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# The Role of SHGs in the Community Mobilization Towards Sustainable Development

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**Abstract:** *The emergence of Self Help Group (SHG) has done remarkable contribution in the generation of livelihood programmes that demands high level of community participation. The SHGs promoted by Karnatak Integrated Development Society (KIDS), Puttur, who works in nine districts of Karnataka, for the past five years had done substantial work in terms of livelihood generation as well its sustainability. A descriptive study is done to analyse the community involvement in the entire project of employment generation. There are individuals and group initiatives which show a track record of success over the past two to three years. The case studies of the beneficiaries from the community and the secondary data available with the documentation of the agency provide adequate information on the community involvement. The profit oriented models have more community involvement than social benefiting ventures. Community awareness has been acknowledged as major component in the promotion of SHGs. The participation of the members in the socio-economic activity strengthened the family resilience of economic constraints and adding income encouraged the other members of the family to support the running of such SHGs. Irrespective of the communal tension prevailing in these geographical area the active involvement of the SHG in poverty alleviation is highly appreciated from people of all quarters. The study calls for the need of exploring the factors that contribute to the sustainability.*

**Key words:** *Self Help Groups, Community Participation, Employment Generation, Sustainability*

## Introduction

The emergence of Self Help Group (SHG) has done remarkable contribution in the generation of livelihood programmes that demands high level of community participation. Community mobilization is a process in which a

group of people have transcended their differences to meet on equal terms in order to facilitate a participatory decision-making process.

The SHGs promoted by Karnataka Integrated Development Society (KIDS), Puttur, who works in nine districts of Karnataka, for the past five years had done substantial work in terms of livelihood generation as well as its sustainability. In the midst of diverse culture and ethnicity it was a herculean task to generate awareness among the people upon the usefulness of SHGs. Numerous training and grassroots level intervention is inevitable to make the dream reality towards effective community involvement. Communal tensions and language barriers like people who speak about six languages at an average makes the task more difficult. Commitment and time bound initiative by professional social workers who joint under KIDS helped in speeding up the process.

### **Community mobilization in research pages**

C. Villi had studied on "The Role of NGOs in Social Mobilizations in the Context of Swarnajayanthi Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) the study revealed that the NGOs have taken number of steps in social mobilization, such as formation and involving various local committees, involving youth clubs, formation of block level federation for sustained motivation, credit linkages, promoting income generating activities, frequent visits and contacts, observations of National and International days of importance, and integrating various departmental schemes, etc.

Sakuntala Narasimhan (1999) says that the strategies for empowering women must focus beyond economic restructuring to improve the social relations, which constrain and restrain women. She stresses social assurance and motivation as the most important directions, especially for rural SC and ST women, to fight for their cause. She equates awareness with empowerment and argues that women need to be aware of what they can do legally, positively and constructively to overcome their oppression and borrows Amartya Sen's view that "what is important is not so much what people receive, as how much involvement they have, and what part they play in the process of growth itself (Sen, Amartya, The Hindu, Delhi, 6.11.1995)

The above studies prove that community mobilization through SHGs is an ongoing process ultimately leading to capacitating the women towards self sufficiency, knowledge generation and organisational skills. The SHG formation by KIDS is studies in this theoretical spectrum to find out the role of SHGs in community mobilization towards sustainable development.

## **Study and results**

A descriptive study is done to analyse the community involvement in the entire project of employment generation. There are individuals and group initiatives which show a track record of success over the past two to three years. The case studies of the beneficiaries from the community and the secondary data available with the documentation of the agency provided adequate information on the community involvement.

SHG details under KIDS; Dhakshina Kannanda – 180 SHGs with 2100 members; Shimoga - 30 with - 315 members; Byndoor - 102 with 1416 members and the total SHGS are - 318 with total SHG Members - 4038.

Community Based Organization under KIDS includes 50 organization farmers groups, 25 general farmers groups, and 3 senior citizen groups. Active participation of women in which more than 60% SHGs are women SHGs. KIDS have SHGs of SC and ST community, and separate SHGs for people with disability. Other than the regular SHG meetings, training programme of various nature had been conducted across the year.

## **Future plans**

1. Formation of new SHGs in the next year
2. Implementing solid waste management system in all families of SHGs
3. Promotion of organic farming and creating organic farming farmers group among SHG members.
4. Micro credit linkage
5. Linkage and networking with government organization.
6. Facilitating all empowerment programs under KIDS thrust areas for the benefit of the CBOs
7. The People's Bank (PB)
8. Bank belonged to the people, formed by the people, working for the people is called as people's bank.

The mobilization of the community is effective in the mobilization of funds for the development community. Simplicity, transference, accountability, mutual trust and cooperation and accessibility are the key features of people's bank. The target for people's bank is 2100 in D.K region, 1310 in Udupi region and 315 in Shimoga region.

The specific role of SHGs in community mobilization was achieved through the fulfillment of following features;

1. Individual needs are fulfilled
2. Community awareness programmes was done through SHGs
3. Health-medical camp, pipe composting, vermi composting, and health insurance were done
4. Education-loan for children's higher education
5. Livelihood support-individual efforts only
6. Representatives attend Gram Sabha meetings

Apart from all these consistent follow up helped in the sustainability of development activities through community mobilization. The profit oriented models have more community involvement than social benefiting ventures. Community awareness has been acknowledged as major component in the promotion of SHGs. The participation of the members in the socio-economic activity strengthened the family resilience of economic constraints and adding income encouraged the other members of the family to support the running of such SHGs.

### **Conclusion**

Irrespective of the communal tension prevailing in these geographical area, the active involvement of the SHG in poverty alleviation is highly appreciated from people of all quarters. The study calls for the need of exploring the factors that contribute to the sustainability.

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