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Research Papers

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## FUNCTIONAL EDUCATION: A TRANSFORMATIVE TOOL FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Dr. Sunitha Ganiger

Assistant Professor and Chairperson  
Department of Sociology  
Tumkur University, Tumkur

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### ABSTRACT

*Women Empowerment is one of the widely used concept world wide. The term empowerment means just not being economically independent but it is a process whereby a women can also take self-decision in all the spheres of life. This paper makes an attempt to understand the extent of influence on their personality development when need based training are given to them. Thus the study mainly focuses on the primary source through a survey and the results of the study shows that the training has an positive impact on their lifestyle.*

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### INTRODUCTION

The term empowerment has the most conspicuous feature containing the word “power” which means the ability to do something; it is vivacity, a strength or control over the intellectual resources and ideologies. Women empowerment is a process of equipping women to not only be economically independent but also to have freedom to spend their money, to enhance one's self-reliance, self-esteem and dignity, to realize their full capabilities, develop positive attitude, take independent decisions and participate actively in all the developmental activities in the spheres of family, community and society at large. Empowerment has been described as nurturing, liberating, energizing the un-affluent and the un-powerful people. Thus empowerment is a dynamic process, which makes difficult to define in a nutshell. It can be described in a various ways like economic independence, social transformation, self-reliance, power of decision making enhancing knowledge, claiming equality,

control over resources and so forth.

Mohammad Abul Hossen says, “Empowerment has various dimensions which includes individual involvement, organizational development and community change. Individual involvement refers to participation of a person in decision making, community change refers to the impact of involvement in the community and organizational development refers to the structures which mediates between the individual and community that facilitates collective action, which lies at the heart of the community change

### STRATEGY

The strategies related to women empowerment are all inter-related. In order to empower women to enable them to play their rightful roles in development, six important factors are very vital, they are: education, micro-credit financing, campaign, net-working, media, research and development. It can also be experienced through building a collective voice or

through transformative learning, which is based on the archetype shift from the traditional learning to need-based learning.

Empowerment through education includes training, functional education, disseminating the information about women's rights, personality development, legal cum medical awareness and many more. It is thus a tool by which women can truly realize their potentialities and can achieve upward social and economic mobility and achieve power and status in the society.

Networking is very essential. A rapport with other women enables them for provocative thinking, micro-credit financing enables them to be economically independent, research and development will thus focus on their rights, cross-cultural studies and analyzing successful cases, campaign can raise awareness and can create a sea change in the climate of the society.

**NEED FOR EDUCATION FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT** Empowerment is used to ensuring social transformation and economic development of a society. It includes political participation and also influencing the political decision. Participation as empowerment is related to redistribution of power in society thereby denoting with sharing or taking part in development process. It can empower the marginalize section of society to take and improve their social status. All this can be achieved by giving need based education for women.

The urgent need of the hour is to inculcate a transformation in thinking, a development of an awakening of their position and rights and change in the attitudes and behavior. It is through the process of awareness programme that women can become aware of their own choice and recognize the aspects of self that which are suppressed and expressed. Women should be taught to triumph over their precincts and find new means of self-expression. Thus awareness programmes focusing on personality development, socio-economic development can be a contrivance through which a society perpetuates spreads its own culture. A healthy well-educated, informed and well-employed woman will definitely be an asset to the society who would in turn make concrete contributions to the development process.

Through training we can involve good leader and also prepare them for jobs that are not usually open for women.

Education can be a means by which women can learn about their experiences of other women

and form a collective consciousness that empowers them to fight justices.

Participation helps them to come out in open and discuss their problems. It also helps to bring about awareness about savings, health environment, cleanliness, family welfare, self-reliance, family planning etc.

#### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Tripathy K K (2004) in his article Self Help Groups says that the SHGs formed and developed under various programmes provide a great opportunity for convergence of various programmes and activities of various organizations.

As according to Dr. Dasarathi Bhuyan empowerment of women can be evinced by the power they regulate in day-to-day affairs which thereby enabling them to move from periphery to the cente stage. The author gives a brief historical background of the change in the status of women from past to the present system. He regrets that though government are showering lot of emphasis on women empowerment but the stark reality is that she faces deprivation and degradation. The human rights scenario continues to be in a depressing and dismal way. The solution for women problems can be overcome by educating them and unless and until women do not take major step they cannot come to the forefront.

Prof Ghadoliya M K in his article "Empowering women through Self Help Groups: Role of Distance Education" says that education is the biggest liberating force and the rise in the levels of education which nourishes progressive outlook and the advent of industrialization and modernization have effected a sea change in the attitudes and thinking pattern of the people. The scheme of micro financing through Self Help Groups (SHGs) has transferred the real economic power in the hands of women and has considerably reduced their dependence on men. This has helped in empowerment of women and building self-confidence, but lack of education often comes in the way and many a times they had to seek help from their husbands for day-to-day work viz; bank, accounts, etc. The distance education provides an opportunity to these women to improve their skills. The higher level of learning will help them to learn skill and vocations and play an effective role in the management of SHGs.

Study conducted by Sulaja S on the topic Social Development and Women in status- An analysis of South Indian States" reveals a

comparative study of four South India States namely Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. The study is based on the selected data of NFHS – II reveals that mere social or economic development will not improve instead we need to make them equal partners in progress and development.

#### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To understand the socio-economic and demographical background of the respondents.
- To find out the number and nature of training programmes attended.
- To know the impact awareness programme on their personality with regard to
  - a) Social recognition
  - b) Decision making
  - c) Personality development

#### METHODOLOGY

The universe for the present study is composed of 100 women from 25 SHGs selected randomly from SKDRDP agency, Mangalore. The required data is collected through structured interview schedule. After the pilot study with little modifications the data was collected in the month of March 2008 during their monthly meetings. The collected data was later codified and with the help of SPSS package and average mean was done. The raw data was later presented in the format of Tables and graphs. However, due to limitations of the words focus has been laid only on major findings of the study.

#### MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- Socio-economic and demographical background of the respondents.
- Majority of the respondents belonged to age group of 26-30, 31-35 and 36-40 with 28 per cent, 26 per cent, 25 per cent respectively.
- The empirical findings of the present study indicates that majority of the respondents education was limited up to high school with 52 per cent, while literates formed 12 per cent and 19 per cent of them had their education up to PUC.
- The survey reveals that 92 per cent were married while 8 per cent were widows.
- The economic indicator for the status of the women can be worked on the basis of their work participation. Thus it was found from the study that majority of them were doing beedi rolling with 67 per cent followed by fishing and petty business. However, an ample number of them informed that the money they earned was utilized for their family purposes.
- Head of the household is a person who bears the chief responsibility for the maintenance of the household and takes decision on behalf of the household also. So in this study it was found that 62 per cent of the respondents had their husbands as the head followed by any of their in-laws with 20 per cent and self formed 8 per cent.
- Majority of the respondents belonged to nuclear family with 86 per cent.
- Majority of them earned monthly at least Rs 1500-2500 while a very few earned more than Rs 5000.
- Majority of them agreed that they earned as supplementary to their family with 52 per cent, while 40 per cent informed they wanted to be economically independent and few said they worked due to poverty and they were the sole bread earner to the family.
- Many had the self inspiration for work.
- Training programmes
- From the present study it is indicated that majority of them attended the programmes based on their interest 52 per cent, while a few were motivated by their friends or neighbours (22 per cent) and rest of them responded that they were asked to take the training by the agency and banks.
- 58 per cent attended more than 10 programmes while 36 per cent went for 6-9 programmes in the last one and a half years.
- Majority of them revealed that the duration of awareness programme at the maximum should be 2-4 hours a day (62 per cent); while 1 day is good was said by 29 per cent of the respondents, hardly 4 per cent said it should be for more than 2 days. However, none preferred to have training programmes for more than 3 days due to family and time constraints.
- For financial support either they pooled the money by SHGs group members which accounted to 61 per cent, while 24 per cent said it was shared by themselves alone, while a few said that the money was shared equally by NGO and also certain banks and institutions provided them the training programmes.
- Majority of the respondents attended the training programmes like preparation of Home Made Products like pickles, papad, cake, chutneys, dry and fried items and many more (68 per cent). Majority attended awareness programmes like women and child development, legal and medical awareness, malaria detection, personal grooming and so on (72 per cent). Less number of them attended the candle making, craft making, tailoring

and so forth (43 per cent).

- ♦ Impact of training programme
- **SOCIAL RECOGNITION**

75-76 per cent said that due to training programme they could easily mingle with Panchayat members, corporators while 84 per cent said that they could speak with confidence with private units, public servants and bank officials while 61 per cent were in association with other mahila mandals or some other private organizations and almost agreed that they could speak easily with their community leaders

#### • DECISION MAKING

Decision making is another important aspect of familial net-work which enables us to understand the inner aspects of family. To find out the empirical reality a question on decision making was asked. Nearly 62 per cent revealed they were also involved in family matters along with their husband while 22 per cent said that only their husband took the decisions and 14 per cent said their in-laws or other member took the major decisions. Hardly 2 per cent revealed all the members sat together and took the decisions in their family

#### • DEVELOPMENT OF SELF

Majority of them said that the training awareness programmes to a major extent enabled them to be self employed (78 per cent), mingle with people 82 per cent, increased self confidence (81 per cent), improved knowledge (65 per cent), enhanced communication skills than before (89 per cent), ability to manage their own affairs (80 per cent), account keeping (73 per cent, official transactions (63 per cent), Marketing skills (52 per cent), involved in fight against social evils (39 per cent), knowledge of personal hygiene (91 per cent), knowledge of family planning (88 per cent) and habit of saving (77 per cent).

#### CONCLUSION

Thus this study makes it clear that need based education and training are the crucial needs of a community. The income generating activities can provide a strong socio- economic position to women thereby enabling her to have a strong position in the family. Thus without a change in self-perception and evolving self-confidence: economic and social empowerment cannot be possible. It has to be noted here that large number of women are now playing a vital role in public life.

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