

Role perception about empowerment of farm women in agriculture in Western Rajasthan

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■ **ABSTRACT** : For removing gender inequality, an effective approach is to mobilize farm women through Self Help Groups coupled with interventions for capacity building. An impact study of socio-psychological attributes of empowerment was conducted. This study was connected under NAIP mission mode project entitled "Empowerment of women in agriculture" where 300 farm women were mobilized to form 20 SHGs. A series of awareness camps, training programmes and related interventions were carried out and data were collected for 'before and after' experiences of becoming SHG members and under going capacity building interventions. The study conducted in 11 villages of three blocks of Pali district revealed an enhancement shift in confidence, self-esteem, decision-making pattern, capacity enhancement, social empowerment and a favourable attitude towards entrepreneurship development and improved agriculture and animal husbandry practices.

■ **KEY WORDS** : Self-help groups, Women empowerment, Attitude, NAIP

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Even today, rural women with their considerable contribution to food security, remain as the most disadvantaged section of the society. Several programmes were envisaged to uplift their present status but most of them lacked sustenance. Significance of the concept of Self Help Groups (SHGs) comes in this context, where rural women join hands to help themselves. Human civilizations have witnessed that exploited people joined together to alter the unsatisfactory situation and form groups with others who have something in common with them. Self Help Groups are formed by the underprivileged section of the society to fight the poverty, thus altering their socio-economic condition. The term Self Help Group is used to description a wide range of financial and non-financial association. SHG is a group of about 10-20 persons from a homogenous class who come together for addressing the common problems. They collect voluntary savings on a regular basis and use the pooled resources to make small interest bearing loans to their members. The process helps theme and improving the conditions and helping in accounts keeping (Rangarajan,

2005). In order to achieve the ultimate goal of gender equality, gender issues need to be mainstreamed to support women with information, training and technology. In the changing scenario, the need for endeavors are being redesigned to focus on women through appropriate sensitization towards their contribution to the agriculture system. The major thrust is their empowerment through capacity building, greater opportunities, access to resources and appropriate interventions. An effective approach is mobilization of farm women towards self-employment by organizing them into Self Help Groups. Empowerment is a multidimensional process which enables individuals or groups the realization of their full identity and powers in all spheres of life. Empowering women socio-psychologically is a crucial decisive step. In fact, the core elements of empowerment have been defined as the agency (the ability to define one's goals and act upon them), awareness of gender power structures, self-esteem and self-confidence (Kabeer, 2001). Impact assessment has emerged as an important aspect of development interventions to measure the impact of programmes on people's live in order