than half of the women (67.5%) belonged to middle age group followed by 26.67 per cent who were young and remaining 5.83 percent of women belonging to old age group. The findings showed that middle-age category was having a major role to increase the income by taking an active part in Self Help Groups (SHGs). Many young women in the SHGs could be a good sign as activities of this group of women decide the future of entrepreneurial development in any

Table 2
Distribution of Women Respondents According to their Landholding, Marital Status and Annual Family Income

Sl. No.	Categories	Frequency (n=120)	Percent	Rank
A.	Landholding			
1.	Landless farm women	8	6.67	IV
2.	Marginal landholding(<2.5 acres)	75	62.50	I
3.	Small landholding(2.6-5 acres)	27	22.50	II
4.	Medium landholding (5.1-10 acres)	9	7.50	III
5.	Big landholding(>5 acres)	1	0.83	V
B.	Marital Status			
1.	Unmarried	4	3.33	II
2.	Married	116	96.67	I
C.	Annual Income (Mean= 74566.5; SD= 13644.5)			
1.	Low (< Rs 60922)	40	33.30	II
2.	Medium(Rs 60922-88211)	71	59.20	I
3.	High (> Rs. 88211)	9	7.50	III

Table 3
Distribution of the Women Respondents according to their Training, Extension Participation and Mass Media Participation

Sl. No.	Category	Frequency (n=120)	Percentage	Rank
A.	Training			
1.	Training not received	81	67.50	I
2.	Training received	39	32.50	II
B.	Extension Participation (Mean= 3.16; SD= 0.624)			
1.	Low Extension Participation	48	40.00	II
2.	Medium Extension Participation	54	45.00	I
3.	High Extension Participation	18	15.00	III
C.	Mass Media Participation (Mean= 2.47; SD= 0.67)			
1.	Low Mass Media Participation	25	20.70	II
2.	Medium Mass Media Participation	76	63.30	I
3.	High Mass Media Participation	19	16.00	III

locality. Majority (40%) of rural women had middle schooling, followed by high/higher secondary schooling (28 per cent) and primary education (26 per cent). The middle and high/higher secondary schooling education status of the respondents may be due to the presence of more member of schools in their area. The probable reason for very less graduate-level education might be, distance to the nearest college. Majority of women (52%) belonged to medium-size families. The probable reason for this family size of being medium to small might be due to their literacy level (intermediate and school) and awareness on small family norms. This may be due to the individual's forward outlook on family planning thereby maintaining medium family size. Furthermore, the cost of living is expanding day by day, besides more unemployment and underemployment.

The results on the land size of the respondent (Table 2) shows that majority (62.50%) of the women had the marginal size

of landholding and only 0.83 percent had big landholding. The landholding category, however, matches the country's overall trends. Since the scope for expanding landholding size is very restricted, it is required that the highest utilization of available land is attained through practicing hi-tech agriculture, various crop cultivation, and intensive agriculture. Majority of the women (96.67%) were married and were leading a normal family life and only 3.33 percent were unmarried. Majority of women (59.2%) belonged to medium annual family income (Rs 60922-88211) group, followed by low annual family income (Rs<60922).

Most (67.5%) of the respondents had not received any training. The possible reason could be that rural women had more responsibility to manage home and farm activities which results in their inability to attend any training program. The result of

extension participation shows that majority (45%) of rural women had medium extension participation. The likely reason for most of the respondents belonging to the medium category might be due to their desire to solve their problems with extension work as well as interest in extension activities to gather up-to-date information and also to

interact easily with female extension workers. Majority (63.3%) of the respondents belonged to medium mass media participation category. Mass media exposure enhances rural women's capacity to obtain more knowledge about technology or innovation and in turn, broaden the rural women's mental horizon to recognize and embrace the methods.