CASE STUDY ON POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN INCOME GENERATION PROGRAMMES OF MAHILA SAMAJAMS AND DWCRA GROUPS
The study has been undertaken to understand the factors influencing participation in the IGP undertaken by Mahila Samajams /DWCRA group: to understand the consequences of participation in IGP: and to assess the relationship between PIDP, it's factors and consequences.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Mahila Samajams and women's groups formed under the Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) in Kerala, have initiated a variety of income generation programmes (IGP) for women. The Mahila Samajams are independent women organisations registered under the Societies Registration Act and make use of the opportunities offered mainly by the government and semi – government bodies. CSWB and CAPART for implementing IGPs. The DWCRA Group also undertakes IGPs by availing bank loans and subsidy from the government. The DWCRA was started in 19982 - 83 as a sub - scheme of the Integrated Rural Development Programme. It intends to provide income generating activities to women anticipating its positive impact on the economic and nutritional status of the family and attempts to provide an organisation support in terms of a delivery system for the assisted women. The scheme envisages formation of groups of 15 - 20 women's who are expected to come together for an activity of mutual interest to all.

In almost all development programmes initiated by the government an element of peoples participation is often built in, although the procedures for evolving people participation have mostly remained ill - defined and illusiv. Setting up of these voluntary groups (self - initiated or promoted) were intended to increase the stakeholder participation and thereby reach maximum benefits to the target groups. But in actual practice it does not take place because of various reasons. As a result some of the schemes are in a crisis and some others couldn’t achieve its expected goal. But in certain other cases there are indications of progress and effectiveness. Since there is ample scope for such agencies to come up and play a crucial role in the development of women and children, there is a need to understand the factors affecting participation and the consequences of participation. This study is initiated in this context.

METHODOLOGY

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated for the study:

I Formulation of group for IGP enhances participation
II Shared understanding between the chief functionaries, project staff and beneficiaries lead to enhanced participation.
III High level of beneficiary participation in IGP lead to goal accomplishment.
IV Formation of Group for IGP help goal accomplishment.
V High level of beneficiary participation in implementation IGP greater sustains it.

Sample:

The study sample was limited to 37 Mahila Samajams and DWCRA group working in 8 districts in Kerala. Among the total 26 are DWCRA Groups and 11 Mahila Samajams. Among the districts 2 selected from the southern part (Trivandrum and Kollam) four from central part (Kottayam, Iduky, Ernakulam, Trissur) and two from
The samples are drawn randomly from the functional ones and from the few recently closed. Among the 37 samples 34 were currently functioning and 4 had stopped functioning. More groups were selected from Trivandrum district because of its higher concentration.

Data Analysis

The collected data were coded soon as completion and were processed. The analysis method we used generally was cross tabulation and in certain correlation between different variables.

Results related to Hypothesis

1. Formation of Group (DWCRA) for IGP enhances Participation:

The analysis based on the data of CFs revealed that forming of beneficiary groups for IGP enhances the level of participation. The DWCRA groups’ high level beneficiary revealed participation whereas the proportions of beneficiary participation in case of Mahila Samajams (MS) are low.

Table 1: Nature of agency and level of beneficiary participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of agency beneficiary</th>
<th>Proportion of the level of Participation of beneficiary</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. and very low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS</td>
<td>100 (10)</td>
<td>50 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DWCRA</td>
<td>100 (24)</td>
<td>27.8 (7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Figures in brackets - number of respondents)

The table indicates that the proportion of the level of beneficiary participation of DWCRA Groups is high at 50 whereas the proportionate level with Mahila Samajams is low at 26.7. But the proportion in case of number and very low beneficiary participation is the highest (50) in MS and lowest (27.8) in DWCRA. In this connection it is interesting to analyses the data of the beneficiaries indication about their level of participation.

Table 2: Nature of agency and level of beneficiary participation

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. and very low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS</td>
<td>100 (10)</td>
<td>48.3 (14)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This table reveals that the level of participation is high among DWCRA (48.4) and that level is very low among MS (13.8) and no or very low participation is 48.3 percent among MS and in DWCRA it is only 23.5 percent. Moreover, both analysis highlighted a very high level participation in implementation.

All these indicate that there are associations with formation of groups for IGP and the level of participation. This demonstrates that beneficiaries got highly involved when they were given full opportunities to participation in decision making.

2. **Shared understanding leads to high level involvement**

The results of the analysis of the data of beneficiary and staff members revealed that shared understanding on participation required for the IGP, by the CF with the staff and beneficiaries, before its implementation leads to high level of participation in decision making process. The following table shows its positive relationship.

### Table 4: Shared Understanding and level of Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understanding</th>
<th>Level of Participation</th>
<th>Beneficiaries</th>
<th>Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No or very low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared</td>
<td>28.6(18)</td>
<td>30.2(19)</td>
<td>41.2(26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14.9(10)</td>
<td>17.9(10)</td>
<td>67.2(45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Shared</td>
<td>36.7(11)</td>
<td>33.3(10)</td>
<td>30.0(9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above table it can be understood that the shared understanding have an association with level of participation. Say for instance, in case of beneficiary the proportion high level of participation is 41.2 and in case of staff it is 67.2.

3. **Participation in decision making leads to goal accomplishment**

The outcome of the analysis of data in this regard indicated that there is relationship between participation in decision making process and goal accomplishment.
### Table 5: Participation in decision making and goal accomplishment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal Accomplishment</th>
<th>Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beneficiaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Prtn.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal achieved</td>
<td>63(51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38.5(10)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not achieved</td>
<td>33.3(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100(1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table indicates that 63 percent of the beneficiaries expressed that they have participated in decision making and full/partially achieved the stated goals of IGP. Similarly 61.5 percent of the staff also stated their participation in decision making and revealed that the beneficiaries achieved the stated goal.

The analysis of the data of CFs in this regard indicated a very close relationship between beneficiary participation in implementation and goal accomplishment. Among them 78.6 percent reported a high level beneficiary participation and full goal accomplishment.

Though all of these findings indicate a relationship between these variables we may not be say how much the beneficiaries have achieved. But this shows a positive qualitative trend.

### 4. **Formation of Group for IGP help goal accomplishment**

The results of the data received form various stakeholders revealed that formation of group for understanding and implementing IGP helps goal accomplishment. Among the CFs of groups 75 percent indicated goal accomplishment.

Assessment of the data of the staff members and the beneficiaries also show a similar trend. Among the 65 percent of the staff in the group in dictated full and partial goal achievement and among the beneficiaries 67 percent revealed full and partial goal accomplishment. In case of Mahila Samajam these rates are comparatively low. The above result demonstrates that the chances of goal accomplishment is more in case of forming beneficiary groups of for undertaking and implementing a programme.

### 5. If the level of participation of beneficiary in implementation is higher, greater will be the continuity (subsustainability)

The summarisation of data collected from various stakeholders indicated that the higher the level of beneficiary involvement in implementation of IGP, greater is chance of its sustainability.

For instance 61 percent of CFs indicated high level of beneficiary participation and continuity of the IGP and another 27 percent indicated moderate level of
participation and continuity. Among the beneficiaries 86.4 person indicated participation in implementation and community of the IGP.

Other results

1. **CFs participation in the whole process:**

   Our discussion with CFs, staff, and beneficiaries indicated that CFs were very actively involved in all processes from the formation stage to the evaluation stages of IGP. This is very high in case of all successful units; the majority of the defunct cases also indicated the non-participation of the chief functionaries. Further, the observation during the field visit revealed that the rapport between the CFs and the other members of DWCRA group is very high and they maintain a good relation which leads to effectiveness and successful achievements. But in most of the cases of Mahila Samajam we could observe that CFs take a control role which lead to suppression and non-cooperation of the beneficiaries and adversely affected the smooth functioning of the IGP.

2. During the discussion with the beneficiaries in the DWCRA group some of them revealed that involvement in this programme helped them gain financial benefit and improved thus living conditions. Moreover, the majority of them stated that the training which they received along with this programme helped improve these skills. Some of them even highlighted their increased confidence. The attitude and behavior of the failure groups revealed their disinterest, non-cooperation, lack of skills and non-facility as the reasons for failure. All these indicated that there is a close relationship between the level of participation and the effectiveness of the women's group. This was also more or less the same in case of Mahila Samajam.

3. It is generally that beneficiaries participation in decision making is limited to implementation of the programme and to contingency measures. In certain case this mentality also hamper the effectiveness of the project. The reason is that the beneficiaries don’t have any voice on the selection, formulation and monitoring of the programme and they were simply treated as 'receivers' not partners.

4. There are also remarkable venations in the understanding on participation between the stockholders. This was very apparent in this study when different stockholders have given responses with regard to sharing of understanding goal achievement etc. in the long run this will also adversely affect the effectiveness of the programme.

All the above results in indicated a strong relationship between various factors affecting participation in development project and the consequences of participation.
INTERPRETATION

The method used for data collection helped obtain relevant details on stakeholder (implementation agency and beneficiaries) participation in IGP programme. Before conducting the interview the research team could establish good report with the sample LOS which created a climate conducive to generating reliable data.

One of the hypothesis highlighted that the formation of beneficiary groups for formulation, implementation and evaluation of IGP for their improvement will result in greater participation of the community in the whole process and will help goal accomplishments.

Another hypothesis revealed that shared understanding on participation by the chief actor with all other actors will have a positive impact on participation. A clear understanding on the role and responsibilities of each actors of a programme helped them play their role in a more effective way, which will lead to effective participation.

The study also indicated a relationship between participation and goal accomplishment. To a certain extent this is true. But in addition to participation, some other factors, such as the relevance of the programme. Its backward linkage will also have remarkable influence on this.

The study indicated a relationship between the level of participation and sustainability. In addition to participation. Various other factors, such as, local environment interest and motivation of the partner and beneficiaries, will also influence the sustainability.

Comparing the group performance and the performance of the Mahila Samajams in undertaking IGP, it is advisable to do more programme through promoting beneficiary groups.

The levels of understanding of various stockholders on participation also have positive and negative consequences. So a general consensus as participation is required to the stockholders who are associated with the same programme.