

## **BARRIERS TO WOMEN EMPOWERMENT**

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Women in particular and their groups in general have been facing various constraints in their way to achieve empowerment. To employ proper remedies, it is very important to find out the problems and constraints faced by the women members as well as their groups. Women cannot smoothly perform functions of their groups if they continuously face the problems. Therefore, in this study, it has been tried to find out the various obstacles faced by the women and their groups.

This chapter deals with the constraints faced by the women members of the selected Self-help Groups of Sonari Development Block.

### **7.1 NEGLIGENCE BY OFFICIALS**

Regarding formation and functions of Self-help Group, the core role of the Block Development officials is that they should visit the field and make reports on status, functions and marketing of Self-help groups by interacting with Panchayat members and Self-help Group members. But the respondents have claimed that they do not get adequate support from the officials and members of Block Development Office. It is also reported that most of the time they are not present in office when the members

want to meet them to know any information regarding their group. The main responsibility of the officials is to motivate the poor, especially the ignorant women to involve in income generating activities. But in reality, they detach themselves from such type of responsibilities.

## **7.2 PROBLEMS RELATING TO RELEASE OF LOAN**

The Panchayat plays a crucial role in the process of development of Self-help Groups. Their major role is to identify of poor people living below the poverty line (BPL). They are expected to help in the formation of groups, selection of economic activities for the group etc. The women members of the Panchayat play active role in the process of organisation and proper functioning of women Self-help Groups. In getting loan, the Panchayat members help the Self-help Group members.

The respondents have informed that in playing these roles sometime the Panchayat members show negligence and biased attitude towards Self-help Groups. In addition, sometime in certifying BPL families they show biased attitude.

## **7.3 LACK OF ADEQUATE TRAINING**

Training is a major component of any development programme. There are three types of training requirements for the Self-help Groups.

- (i) Building of Managerial capacity.
- (ii) Up gradation of skill.
- (iii) Application of modern technology.

It is very much necessary to build the managerial capacity of the group members for smooth running of their Self-help group. As like, it is also important to develop the

skill of the members of group in selected activity. To upgrade their skill they must have to know the applications of modern techniques relating to their activity. Therefore, the members of Self-help Group should be trained in all these areas. The aim of the training is to make group competent and capable of running an income generating activity and to make the self-help Groups sustainable.

One of the major problems faced by the women is the lack of adequate training. Women respondents have reported that they need adequate training for smooth handling of their groups. Most of the members even do not know about loan disbursement, bank assistance, formation and maintenance of groups and so on. They need proper training. Therefore, training is necessary for giving knowledge about credit disbursement, promotion and coordination of groups for credit holders, knowledge of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial activities etc. On the other hand, training centres should be nearby their villages or within the block. It is also important task of the officials to inform the beneficiaries about new government programmes from time to time.

But the respondents have reported that the training organizers are unable to cover all the members of Self-help Groups in the training programme. So, women remain apart from getting proper training.

It is also reported by the women that the training programmes attended by the the members were not suitable and sufficient for them, because all the training programmes are not related to their product enterprise.

### 7.3.1 IMPEDIMENTS TO TRAINING

Women of the rural areas are usually under the male dominated authority. Traditional division of roles and responsibilities among the male and female members of the household obstruct women in their marketing, attending meeting and also their mobility outside their household

Women are facing various impediments to participate in training programmes. The family members, basically the head of their family and husband, do not want mobility of the female members outside their family boundaries. The women have responded that their family members believe that major functions of women should be domestic and women cannot smoothly perform economic activities like men. Sometimes scare for outsiders' contempt or violence, their family members make barrier to go outside from home. Most of the respondents have replied that due to pressure of domestic works like housekeeping, child caring and agricultural activities they can not smoothly perform their group activities and participate in training programmes.

**Table 7.01 Pattern of impediments to training**

<b>Pattern of impediments</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Pressure of family work	227	78.27
Motivation of Non participation	17	5.86
No allowance from home	46	15.86
Total	290	100

Source: Field data in Sonari Development Block, July 2012

Data shows in table 7.01 impediments faced by the women. Out of total respondents 78.27% have told that pressure of their family work and responsibilities do

not allow them to attend training programmes. Moreover, most of the time women have to busy in paddy field and can not participate in training programmes. 5.86% women do not want to participate in training programmes due to their non participation motivation. Because training centres are organised far from their villages and block. 15.86% have responded that during the time of cultivation their family members or husband do not allow them to go outside for whole days.

#### **7.4 LACK OF PROPER MONITORING**

Success of any self-employment activity largely depends upon proper monitoring by implementing agencies. Proper monitoring gives courage and support for smooth running of the activity. Regarding the monitoring of Self-help Groups the concerned agencies look into some aspects like maintenance of accounts of the group, regular meeting and cohesiveness of the group, repayment of bank loan, marketing linkage and exposure, involvement in social services and general welfare activities of the community etc.

The respondents have claimed that the assistances of the agencies, Panchayat members, and block members are absent. There is lack of cooperation between the officials and members of the Self-help Groups.

#### **7.5 LACK OF EXHIBITION**

Role of exhibition is very important in marketing and improvement of Self-help Groups. One of the major tasks of Self-help Group is to select an appropriate productive activity. But members are unknown about the market potential of their productive work. They are also not aware of the new ideas or new profit generating economic activities. Therefore, to identify the market demands the exhibition is

important. It can also be possible displaying their products in exhibition. The respondents have reported that they did not get information regarding the exhibition.

## **7.6 LACK OF MARKETING**

Marketing of the goods produced by the Self-help Groups is an important task. If there is a proper market for the sale of their products, the group will never lose its interest. Mostly women have engaged in home based production. Still most of the selected groups could not take income generating activities due to the lack of proper market. On the other hand their home based product could not compete with the products of the global market. In addition the women have lack of idea regarding marketing. These types of problems hamper the women Self-help Groups in the path of achieving empowerment. They demand special attention from the officials and members of the Block Development office, Panchayats and implementing agencies in this context.

## **7.7 PROBLEMS FACED BY GROUP MEMBERS**

Cooperation, collective efforts, equal participation of the members in the group activities are the major energies for smooth management of Self-help Groups. Conflict and irregularity are the main constrains on path of success of Self-help Groups. Many Self- help Groups have stopped to function due to these types of reasons. The selected members of Self-help Groups have reported that some time they face such type of problems among the members. This type of situation creates barriers in the path of attainment of empowerment.

Due to some unskilled members in their groups, women cannot smoothly perform their group activities. Therefore they have responded that they need more training relating to their income generating activities. Moreover, due to some

uneducated members of their groups, they face problems in performing economic activities like transaction with banks, maintaining group funds and marketing. It is also known from the respondents that sometimes conflicting situation is happened among the members of the groups. This type of situation is created due to different reasons such as differences in opinions of the members regarding their group management and activities.

The women have responded that many times the group face problems due to some non energetic members of their group and irregularity of some members obstruct their group activities.

## **7.8 CONCLUSION**

From the discussions in this chapter, it is clear that the women in particular and their group in general have been facing various problems in their path of attainment of empowerment. One of the major problems faced by the women is lack of adequate training. The women respondents have replied with dissatisfaction that most of the members among them even do not know about loan disbursement, banking services, and management of group. Therefore they need proper training. Training is necessary for giving knowledge about credit disbursement, promotion and coordination of groups for the members, knowledge of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial activities. The women who attended training programmes earlier have responded that all the training programmes were not suitable and sufficient for them, because all the programmes were not related to their product enterprise. Moreover due to pressure of domestic works like housekeeping, child caring, agricultural activities etc women can not give sufficient time to their group activities and participate in training programmes.

It has been revealed from the study that sometimes women do not get adequate support from the officials and members of Block office and Panchayats. In swift disbursement of loan the Panchayat members show negligence and biased attitude towards their group.

The groups have been facing problems within their groups. Many times due to presence of unskilled members in their group they cannot smoothly perform group activities. Sometimes conflicting situation takes place among the group members due to different opinions regarding their group management and activities. The study has divulged that because of some uneducated and non energetic members in their group, they face problems during the time of discussion of group funds, credit disbursement etc. The women have responded that irregularity of some members obstruct their group activities.