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Determinants of group dynamics effectiveness among women self-help groups

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Abstract

Self Help Groups have become an important grassroots mechanism for promoting the socio-economic development and collective participation of rural women. However, the performance of self-help groups depends not only on financial access but several socio-economic, communicational and psychological characteristics of the members. The present study analyses the determinants of group dynamics effectiveness of women self-help group in Chirang district of Assam. The study was conducted during the year 2022–23 using an explorative research design. A total of 120 women respondents representing 12 functioning self-help groups were selected from six villages across Bengtal, Bijni and Sidli talukas of Chirang district. Ten members from each selected self-help groups were chosen through simple random sampling. Data were collected personally through a structured interview schedule. Eleven factors such as age, education, annual income, marital status, farm size, mass media exposure, cosmopolitanity, social participation, extension participation, economic motivation and attitude towards self-help groups were studied as determinants. The result evidently stated that half of the respondents were seen to be having high and very high group dynamics effectiveness, while 21.67 per cent were in medium category, 20.83 per cent in low category and only 07.50 per cent in very low category of group dynamics. The correlation analysis revealed that age had a negative and significant relationship with overall group dynamics effectiveness, whereas annual income, cosmopolitanity, extension participation and attitude towards self-help groups were found to have positive and significant correlation at the 0.01 level. Determinants like social participation and economic motivation were also found to have positive and significant relationships at the 0.05 level. Education, marital status, farm size and mass media exposure did not show significant relationships with overall group dynamics effectiveness. The result indicate that behavioural orientation and institutional engagement are stronger determinants of effective group functioning than basic demographic characteristics.

Keywords: Women, group dynamics effectiveness, self-help groups, extension participation, socio economic characteristics

Introduction

Mahatma Gandhi quoted “women are the noblest of God’s creation”. Indeed, women are the great teacher of all time; home is her school and family members her students. Development of rural women is very important for economic and overall development of any country all over the world. The self-help groups are the small economically homogeneous and harmonious group of rural women who voluntarily adjudicate to contribute to a collective fund to be given to their members in conjunction with the group’s commitment to strive towards unity, self-esteem and group consciousness, social and economic empowerment through democratic functioning. Via shared liability these groups allow the poor to solve the collateral protection issue and thus free them from the clutches of moneylenders (Stiglitz, 1993). Self-help groups have become an important grassroots mechanism for promoting the socio-economic development and collective participation of rural women in India. The Self-help groups approach enables individuals with broadly similar socio-economic backgrounds to organize themselves voluntarily around common needs and objectives. “Self-help groups, also known as mutual help, mutual aid, or support groups, are groups of people who provide mutual support for each other. In a self-help group, the members share a

common problem, often a common disease or addiction. Their mutual goal is to help each other to deal with, if possible, to heal or to recover from, the problem.” (Ahmadi, 2004) ^[1]. The very purpose of self-help group is to build the members in an all-rounder manner. The self-help groups provides the women a base for self-employment and empowerment through group dynamics.

The concept of group dynamics provides an appropriate framework for understanding these internal processes. Behaviourists studied that more than 50 per cent of the world’s activity are conducted in groups. People cluster together in millions of groups in order to satisfy their basic social, economic and biological needs. We also spend a significant amount of our time as a part of some or the other group hence, it becomes essential to understand the nature and formation of groups, what conditions facilitate their growth. The self-help groups provides the women a base for self-employment and empowerment through group dynamics. However, members of Self-help groups may differ considerably in their personal and socio-economic backgrounds. This may affect their opportunities, experiences and capacity to participate in group affairs. Understanding the relationship between some of the socio-economical, communicational and psychological characteristics of the self-help group members with the group

dynamics effectiveness has practical importance. If certain characteristics are strongly associated with effective group functioning, development agencies and extension organizations can design interventions that strengthen those factors. Taking into consideration of this, a study was conducted to identify the determinants for group dynamics effectiveness of women self-help groups in Assam.

Materials and Methods

An explorative research design was used in this study. The investigation was conducted during the year 2022-23 in Chirang District of Assam. Three talukas were identified for the study namely Bengtal, Bijni and Sidli. Two villages from each taluka were selected with the help of random sampling method. Therefore, total of 6 villages were selected for the study. From the selected six villages the self-help groups that are currently functioning and have been working for more than two years and above were selected purposively. Therefore, two self-help groups from each village were selected making a total of twelve self-help groups. From the selected Self-help groups, 10 members each were selected

with the help of simple random sampling method. Thus, a total of 120 self-help group members were selected from the three talukas for the study. The respondents were randomly selected irrespective of insured status. A well-structured and pretested questionnaire was used to elicit the data from the respondents. Appropriate statistical tools were employed to analyse the data and interpretations were made out based on the results of the analysis. The Overall group dynamics effectiveness of the respondents was measured and categorized into five categories i.e., very low, low, medium, high and very high by using an arbitrary method. Correlation analysis was carried out between the socio economic, communicational and psychological characteristics of the women members with the overall Group dynamics effectiveness.

Results and Discussion

Profile of women self-help group members

This describes about the socio economic, communicational and psychological characteristics of the members of the self-help group members.

Table 1: Distribution of self-help group members according to their socio-economical, communicational and psychological characteristics

Socio economical character n=120			
Indicators	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Age	Young	34	28.33
	Middle	76	63.34
	Old	10	08.33
	Total	120	100
Education	Illiterate (no schooling)	07	05.83
	Primary school (1 st to 8 th)	23	19.17
	Secondary school (9 th to 10 th)	60	50.00
	Higher secondary school (11 th to 12 th)	20	16.67
	Graduate and above	10	08.33
	Total	120	100
Annual income	Up to ₹ 1,00,000/-	45	37.50
	₹1,00,001 to ₹2,00,000	65	54.17
	Above ₹ 2,00,000	10	08.33
	Total	120	100
Marital status	Married	100	83.33
	Unmarried	09	07.50
	Divorced	00	00.00
	Widow	11	09.17
	Total	120	100
Farm size	Marginal (up to 1.00 ha)	27	22.50
	Small (1.01 to 2.00 ha)	81	67.50
	Semi medium (2.01 to 4.00 ha)	11	09.17
	Medium (4.01 to 10.00 ha)	01	00.83
	Large (10.01 and above)	00	00.00
	Total	120	100
Communicational characteristic			
Mass media exposure	Low	38	31.67
	Medium	57	47.50
	High	25	20.83
	Total	120	100
Cosmopolitaness	Low	31	25.83
	Medium	75	62.50
	High	14	11.67
	Total	120	100
Social participation	Low	33	27.50
	Medium	74	61.67
	High	13	10.83
	Total	120	100
Extension participation	Low	41	34.17
	Medium	68	56.67
	High	11	09.16
	Total	120	100

Psychological characters			
Economic motivation	Low	12	10.00
	Medium	75	62.50
	High	33	27.50
	Total	120	100
Attitude towards self-help group	Unfavourable	14	11.67
	Favourable	85	70.83
	Highly favourable	21	17.50
	Total	120	100

From the above Table 1, the profile of the respondents indicate that majority of the respondents (63.34%) belonged to middle age group, 50.00 per cent of women members were educated up to Secondary School level. A majority of 54.17 per cent of the respondents had annual income ranging from ₹1,00,001 to ₹2,00,000/-, majority i.e. 83.33 per cent of women members were married and 67.50 per cent members possessed small land holding i.e. between 1.01 to 2.00 ha. With respect to communication and behavioural characteristics it can be revealed that 47.50 per cent of respondents had medium level of mass media exposure, majority of women members (62.50%) fell under medium category of cosmopoliteness, 61.67 per cent fell under medium category of social participation, 56.67 per cent had medium extension participation and 62.50 per cent had medium level of economic motivation. A favourable attitude towards self-help groups was reported for 70.83 per cent of

respondents. This profile is important for interpreting the relational findings.

Overall Group Dynamics Effectiveness of the members of self-help groups

The distribution of respondents according to their overall group dynamics effectiveness was studied.

Table 2: Distribution of the self-help group members according to their overall group dynamics effectiveness

Sl. No.	Category	Frequency (n=120)	Percentage(%)
1	Very low	09	07.50
2	Low	25	20.83
3	Medium	26	21.67
4	High	30	25.00
5	Very high	30	25.00
Total		120	100

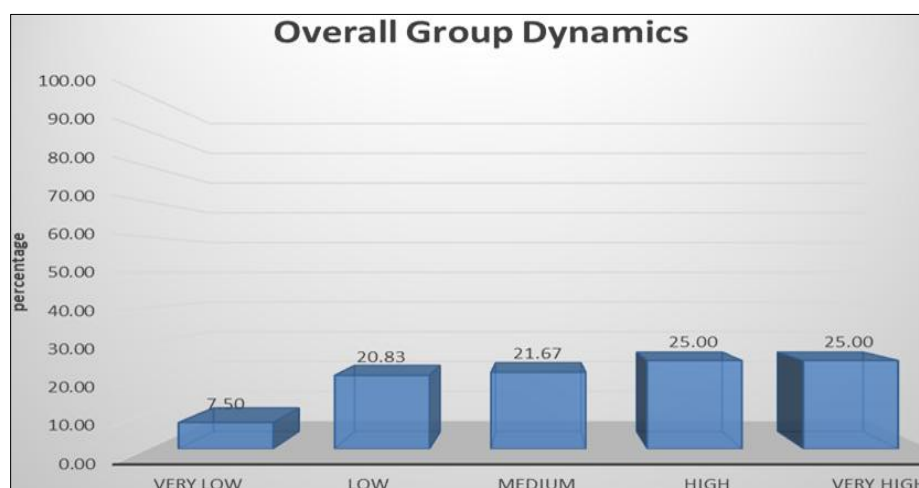


Fig 1: Distribution of respondents according to their overall group dynamics effectiveness

The data given in Table 2 shows the distribution of overall group dynamics effectiveness of the members. One fourth of respondents (25.00%) fell under very high category of group dynamics effectiveness, another 25.00 per cent fell under high category. A further 21.67 per cent of respondents had medium category, 20.83 per cent of respondents had low category and 07.50 percent respondents had very low level of Group dynamics effectiveness respectively.

Thus, it can be inferred that maximum number of self-help group members have a high to very high level of overall group dynamics effectiveness. Similar finding was reported by Darji (2018) [3] and Patil (2019) [9] where, majority of the respondents had high to very high level of overall group dynamics.

Table 3: Relationship between socio economic, communicational and psychological characteristics of the respondents and their group dynamics effectiveness.

Sl. No.	Variables	Correlation coefficient ('r' value)
1	Age	-0.314**
2	Education	0.070
3	Annual Income	0.240**
4	Marital Status	0.008
5	Farm size	-0.171
6	Mass Media Exposure	-0.046
7	Cosmopoliteness	0.247**
8	Social participation	0.199*
9	Extension Participation	0.438**
10	Economic motivation	0.224*
11	Attitude towards self-help group	0.346**

* Significant at 0.05 per cent level of probability

** Significant at 0.01 per cent level of probability

1. Age and Group Dynamics Effectiveness

With regard to the data presented in Table 3 it is revealed that age of the Self-help group members had negative and significant ($r = -0.314^{**}$) relationship with their group dynamics effectiveness. Thus, it can be said that as the age decreases the level of group dynamics effectiveness increases and as the age further increases the level of group dynamics decreases. Therefore, it can be concluded that young Self-help group members had high level of group dynamics effectiveness than old aged members as young members are more enthusiastic and passionate. Similar finding were reported by Ganguli (2005) ^[4], Bhatt (2010) ^[2], Parmar (2014) ^[8], Darji (2018) ^[3] and Patil (2019) ^[9].

2. Education and Group Dynamics Effectiveness

With regard to the data presented in Table 3 it has been revealed that education of the self-help group members had positive and non-significant ($r=0.070$) relationship with their group dynamics effectiveness which indicated that education of the members was not an important factor in determining the group dynamics effectiveness. Thus, it can be said that level of group dynamics effectiveness was observed similar among the different levels of education found within the self-help group members.

3. Annual income and Group Dynamics Effectiveness

With regard to the data presented in Table 3 it is revealed that annual income of the Self-help group members had positive and significant ($r=0.240^{**}$) relationship with their group dynamics effectiveness which indicates that annual income of the members was an important factor in determining the group dynamics effectiveness. Thus, it can be said that as the annual income increases among the members the level of group dynamics also increases. Therefore, it can be concluded that the members who earned more had more group dynamics effectiveness because earning more income is an important factor which always motivates an individual to perform higher and better in the groups. Similar finding was reported by Ganguli (2005) ^[4] and Purnima (2005) ^[6], Bhatt (2010) ^[2] and Patil (2019) ^[9].

4. Marital status and Group Dynamics Effectiveness

With regard to the data presented in Table 3 it is revealed that marital status of the self-help groups members had positive and non-significant ($r=0.008$) relationship with their group dynamics effectiveness i.e. the level of group dynamics among the members will remain same irrespective of their marital status which indicated that's marital status is not an important factor in determining the group dynamics effectiveness. Similar findings were reported by Prasanna (2009) ^[7].

5. Farm size and Group Dynamics Effectiveness

With regard to the data presented in Table 3 it has been revealed that farm size of the self-help group members had negative and non-significant ($r=-0.171$) relationship with their group dynamics effectiveness which indicates that farm size did not have any influence over the group dynamics effectiveness of the members, thus farm size of the members is not an important factor in determining the group dynamics.

6. Mass media exposure and Group Dynamics Effectiveness

With regard to the data presented in Table 3 it has been revealed that mass media exposure of the self-help group members had negative and non-significant ($r = -0.046$) relationship with their group dynamics effectiveness which indicates that the group dynamics were same irrespective of different levels of mass media exposure among the members thus, it can be said that mass media exposure of the members is not an important factor in determining the group dynamics effectiveness. Similar findings were supported by Prasanna (2009) ^[7] and Patil (2019) ^[9].

7. Cosmopolitaness and Group Dynamics Effectiveness

With regard to the data presented in Table 3 it is revealed that cosmopolitaness of the self-help group members had positive and significant ($r=0.247^{**}$) relationship with their group dynamics effectiveness. Thus, it can be said that as the level of cosmopolitaness increases, the level of group dynamics effectiveness also increases and vice versa. Therefore, it can be concluded that the members who were more cosmopolite had higher level of group dynamics compared to the other members who were less cosmopolite because the group dynamics effectiveness is highly influenced by communication and interaction with others, during the visit to the nearby and far place which also helps individual to receive more information from outside world. Similar finding was revealed by Purnima (2005) ^[6] Bhatt (2010) ^[2] and Patil (2019) ^[9].

8. Social participation and Group Dynamics Effectiveness

With regard to the data presented in Table 3 it is revealed that social participation of the self-help group members had positive and significant ($r = 0.199^{*}$) relationship with their group dynamics effectiveness which indicates that social participation of the members was an important factor in determining the group dynamics effectiveness. Thus, it can be said that the as the social participation increases the group dynamics also increases and vice versa. Therefore, it can be concluded that members who had higher social participation had high level of group dynamics effectiveness than the members whose social participation was low because the people with higher social participation establish better social contacts with other people, other groups and other agencies which helps them to acquire new ideas, information and skills useful to the group. Similar finding was reported by Prasanna (2009) ^[7] and Patil (2019) ^[9].

9. Extension participation and Group Dynamics Effectiveness

With regard to the data presented in Table 3 it is revealed that extension participation of the self-help group members had positive and significant ($r = 0.438^{**}$) relationship with their group dynamics effectiveness which indicates that extension participation of the members was an important factor in determining the group dynamics effectiveness. Thus, it can be said that as the level of extension participation increases the group dynamics effectiveness also increases and vice versa. Therefore, it can be concluded that the members who were actively participation in extension activities had higher

group dynamics effectiveness because they were having more outdoor knowledge regarding different topics in different fields which is intern is profitable for the group and the dynamics of the group. Similar finding was reported by Purnima (2005)^[6], Ganguli (2005)^[4] and Prasanna (2009)^[7].

10. Economic motivation and Group Dynamics Effectiveness

With regard to the data presented in Table 3 it is revealed that annual income of the self-help group members had positive and significant ($r=0.224^*$) relationship with their group dynamics effectiveness which indicates that economic motivation of the members was an important factor in determining the group dynamics effectiveness. Thus, it can be said that the members who had high economic motivation had higher level of group dynamics effectiveness and vice versa. Therefore, those members who would strive hard and make oneself aware about different aspects of profit maximization and were motivated to achieve certain economic level had higher level of group dynamics effectiveness. Similar finding was reported by Purnima (2005)^[6], Prasanna (2009)^[7], Darji (2018)^[3] and Patil (2019)^[9].

11. Attitude towards self-help group and Group Dynamics Effectiveness

With regard to the data presented in Table 3 it is revealed that attitude towards self-help group of the self-help group members had positive and significant ($r = 0.346^{**}$) relationship with their group dynamics effectiveness which indicates that attitude towards self-help group of the members was an important factor in determining the group dynamics effectiveness. Thus, it can be said that the members with a positive outlook and attitude toward self-help group had higher level of group dynamics effectiveness compared to the members who had moderate to negative outlook. Therefore, it can be concluded that positive attitude enables the members to perform and helps in better functioning of self-help group hence leads to higher level of group dynamics effectiveness. Similar finding was reported by and Kavitha *et al.* (2011)^[5] and Patil (2019)^[9].

Conclusion

In present days self-help group plays a very important tool in building the functioning capacity of the rural woman. From the present study, it can be concluded that the majority of the self-help group members had high to very high overall group dynamics effectiveness indicating relatively strong group functioning among substantial proportion of members. However total of 28.33 per cent remained in low and very low categories demonstrating the need of continue efforts to strengthen the group processes. Correlation analysis revealed that age, annual income, cosmopolitaness, social participation, extension participation, economic motivation and attitude towards self-help group showed significant association with functioning of group dynamism. Age showed negative and significant relationship with group dynamics whereas annual income, cosmopolitaness, social participation, extension participating, economic motivation and attitude towards self-help group showed positive and significant corelation. Education, marital status, farm size and mass media exposure did not show any significant

relationship.

The results therefore demonstrate that strengthening self-help groups require much more than providing financial assistance, rather complementing the financial assistance with extension contact, institutional exposure, social networking, and strengthening member's confidence in their groups. Developing agencies should therefore view self-help groups not as merely as credit delivery mechanism but as social and organisational institutions requiring continuous capacity building.

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