

Role Of NGOs Towards Women Empowerment

P.Narumugai¹, J.Lalith Kumar²

ABSTRACT

Empowerment of women is the desperate need for the hour. Empowerment of women capacitates sustainable rural and urban development by the uplifting the economic, social and political status of women in India. Empowering the women in these aspects is necessary to convert the idle society into self-sustainable society. Women empowerment can be achieved through provision of adequate education facilities, political support, and effective legislation system and employment generation for women. NGO'S and the self-help groups (SHG) play a very vital role towards women empowerment by providing basic education, vocational training, training for self-employment, legal aid, protection for women and self-awareness programs. Thus they are mainly concerned with the upliftment of the women in the society. This paper looks into the process through which women empowerment is achieved and the status of women are uplifted with the aid of NGOs in the Indian scenario. This paper discusses upon the empowerment of rural women by means of NGOs and the advantages entrepreneurship among the rural women. This paper seeks to explore some measures that should be adopted in order to position rural women as equal players in entrepreneurship and economic development.

Key Words: Women Empowerment, Self Help Groups, Economic Development

INTRODUCTION

The organizations which do not come under the direct control of any governmental agencies or any other autonomous bodies and are engaged in providing financial and non financial helps to those who are deprived of certain rights in the society are known as Non Governmental Organizations. They usually do not have an intention to make profits. The concept of NGOs developed in India only after independence. The NGOs have played a vital role towards the development of rural India since 1970 s. Developmentalists, government and foreign donors have often felt that NGOs that are small scale, flexible, innovative and participatory are more successful towards reaching the poor and towards poverty alleviation. This consideration has lead to the rapid growth of the NGOs that are involved in initiating and implementing rural development programs. Initially, the NGOs did not have or did not choose any particular field of expertise and only had the common goal of helping the deprived. Later on, NGOs with their own field of expertise came up. This proved to be useful because, NGOs which have a specific field of expertise knew the exact options and choices that they had towards sorting out the problems in their own field. One example for such NGOs is the NGOs which strive towards women empowerment. In research paper is an attempt to examine the active role that NGOs can play in promotion of empowerment and self-employment among women and to get to know the effectiveness of NGOs in betterment of the lives of women towards empowerment. It also analyzes the role and nature of NGOs and examine their significance in the society for the better lives of women.

¹ P.Narumugai,II BBA LLB(Hons), Saveetha School of Law, Saveetha University, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

² J Lalith Kumar, Assistant Professor, Saveetha School of Law, Saveetha University, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

OBJECTIVES

- To discuss on the features which NGO requires to be effective in its functions.
- To identify the strategies followed by NGOs towards women empowerment.
- To identify the objectives of NGO that is focused towards women empowerment.

FEATURES OF NGOS³

NGO s are basically focused towards improving the socio economic conditions of the people with whom they work. The following are the important characteristics that an NGO requires to have in order to be effective:

- **Voluntary:** NGOs are voluntary organizations and are formed by a few concerned people who have their own self interest towards societal development. They are not formed out of anybody's compulsion. If formed so, then it will not be effective in its functions.
- **Legal Status:** NGOs are registered with the Government under the Societies Act, Trust Act, Companies Act etc. They are also registered under Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) with the ministry of Home Affairs of The Government of India. This enrollment with FCRA is required to be entitled to obtain funds from abroad.
- **Independent:** NGOs need to be independent in planning and implementation of their programs. Any other sort of external intervention may not allow the NGO to perform to its fullest capacity
- **Flexible:** NGOs must be flexible to interventions. They are not bound by redtapism and other bureaucratic obstacles.
- **Quicker in decision making:** NGOs take quick decisions in response to the needs of the society. The more quickly the decisions are taken, the faster the services reach the deprived.
- **High motivation:** The members and the staff are endowed with high motivation and inspiration to work for the cause of the people. They strive tirelessly to achieve their purpose for the benefit of the target groups.
- **Freedom in Work:** NGO workers need to enjoy freedom in their field work, in organising the community and carrying out the development schemes.
- **Catalytic:** NGOs enhance and induce the communities into social action but they do not dilute and distort themselves in the process of intervention.
- **People-Centered:** NGOs encourage people's participation. They plan things for the people and implement the same through the people. They make decisions by discussing with voluntary people and implement a decision that is the most effective towards helping people develop.
- **Non-profit oriented:** NGOs are not run with intentions of profit. The surplus and gains from economic projects, if any, are not distributed amongst the members or stakeholders. They are re-used for some other development purposes.

ROLE OF NGOS TOWARDS WOMEN EMPOWERMENT⁴

Women Empowerment has been the primary focus for both government and most NGO's. Voluntary action promoted by NGOs engaged in development play a significant role towards rural development which is dependent upon the active participation of the volunteers through Non-Government Organizations (NGO).

The various roles of NGOs towards women empowerment are described below:-

- Educating the Rural Women
- Supplementation of Government Efforts
- Efforts Organizing the Rural Women
- Building various Model and Experiment
- Ensure Women's Participation in their empowerment
- Mobilizing the optimum Resources
- Promoting Rural Leadership
- Representing the Rural Women
- Promoting Technology in Rural areas
- Providing effective & efficient Training to Rural Women.
- Monitoring and Evaluation.
- Impact assessment.

³ www.shodhganga.com

⁴ T.Ahmed, Hemalatha, A.Narayana, Role of NGOs In Women Empowerment With Special Reference to Uttar Pradesh, International Journal of Applied Research, ISSN Print: 2394-7500, ISSN Online: 2394-5869

- Planning and Implementation

STRATEGIC AREAS WHERE NGOs FOCUS IN ORDER TO BRING IN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT⁵

NGOs can play a meaningful role towards self-employment of women and their empowerment in the following ways:

- **Training & Skill Development :** There is a total 22.27% female work participation in India of which main workers contribute 16.03% and marginal workers 6.24%. Women constitute 90% of the total marginal workers of the nation. There are regional variations in work participation rates within the country from 4 percent to 34 percentage. Women often find employment as casual labour in agriculture and the growing informal sector. Efforts by NGOs focus on the empowerment of poor women. Their aim is to train and provide them with opportunities of self-employment to improve their social and economic status.
- **Legal Awareness and Property Rights:** In rural India, only 13% of the women enjoy rights of inheritance of land. In village usually the daughters marry and leave the village and hence no inheritance rights exist. The government schemes also allot land to male household heads. An adult son gets compensation for displacement but the adult daughter isn't allowed to enjoy her right to inherit. NGOs are working towards legal empowerment of women to generate awareness regarding their legal rights and also help them buy land by extending loan facilities.
- **Fair Trade:** Fair trade is the ideology of cutting down on the middlemen so that the product while reaching the buyer is still desirable, price-wise. Fair Trade is about giving poor people power. It is a vigorously developing business concept. It means paying producers a fair price for their work, helping them gain the skills and knowledge that they need to develop their businesses, and challenging ways of trading which keep people poor. NGOs often act as facilitators in this process especially while women are willing to take up this process, NGOs that fight for women empowerment support them financially.
- **Self-Help Groups:** Basically self help groups are small groups formed, mostly by women at the village level. The basic intention of everyone in the SHG is to invest in some small business and gain small profits. The NGOs that are women centric usually financially fund these people with initial loans with minimum interest rates for initial investment, which those women can pay back after reaping profits.
- **Skill Training:** The small scale sector of cottage industry accounts for over 10% of the production in agricultural and rural based industries in India. Government programs focus on skill improvement, employment generation, transfer of technology, rural industrialization and promotion of self-reliance amongst the people. NGO's assist in raw material procurement, skill training, marketing, coordination and inter institutional linkages and render advice to the government on policies concerning to the small-scale sector.
- **Capacity Building:** The technical competence of the people manning the delivery of the cooperative support services must be enhanced and adopted to the specific requirements of the cooperative societies. Keeping in view the present state of economic liberalization, immediate necessary measures must be taken by government institutions, cooperative sector, private sector, NGOs, national and international agencies to sufficiently equip self-employed women with information, knowledge, technology, training and managerial techniques.

SUGGESTIONS

- A general suggestion to all NGOs is that they can function effectively if they have a particular area of focus. This is because, an NGO that simply focuses on all aspects of the society cannot be at expertise in any of those aspects. Therefore, the NGO cannot perform to it's fullest capacity. Whereas if the NGO concentrates only on one area of focus, then it will be able to give its fullest potential towards resorting that issue.
- Women empowerment does not only mean the empowerment of female adults. Women illiteracy, and lack of empowerment in women persists in the society because these women were not educated when they were young. Therefore if complete women empowerment has to be achieved, then the girl children need to be educated. Only then will the future nation have empowered women population.
- In addition to their programs and projects, in order to stay attached to their missions, NGOs focused towards women empowerment must have internal good governance which contributes towards transparency and accountability. Only then will people join their missions and also support them financially.
- All women centric NGOs must have a strategic approach that will expand their scope towards reaching women and empowering them. Only a strategic approach will lead to faster results.

⁵ Role of NGOs in Promoting Self Employment of Women

CONCLUSION

Empowered women have a feminist ideology and wish to empower other deprived women. These empowered women by associating with an NGO whose mission is closely related to their ideology, will be able to realize their beliefs, and this gives them a high level of satisfaction and accomplishment. Earnings and independence of women must be the primary mission of these women centric NGOs. Although existing progressive affirmative action programs help many persons of different sections achieve social and financial status in India by providing entry into elite professions and the political arena, more attention should be paid to the education and empowerment of underdeveloped and vulnerable women in rural areas. Governments and volunteers can make an effort to ensure that more women, especially those from backward regions, receive higher education and training in interpersonal skills and are recruited to volunteer. Furthermore, there is a need for public support to enable wider diffusion of some of the key themes that are part of the feminist perspectives, namely, concern for equity and social justice. If more people are exposed to such ideology, more may take action in the form of starting NGOs or by supporting the entrepreneurs that run the NGO. It has to be ensured that those involved in social work and in volunteering should be able to receive publicly available resources to support the formation of organizations. These include training programs and mentoring services to facilitate the formation of NGOs. If such programs can be made available to those who are starting NGOs, or who are in the process of doing so, they may be able to increase the chances of success to those entrepreneurs. Thus the role of NGOs towards empowerment of women is very crucial in the Indian scenario.

REFERENCES

- www.shodhganga.com
- T.Ahmed, Hemalatha, A.Narayana, Role of NGOs In Women Empowerment With Special Reference to Uttar Pradesh, International Journal of Applied Research, ISSN Print: 2394-7500, ISSN Online: 2394-5869
- Role of NGOs in Promoting Self Employment Among Women
- M.Kumaran, Roles, Responsibilities and Trends of NGOs In Women Empowerment