

Potential of Self Help Groups as an Entrepreneur: A Case Study from Uttar Dinajpur District of West Bengal

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ABSTRACT India has witnessed a three-fold increase in population over the last half century without corresponding growth in opportunities, especially in rural areas. Women constitute 50 percent of the population and are the backbone of the family. In recent years, the traditional roles of women have undergone some changes due to economic needs, and some efforts were made to bring visibility and mainstream women's contribution to the overall growth and development of society. Self Help Groups (SHGs) are becoming one of the important means for the empowerment of poor women in almost all developing countries, including India. This study was carried out to examine the functioning and entrepreneurial activities of members of different SHGs. 25 SHGs and a sample of 300 women members were selected for the study. Present study is carried out with the specific objective to know the socio- personal background of the members of SHG, to know the knowledge, attitude and skill acquisition after getting training and financial support from different agencies. Study also identifies the entrepreneurial qualities of its members. Majority of SHGs had started their work from group savings, whereas few had taken subsidized loan from bank. Profit earned is equally shared by the members of SHG. It was observed that all the respondents had very low level of skills prior to different trainings, especially in case of trainings on vermi-compost making and fabric printing and painting etc. Change in knowledge, skill and attitude was worked out on the basis of average scores obtained from pre and post exposures. Maximum percentage of respondents had medium change in knowledge, skill and attitude.