

Empowerment of women through income generating activity in Northern Karnataka

SANGAMESH PUJAR AND S. B. PATIL

Department of Department of Agricultural Extension, College of Agriculture, Vijayapur
University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad - 580 005, Karnataka, India
E-mail: sbpatilacb55@gmail.com

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Abstract: Empowerment is a process, which helps people to gain control of their lives through raising awareness, taking action and working in order to exercise greater control. Empowerment is the feeling that activities the psychological energy to accomplish one's goals. Karnataka Community Based Tank Management Project (KCBTMP) implemented by Jala Sanvardhana Yojana Sangh (JSYS), was launched on 5th June 2002. The project objective is to improve rural livelihoods and reduce poverty by developing and strengthening community based approaches for improving and managing selected tank systems. This study was conducted in Vijayapura and Bagalkot districts of North Karnataka in 12 villages and from each village 10 respondents were selected randomly, thus the total sample was 120. Interview schedule was used to collect the data. The study revealed that 60.83 per cent of the women belonged to middle, 89.17 per cent were from nuclear family, 79.17 per cent had medium family size, 35 per cent were small farmers and 85.83 per cent of them occupation is agriculture. They had low extension participation, Social participation, contact with extension agency and mass media participation. The women were more empowered socially followed by economically and psychologically. Overall empowerment of women through income generating activities in CBTMP, there was 22.41 per cent of respondents gain empowerment socially followed by psychologically (22.17%), economically (16.56%), culturally (15.14%) and political empowerment (14.67%). Overall gain in empowerment is 17.70%.

Keyword: Empowerment, Income, Self help groups

Introduction

Empowerment is a multi-dimensional process, which should enable women or group of women to realize their full identity and power in all spheres of life (Surekharao and Rajamanamma, 1999). It consists of greater access to knowledge and resources, greater autonomy in decision making to enable them to have greater ability to plan their lives, or to have greater control over the circumstances that influence their lives and free from shocks imposed on them by custom, belief and practice. Generally development with justice is expected to generate the forces that lead to empowerment of various sections of population in a country and to raise their status especially in case of women.

In the present century the terms women empowerment, women welfare, gender justice have come to light in the social, economic and political development perspective of both developed and developing nations. Traditionally women in all most every society have remained a second grade citizen. Hence, neither they are allowed to get themselves educated nor they were given legal rights in the property, government and in administration.

In this context a study was undertaken with specific objectives to study the socio-economic characteristics of women beneficiaries in CBTMP and to study the empowerment of women beneficiaries through CBTMP.

Material and methods

This study was conducted in Vijayapura and Bagalkote districts of North Karnataka during 2015-16. From each districts two taluk were selected, from each taluk three villages selected purposively based on the community tank presence. From each village 10 women beneficiaries were selected randomly making the sample size of 120. Pre tested interview schedule was used

to collect the data. Suitable statistical tools like Frequency, percentage and empowerment index were used for analysis of data.

Empowerment index

Based on score obtained women empowerment index was calculated by following formula.

$$\text{Women empowerment index} = \frac{\text{Score obtained}}{\text{Maximum possible score}} \times 100$$

Based on scores obtained the results are presented in frequency and percentage. The index was calculated for each dimension by using the above formula. vidya tyade (2006).

Results and discussion

The data presented in the Table 1, revealed that, 60.83 per cent of the respondents belonged to middle age group; 32.50 per cent belonged to young age group. This age of an individual (36-50 years) and 6.67 of the respondents belonged to old age (above 50 years). Young and middle age were the most productive periods in the life of an individual and so women in their age were actively involved in the farm activities. Usually women of these ages range were enthusiastic and had more work efficiency. Further middle aged women shared more family responsibility than the younger ones. They also had a strong desire to be an earning member and contribute their share to the income of their family. This might have been the important reason to find majority of farm women in the age group of 36-50 years. The above mentioned findings were in line with the findings of Sharma and Singh (2002), and Rayangoudar (2009) who found most women working on the farms were to be from the middle age category.

Table 1. Socio-economic characteristics of women beneficiaries involved in community based tank management project n=120

Sl. No.	Variables	Categories	Frequency (No.)	Per cent (%)
1	Age	Young age (18 to 35 years)	39	32.50
		Middle age (35 to 50 years)	73	60.83
		Old age (above 50 years)	8	6.67
2	Education	Illiterate	9	7.50
		Functionally literate	43	35.83
		Primary (class 1-4)	18	15.00
		Middle school (class 5 – 7)	24	20.00
		High school (class 8 -10)	19	15.83
		College education (PUC and above)	7	5.83
3	Marital status	Unmarried	2	1.67
		Married	106	88.33
		Widow	8	6.67
		Separated	4	3.33
4	Family type	Nuclear	107	89.17
		Joint	13	10.83
5	Family size	Small (1 – 4 member)	6	5.00
		Medium (5 – 8 members)	95	79.17
		Large (9 & above)	19	15.83
6	Land holding	Marginal farmers(<2.5 acre of dry land)	28	23.33
		Small farmers (2.5 – 5.0 acre of dry land)	42	35.00
		Medium farmers (5-10 acre of dry land)	33	27.50
		Big farmers (>10 acre of dry land)	17	14.17
7	Family occupation	Agriculture	103	85.83
		Subsidiary	17	14.17
8	Livestock possession	Yes	92	76.67
		No	28	23.33
9	Annual income of the family	Low (mean–0.425 X SD)	5	4.17
		Medium (mean \pm 0.425 X SD)	114	95.00
		High (mean + 0.425 X SD)	1	0.83
10.	Extension participation	Low (mean–0.425 X SD)	55	45.83
		Medium (mean \pm 0.425 X SD)	41	34.17
		High (mean + 0.425 X SD)	24	20.00
11.	Contact with extension agency	Low (mean–0.425 X SD)	76	67.30
		Medium (mean \pm 0.425 X SD)	-	-
		High (mean + 0.425 X SD)	44	32.70
12.	Social participation	Low (mean–0.425 X SD)	50	41.67
		Medium (mean \pm 0.425 X SD)	23	19.16
		High (mean + 0.425 X SD)	47	39.17
13.	Mass media participation	Low (mean–0.425 X SD)	54	45.00
		Medium (mean \pm 0.425 X SD)	26	21.67
		High (mean + 0.425 X SD)	40	33.33

The education level of the respondents showed that 35.84 per cent of them were functionally literate, 20 per cent of the respondents had education up to middle school,

15 per cent received primary school education, 15.83 per cent had received high school education, and 7.50 per cent were illiterate and only 5.83 per cent of them received college level

education. Non-realization of the influence of formal education has come in the way of getting them better education by their parents. Poor economic status, rural social environment, poor education facilities during their childhood days and schools located faraway places were the other contributing reason for poor education. Considerable percentage of rural women, were functionally literate because they learnt from the other members who were educated in the group. Only the functional literacy is not going to achieve the objective. This calls for encouragement of women to acquire formal education. These findings are in line with Hemalathaprasad (1995) and Sharadha (2001).

Regarding the marital status of respondents, most of them (88.33%) were married and 6.67 per cent of the farm women were widows, 3.33 per cent of the farm women were separated and 1.67 per cent of them were unmarried. Marriage was a traditional social institution and Indian villages being traditional, this was an expected trend. In rural areas girls were also married at a young age. All these could be reasons for the presence of high per cent of married respondents. Normally young unmarried girls were not sent out to work on the farms but are employed at households the parents. The results were in the line with the results of Rayangoudar (2009) who found that majority of the respondents were married.

The data pertaining to family type revealed that, majority (89.17%) of the respondents belonged to nuclear families, while 10.83 per cent of them had joint families. In India since time immemorial joint family system has existed. Rural people were mostly traditional in their value system and had belief in co-operative living. In addition in the present study empowerment was the main objective of all the respondent families and empowerment itself considered as a development of women. In joint family they were not allowed their women to participate in social activities which restrict the women. However, some families had broken up with their siblings and have set up their own nuclear families and actively participating in CBTMP. In general, joint family system was the norm in those villages. Anasari and Sunetha (2014).

The information about the size of the family revealed (Table 1) that, 79.17 per cent of the respondents had 5-8 members in their family, about 15.83 per cent of the respondents had family size of more than 9 members and 5.00 per cent had 1-4 members in the family. The probable reason for finding medium to large families could be that the small family norm was not yet accepted to a large extent by rural people. The other reasons could be that agriculture which was the main occupation on of majority of the families was labour intensive and needed team work.

The existence of greater number of nuclear families in the study area might also been one of the reasons for finding middle size families. On the contrary, only few of the respondents maintained small families. This might be due to their awareness, education and greater exposure to mass media. Further, as the cost of living was increasing day by day, they might had found it beneficial to have small families to lead a better and comfortable life. The results were in ne with the results of

Mooley (1986), Singhal *et al.* (1982) Ingle and Dharmadhikari (1987) and Rayangoudar (2009) who found that majority of the respondents were from medium size families.

India is said to be a land of small land holders with nearly 80 per cent of agriculture families holding less than 5 acres of land. The number of marginal and small land holding in 2000-01 and has been increased from 98.103 million to 107.624 million in year 2011. In the present study nearly more than 50 per cent respondents possessed less than 5 acres of land. Twenty eight per cent had medium land holding and 14.17 per cent owned more than 10 acres of land. This was keeping with the trend where in India 78 per cent of the country's a farmer own less than 2.0 hectares of farm land. The results were in line with the results of Swetha *et al.* (2006) who reported in her study that majority of the respondents belonged to small land holding category (2.5-5.00 acre). The result presented in the Table 1 indicating that majority of the respondents (76.67%) possessing livestock activity. This study mainly on the income generating activity carried out by farm women means it's showing that live stock is the live stock possession is playing main role in their livelihoods.

The economic position of the family indicated that majority of the respondents (95%) have an medium annual income category *i.e.* more than ₹ 1,32,000 to ₹ 5,72,000, 4.17 per cent women beneficiaries belongs to low annual income category (₹ 1,32,000) and only 0.83 per cent of women beneficiaries have high annual income category ₹ 5,72,000). This might be due to the reasons that women beneficiaries earning their income from their own activity so they want to adopt the new technologies for getting the higher income and higher productivity. Table 1 also showed that 45.83 per cent of respondents belong to low extension participation category with 34.17 per cent having medium extension participation, while 20 per cent were belong to high extension participation category.

The low extension participation because of women has the time to participate in extension activities. Women were considered as farmers, taking care of the family was considered as the prime role of a woman. Fourty six percent of the respondents have low extension participation could be because women do not have the time to participate in extension activities. Women were actively participating in agriculture, once she gets back home she was confined to the house to take care of children and cook for the family. The results are in line with the findings of Chethan (2002), Nukapur (2002) and Swetha *et al.* (2006) who found that majority of the respondents had low extension participation. Extension contact results in purposeful action which is largely contingent upon an individual's belief in her ability to perform that action correctly and effectively. The farmer frequently contacts various departmental officials to seek more information and to clarify the doubts pertaining to the current cropping system. Data on this aspect indicated that, majority (64. 17%) of the respondents had low contact with extension agency. The reason for low extension contact may be due to illiteracy of respondents and lack of decision making authority and lack of availability of female extension workers. The reported

results of this study go with the conclusions of Neelaveni *et al.* (2002), Nukapur (2002), Swetha *et al.* (2006) and Singh and Sharma (2002). The data presented in the Table 1 revealed that, 41.67 per cent of the respondents had low social participation while 39.17 per cent had less participation.

The probable reason may be because more than half of the respondents were the members of Mahila Mandalas or the Self Help Groups (SHGs) in the village. Women SHGs have revolutionized the rural landscape. SHGs were now formed by the government agencies, NGOs and banks. There are many advantages for women becoming members of SHGs, the main advantage of which was availability of loan without collateral. Security women become members of SHGs to borrow money for consumption purpose or for productive purposes for starting new enterprise. The low participation (41.67%) could be because of social barriers or the lack of regular savings to join SHGs. Illiteracy could also be a reason for not participating in social activities.

Empowerment of women through income generating activities in KCBTMP

Psychological empowerment

The Table 2 depicted that psychological empowerment of women through income generating activities in CBTMP; there was 25.83 per cent beneficiaries gain in self confidence followed by self image (25.00%), self reliance (23.33%), career ambition (19.17%) and courage (17.50%). This might be due to participating in social activities, group discussion and training programmes for income generating activities.

Cultural empowerment

It is evident from Table 3 that cultural empowerment of women through income generating activities in CBTMP gain in cultural empowerment was due to attending Freedom for attending common place and TUG office (23.33%), freedom for performing festival ceremonies (17.50%), freedom for deciding (food) menu (16.67%), liberty for attending marriage ceremony

(13.33%), freedom for wearing kinds of dressers (12.50%) and freedom to interact with male outside family (7.50%). This might be due to exposure of beneficiaries to the society and taking decision, interaction with other beneficiaries of the group and orientation of members.

Social empowerment

The Table 4 revealed that gain in social empowerment of women beneficiaries were due to participation in decision about girls marriage (27.50%), participation in decision about education of children (23.33%), feeling of social security (23.33%), freedom to work outside family (23.33%), self education 21.67 per cent, participation in decision about family planning welfare (18.33%), freedom for adopting practices for maintaining health were 14.17 per cent and access to water and participation in community action were 5.00 per cent. This might be due to the reasons that in rural areas decision about the marriage of girls taken by the family heads so there was participation of the girls in the marriage decision.

Economic empowerment

It is noticed from Table 5 that gain in economic empowerment of women through income generating activities in CBTMP were participation in decision making about adoption of modern technology in home/enterprise (29.17%), participation in decision about purchasing house building (24.17%), operating personal account in bank (20.00%), freedom for selection of job (19.17%), personal saving in form of fixed deposit (18.33%), authority to employ labours (5.00%) and participation in decision about marketing of produce (4.17%). This might be due to the reasons that women beneficiaries earning their income from their own activity so they want to adopt the new technology in getting the higher income and higher productivity.

Political empowerment

In Table 6 It was observed that 33.33 per cent, 15.83 per cent, 15.83 per cent, 3.33 per cent and 5.00 per cent of them had gain in political empowerment about awareness of human rights, awareness of legislation for women, freedom for

Table 2. Psychological empowerment

Variables	Before		After		Gain in empowerment	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Self confidence	56	46.67	87	72.50	31	25.83
Courage	38	31.67	59	49.17	21	17.5
Self reliance	43	35.33	71	59.17	28	23.33
Career ambition	42	35	65	54.17	23	19.17
Self image	39	32.5	69	57.5	30	25

Table 3. Cultural empowerment

Variables	Before		After		Gain In Empowerment	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Freedom to interact with male outside family	63	52.50	72	60.00	9	7.50
Freedom for performing festival ceremonies	72	60.00	93	77.50	21	17.50
Freedom for wearing a kind of dress	19	15.83	34	28.33	15	12.50
Freedom for attending common place/ TUG office	43	35.83	71	59.17	28	23.33
Freedom for deciding (food) menu	69	57.50	89	74.17	20	16.67
Liberty for attending marriage ceremony	57	47.50	73	60.83	16	13.33

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Table 4. Social empowerment

Variables	n=120					
	Before		After		Gain in empowerment	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Self education	56	46.67	82	68.33	26	21.67
Freedom to work outside family	48	40.00	76	63.33	28	23.33
Freedom for adopting practices for maintaining health	53	44.17	70	58.33	17	14.17
Participation in decision about family planning	64	53.33	86	71.67	22	18.33
Participation in community action	72	60.00	78	65.00	6	5.00
Feeling of social security	66	55.00	94	78.33	28	23.33
Participation in decision about education of children	70	58.33	98	81.67	28	23.33
Participation in decision about girls marriage	45	37.50	78	65.00	33	27.50
Access to modern technology	30	25.00	84	70.00	54	45.00

Table 5. Economic empowerment

Variables	n=120					
	Before		After		Gain in empowerment	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Freedom for selection of job	60	50.00	83	69.17	23	19.17
Personal saving in form of fixed deposit	59	49.17	81	67.50	22	18.33
Operating personal account in bank	35	29.17	59	49.17	24	20.00
Participation in decision about adoption of modern technology in home/enterprise	43	35.83	78	65.00	35	29.17
Participation in decision about purchasing building/house	65	54.17	94	78.33	29	24.17
Participation in decision about marketing of produce	36	30.00	41	34.17	5	4.17
Participation in purchase of input for family enterprise	56	46.67	71	59.17	15	12.50
Authority to employ labours	39	32.5	45	37.50	6	5.00

Table 6. Political empowerment

Variables	n=120					
	Before		After		Gain in empowerment	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Holding a political position at present	2	1.67	6	5.00	4	3.33
Freedom for participation in active politics	22	18.33	41	34.17	19	15.83
Awareness of human rights	19	15.83	59	49.17	40	33.33
Awareness of legislation for women	9	7.50	28	23.33	19	15.83
Awareness of political institution	2	1.67	8	6.67	6	5.00

participation in active politics, holding a political position at present and awareness of political institution, respectively. Due to the awareness about various programmes may aware about their right through media or other communication media.

Empowerment of women with respect to the different sub components

Table 7 indicating that the different sub components of empowerment. It is observed that major component was social empowerment which was ranked 1st, followed by cultural empowerment placed 2nd Rank, psychological empowerment 3rd rank, economical empowerment occurred 4th and political empowerment 5th. Thus, there was the highest empowerment in case of social and the lowest in political component. Then over all empowerment index is 75.79 per cent.

Table 13 depicted that overall empowerment of women through income generating activities in CBTMP, there was 22.41per cent of respondents gain empowerment socially followed by psychologically (22.17%), economically (16.56 %), culturally (15.14 %) and political empowerment (14.67 %). Overall gain in empowerment is 17.70 per cent.

Table 7. Empowerment of women with respect to the different sub components

Main indicators	n=120	
	Index	Rank
Psychological empowerment index	79.1667	III
Cultural empowerment index	80	II
Social empowerment index	83.0556	I
Economic empowerment index	75.8854	IV
Political empowerment index	60.8333	V
Overall empowerment index	75.7882	

Table 8. Overall gains in empowerment

Main indicators	n=120		
	Before	After	Gain in empowerment
Psychological Empowerment	36.33	58.50	22.17
Cultuaral Empowerment	44.86	60.00	15.14
Socia Empowerment	46.67	69.07	22.41
Economic Empowerment	40.94	57.50	16.56
Political empowerment	9.00	23.67	12.22
Overall Gain in empowerment		17.70	

Conclusion

In the light of findings of the study and personal experience of researcher at the time of interviewing respondents, following implications were made for providing a helping hand in developing an effective strategy for empowerment of rural women. The result of the study revealed that the extent of gain in empowerment through income generating activity was 17.17 per cent which indicated that still there is lot of scope to

empower the women by taking the contributing factors. Education plays an important role in empowering women, the education levels of majority of respondents were found to be low. The national literacy mission and the Government of Karnataka could plan and implement programmes to enhance the literacy level of women through Self Help Groups (SHGs). Education up to 10th standard for ladies needs to be made compulsory in future policy.

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