

Case Study

Conceptualisation of Women Empowerment through Education - A Case Study of Mahila Samakhya, Chamarajanagara District of Karnataka

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ABSTRACT

Women empowerment plays a vital role to bring out the colossal changes and developments in the society. To understand the concepts and empowerments of women, one should understand the rights of women, which definitely given by constitution of women commission. Therefore, the researchers have taken case studies with the intention to discover and to analyse the effectiveness of women empowerment programmes which has taken by the Mahila Samakhya through federations. Mahila Samakhya Programme is being initiated by the Ministry of Human Resource Development under the Department of Education. It was born out of New Education Policy of 1986, and the aim was to create gender equality. It considered education as a tool for empowering women. Education not only means literacy and knowledge but also means creating awareness and providing skills to the holistic development of women. The study was being taken in Chamarajanagar District of Karnataka, which is one of the backward Districts of the state. This research is based on the case study method and the researcher has used the direct, indirect method of observation and focused group discussion was also have been used to know the effectiveness of Mahila Samakhya programme. In this study the more prominence has been given to the programmes like Kishori, Mahila Shikshana Kendra, Saakshara Samakhya, Kishori Mela, Naari Sanjivini, Naari Adalath and political committee of the federations. A case study of the Srigandha Mahila Sangha also been done to prove the concept of women empowerment through education.

Key words: Mahila Samakhya, Education, Women empowerment.

INTRODUCTION

Women lag behind men in terms of every set of socio-economic indicators, in spite of gender equality being one of the constitutional mandates. This is even more prevalent in rural India. Therefore, there is a need to empower women. Any development strategy which neglects the need for enhancing the role women cannot lead to comprehensive socio-economic development. Empowering of women is necessary sustainable development of a community. Collective thinking encourages women and gives them confidence.

As the country has implemented new education policy in the year 1986, a new program called Mahila Samakhya Programme was implemented to empower the women in the country. The programme mainly concentrates on women's education followed by health, economical status, self-reliance and political awareness. The program was implemented in various states of country which includes Karnataka state. The program is organized by district level through district program coordinator. The program has been implemented in 10 districts of Karnataka namely, Bidar,

Gulbarga, Bijapur, Bagalkot, Belgaum, Chitradurga, Chikkaballapur, Kolar, Mysuru, Ramanagar and Chamarajanagar. Among the 10 MSK implemented districts in Karnataka, the present study concentrated only on Chamarajanagar district as it is one of backward district in the state as well as

where women's empowerment is necessary for community's development. Therefore, the study has been conducted to analysis the educational level of women under this programme and the functional status of Mahila Samakhya Karnataka in the district.

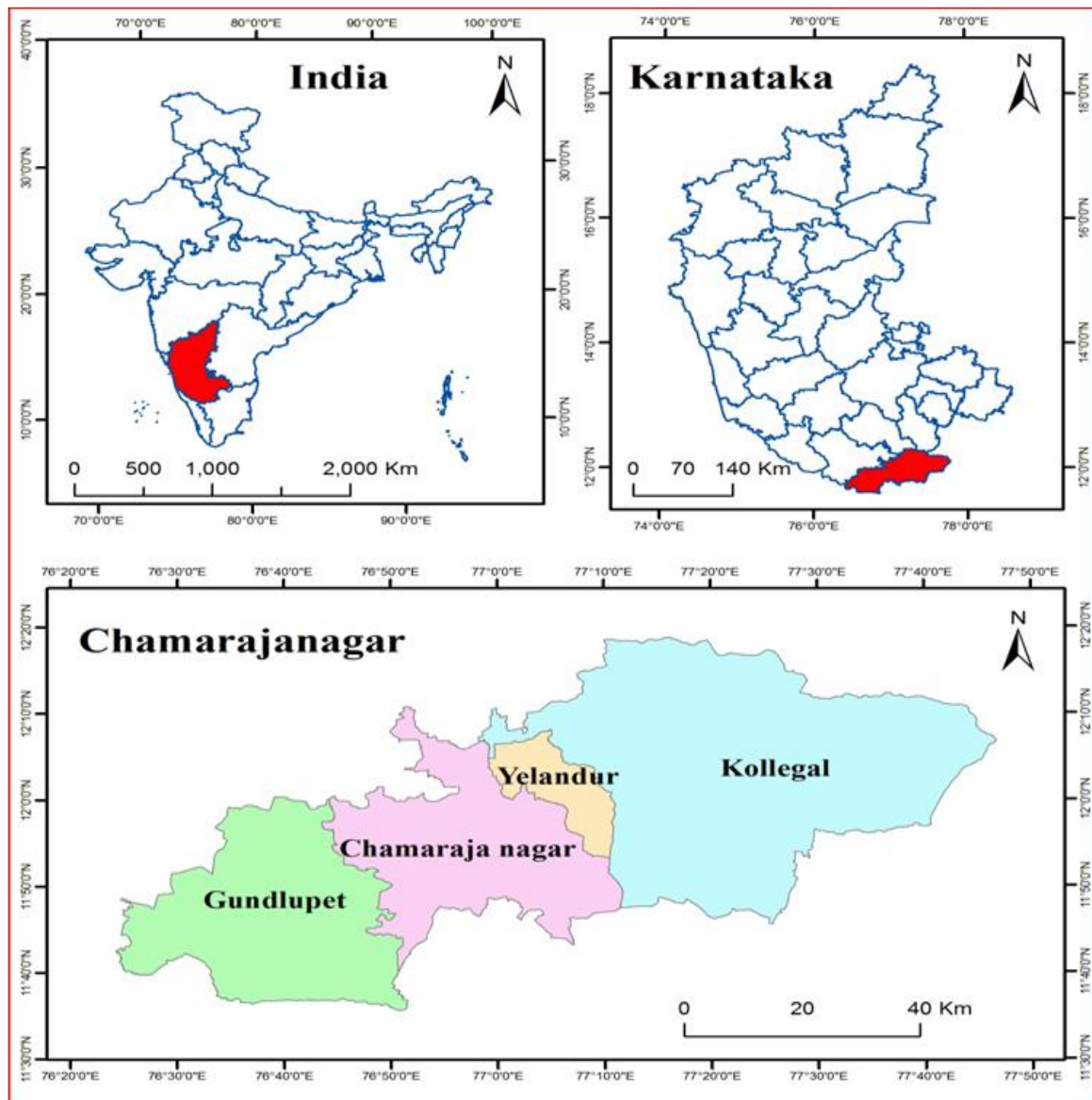


Fig 1: Location of Study Area

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study is based on primary as well as secondary data. Primary survey has been conducted among the women in the program to understand their educational level and among the MSK workers to understand their functions. Other related information on women's education and MSK functions also has been obtained as

secondary data from published documents. To collect the primary survey, observation, interaction and informal interview method have been used.

MSK programme has initiated a federation in each taluk that consists of several Self Help Groups through which the plans have been implemented in the district. The name of federation in each taluk

indicated through different names as it is called *Sri Gandha Mahila Maha Sangha* in Chamarajanagar, *Sugandha Mahila Maha Sangha* in Gundlupet, *Chandana Mahila Maha Sangha* in Yalandur and *Maha*

Mahila Sangha in Kollegala. During the years 2005-2006, the MSK was worked in 101 villages covering 2,900 women from 166 SHGs.

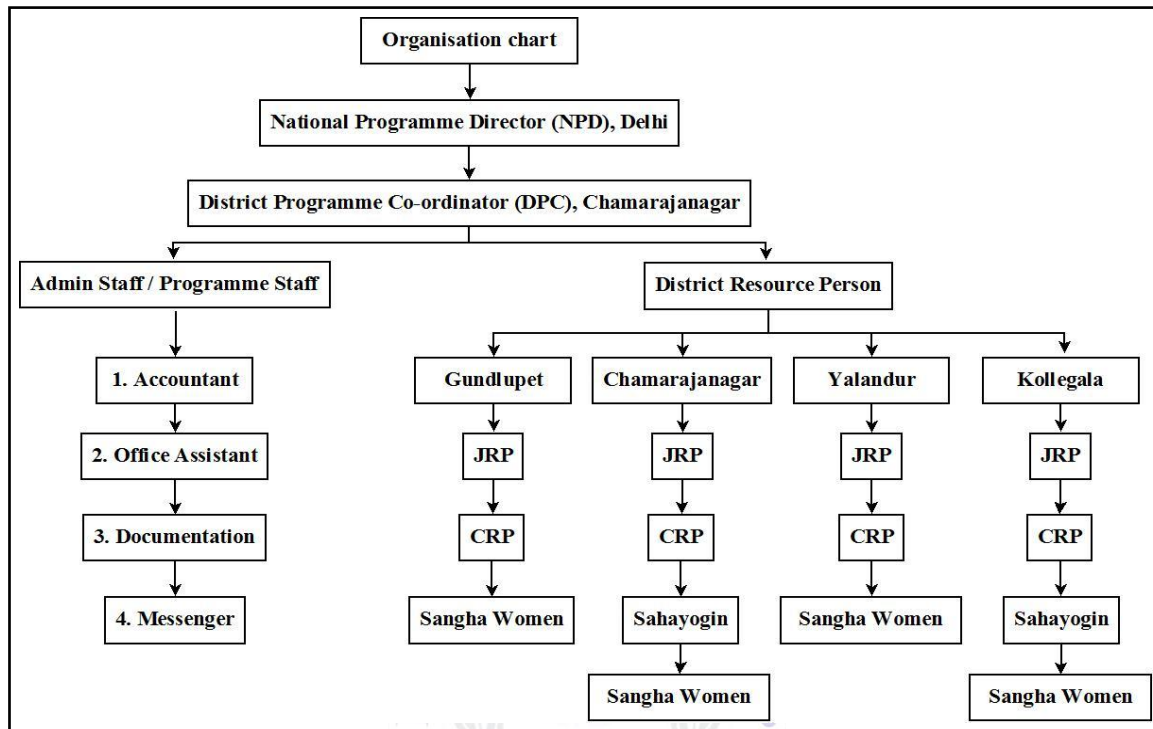


Fig 2: Organization Chart of MSK
JRP: Junior Resource Person, CRP: Cluster Resource Person

Details of Members by Caste Chamarajanagar District, 2014

S. No.	Taluks	No of villages	SHGs	Number of Women				Total
				SC	ST	OBC	Minority	
1	Chamarajanagar	81	156	1821	613	2427	183	5044
2	Gundlupet	72	137	1134	350	1284	0	2768
3	Yalandur	32	73	1052	175	475	3	1705
4	Kollegala	50	71	1008	401	430	2	1841
Total		235	437	5015	1539	4771	188	11,358

CASE STUDY 1

This case study is related to *Mahila Shikshana Kendra*. Bhanupriya is a girl studying in Mahila Shikshana Kendra which is situated in Chamarajanagar Taluk. She is studying in 10th standard. She had run away from her home with a boy. Later, their parents gave complaint and they were caught. The boy was arrested by police. The girl was made to join *Mahila Shikshana Kendra* by her parents. Now the girl is doing well in her studies. She is very active.

Interesting part here was the MSK staff without hurting the feelings of the girl they managed to tell her how important the education is for a girl. She didn't accept this

at first. Later on she understood the importance of education by seeing other children's engagement in education activities and by mingling with them in *Mahila Shikshana Kendra*.

CASE STUDY 2

This case study is related to *Naari Adalath Vedike*. The apprentice had an opportunity to see how the cases are handled in *Naari Adalath*. A divorce case came to *Naari Adalath*. Woman who gave complaint was Soubhagya. She is a house wife in Chamarajanagar. Her husband's name is Nagaraj. He is a Government high school teacher in Yelawala, Mysuru. They have 2 children. Son is studying in higher

primary and daughter is studying in a College in Mysuru.

The woman wanted divorce from her husband. She complained that her husband drinks everyday and abuses her a lot. He always scolds her family members. She said she has suffered it for many days and now she wanted divorce. She is also suffering from financial difficulties because of him. Even though he earns a good salary, he was not giving that to his wife. She has borrowed loans from many for the education of her children. She told she wants divorce as soon as possible.

Naari Adalath members interviewed her husband also. But he denied whatever told by her. He said he was not drinking. He was just acting like drinking. He was also ready to lead a life with her. He agreed he will surely look her after well. They also collected information from the children. Children said they need both mother and father and they told that the father drinks and scolds the mother. But, he looks after the children well.

After this *Naari Adalath* members also collected information from the neighbours and family members of both the sides. Everyone opined that there is mistake from both the sides and lack of understanding is there. The father's brother had died some months back. So, he was depressed. This situation was not understood by the wife.

Naari Adalath members made them to sit together and counselled. They both understood their problems. They agreed to live together. Here, the apprentice noticed the way *Naari Adalath* members handled the case. They solved the case after taking all the facts related to the case. They also explained them the consequences of divorce if they apply for it. The couple understood problems of divorce and they analysed it very well. It helped them in solving the problem successfully.

CASE STUDIES 3

The apprentice had the opportunity to speak with some women and SHG and make it a case study. They are-

Case study A

Madamma is a lady from Hosapodu. She belongs to *Soliga* tribe. She is with MSK since 25 years. At first, MSK was working with tribes in Chamarajanagar. So, she is in contact with MSK. The apprentice spoke with her and collected some interesting information-

- Madamma told that earlier tribal used to run away inside the forest because of fear if they see anyone. Now, the situation has completely changed. The women face boldly anybody.
- They were not ready to go to hospital earlier out of fear. But, MSK staff changed this attitude of people. They created awareness about health issues and now they go for checkups on their own.
- Madamma herself has become very bold. She was speaking nothing at first. But, now she is the present treasurer of Sri Gandha Mahila Maha Sangha. She speaks very well with anyone. She visits Banks and other departments if necessary on herself.
- Another interesting thing which she told was the tribals make SHG not to save money mainly. But they want to come together in difficulties. They discuss with each other their personal problems or the problems related to their village and try to find out solutions.

Case study B

The apprentice had an opportunity to speak with members of Ambedkar Mahila Samakhya Sangha. The apprentice took it as case study because she feels that the SHG has done a lot after coming in contact with MSK. This SHG is in Dadadahalli. The SHG was created by MSK 8 years ago. All women had a fear to come out of home. Now, they attend every meeting. They have become bold. They visit banks and have taken loans.

Once they had a problem related to electricity in their village. The women from this SHG stepped forward and after giving a complaint to Panchayath, they got the problem solved. It was also complained by

the children that the mid-day meal is not being served properly in the school. The women enquired and came to know that the problem was corruption from the side of

Head Master. The women came together and made a strike after which the HM was suspended and a new HM was appointed.



Fig. 1: Siddappaji Mahila Samakhya Sangha meeting, Alur, CH Nagar, visits of apprentice trainee to Alur on 23-09-2014.



Fig. 2: Sri Gandha Mahila Maha Sangha, Executive committee meeting, CH Nagar



Fig.3: Classroom situation of Mahila Shikshana Kendra, CH Nagar



Fig.4: Federation members Madamma, Mahadevamma and others discussing with apprentice trainee, Ms. Priya H A.



Fig.5: CRP meeting, Chamarajanagar

Learnings

1. Non-literate rural women and indigenous community women may be empowered through continuous awareness programmes, training programmes and hand holding for some time.
2. There is a greater need to empower adolescent girls on achieving education, having a clear career path to learn self protection strategies, personal hygiene, and self-confidence and to have some life skills at this age.
3. It is learnt that people are in need of informal legal systems like Nyaya Panchayath and Naari Adalath, which is cost-effective in finalising the disputes.
4. It was understood the importance of formation of a federation which represents women's strength.
5. The trainee witnessed the withdrawal process of a Government promoted and funded NGO like MSK. The withdrawal itself is a challenging process. It was so difficult for both i.e., NGO and women to get separated from each other.
6. The study of MSK is the best model of empowering women through education which can be replicated everywhere in India.
7. It was learnt how much it is important to provide enough 'time and space' for the development and empowerment of women. The whole project emphasized for process-

orientation and not target-orientation.

8. The efforts of MSK have shown that women can achieve anything if they are properly educated, their self-confidence and self-esteem is realised.
9. It was great to understand that women can address social issues such as prevention of child marriage, sexual harassment, fighting against illegal liquor shops, to make the standing committees of Panchayath to be active, to make the schools to realize the importance of providing quality mid-day meal, etc.
10. It is understood that MSK is the only NGO which has made efforts and has worked towards achieving gender equality, raising voice against gender discrimination which is the 3rd Millennium Development Goal.

CONCLUSION

MSK has worked very well for the empowerment of women in Chamarajanagar District. It was a wonderful experience to talk to women and listening to their experiences. Education is a powerful tool which can be used to empower women. The apprentice noticed that women now have basic information about Panchayath, Health, importance of Education, Laws, etc. It enhanced knowledge about SHGs.

Women should be encouraged for self-reliance. They are capable of handling and solving the problems. But, a supportive system is needed to bring it out which the Organizations like MSK are doing. The apprentice appreciates the efforts and

commitment of the MSK staff in empowering women.

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