Role of Women in Economic Development : with special reference to Education and Women Empowerment in Nagaon Village of District Kamrup

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Abstract: Rural Development is the process of improving the quality of life and economic well-being of people living in rural areas. The process of development of a country would be incomplete unless women are fully involved in education and earning sources. Very often we talk about empowerment of women. Education and economic development is the prerequisite for empowerment of women. In this paper we shall discuss the role of woman i.e. their hard work and contribution to the family in economic development which will be based on the survey work and analysis done in the village Nagaon of Kamrup District.

Key Words: Women Education, Empowerment, sustainable development.

Introduction

Development of people must begin with development of their awareness of their surrounding and opportunities. Rural Development is the process of improving the quality of life and economic well-being of people living in rural areas. Women are central to the entire development. Rural women are key agents for development. They play a catalytic role towards achievement of transformational economic environmental and social changes required for sustainable development. The process of development of a country would be incomplete unless women are fully involved in education and earning sources. Very often we talk about empowerment of women. Women's empowerment has been regarded as a key factor to the sustainable development in the present era. Education and economic development is the prerequisite for empowerment of women. During the past three decades research on women have been considered important and women have come to the center point of different researches. The emphasis on research on women with a focus on their needs, perceptions, contributions and roles has resulted in a major critique in bringing several political and economical policies and minimizing gender gap. The inputs from direct research on women with references to their different roles at different time in the society have made a major contribution in bringing out needful policies and programmes of government. The productive but unpaid contribution of majority of women in household work as well as in agricultural sector remain invisible. Several initiatives have been suggested from time to time in government policies so that the contribution of women to household economy become visible which is one of the most important factor for transforming an weaker women to an empowered women. It is also equally important to understand that visibility does not mean only appearing in the advertisement. One of the powerful approaches to women empowerment is the formation of self help groups among women and making them financially independent.

Objectives

In this paper we shall discuss the role of woman, their hard work and contribution to the family in economic development which will be based on the survey work and analysis done in the village Nagaon of District Kamrup.

Methodology

The information required for the study has been collected by primary sources. The primary data has been collected by providing questionnaires to women of both North and South part of the village Nagaon located in the Baihata Chariali area. The questionnaires were mainly based on educational qualification, member of self help group, their earning sources, monthly income and also their future plans

Findings and Discussions

The collected data processed scientifically and findings are presented in the following tabular form which gives a clear picture of status of women of the village with respect to their age, educational qualification, income and future plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Below 20</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>41 – 50</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Above 50</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Educational qualification</td>
<td>No formal Education</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Below H. S. L.C.</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>H. S. L.C.</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the above table we have observed that out of the total surveyed women only three are unmarried which are below age 20 and maximum numbers of respondents are in the age group 30 – 40.

The important findings related to the surveyed women are presented as follows:

1. **Educational status of the respondents:** The educational status varies from illiterate to graduate. The study shows that 6% are illiterate, 23% are below H.S.L.C., 21% are H.S.L.C. passed, 10.5% are H.S. passed and only 13.5% are graduate.

2. **Occupation and Monthly income of the respondents**
The economic empowerment of women depend upon their earnings and contribution to the families. It has come to light through the survey that the women of the study area besides doing their household activities and taking care of children contribute to their families by more than one work according to their interest, requirement and convenience. Their contribution to the family and to the society as a whole is much greater though it is not visible. It has been found from the survey that 34% of the women have no income though they are involved in different activities like weaving, sewing, animal husbandry, livestock and farming. Traditional weaving skill is common among the women of the study area. Also poultry keeping is a common practice of women of this area. They generally keep pigeon, duck, hen which is a cheap source of nutrition for the whole family and others also. In case of animal husbandry the women of the area rear mainly cows and goats. From the table it has been found that 53.7% have income below Rs.5000. It is encouraging to find that 12% of the surveyed women earn more than Rs.5000 per month. Another important fact is that the women in the age group of above 50 are not literate but they earn themselves and want to increased their income in future. 

3. **Self Help Groups**
From the table it has been found that 89.5% of the surveyed women are housewife and 50% of them are member of Self Help Groups. They have also received financial aid from Government and they are also satisfied by the Government schemes.

4. **Satisfaction and future plan**
After analysing the data it has been exposed that illiterate middle aged women earn a monthly average income below Rs.5000 and they are not satisfied with their income and they have future plans to increase their income. Moreover it is found that some women are though not members of Self Help Groups they earn themselves by weaving, farming and not satisfied by their income. As a whole 37.3% are content with their earning and the rest feel that they are capable of earning more. 38.8% have future plans to uplift their way of living and want to increase their income, saving and expenditure.

**Suggestive Measures**
1. Steps should be taken to improve the educational status of women as a whole as the married women are not of the same village. They should be made aware of the fact that education is a tool which is necessary for establishing a link with the Government schemes and policies.
2. Motivation for higher education and preparing women for public and private sector services.
3. Proper training programme should be arranged to enhance the skills of weaving, knitting, cutting, embroidery etc. Which are profitable business for women.
4. Agricultural activities, Animal husbandry, livestock are to be developed in scientific and commercial basis. For this purpose better training, financial assistance, provision of marketing facilities etc. Should be provided to the respondents to get economic benefit directly.

5. Respondents should be made aware about the activities of the self help groups through which they become economically independent.

6. Successful women of different fields like, agriculture, firming, other business may be invited to interact with the local women.

**Conclusion**

Women play a significant role in the economic welfare of the family as well as the society. So the women folk of the society should be developed and well trained such that the society is influenced by their involvement in income generating activities apart from household activities and taking care of their children. For the development of the society it is important not only to make women literate but also economically independent so that they become empowered women.

All things said but not done will do least for the better status of women. Let us work together to bring women to the expected level about advancement, development and empowerment.

**References:**