

The management and operational status of the SHGs under West Bengal comprehensive area development corporation

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ABSTRACT

The present study was carried out in Haringhata Block, comprising the rural areas and villages in the district of Nadia under WBCADC. This investigation was made to assess the management, operational status of the SHGs under west Bengal Comprehensive area Development Corporation. Twenty SHGs were randomly selected out of 350 SHGs, by using the cluster sampling approach or technique. The data were processed into frequency and percentage. From this study, it was inferred that they have developed abundant self-reliance and self-esteem through this SHG movement. Again, the SHGs in the block have been releasing their social responsibilities with greater willingness. This experience available in the block intervened that SHGs were sustainable, have reliability, stimulate savings in the process. It also helped to the borrowers to come out of vicious turbulence to alleviate the poverty which can transform their energies to synergies.

KEW WORDS : Comprehensive, Management, Socio-economic

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INTRODUCTION

Self-help groups (SHGs) are playing a major role in rural India today. The group-based model of self-help is widely practiced for rural development, poverty alleviation and empowerment of women. Self-help as a strategy for social development places and giving emphasis on self-reliance, human agency and action. It intends to mobilize people, to give them voice and build people's organizations that will overcome barriers to participation and empowerment. The self-help model in India facilitates institution-building in the form of people's organizations, groups, clusters and federations (Wisniwski, 1999). The poor, however, seldom organize themselves. It is an assisted self-help process where the State, the financial institutions and the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play an important role in mobilizing and assisting the poor and the needy. While the policies of the external agents of development place emphasis on building institutions to assist the poor and women, the practice-oriented reality has to deal with the structural barriers that people in general, women as special and the organizations also face (Singh, 2002). At the level of practice, the

outcomes of self-help depend on building mutually beneficial relationships, negotiating power and gaining control (Rao, 2003).

The West Bengal Comprehensive Area Development Corporation popularly known as CADC, is a statutory autonomous body formed in 1974, with a view to bring about all round development of rural economy through an integrated approach towards diverse activities *viz.*, irrigation, agriculture, animal husbandry, fishery, literacy, preventive health, women and children development, rural industries, farmers co-operatives etc., for putting this model approach to test. Being a unique concept that had not been tried earlier, many practical difficulties surfaced during the initial stages of its implementation. Accordingly the original model had to be revised and modified from time to time.

METHODS

The West Bengal comprehensive area development corporation at Jaguli, Nadia was supervising 350 self-help groups in different villages under Haringhata block. The present study was conducted on the SHGs under

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WBCADC, Jaguli, Nadia. Considering the limitation of a student’s research work, study was conducted only on 20 SHGs which have been selected by simple random sampling method. It was also found that each self-help group consisted of 10-12 members. For the present investigation, all the members of selected 20 groups had been taken as sample and this sampling technique is known as cluster sampling. In this way the total 200 members from 20 groups had been taken for the investigation. Data were collected personally from the respondents with the help of interview schedule during the month of February, 2009 to June, 2009. Simple tabular analysis with frequency and percentage calculation were used to interpret the data.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

The findings of the present study as well as relevant discussion have been summarized under following heads:

Management and operational status of SHG under CADC:

Table 1 it is clear that 56 per cent of the members received revolving fund after completion (Bank credit received) of their 1st grading. They have started their economic activities and waiting for 2nd grading. None of them were completed the 2nd grading. Thirty four per cent group members found a new group and 10 per cent of them were waiting for 1st grading of total respondents. In different villages of Haringhata block Gram Panchayat plays a important role for the forming of SHGs. The villagers also knew the group forming approach of WBCADC through Panchayat.

Sr. No.	Present status of SHGs	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Newly formed	68	34
2.	Waiting for 1 st grading	20	10
3.	Revolving fund / Bank credit received	112	56
4.	2 nd grading completed	-	-

Table 2 reveals that most of the members *i.e.*, sixty seven per cent of them belonged to middle age category, 24 per cent were young, only 9 per cent of them were old. So, it implies that the middle aged persons were mostly

Age category	Frequency	Percentage
Young (less than 20 – 25 years)	48	24
Middle (25 – 40 years)	134	67
Old (above 40 years)	18	9

enthusiastic about group formation for having sustained income.

The members were asked to mention important reasons of group formation under WBCADC. Table 3 depicts important reasons behind group formation. These are to be self-dependent to earn some extra money, to contribute family income, to develop saving habit and to meet up emergent need for cash. Out of these reasons ‘to contribute family income’ was ranked 1st with about 73 per cent under this programme. Twenty three per cent had to become ‘to be self-dependent’, three per cent and one per cent states that for their saving habit and to meet emergent need for cash, respectively.

Sr. No.	Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
1.	To be self-dependent	46	23
2.	To earn some extra money		
3.	To meet emergent need for cash	2	1
4.	To contribute in family income	146	73
5.	To develop saving habit	6	3

All groups in Table 4 were formed by the women members for their welfare and development. Priorities had been given for female members for forming the group. Cent per cent SHG members were women centered.

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	0	0
Female	200	100

Table 5 reveals that most of the members *i.e.*, seventy per cent selected their activities on the basis of availability of local market. (Making, vermicomposting), twenty five per cent had selected on the basis of local resources and only 5 per cent were based an inherited skill of the members of the groups.

Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
Based on the availability of local market	140	70
Based on local resources	50	25
Based on inherited skill of the members of the groups	10	5

It has been noticed from Table 6 that about 48 per

Table 6 : Assistance in selection of key activity of the members

Assisting agency	Frequency	Percentage
Selected by group members herself	96	48
Gram Panchayat Pradhans/ members	0	0
Selected by WBCADC	104	52
Bank officials	0	0

cent of the members selected their key activity under SHGs by themselves. About 52 per cent of members selected their key activity by the WBCADC. Bank officials or Gram Panchayet Pradhans have no influence for selection of key activity.

Since about 68 respondents belonging to 6 groups did not confine themselves in a single enterprise which would enable them to involve themselves more than one activities like mating, vermi-composting, agricultural work, turmeric dusts preparation simultaneously. In such situation it was not possible to get exact statistical ranking of the key activities (Table 7).

Table 7 : Preference ranking of key activities taken by SHG member

Items/activities	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Vermicomposting / seedling raising / agricultural work	68	34	I
Mushroom cultivation	54	27	II
Mating	24	12	IV
Poultry and goatary	32	16	III
Turmeric dust preparation	10	5	VI
Jute thread / bags	12	6	V

Table 7 also reveals that 34 per cent of members have taken the activity of vermicomposting and agricultural works and mushroom cultivation 27 per cent. Other members have taken different type of activities like poultry and goatary 16 per cent, 12 per cent mating, 6 per cent jute threads or bag preparation and 5 per cent turmeric dust preparation of the total respondents of the groups. So, it is clear that vermicomposting and agricultural work (34 per cent) was mostly preferred by the members as their key activity.

From Table 8 it can be inferred that success and sustainability of self-employment ventures largely depend on the attainment of required skill to successfully run their enterprise. The objective of the training is to impart the necessary skills required for the key activity and upgrade the capacity of the members both in individual as well as the group. The members are being provided basic orientation (BOP) minimum skill requirement (MSR),

Table 8 : Training profile of SHG members of CADC

Sr. No.	Training	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Capacity building (2 days)	120	60
2.	Basic orientation programme (BOP) 2 days	180	90
3.	Minimum skill requirement (MSR) – 7 days	100	50
4.	Informal education and communication (IEC) 1 day	0	0
5.	Awareness programme	80	40

information, education and communication (IEC), awareness programme (AP) and capacity building training. It was measured in terms of duration (in days). Table 8 also reveals that there were different types of training profile viz., capacity building, basic orientation programme, minimum skill requirement, informal education and communication and awareness programme. Out of these, 50 per cent of them followed by MSR, 90 per cent BOP and capacity building training 60 per cent and awareness programme 40 per cent.

Table 9 shows that 90 per cent of the members attended group meeting regularly. This clearly indicates that most of the members of the group were aware about the norms of group functioning. Besides a high percentage attendance in group meeting depicts the proper functioning of the group. Only 7 per cent and of the members had more than 50 per cent attendance and 3 per cent of the member of the group had less than 50 per cent of group meeting.

Table 9 : Regularity of attendance in group meetings

Attendance	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 50% of group meeting	6	3
50 – 75% of group meeting	14	7
Above 75 – 100% group meeting	180	90

Table 10 reveals that most of the group members linked different credit institutions. Most of the group members preferred to open their group account under Garmin Bank. They were more cooperative than other commercial banks. But 48 per cent group members opened their account in under UBI. due to the absence of Cooperative banks, 41 per cent people linked with Gramin

Table 10 : Name of the credit institution

Credit linkage institution	Frequency	Percentage
Fatepur Gramin Bank	82	41
United Bank of India	96	48
Others	22	11

Table 11 : Involvement of group members in various managerial operations under CADC

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Operating bank accounts and other dealings		
By elected leader of the SHGs	160	80
By others SHGs	40	20
By volunteers / others		
Maintenance of record and keeping loan register and savings register		
By elected leader of the SHGs	200	100
By others SHGs		
By volunteers / others		
Decision on loan taking		
Meeting by all members	200	100
By elected leaders		
By others		

bank and rest 11 per cent members maintained accounts in others institution. The group members generally used to take minimum 6 installments for repayment of the credit taken by them.

Under the programme of WBCADC training SHGs, each group has to open a bank account in the name of concerned group for money transaction. It is revealed from Table 11 that about 80 per cent of the members belonged to the group where bank account and other dealings were operated by the elected leaders of the SHGs. 20 per cent members belonged to the group where banking operations were conducted by other SHG members. There was not a single group where bank operation was conducted by volunteers and others. It clearly indicates that most banking operations were conducted by the leaders of the SHGs.

All the groups maintained record; kept loan register and saving register by their elected leaders. All the members of each group take part in making decisions to loan taking and it is decided in the group meetings.

Operational problems or constraints as perceived by the group members and measures suggested for improvement:

This section deals with some important problems for smooth functioning of SHGs as perceived by the members and also measures were suggested by the respondents to overcome those problems (Table 12 and 13). The respondents were asked open ended questions to mention the most important problems which they were facing and also suggested measures for the effectiveness of their group activities. These were ranked on the basis of percentage of the respondents reporting.

From this entire study it may be inferred that they

Table 12 : Problems and their suggested measures (n=200)

Perceived problems	Ranks	Frequency	Percentage
Insufficient fund		168	84
Lack of infrastructural facility		24	12
Lack of family cooperation			
Health hazards		8	4
Suggested measures			
Inculcation of adequate cooperation of bank and block officials towards the members of the group		170	85
Easy and expeditious banking procedure <i>i.e.</i> , commercial banks		30	15

Table 13 : Problems perceived by the group members in group function and suggested measures

	Frequency	Percentage
Problems perceived by group members		
Lack of proper irregularity in taking care and proper guidance and, Unfair demands from some NGOs/ voluntary organization	140	70
Complex banking system	104	52
Lack of marketing facility	100	50
Bad communication system	100	50
Egos and jealousy among the group members	70	35
Lack of awareness among members regarding norms of groups	12	6
Suggested measures		
More assistance of Panchayat members, Block and Block officials pressurize the Gram Panchayet Pradhans to cure the injured communication system.	110	55
Inculcation of awareness among the member regarding the objectives	80	40
Organizing regular meeting with group members by inspecting the work progress and problem and solution	60	30
Provision of more improved training for the members	60	30
Development of interaction and empathy among the member	36	18
Improved the social binding and make compact reticulate system	-	-

have developed abundant self-reliance and self-esteem through this SHG movement. Again, the SHGs in the block have been releasing their social responsibilities with greater willingness. These experiences available in the block intervened that SHGs are sustainable, have reliability, stimulate savings in the process. It also helps to the borrowers to come out of vicious turbulence to alleviate the poverty which can transform their energies to synergies.

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