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ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN EMPOWERING RURAL WOMEN: A CASE STUDY OF SELECT NGO'S IN SIDDIPET DISTRICT OF TELANGANA STATE

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ABSTRACT

Empowerment is a multi-dimensional process that helps women to gain authority and self-realization in improving their life standards. It signifies a change from a status of failure to recognition, success and also systematizes their lives and resources. Therefore, to empower women in rural areas the both central and state governments have perpetuated many schemes. But due to the illiteracy & poor education, malnutrition, lack of awareness and digital gap, rural women are very far to reap the benefits from such empowerment and economic development schemes. In this connection, NGO's the legally constituted voluntary organizations have been playing a significant role in the empowerment of such disadvantage's women, helping them stand on their own through their activities, which includes vocational training, welfare programmes, development-oriented activities, empowering women and weaker sections, protecting the rights of marginalized segments, protecting the environment, spreading literacy and education and other similar programmes. Keeping the imperativeness of women empowerment in the view the researcher made a present study to examine the role of select NGO's in empowering rural women in identified villages. The profile of the respondents reveals that about 74% are in the age bracket of 25 to 50, almost 92% members of any women empowerment scheme are married and sizeable amount, i.e., 95% respondents belongs to other than forward community. Further he has also tried to find the impact of such NGO's on improvement of their income levels and thereby satisfaction level and found that, the NGO's chosen for the present study were able to create an indispensable impact on the empowerment and development of the women beneficiaries. NGO's have their significant impact on effective implementation of various rural empowerment schemes in the selected villages. 70 percent of respondents have opined that they came to know the existence of schemes, availability of benefits of different schemes through the training programs and awareness activities arranged periodically in their respective villages by these NGO's. Regarding to economic progress, majority of them (77%) have responded that the schemes have gave a fillip their monthly income by 2000 to 3000 per month, which was indeed by the educational support of the NGO's itself. Based on the impact parameter, it is found that good number of respondents have (77%) also opined that their life style, standard of living, cost of living and family exposure have remarkably raised to appreciable level and resulted for rely on their own resources by increase of their regular income levels. Almost 85% of the respondents are stratospherically happy with the impact of the schemes on their economic improvement. At the end, for their more conducting role and strengthening the initiatives of the NGO's the researcher earnestly appeals to the government should ponder over the point providing technological support, financial assistance and need based training to the organizers of the NGO's.

KEYWORDS

NGO, women, empowerment schemes, income development

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INTRODUCTION

In a common parlance, a rural area is a geographical entity located outside the towns and cities. In authoritarian way it can be defined as domain encompassing all population, housing and territory not included in urban area. According to Indian planning commission and NSS, it is a place wherein maximum population is 15,000, population density is up to 400 per square kilometer and 75% of male working population involves in agriculture and its allied activities is rural area. So, 70% (2011 Census) of Indian population stays in rural and suffering with myriad problems like dependence for sustenance on agriculture, poor wage system, malnutrition, distress migration, lack of access to quality healthcare and education and poor awareness and implementation of government schemes. As the development of rural areas is very prominent indices of growth and progress of any nation, India as well as new born state of Telangana has taken more and more initiatives for upliftment of downtrodden rural communities by promoting development programs like poverty alleviation, employment generation and social security measures to empower the rural areas. According to the ministry of rural development, government of India has been earmarking 105,447.88 crore (16 Billion USD) annual budget for rural empowerment schemes (IPC reports). Indeed, increasing the degree of autonomy and self-determination at gross root level by infusing concrete awareness and usage of numerous rural development schemes is the true empowerment, for that government at different levels and its organized mechanism have been putting indefatigable efforts. Apart from this, many an NGO's also have registered very impressive place in educating people of rural India on various rural empowerment programs.

NGO'S IN INDIA

Non Government Organizations (NGO's) are voluntary, autonomous, nonprofit organizations or group of people established to organize awareness programs on government schemes, activities, initiations apart to address various problems and difficulties prevail in rural society. Further they educate rural people by inculcating zeal over power dynamics at work and gaining skill and capacity building so as to secure reasonable control over their lives. Perhaps registration is not mandatory for NGO's but to get certain government benefits and recognitions they may register under societies registration act 1860 or Indian income tax act 1961. NGO's in India are committed to social justice, inclusive development and also contribute for healthy human rights. NGO's indeed aim at dissemination of required information and promotion of sustainable development initiatives, in respect of the needs of underrepresented and marginalized sectors of society. According to the reporting of The Indian Express dated 1-8-2015, India has 31 lakhs NGO's, more than double the number of Schools, 250 times the number of government hospitals, one NGO for 400 people as against one policeman for 709 people. Besides, more than 82,000 NGO's are registered in 7 union territories, further in Delhi alone there are 76,000 NGO's. if we contemplate state-wise split up Utter Pradesh is at the top with 5.48 lakhs followed by Maharashtra 5.18 lakhs and Kerala 3.7 lakhs (The Indian Express).

For the present study I have taken Three NGO's i.e., IRDS (Ideal Rural Development Society) NGO located at Irkode village of Siddipet Mandal & District, **Society for Womens Awareness and Rural Development**, located at Siddipet Town and **Adarsha Mahila Mandali** of Mohinpura of Siddipet district itself. All these NGO's actively involve and spread its activities across the district for poverty alleviation, women empowerment and to throw light and awareness over various government schemes for the development of poor in general and women empowerment schemes in particular.

JOB CHART OF NGO'S IN NUTSHELL

NGO's are playing imperative role in the empowerment of women. They adopt multiple strategies to improve the condition of the women. Non-governmental organizations are training women in various aspects to make them to come out of their inhibitions and to involve in fruitful activity. The scope of NGOs operational areas touches every walk of life (Patel, Dubey, 2010). The spread NGO activities in the country, as in many other parts of the world, are manifested in a number of spheres and in a wide spectrum of programmes. In welfare programmes, development-oriented activities, empowering women and weaker sections, protecting the rights of marginalized segments, protecting the environment, spreading literacy and education to name a few

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The following studies have been reviewed in the present paper, so as to reflect the findings in connection with NGO's role in rural empowerment:

P. Narumugai & L. Lalitha Kumari (2017) in their joint paper titled 'Role of NGO's towards Women Empowerment' have signified the women centric NGO's role to realize women beliefs, ideology, self-respect and upliftment. **Brahmbhatt Ankita R & Dr. Sheth Pinakin (2017)** in their paper 'The role of NGOs in empowering women-an empirical study of the selected NGOs of India' have found, that the level of impact of NGO's on empowering the women is high and quantifiable at maximum extent. **Narayana (2015)** in his paper entitled 'Role of NGO's in women empowerment with special reference to Uttar Pradesh' has observed that the empowerment of women facilities causes for sustainable rural development. He has also opined that the rural empowerment schemes transform the idle society into self-sustainable society. **Manju Pathania Biswas & Dr. Rama Mohan Rao (2014)** have examined the role of NGO's in empowering the women through Micro-finance and found that NGO has helped women to gain economic empowerment and improve quality of their life. **Mrs. Sheela Margret & Dr. N. Kala (2013)** have observed the impact of NGO's intervention on the empowerment of women, by their empirical research paper 'Study on impact of NGO interventions on the empowerment of women'. Further they have strongly made a conclusion that the demographic variables age, education, monthly income and years of affiliation influences the level of empowerment of the respondents.

H. Ramakrishna (2013) in his empirical research paper 'The emerging role of NGO's in rural development of India: An assessment' he has remarked as NGO's with their advantage of non-rigidity, local specific, felt need based, beneficiary oriented and committed and dedicated nature of service have established multitude of roles. **Patel, Dubey (2010)** have highlighted the scope of NGO's operational areas in spreading the rural empowerment schemes and have also tried to observe the geographical impact on effectiveness on such schemes in their book entitled NGOs and social work. **Jain (2006)** in his study on "Rural development Schemes: An overview" found that the NGO's have been acting as a strong bridge between the promoters of various rural empowerment schemes and their beneficiaries. He has also stressed that the NGO's have been established a strong sense of emotional bond with the inhabitants of the rural area by their numerous awareness and educating initiatives and activities. **Naznin Islam & Nahid Sultana (2005)** have highlighted the role of NGO's in providing legal aid, basic education and vocational training to the vulnerable women in rural through their paper 'Role of NGO's in empowering the vulnerable women: A study on ASD'. **Indu Bhaskar and Geethakutty (2001)** have examined the impact of initiatives of NGO's on socio-economic conditions of rural poor vis-a-vis- rural empowerment schemes through their working paper "Role of NGO's in rural development: A case Study".

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PRESENT STUDY

After reviewing the above literature, the researcher of the present study felt that the rural development schemes have been playing pivotal role in rural empowerment. It is undeniable that the economy of a nation can be improved only when the quality of life of the people residing in the rural pockets of a country improved by increasing standards of cost of living, quality of living and living with self-respect. To make access to all those aspects governments at central and state level ever designing rural empowerment policies, strategies and programs. Further they are also keen on their effective implementation and continuous improvement. On the other hand, NGO's performing variety of service and humanitarian functions to bring people concerns to government, as well as educating and training rural people on such rural development schemes. In this connection the researcher has tried to know whether the NGO's are really contributing positively on organization of awareness programs and training initiations on various rural empowerment schemes in the identified rural areas. Further it is also aimed to study the impact of their activities on rural empowerment.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the study are as per following:

1. To know the initiatives of selected NGO's towards women empowerment.
2. To examines the respondents' profile and satisfaction level over NGO's Initiatives.
3. To study the impact of NGO's activities on women empowerment.
4. To offer needy suggestions for NGO's conducive efforts vis-a-vis women empowerment.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Methodology is the scientific approach to conduct any study. For present study to design sample frame a non-probability sampling technique i.e., convenient sampling method is adapted apart from usage of schedules wherever required and IRDS an NGO is taken as a sample unit. Further to conduct this study, couple of villages Irkode and Burugupalli of the Siddipet district and 50 respondents from each village (Total-100) were taken as sample. Required data have been collected through primary source such as direct personal investigation and secondary sources of research articles, government reports and newspaper articles. Eventually the collected information has been tabulated and analyzed by using simple statistical techniques like averages and percentages.

INITIATIVES OF SELECTED NGO'S

The selected NGO's for the present study were started during the years 2008 to 2010 and right from their inception they have been very actively involved in conduct of short-term trainings and organization of various kinds of awareness programs and activities over government schemes that are connected with women empowerment. Organizing awareness programs, arrangement of enlighten lectures and invited talks, initiating skill development activities, identification of financial assistance agencies, promoting rural leadership, monitoring and evaluating the activities and performance of the beneficiaries, acting as bridge between women and schemes implementing authorities and assessment of schemes impact on their empowerment are some of their regular activities. MGNREG, SGSY, PMGSY, RTE Act, IAY, NSAP, IWMP, IRDP and Telangana government introduced social security schemes like AASARA, KALYANA LAXIMI, WIDOW PENSIONS, BEEDI PENSIONS, SELF HELP GROUPS, RYTHU BANDU are some of the rural and women empowerment schemes on which these NGO's light is shedding.

During 2017-18, when the researcher was working at Government Degree and PG College, Siddipet, has executed couple of MOU,s with these NGO's To exchange the latest know-how relating to various government schemes and policies of rural poor and for their wellbeing and the selected students of Department of Commerce of Government degree College Siddipet (A) will be trained and imparted knowledge/Skill in the programs and government initiatives. Further both parties have agreed to jointly organize skill development programmes on issues of the society in general and youth in particular and workshops on mutual agreed topics from time to time. The exchange of expertise in the form of preparation of questionnaires, schedules, interview formats and final documents on various government schemes and their initiatives will be made together.

ANALYSIS OF DATA AND INTERPRETATION

Under the head of analysis of data, the researcher has made an attempt to analyze the data collected through the questionnaire with the help of the statistical tools such as averages, percentages and ratios. Further the collected data is also constituted in the form of tables.

TABLE 1: PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Age	Below 25Yrs	25-40 Yrs	40-50 Yrs	Above 50 Yrs
	20(20.00%)	58 (58.00%)	16 (16.00%)	6 (6.00%)
Marital Status	Married: 92 (92.00%)		Un-married: 8 (8.00%)	
Education	Illiterate	Below SSC	Inter	Degree & above
	22(22.00%)	30 (30.00%)	46 (46.00%)	2 (2.00%)
Social status	SC	ST	BC	Others
	37(37.00%)	11(11.00%)	47 (47.00%)	5 (5.00%)
Frequency of visit by NGO to village in a month	1 to 2 times in a month (47)	2-4 times in a month (33)	By Month (14)	Monthly once (6)
Knowing about Rural empowerment Schemes in %	Through News Papers (9.00%)	Through TV and Radios (11.00%)	By NGO's (70.00%)	From neighbors' (10.00%)

Source: Primary data compiled from Questionnaire

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to vertical totals.

The data in Table 1 reveals that 58.00 per cent of the respondents belong to 25-40 years age group, followed by 16 per cent belong to the age group of 40-50 years and the remaining respondents fall either in above 50 years or below 25 years age group. As the sample respondents are female, researcher has tried to know their marital status. Therefore, it is found that about 92 per cent are married and the very meager i.e., 8% are unmarried. The educational back ground indicates that 46 per cent of the respondents have Intermediate education and 30 per cent have below SSC as their qualification. Only 2% respondents have graduation and above qualifications and the remaining i.e., 22% are illiterates. It is to be noted that majority (76%) of the respondents have intermediate and below qualifications. When researcher has also tried to find out the social status of the selected respondents, it is found that 47% belongs to BC followed by 37 % SC, 11% ST and 5% other communities. Hence it may be inferred that very huge number (95%) of the respondents are other than forward community alone. Further the respondents were asked about the frequency of visit by the representatives of the NGO's and organization of different kinds of initiatives. The significant number of respondents (80%) has opined that the NGO's have been visiting the villages for organization of various activities almost 2 to 4 times in a month. Majority (70%) of the women have come to know about the various empowerment schemes through the initiatives of these NGO's only.

Satisfaction levels of respondents

The researcher through this paper has made an attempt to study the satisfaction levels of the respondents with the initiatives, activities and programs being organized by the selected NGO's in the identified villages. Following table -2 shows that majority of the respondents (54%) have opined that the initiatives of the NGO's are excellent followed by 31 percent good and 10 percent by average. So, from the table it may be concluded that the significant number of respondents are very much satisfied with the activities of the NGO's towards their empowerment.

TABLE 2: SATISFACTION LEVELS WITH THE INITIATIVES OF NGO VISA A VISA WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Sl. No	Attribution	No. of Respondents	Satisfaction level in percentage
1	Excellent	54	54.00%
2	Good	31	31.00%
3	Average	10	10.00%
4	Poor	03	03.00%
5	Very Poor	02	02.00%
6	Total	100	100.00%

Source: Primary data compiled from the structured Questionnaire.

Impact on monthly Income

The researcher to meet his objectives of the study has also tried to examine the impact of rural empowerment schemes in improvement of monthly income of the selected respondents of the two villages. It is found that there is impressive impact on monthly incomes of the respondents after becoming the beneficiary of the scheme. Table -3 reveals that about 42% have said that the impact of the schemes on their economic improvement is very high followed by 35% high and 11% moderate. But very insignificant i.e., 5 percent have opined that there is no or low impact at all on the progress of their incomes, even after their admitting into rural empowerment schemes. Further it was also studied the range of income levels improved by the families. Almost 77 percent of the respondents very positively expressed the satisfaction, saying that their family monthly incomes have been significantly raised in the bracket of 2000 to 3000 rupees. Hence the researcher has inferred that on an average the family admitted into any of the rural empowerment scheme has been earning about Rs. 3000 per month as an additional income to their regular income of the family.

TABLE 3: IMPACT OF EMPOWERMENT SCHEMES ON IMPROVEMENT OF WOMEN MONTHLY INCOME

Attribution	Impact Level		Monthly income level changes	
	Number of Respondents	Range of Income Improved	Number of Respondents	
Very High	42 (42.00%)	500-1000	04 (04.00%)	
High	35 (35.00%)	1000-1500	06 (06.00%)	
Moderate	11 (11.00%)	1500-2000	13 (13.00%)	
Low	07 (07.00%)	2000-2500	38 (38.00%)	
Very low	05 (05.00%)	2500-3000	39 (39.00%)	
Total	100 (100.00%)		100 (100.00%)	

Source: Primary data compiled from Questionnaire

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to vertical totals.

CONCLUSION

Therefore, through this study it has been found that the NGO's have their significant impact on effective implementation of various rural empowerment schemes in the selected villages. 70 percent of respondents have opined that they came to know the existence of schemes, availability of benefits of different schemes through the training programs and awareness activities arranged periodically in their respective villages by these NGO's. Regarding to economic progress, majority of them (77%) have responded that the schemes have gave a fillip their monthly income by 2000 to 3000 per month, which was indeed by the educational support of the NGO's itself on those women empowerment schemes. Based on the impact parameter, it was found that good number of respondents have (77%) also opined that their life style, standard of living, cost of living and family exposure have remarkably raised to appreciable level and resulted for rely on their own resources by increase of their regular income levels. Almost 85% of the respondents are stratospherically happy with the impact of the schemes on their economic improvement. Eventually, it was observed through this study that the NGO's have been playing very pivotal and Samaritan role in improving the capacity building, skill enhancement and boosting the morale of the rural villagers, their presence in implementation of such rural empowerment schemes cannot be ignored at all. Hence for their more conducting role and for more strengthening the initiatives of the NGO's the researcher earnestly appeals to the government should ponder over the point providing technological support, financial assistance and need based training to the organizers of the NGO's.

WAY FORWARD

In spite of appreciable contribution of NGOs for women empowerment the ground reality is not still admirable and encouraging. Many women are not yet empowered and do not have any power or freedom to take decisions either in their family affairs or in group they are participating. They cannot even spend their own money at their wish and will. Still lot more needs to be done on this front. Hence, government's contribution has to be immense. As per as various studies reviewed for this study, NGO's can only supplement the government's efforts. Government must focus more on providing education and empower underdeveloped and vulnerable women especially in rural areas. Furthermore, those involved in social work and in volunteering besides NGO's should be given publicly available resources like training programmes and mentoring services to support the establishment of NGOs. Undoubtedly, establishment of more NGOs will help in effectively fight against the issues faced by women, so government should encourage people to come forward and start them.

Finally, NGOs seem to have significant role in bringing drastic changes in the life style of women by providing legal awareness, light over property rights, capacity building and promotion of use of ICT. They are quite successful in making women to become independent and self-motivated and take their own decisions in matters concerning them by instilling leadership qualities and ensuring their participation. They have also contributed in increasing the literacy level and health of women. In order to make gender equality a reality, NGOs should continue their work in furthering women's cause in all walks of life like social, educational, economic and household. Unless meaningful changes are achieved in these fronts, holistic women empowerment will continue to remain elusive. NGOs have the necessary capacity to be the vehicle of change in these fronts.

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