

Skill development of Students for Economic Empowerment

ABSTRACT

A study was conducted in College of Home Science, Department of Family Resource Management and Consumer Science organized skill development classes for the economic empowerment of the students. These classes are geared towards the needs of students in a particular context keeping in view their social needs, culture and geographic realities. The present study was carried out to enhance the economic empowerment of students of Kumarganj through skill development. A Total 124 respondents participated in the study. Primary data were collected through interview schedule. Results revealed that about 80 percent of the respondents improved their skills in functional and decorative crafts while 87 percent respondents contributed to family income. Following a skill development programme, 70% of respondents agreed that they had improved their leadership and communication skills. The findings indicated that organising students into self-help groups was a relevant strategy for empowering them, as poor students expressed a strong tendency to derive strength from being a member of the group. The intervention of Family Resource Management and consumer science had a positive impact on students' functional status. It was observed that there is a perfect fit between skills, resource available, technological options and marketing avenues.

Key word: Skill development, Rural Women, Empowerment indicators

Introduction

“The economic empowerment of student is being regarded as a sign of progress for the country. Hence, the issue of economic empowerment of student is of paramount importance to policy makers, developmental scientists as well as social workers. Economic empowerment is the initial aspect of student development. Economic empowerment means greater access to financial resources inside and outside the household, reducing the vulnerability of poor student to crisis situations like poverty, death and accidents in the family and significant increase in students own income. Economic empowerment gives students the power to retain income and use it at his/her discretion. It provides equal access and

control over various resources at the household level” (Singh *et al*, 2013). “Financial self-reliance of women both in household and in the external environment leads to empowerment of the women in other spheres. To change the face of socio-economic scenario, micro-enterprises and sellers are playing significant role in the self-employment by raising the level of income and standard of living of college students. In our country, self-employment through skill development has been recognized as an essential force to development in college level. Skill development is planned in such a way so as to improve the socio economic life and mainly focuses on extending the benefits of development to the poorest among the college students. By the formation of SHGs, the low income segments are being integrated with the rest of the college students by ensuring them better participation in the benefit of development” (Jain, 2003). These groups not only speed up economic growth but provide jobs and help to improve the quality of rural life towards self- reliance. Keeping these points in view, the study has been planned with the following objectives:

1. To develop the skill of the college students through training.
2. To access gainful employment avenues for college students after skill development.
3. To study the role of self help groups in economic empowerment.
4. To access capabilities and leadership qualities of college of students

Methodology

The study was conducted among students of Home Science of the college of Home Science. Acharya Narendra Dev University of Agriculture and Technology (A.N.D.U.A&T.), District Ayodhya, has five departments of College of Home Science. The study was based on primary data. The data was collected from 12 self help groups and with a membership of 124 members. A sample of 124 college respondents was taken on the basis of criterion that they should be running their enterprise in a self help group. “A self-designed, well-structured and pre tested interview schedule was used to collect data needed on different variables in order to achieve the objectives of the study. The study contained both qualitative and quantitative data. Simple frequency and percentage distribution was used for statistical analysis” [7].

Results and Discussion

The findings of the study as well as relevant discussion has been presented under the following headings:

Skill development of college students

Family Resource Management and Consumer Science is an important pathway for poverty alleviation in India and it is an important skilful activity of all the Colleges of Home Science established by A.N.D.U.A&T. throughout the country. Family Resource Management and consumer science, Ayodhya is continuously engaged in upliftment of college students through entrepreneurship development. Perusal of table 1 revealed that through its skill activities, the department organized 135 skill development courses on various home science technologies during 2013- 2019 which benefited 3375 girls. Similarly, 21 skill development classes were organised covering aspects like dress designing, hand embroidery, needle work, painting, tie and dye and preparation of decorative utility articles that improved skills of 630 college students. Similarly, 16 in course training were also organised by the centre to update the skills of College of Home Science. These hands on training programmes are modulated in such a manner so that college students can understand scientific methods of nutrition, grain storage, stain removal and designing of garments etc. They were also trained on group dynamics of SHG formulation so that they can maintain the cohesiveness. In addition to training programmes, may skill development activities like celebration of important events like world food day, national nutrition week, world environment day. Seminar on role of students in entrepreneurial skill (24) were organised by Family Resource Management and Consumer Science, College of home Science, A.N.D.U.A&T. Kumarganj, Ayodhya to sensitize the students regarding health, nutrition, gender mainstreaming and improving entrepreneurial skills of college students.

The effectiveness of these courses revealed that adoption rate of some vocations like dress designing, value addition of food product and preparation of utility articles among college students was 68 percent. Similarly, jute craft adoption rate was 56 percent. Some skills like gel candle making, preparation of detergent,

chalk making and pot painting and preparation of nutritious snacks were adopted only at household. During the period under investigation, it was observed that 12 percent of these trained students have started their handicraft and shops for earning livelihood and have opened their own centres for training of girls.

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Table 1: percent of these have been employed as master trainers by government agencies like cooperatives department, NABARD, Government schools.

S.No.	Type of activities organised	No. of Activities	No. of Beneficiaries
1.	Training	16	320
2.	Vocational training	21	630
3.	Exposure visit	18	-
4.	University level Training	18	540
5.	Celebration of important events like national nutrition week/ world environment day/ international womens day/ consumer day etc.	135	3375
6.	Class demonstration	28	593

Table 2: Socio economic activities of Self Help Groups organised by College of Home Science, A.N.D.U.A.&T., Kumarganj

S.No.	Economic and social activities	No. of Participants	Marketing agencies
1.	Value addition to detergentmaking	10	Kisanmela, department
2.	Contemporary uses of craft, catering at department	12	Kisanmela, college functions
3.	Tie and Dye of Garments	11	Kisanmela, students and staff of university

4.	Contemporary use of Bag, block printing, paper mache products	12	Kisanmela international conference by PRAGAT
5.	Knitting and stitching of garments, hand embroidery	12	Kisanmela and order placed by customers

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6.	Catering unit, stitching of garment	10	Kisanmela
7.	Needle and crochet work, tie and dye of garment	12	Kisanmela, credit linkage under university campus
8.	Dying of dupattas, quilt work	10	Kisanmela and customer demand
9.	Soft toys making, decorative thali, jute work	11	Kisanmela and customer demand
10.	Enriched products like carry bag, cushion	12	Kisanmela and customer demand
11.	Handmade products like stools, table and chair	12	Kisanmela and customer demand

Family Resource Management and Consumer Science, College of Home Science, A.N.D.U.A.T., Kumarganj, has mobilized trained college students into making self help groups. Perusal of table 2 revealed that 124 students of self help groups were involved in vocation like stitching and needle craft, catering and meal planning, bakery products, tie and dye and quilting. “It is also cleared that all of them are involved in micro credit saving. They were selling their handicrafts through shops and direct exhibition organized by A.N.D.U.A.T. and other allied departments”. [7] **Acharya and Samanthi, 2013** also reported that “SHG based students are involved in micro credit savings. Self help groups are these groups who carry out self owned economic activity for earning their livelihood”. “SHGs are increasingly assuming the role of students of credit distribution to poor students in a sustained manner. They form a source for poverty alleviation, serve as tool for empowerment of student, provide sustainable and rapidly extending economic based in the college of Home Science, promote the habit of thrift and

opportunities among the members of members for government exposure and bring out hidden talents and leadership qualities” (Prasad, 2007, Singh, 2015 and Deka and Borgohain, 2016). Empowerment indicators of college students organised into self help groups by family resource management and consumer resource management.

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“Empowerment is a process of awareness and capacity building leading to greater participation, great decision making power and control of the transformative action” (fredrick, 2009).

“The empowerment of women covers both individual and collective transformation. The department of Family Resource Management, Kumarganj, Ayodhya focused attention on empowerment of students centred self help group and made them financial and socially stable. Exhibition spaces provided by College of Home Science have opened a new dimension in promotion of hand made products and encouraged the trainees in the development of agricultural residue products like fruit and vegetable preservation yantra, mats, decorative bags. Family Resource Management has provided a platform not only for direct sale of rural marketing giving exposure to rural artisans/entrepreneurs to various aspects of marketing and developing linkage with others”. [7]

“Different indicators of empowerment of women as per their opinion were analysed and presented in table 3. This table revealed the opinion of the respondents regarding empowerment. 64.51 percent of the respondents agreed that they are able to improve their skills in vocations like stitching and quilting of garments and decorative thali, 70.96 percent of them agreed that they are more aware about various health hygiene and nutritional practices, 54.45 percent of the respondents agreed that they command better leadership and communication skills, 54.83 percent of the respondents agreed that they now make decision in the household, village and community, 87.09 percent of the respondents felt that they are now earning members of family and 62.90 percent of the respondent agreed that they have improved their standard of living”. [7]

Table 3: Empowerment of college students organised into SHGs by College of Home Science, Kumarganj [7]

S.No	Indicators of Empowerment	Agreed	No opinion	Disagree	Total
1.	Skill up	80 (64.51)	20	24 (9.35)	124

	gradation		(16.13)		
2.	Awareness about health hygiene and nutrition in daily life	88 (70.96)	5 (4.03)	31 (25.0)	124

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3.	Better leadership and communication skill	70 (56.45)	25 (20.16)	29 (23.38)	124
4.	Decision making in family and society	68 (54.83)	28 (22.58)	28 (22.28)	124
5.	Contribution to family income	108 (87.09)	16 (12.90)	0	124
6.	Improved Standard of Living	78 (62.90)	23 (18.54)	23 (18.54)	124

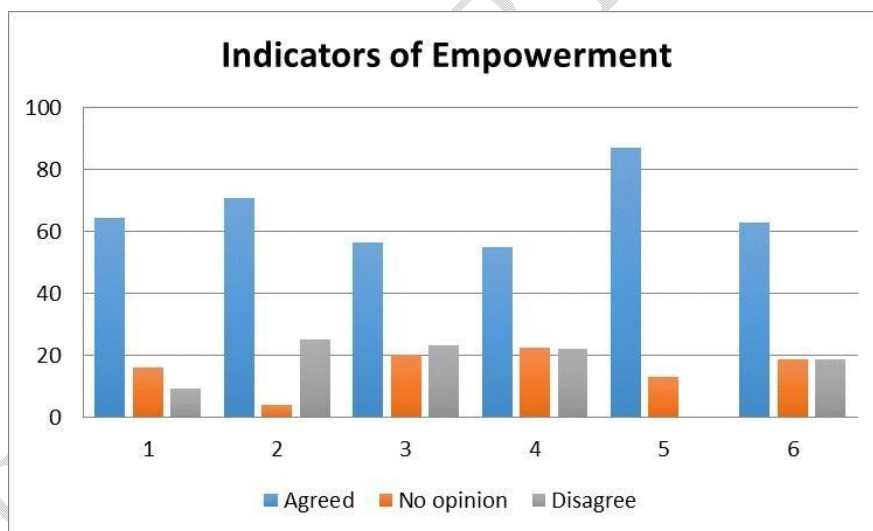


Fig. 1: Indicators of Empowerment

Conclusion

Skill improvement package of Family Resource Management and Consumer Science, College of Home Science, A.N.D.U.A.&T., Kumarganj has resulted in participation of college students in income generation activities. Thus college of

confidence and social status which leads to improvement in their quality

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of life. The college students have taken the lead and playing an important and pivotal role in social transformation, welfare activities and infrastructure building. So, the College of Home Science Kumarganj, Ayodhya has proved to be a significant instrument through which empowerment of women in terms of decision making, utility and skill up gradation become possible.

Consent

As per international standard or university standard, respondents' written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

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