

ROLE OF MAHILA SAMAKHYA KARNATAKA IN THE EMPOWERMENT OF RURAL WOMEN THROUGH EDUCATION PROGRAMMES AT MYSURU DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT--Mahila Samakhya programme was initiated in 1989 by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) under the Department of Education, Government of India with the aim of empowering rural women. The article assesses the various Educational programmes undertaken by Mahila Samakhya Karnataka (MSKn) at Mysuru District. The sample size comprises of 360 women respondents and the data collected was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The results reveal that, 90% of the respondents found the programme to be extremely effective, more than 85% possess awareness on education mainly due to this programme and over 75% of the knowledge gained is utilized by the respondents to become confident and also to encourage their children and family to obtain education. It is concluded that, MSKn programme has played a significant role in the empowerment of rural women through Education programmes.

Keywords--Mahila Samakhya Karnataka, Education, Women, Empowerment, Awareness.

I. INTRODUCTION

Women play multiple roles and contribute significantly for the wellbeing of the family and the Society. In the rural areas, women are found to be playing traditional roles, bound by superstition, illiteracy, patriarchal norms and social issues, which are hindering their process of empowerment. The Government of India has taken several measures to empower women and to strengthen them to face the challenges.

In the recent years, the notion of women empowerment has endured a massive change from welfare oriented approach to equality approach. It is regarded as a method by which the helpless gain a better control over the circumstances of their lives. Social researchers, scholars, reformers, policy makers have considered Education as one of the means for empowerment of women as it facilitates women to deal with the problems themselves, to look after their families and further to communicate in a better way in the society.

“Empowerment is a process, which helps people to gain control of their lives through raising awareness, taking action and working in order to exercise greater control. Empowerment is the feeling that activates the psychological energy to accomplish one’s goals” (Indiresan, 1999). Women are said to be empowered whenever

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they are in a position to make use of all their rights and technological facilities on their own. The attitudinal change and awareness programmes are the main strategies for empowerment. (Yashoda.R, 2007).

The National Policy on the Empowerment of Women (2001) has laid emphasis on social, financial empowerment, wellbeing, sanitation, housing, better conditions for women, organizing gender sensitization programmes and building up association with voluntary associations and NGOs.

Mahila Samakhya programme was initiated in 1989 by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) under the Department of Education, Government of India in order to meet the goals of the New Education Policy of 1986 which gave prominence for education projects and interventions to bring about gender equality. The programme was initially executed at Gujarat, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh, and was later extended to other States namely Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Kerala, Uttarakhand and Madhya Pradesh.

The word Mahila signifies 'Women'; 'Samakhya' is a compound of the Sanskrit word 'Sama' signifying 'equivalent' and 'akhya' signifying 'to be valued or weighed'. (Nualat, Gemma, 2012). Education is considered as a basic tool by Mahila Samakhya for empowering women. It focuses not only to make women literates but also to create awareness and advancement in their skills, confidence and bring changes in them as well as in the society. This programme received assistance from State government, UNICEF and World Bank. For its services rendered, it was conferred with 'Noma Literacy Award' by UNESCO in 2001. It also received 'Laadli Media Awards' for Gender Sensitivity 2011-12, Southern Region.

Since its inception, Mahila Samakhya Karnataka (MSKn) is involved with planning and executing programmes for empowerment of rural women. At Mysore District, in 05 Taluks out of 07, namely, H.D.Kote, Hunsur, Periyapatna, K.R.Nagar and Nanjangud, MSKn programme was implemented in 1989. By 2014 MSKn was functioning in 18 Districts of Karnataka. But in the year 2014, MSKn was withdrawn from 09 Districts of Karnataka namely, Chamarajanagar, Bellary, Koppal, Bijapur, Bagalkote, Bidar, Gulbarga, Raichur including Mysore District. Currently MSKn is working at only 09 Districts - Yadgir, Dharwad, Gadag, Haveri, Chitradurga, Belagum, Kolar, Ramnagar and Chikkaballapur and the reason for the withdrawal is to facilitate the MSKn Federations to function independently.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the effectiveness of the Education programmes of MSKn at Mysuru District
2. To highlight the awareness of respondents on Education programmes in the area selected for the study.
3. To focus on the respondents utilization of knowledge obtained from Education programmes of MSKn at Mysuru District.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Eesani Kandpal, et al (2012) conducted a study on the Impact of Mahila Samakhya on empowerment of women at 6 districts of Uttarakhand with a sample size of 487 women. Survey method is adopted and the primary source identifies the access to outside employment, physical mobility and political participation as three important components of women empowerment. The results have shown that participants of Mahila Samakhya are significantly more empowered than non-participants and both directly and indirectly it has succeeded in

empowering women. They have suggested for further research to understand the indirect effects of this programmes.

Barberillo Nualart, Gemma (2012) has analyzed the impact of the programme of Mahila Samakhya on women and girls education by adopting case study method at Bihar. The researcher has applied two theories of Empowerment i.e Methodological Guide of Women Empowerment and the Elisheva Sadan's Empowerment theory. The article suggests the implementation of an empowering education, apart from the formal education to help women and girls overcome inequalities in education. For the purpose of this study qualitative data is used more than quantitative data and the results revealed that Mahila Samakhya programme in Bihar has been successful in educating women and Bihar and bringing them to the mainstream of the society.

Sunitha Nayak(2005) in the article, has made an attempt to analyze the reasons responsible for educational backwardness of women in Orissa. The author has opined that, the education is an urgent requirement for empowerment of women in India. In this article mention is made of Mahila Samakhya and its programmes and recommends for to increase the capacity of Mahila Samakhya federations, sanghas and orientation of staff needs to suit the changing concerns of women. The article stressed on greater networking and a more robust state resource centre to sustain the efforts of sangha women to resolve sensitive issues.

MSKn programme has functioned over 25 years at various Taluks of Mysuru District for the empowerment of rural women. The review of literature on the topic revealed that, though studies have been conducted, they have not focused particularly on Mahila Samakhya Karnatka's Educational programmes in empowering rural women. Hence, the present study is significant to fill the gap.

IV. METHODOLOGY

Sample size

For the purpose of the study only 03 Taluks of Mysuru District namely Nanjangud, Hunsur and Periyapanta are selected where MSKn Federations are functioning effectively. In these Taluks, a total of 4479 women are members of MSKn Sanghas. The sample size was decided based on the Morgan table. The total number of women respondents included in the present study is 360. 06 Sanghas from each Taluks which amounts to a total of 18 Sanghas that are functioning for more than 10 years are selected randomly. The data is collected from 20 women belonging to selected Sanghas who are in the age group of 30–69 years.

Tools employed:

Interview Schedule was prepared to extract relevant information from the selected respondents based on the objectives of the study.

Procedure

Primary source of data was collected by conducting field visits, using Interview Schedule and Focused Group Discussion methods. Details of the programme was also obtained from programme organizers, trainers, resource persons in the field and the beneficiaries, through interaction and observation methods.

The data was scrutinized and coded and analyzed using Descriptive statistics which included frequency and percentage and for the inferential statistics chi-square tests was used. Tables 1 to 3 present the details of the data collected on the study, its interpretation and the results of chi-square tests.

V. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Table 1, indicates the Effectiveness of various MSKn programmes on Education. The responses of respondents are as follows.

Mahila Saksharatha Kendra: 59.4% of the sample indicated that Mahila Saksharatha Kendra was extremely effective and remaining 40.6% of them indicated effective.

Literacy camps: Majority of the sample (90.8%) responded that literacy camps were extremely effective and the remaining 9.2% of them agreed for the programme to be effective.

Enrolment campaign: 91.7% of the sample considered Enrolment campaigns to be extremely effective in educational empowerment and the remaining 8.3% of them have responded for the programme to be effective.

Street plays and Jathas: From the table it is clear that, 90.3% of the sample consider Street plays and Jathas to be extremely effective and the remaining 3.1% and 6.7% of them responded for the programme to be effective and moderately effective.

Awareness programmes on education: 89.4% of the sample responded that Awareness programmes on education were extremely effective and the remaining 10.6% of them agreed on the programme to be effective.

Table 1, clearly indicate that, more than 90% of the respondents consider most of the MSKn Education programmes to be extremely effective and only Mahila Saksharatha Kendra programme is considered to be effective by 40.6% of the respondents. The results of the Chi-square test revealed that, there is a significant association between MSKn Education programmes and its Effectiveness. Hence, it can be inferred that, MSKn programmes on Education are extremely effective as there were found interesting and easily understandable even by the illiterate women.

Table 1: Effectiveness of various MSKn programmes on Education Frequency and percentage of responses on for the empowerment of rural women and results of chi-square tests

Sl. no	Particulars		Effectiveness					Test statistics
			Not at all	Slightly effective	Moderately effective	Effective	Extremely effective	
1	Mahila Saksharatha Kendra	F	-	-	-	146	214	X ² =12.84 ; P=.001
		%	-	-	-	40.6%	59.4%	
2	Literacy camps	F	-	-	-	33	327	X ² =240.1 ; P=.001
		%	-	-	-	9.2%	90.8%	

3	Enrolment campaign	F	-	-	-	30	330	X ² =250.0 ; P=.001
		%	-	-	-	8.3%	91.7%	
4	Street plays and Jathas	F	-	-	24	11	325	X ² =526.0 2; P=.001
		%	-	-	6.7%	3.1%	90.3%	
5	Awareness programmes on education	F	-	-	-	38	322	X ² =224.0 4; P=.001
		%	-	-	-	10.6%	89.4%	

Table 2 shows the respondents Awareness on Education programmes. The responses of respondents are given below.

Table 2: Awareness on Education programmes Frequency and percentage responses on Awareness due to MSKn programmes on Education and results of chi-square tests.

Sl. no	Particulars		Responses		Test statistics
			Yes	No	
1	Right to education	F	358	2	X ² =352.04; P=.001
		%	99.4%	0.6%	
2	Sarvashiksha Abhiyan	F	304	56	X ² =170.84; P=.001
		%	84.4%	15.6%	
3	Scholarships for education purpose	F	337	23	X ² =273.88; P=.001
		%	93.6%	6.4%	
4	Adult Education	F	344	16	X ² =298.44; P=.001
		%	95.6%	4.4%	

Right to education: 99.4% responded Yes for having awareness on Right to education and only 0.6% of them said No.

Sarvashiksha Abhiyan: A sample of 84.4% indicated Yes and the remaining 15.6% responded No for the awareness about Sarvashiksha Abhiyan.

Scholarships for education purpose: Majority 93.6% of the sample indicated Yes while the other 6.4% responded No for having awareness on Scholarships for education purpose.

Adult Education: 95.6% of the sample indicated Yes while the other 4.4% responded No for awareness on Adult education.

The data in table 2 highlights that, more than 85% are aware of Education programmes and only 15.6% do not possess awareness on Sarva Siksha Abhiyan. This indicates that MSKn programmes have led to higher awareness on Education among women. The results of the Chi-square test revealed that, there is a significant association between MSKn programmes and the awareness obtained. Hence, it can be concluded that, their

awareness is due to their regular participation in the activities of MSK which can be utilized by them to become literates and also to get scholarship for their children.

Table 3 indicates the utilization of knowledge gained from Education programmes. The responses of respondents are as follows

Table 3 : Utilization of knowledge gained through MSK Frequency and percentage responses on the utilization of knowledge obtained through MSK programmes and results of chi-square tests.

Sl.no	Particulars		Knowledge utilization					Test statistics
			> 75%	75%	50%	25%	< 25%	
1.	Encouraging children and family members to obtain Education	F	271	89	-	-	-	X ² =92.01; P=.001
		%	75.3%	24.7%	-	-	-	
2	Overcoming Superstitious beliefs	F	149	211	-	-	-	X ² =10.68; P=.001
		%	41.4%	58.6%	-	-	-	
3	Think & Plan ahead for the future	F	102	203	55	-	-	X ² =95.32; P=.001
		%	28.3%	56.4%	15.3%	-	-	
4	Face the challenges with courage	F	147	197	16	-	-	X ² =145.62; P=.001
		%	40.8%	54.7%	4.4%	-	-	
5	Co-operate & act collectively in groups	F	184	170	6	-	-	X ² =163.27; P=.001
		%	51.1%	47.2%	1.7%	-	-	
6	Give prominence for Gender equality	F	251	107	2	-	-	X ² =260.45; P=.001
		%	69.7%	29.7%	0.6%	-	-	
7	To become confident	F	279	61	20	-	-	X ² =323.02; P=.001
		%	77.5%	16.9%	5.6%	-	-	

Encouraging children and family members to obtain Education: A majority of 75.3% responded above 75% on Encouraging children and family members to obtain Education while the remaining 24.7% responded for 75% on the same.

Overcoming Superstitious beliefs: From the table it is clear that, 58.6% responded 75% on overcoming superstitious beliefs while the remaining 41.4% responded for above 75% .

Think & Plan ahead for the future: 56.4% of the sample indicated the utilization of knowledge was 75% on Think & Plan ahead for the future. The remaining 28.3% and 15.3% responded for utilizing the knowledge above 75% and 50% respectively on the same.

Face the challenges with courage: 54.7% of the sample indicated the utilization of knowledge was 75% to face the challenges with courage. The remaining 40.8% and 4.4% responded above 75% and 50% respectively.

Co-operate & act collectively in groups: The majority of 51.1% of the sample indicated the utilization of knowledge was above 75% on Co-operate & act collectively in groups. The remaining 47.2% and 1.7% responded against 75% and 50% respectively.

Give prominence for Gender equality: The table shows that, 69.7% of the sample utilize the knowledge to above 75% on giving prominence for Gender equality in groups. The remaining 29.7% and 0.6% responded for utilizing 75% and 50% respectively on the same.

To become Confident: 77.5% of the sample indicated the utilization of knowledge to above 75% to become confident. The remaining 16.9% and 5.6% responded for utilizing 75% and 50% respectively.

Table 3. reveals that, majority of the respondents (75.3% & 77.5%) are utilizing the knowledge gained through MSKn Education programmes to over 75% to become confident and to encourage their children and family members to obtain Education. More than 50% of the respondents are utilizing 75% of their knowledge to overcome superstitious beliefs, to think and plan ahead for the future and to face the challenges with courage. No respondents responded for the utilization of knowledge upto 25% and below.

The Chi-square test revealed that, there is significant association between knowledge gained and its utilization. The utilization of knowledge is found to be above 75% which indicates that, by MSKn programmes women are not only becoming aware but are also making use of the knowledge in their day to day lives which helps in the process of empowerment.

VI. MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- 90% of the sample responded that Enrollment campaigns, Literacy camps, Street plays and Jathas and Awareness programs on education to be extremely effective programmes of MSKn on education.
- More than 85% of the respondents agreed that, the programmes have led to higher awareness on right to education, Scholarships for education purpose, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan as well as on Adult Education.
- More than 75% of the sample utilize their knowledge gained through MSKn programmes to an extent of 75% and above to become confident and encourage children to obtain education, to overcome superstitious beliefs, to think and plan ahead for the future, face the challenges with courage, to cooperate and act collectively in groups as well as to give prominence for gender equality.

VII. DISCUSSIONS

Empowerment of women in general and rural women in particular is essential to enable them to fully participate in all the development activities, utilize the benefits and privileges to the fullest as well as to take independent decisions in life.

The findings of the present study revealed that, MSKn Education programmes are considered extremely effective by 90% of the respondents. The reason can be attributed to its flexibility, its easily understandable contents and also found to be interesting as it adopts street plays and jathas, Enrollment campaigns involving Sangha women. Information is imparted on education through Awareness programmes and Mahila Sikshana Kendras which assist in create a learning environment.

Due to MSKn more than 85% of the women have become aware of the various education programmes. The awareness on Adult education will aid them in becoming literates, furthermore their awareness on right to education, SSA and scholarships given for education purpose will enhance the number of enrollment of children to schools.

The Knowledge gained through MSKn is utilized to over 75% for various positive reasons indicate that, the programme has benefitted rural women to a greater extent. The increase in their confidence level, courage to face the challenges, plan ahead for the future all indicate their process of empowerment.

The previous studies conducted by Eesani Kandpal, et al (2012), show that the members of MSKn are significantly more empowered than non-participants. Barberillo Nualart, Gemma (2012), Sunitha Nayak(2005) have found the MSKn programme implemented at different States to be victorious in empowering women through its education programmes.

The limitations of the present study are the selection of only 03 Taluks of Mysuru District. A larger Sample of respondents could also be have been considered.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Women are a significant segment of the society and their Empowerment is felt essential by every State and Nation. Education is one of a significant milestone of women empowerment, as it essentially makes difference in their lives and empowers them to face the difficulties courageously.

The findings clearly indicates that, the objectives of the present study are clearly met as the programme is found by majority of the respondents to be extremely effective, possessing awareness of the education programmes and utilizing the knowledge gained. Therefore, it can be concluded that Mahila Samakhya Karnataka has been successful in its endeavours and has played a significant role in the empowerment of rural women Thus, it can be stated that Education and empowerment reinforce each other.

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