



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Social Science

EFFECT OF SANJEEVINI IN LIVELIHOOD DIVERSIFICATION AMONG THE MEMBERS OF SELF-HELP GROUPS – A STUDY IN MYSORE DISTRICT OF KARNATAKA

KEY WORDS: Rural Livelihood, Poverty, Self Help Group, Income Diversification, Wealth Creation

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ABSTRACT

Sanjeevini is the rural livelihood program being implemented by the Government of Karnataka under the framework of National Rural Livelihood Mission. Diversification of income or livelihood is the key for augmenting capabilities, particularly economical and financial capital of the people in the rural area. The diversification can only be induced by systematically building their individual (human) and group (social) capabilities. The NRLM has a multiple strategy to extend livelihood opportunities for rural poor. It starts from effective social mobilisation, capacity development, building institutions of poor and developing support systems for the members. Some inherent and external factors can contribute or contradict the income diversification initiative. This paper endeavours to identify the determinants of income diversification and discuss the challenges as well as solutions for expediting the results.

INTRODUCTION

The National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) which is popularly known as Sanjeevini in Karnataka and Aajeevika at the national level was launched on 3rd June 2011. The Mission has a mandate to reach out to eight – ten crore (100 million) economically backward households residing in the purview of 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats across the country and link them to sustainable livelihood opportunities and encourage them till they come out of vicious cycle of poverty. NRLM believes that the poor have essential capabilities to graduate out of poverty. The challenge is to inculcate the entrepreneurial capabilities by adding them with capacities (knowledge, information, tools, collectivization, finance, etc.). The mobilization of rural poor women into Self-help Groups (SHGs) and their alliances is the main objective of NRLM. SHGs are similar groups of 5-20 women which function on the ideologies of mutual support and cooperative action. One of the major focuses of the NRLM program is to federate the SHGs at the village, Gram Panchayat level, cluster level, and block level. The institutions provide services to their members, savings, credit, livelihoods support, etc that help them strengthen and sustain their livelihoods. NRLM ensures that the members have the mandatory skills to manage the institutions through the regular capacity building. As the SHGs and their institutions of the poor mature, they become a strong demand system on behalf of their members. The institutions would create their own human, social, financial and other resources. The institutions build linkages with mainstream institutions such as banks, local governance bodies to address different dimensions of their poverty. These measures enable the members to access entitlements, rights, resources and livelihood opportunities.

The prime strategy to augment the economical capital of people in rural areas are enhancing the risk management or mitigation capabilities and induce diversification of income sources for the women members involved in the SHGs.

In this paper, it is endeavoured to gather and analyse the evidences to understand how far the program is able to effect livelihood diversification among members of the self-help groups and their families.

The objective of the study

- To understand the effect of sanjeevini on the economic status of the beneficiaries
- To study whether the participation in the sanjeevini program resulted in the livelihood diversification of the beneficiaries

METHODOLOGY

The National Rural Livelihood Program is being implemented in the

name of Sanjeevini in Karnataka. Five districts in Karnataka were chosen to implement the exclusive National Rural Livelihood Project (NRLP). Mysore district is one of the five districts selected for the program implementation. Out of the seven talukas (blocks) in Mysore, the NRLP is implemented in four talukas i.e. T. Narasipura, Nanjanagudu, Hunasuru and Heggada Devana Kote.

The village in the taluka as surveyed and listed under the SECC (Socio Economic And Caste Census) 2011 were considered. Two villages were randomly selected using standard formula in Microsoft Excel application. The list of beneficiaries was collected from the District Mission Management Unit (DMMU) of Mysore. The beneficiaries who have completed three years of participation in the Self Help Group established or adopted by Sanjeevini. The three years criteria were kept as the nature of the study is of evaluation. As there are different stages in the Sanjeevini program from identifying beneficiary to facilitate them with appropriate livelihood opportunity, it requires three years for the beneficiary to sail through and experience the various stages. 50 beneficiaries who have completed three years period was randomly selected from each village.

In total, 400 respondents drawn from 08 villages belong to eight different village panchayaths from four blocks of Mysore District. The analysis of the data and required statistical tests was done using STATA package.

Availability of Human Resources in India estimated to be growing. The working-age population (aged 15-64) has increased in India since the 1980s. In 2009, the share of the population aged 15-64 accounted for 63.9% of the population in India. The share of the working-age population is estimated to reach 67.0% of the population by 2020. India's working-age population will see period growth of 17.4% during 2010-2020. India would have the largest work force in the world. The potential population in working age group is estimated as 47 million followed by Pakistan which would have 19 million. Majority of the countries including China would have negative working age population (US Census Bureau)

On the other hand, there is also an estimation of acute scarcity of skilled workers threatens Indian economy. An acute shortage of skilled workers is posing a major threat to the Indian economy. The Planning Commission estimates that only 20 percent of the 12.8 million entering the work force annually get some formal training. (The Report of Planning Commission, Government of India). The plan panel has assessed that in an economy growing at the rate of 'over nine percent', skill development poses major challenges. At the same time, it opens up 'unprecedented doors of opportunity' if

the process of skill enhancement is carried out in an integrated manner. The Planning Commission has also estimated that the ageing economy phenomenon would globally create 'a skilled manpower shortage of about 46 million by 2020'. If India can get its skill development act right, it will have a skilled manpower surplus of around 47 million. 'India should have 500 million skilled technicians by 2022. The organised sector accommodates only 16 percent of the total work force while the rest is in unorganised sector. There are around 300 million workers in the unorganised sector. There is a need to transform them into an asset by enhancing their skills. The World Bank report of 2006, shows that among persons of age 15-29 only about 2 per cent reported to have received formal vocational training and another 8 per cent reported to have received non formal vocational training. In addition, at current growth rates India is projected to have a significant unemployed population (estimates range between 19 and 37 million unemployed by 2012), the largest share of which will be educated youth.

Determinants of Livelihood Diversification:



Source: Author

The above factors can be considered for measuring and understanding diversification of livelihood in the study area.

Internal (Inherent):

- i. Age of the participants is one of the enabling factors. If as most of the participants are in the working age group, their ability to be participating in the other income generation activities would be high.
- ii. Level of education can be a determinant of participant's ability to comprehend the need and ways for diversification.
- iii. Family Support is an important factor for women to take part in the group and economic activities, especially in the rural milieu. Lack of family support shall deter women members from participating in the activities
- iv. Economic Condition of the women i.e whether the women and family are well off or worse off economically. If the family is in poor economic condition, there will be an urge for participation in diversified livelihood activities
- v. Possession of Assets including land is a factor that provides a confidence to participate in other livelihood activities

External:

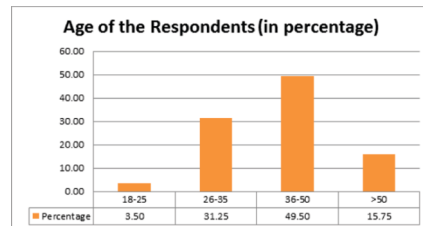
- vi. Other employment and economic opportunities in the vicinity is another factor that facilitates participants to diversify their income
- vii. Access to credit especially from the banks and micro finance institutions is an important factor that provides a required capital support to diversify the livelihood activity
- viii. Capacity Development and Skill Training is crucial to develop human capital. One of the most necessary factor for respondents to participate in different livelihood is the skill and training in other social / self development aspects
- ix. Support Network and Exposure is another factor which is external to the respondents; need to be facilitated by the program. Support network augments confidence, provide necessary inputs and capability to venture in to the new livelihood activity

ANALYSIS & RESULTS

Mysore district covers a total geographical area of 6,76,382 hectares of which 62,851 hectares constitutes forest land. The net cultivable land is 4,86,410 hectares and 1,14,010 hectares of land is irrigated. The prominent river of the district is Cauvery. Mysore

district may be considered as one of the prosperous districts of the state based on the development and utilization of irrigation facilities, an abundance of forest wealth and its Seri-cultural products. According to the 2011 census, Mysore district has a population of 2,994,744, This gives it a ranking of 125th in India (out of a total of 640) and the 3rd largest in the state. The district has a population density of 437 inhabitants per square kilometre (1,130 /sq mi). There are 7 revenue administrative blocks. H.D. Kote and Nanjangud blocks are having vast geographical area because of the forest. Nanjangud block is having a greater number of grama panchayaths in the district; this is due to more population in the district compared to remaining blocks of the district.

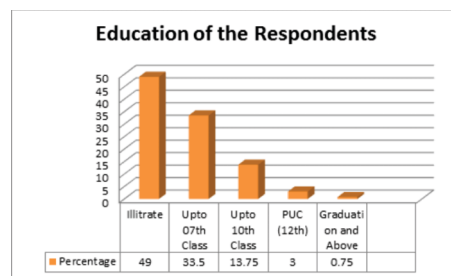
Graph-1 Age of the respondents (in percentage)



Source: Primary data

It can be observed almost half the respondents falls in the age group of 36 to 50 years which is around 49.50 per cent, followed by the age group of 26-35 years which is around 31.25 per cent and the respondents in the age group of 18 – 25 years were only 3.5 per cent, and respondents over 50 years were 15.75 per cent out of 400 respondents. However, the average age of the respondents was 32 years. This is a positive factor and an opportunity for the program to facilitate income diversification activities. Most of the beneficiaries are in the working age group and openness to get oriented towards other occupations will be high.

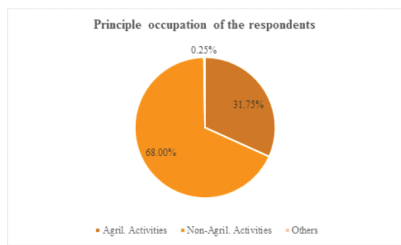
Graph-2 Education of the respondents (in percentage)



Source: Primary data

Above graph depicts the educational qualification of the respondents, a major portion i.e 49 per cent of respondents was illiterate, the respondents with primary education was 33.5%. Out of the 400 respondents, only 0.50% (2) of them had a graduate degree and 0.25% (1) had a master's degree. Whereas, the remaining other respondents had completed up to high school 13.75% and pre-university course 3.00% only. (55 and 12 respondents respectively). Therefore, the table reveals that a greater number of participants in the Sanjeevini groups are illiterate persons. This is true with respect to other SHGs also as per the observation in the study. This phenomenon is mostly because the poor literacy rate among women in Karnataka which is still at 41.68% as per 2011 census and women from lower strata of economy are in need to join SHGs or the strategy of Sanjeevini to reach the women members from both the social and economically marginalized sections. If we consider education as one of the major factors to influence livelihood diversification, the situation is half favourable as almost half of the members are falling in the illiterate category.

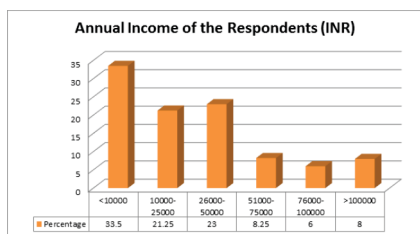
Graph-3 Principle Occupation of the Respondents



Source: Primary data

Above graph infers on the principle occupation of the respondents, 68 percent of respondents are involved in agriculture activities. The study area being agrarian place, it is natural to see more respondents involved in agricultural activities. The involvement of respondents in agricultural activities is above the state average. This infers the possibility and need for enabling diversification in their livelihood.

Graph-4 Annual income of the respondents

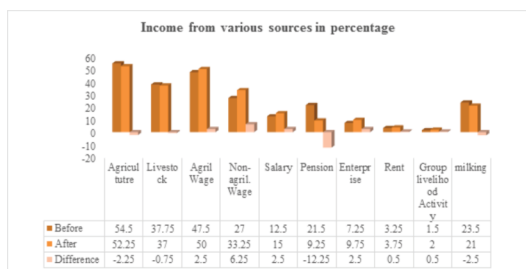


Source: Primary data

With respect to respondent's income, the above graph gives a clear view of number respondents belonging to different income groups. Considerably a larger portion of the respondents i.e., 134 (33.50 percent) had a low annual income (i.e., less than 10000 rupees per annum) which is under below poverty line. Whereas 85 respondents (21.25 percent) and 92 respondents (23 percent) of the total respondents belong to the income group of 10000-25000 and 26000-50000 rupees per annum respectively. On the other hand, out of 400 respondents, 24 (6. percent) of them had an annual income in the range of 76000-100000 rupees per annum and 32 (8. percent) of them had an income more than 100000 rupees per annum. Nearly 55% of the members of Sanjeevini earning not more than 25,000 rupees family income per annum.

Household Income Source

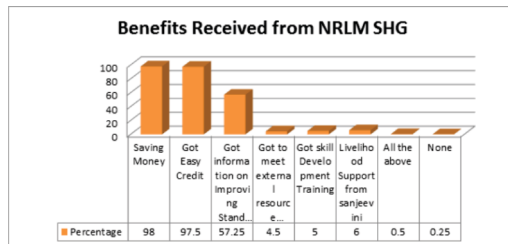
Graph-5 Respondents income from various source



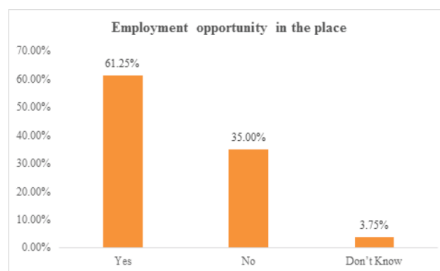
This graph gives an idea about the income from various sources before and after participating in the SHG. At the first level, some of the easy and possible livelihood diversification from important sources have listed here and obtained data from the primary survey. The above graph shows there is a marginal decline in the income source from Agriculture, which is respondents family involved in their own land. There is an increase in number of respondents saying they have a source from agricultural wage (by 2.5%), Non-Agricultural Wage (by 6.25%), salary (2.5%), enterprise (2.5%). On the other hand, respondent's family receiving social security pensions reduced by 12.25%, milking activity by 2.5%. Although, diversification of source of livelihood is not that significant, the influence of Sanjeevini group is began to

show in the study area. As women are exposed to credit and thrift activity along with development of linkages, their income sources are beginning to be expanded.

Graph-6 Various Benefits received from NRLM SHG



Graph-7 Staus of Empolyment opportunity



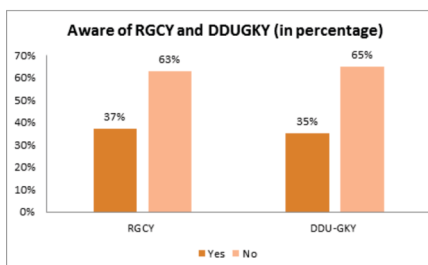
The above graph infers about employment opportunity for women members in their neighbourhood. About 61.25 percent of the respondents said that they have employment opportunities in their place and the remaining 35 percent respondents said there was no employment opportunity in the place.

Graph-8 Status of Employment availability



More than 55% of the respondents shared that they have an employment opportunity for less than 6 months in a year. Only about 29% of the respondent said they have employment through the year and remaining 17 per cent said they have employment opportunity for about 6 to 9 months. This infers the need for diversification of livelihood activities and additional employment opportunity for women members in the rural area. Seasonal unemployment or underemployment is commonly found even today in the rural areas of the district like Mysore which is supposed to be relatively better in terms of development in the state of Karnataka.

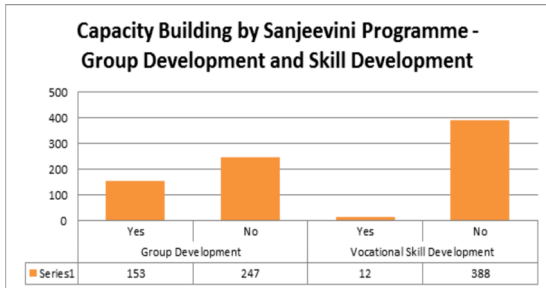
Graph 9 – Awareness and Access to Skill Development



DeenDayalUpadyay Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU GKY) a Government of India initiative and RGCY (Rajiv Gandhi Kaushalya Yojana) which is Government of Karnataka initiative to equip the rural youth with the required vocational and employable skills. But only about 37% and 35% of the respondents inferred that they

are aware of RGCY and DDU GKY respectively. SHGs are supposed to be serving as a platform to mobilize trainees for the program. Utilizing the benefit of the program either the SHG members or the young members from their families could have been either wage employed or self employed, providing additional livelihood opportunity for the family. But, the SHG members awareness about the programs found to be dismal in the study area.

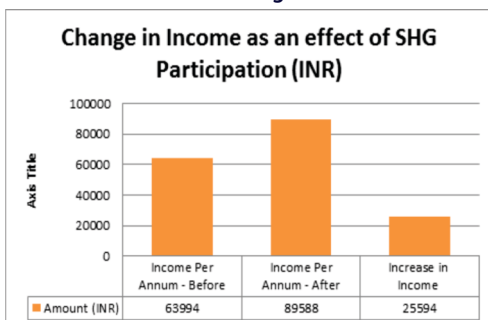
Graph-10 Status of Capacity Building from Sanjeevini



Capacity Development and Vocational Skill Training is a vital factor in inducing diversity in livelihood among rural women. It can be learnt from the above chart that only about 38% of the respondents said they received some training program that helps to develop the group. As per the Capacity Development plan of NRLM in Karnataka, each group should have been imparted with eight training modules on various aspects of building and strengthening SHGs. Only 12 members out of 400 respondents reported to have received any kind of vocational skill training program.

The fundamental philosophy to federate women under SHG is to bring the affinity and develop support system. This shows, participation of women in SHGs has resulted in providing the support structure for the women. When it comes to the skill development training, which was one of the major benefit SHGs should have received, only 12 respondents informed that they have obtained skill development training from the SHG or Sanjeevini. During the study, respondents shared that they have received trainings related to participation and management of SHGs and not any program to augment their vocational skill. When the researcher asked about usefulness of the training they have received, only 8% said trainings they received were useful. This is one of the major concerning factors in the earlier SGSY program also. Trainings were conducted mostly as a quick orientation sessions and the places chosen for conducting training was also not conducive to impart effective training sessions. This infers, a proper institutional mechanism should be put in place to focus on capacity development and skill development programs, which is fundamental to induce livelihood diversification among members of SHGs.

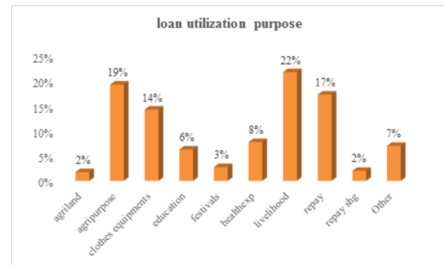
Graph-11 Status of Income Change



Source: Primary data.

The respondents reported to have augmented their annual income by Rs 25594/- per annum as the result of their participation in the SHG. This is mainly due to the savings, credit and thrift activity in the SHGs. The increase in income is about 40% in the four to five years period

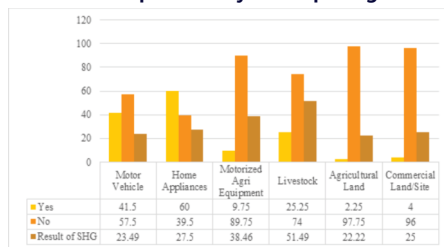
Graph-12 Status of Loan Utilization



The above graph represents the loan utilization purpose of the respondents. 22 percent of the respondents said that they have utilized for livelihood purpose, 19 percent of them utilized for agricultural purpose and another 2 percent reported to have utilized the loan for agricultural land purchase or development purpose. Add the above three factors, around 43% per cent have used for the direct livelihood purposes. On the other hand 17 percent and 2 percent (in total 19%) utilized for repayment of the external and SHG loans respectively. 14 percent utilized for buying clothes and other basic needs of the home and other 6 percent of them utilized for their children's education purposes. 3 percent of them utilized for to celebrate festival and 8 percent of them for health expenditure and finally 7 percent of them for another purpose.

This infers the most of the loans taken from the SHG are utilized for the livelihood and other development purposes instead of utilizing it for wasteful expenditures. This can be interpreted that there is a good orientation among members of the SHGs on loan utilization.

Graph-13: Asset Acquisition by Participating in SHG

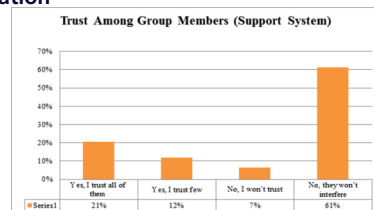


Source: Primary data

The above graph represents the asset acquisition of the respondents before and after joining the SHG. 41.5 percent of the respondents purchased the motor vehicle, and only 23.49 percent among them attributed it to their participation in the SHG. Similarly, 60 percent of respondents reported that they have bought home appliances and around 27.5 percent of them attributed it to their SHG participation. Interestingly 9.75 percent respondents reported that they have bought motorized agriculture equipment and 38 percent of them attributed it to their participation in the SHG. 25 percent have bought agriculture livestock, and half of them attributed it to their SHG participation. Only 2 percent respondents informed that they acquired agricultural land and 22.22 percent of them attributed it to SHG. Around 4 percent of the respondents have bought the commercial land and 25 percent of them attributed it to their participation in SHG.

Although some respondents have acquired different assets in the last three years, the effect of Sanjeevini appears to be minimal.

Graph-14 Support from the Group Members for Livelihood Diversification



Source: Primary data

About 61% of the respondents said their peers would not interfere or support in livelihood activities. It was also observed in the field study that cohesiveness among the group members to take up livelihood activities is not so encouraging. When it comes to the trust factor, only 21% said that they would trust their group members in total as a support in the time of family and livelihood distress and 12 percent respondents said they trust few.

This infers the need for augmenting social capital among and develop the SHGs in the forgotten lines of 'principles of affinity'.

SUGGESTION AND CONCLUSION:

The National Rural Livelihood Mission Framework document mandates the focus to be on building Human, Social, Financial and Economic capitals. It also provides the thrust on providing livelihood opportunity for the rural poor which is much more than mere augmenting their financial and/or economic capital. In true sense, the whole strategy and implementation process should have been foresighted in creating rural wealth, thus the poor will have a sustainable livelihood option. Even today the enabling environment to establish rural business or enterprise is not fully established. The non-farm income generation activities linked to local agricultural produce has not found the place in the implementation level. The non-farm livelihood promotion activities are largely happening in silo promoting wage employment outside the village.

Karnataka is the pioneer state in the SHG movement. The fundamental principles to have the members collective develop affinity and strengthen support system. In the due course of time and scale of operation, the groups are largely functioning for the purpose of credit and thrift. The support system for women is crucial for livelihood diversification.

On the other hand, there is a favourable condition to induce livelihood diversification as there is good orientation on utilization of loans for the productive purpose, accessibility to the credit, more than half of the members having literacy and significant portion of members are in the working age group.

The Sanjeevini program is being implemented in Mysore district as one of the five focussed districts under National Rural Livelihood Project from the year 2013-14. Mysore district being one of the NRLP districts is having extensive human and as well as financial resources. The effect of Sanjeevini on livelihood diversification of the beneficiaries is found to be insignificant and with the less pace. In order to expedite the process of livelihood diversification following measures are suggested:

- a. The cooperation of bankers to the SHGs should be increased with increased relationship building measures. The increased financial support towards livelihood activities is crucial and not merely micro-credit which will just help to the poor to manage their poverty
- b. Convergence with village panchayath and other line departments for accessing social entitlements and infrastructure under other development programs should be strategic and systematic.
- c. The program model should be systematically and logically progressed towards Wealth Creation Model
- d. Capacity building programs, for both group building and skill development should always be a prime focus of the mission.
- e. The livelihood mapping and planning activities at the village Panchayat level should be conducted in a systematic manner. Both short- and long-term plan should be developed considering the dynamic labour market.

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