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A study on psychological empowerment of rural agrarian women

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Abstract

A good mental health is a fundamental part of women well-being, so the empowerment of women cannot be complete without their psychological empowerment. So this study was aimed to examine the psychological empowerment of rural agrarian women. Total 120 sample were selected from two villages of Telangana state. Psychological empowerment inventory developed by Spreitzer, Gretchen M. (1995) was used for this study. This study found that three fourth of the sample were had scored low category in psychological empowerment components i.e meaningfulness, competence, self-determination and impact domains. This might be due to internal and external factors like farm women had low literacy levels, lack confidence in their abilities, skills, less choice to autonomously initiate and regulate work processes and fear of failure etc. The study recommends that appropriate intervention programme can help farm women to boost psychological empowerment. This would improve their well-being and happiness.

Keywords: Farm women, psychological empowerment

Introduction

Agriculture is an important component of rural livelihoods. Almost 70% of India's population of 1.2 billion—some 833 million persons lives in rural areas (Census of India 2011). Where women play the role of a key partner. Globally women constitute half of the world's population and produce half of the agricultural products according to a UN report. India and other developing and under developed countries all point to the conclusion that women contribute far more too agricultural production than has generally been acknowledged. Recognition of their crucial role in agriculture should not obscure the fact that farm women continue to be concerned with their primary functions as wives, mothers and homemakers. Despite their importance to agricultural production, women face severe handicaps.

The performance of the agriculture sector in countries where the population is largely employed in farming is strongly connected to a reduction in poverty, hunger, and inequality of the population (Lowder, Skoet, & Raney, 2016) [2]. A healthy agriculture sector is closely related to poverty reduction, economic development, and peace, in countries where the economy is dominated by farming (De Soysa & Gleditsch, 1999) [3]. In addition to the importance of the agriculture sector to the nation's peace and security, farmers' job performance fulfills important human needs for survival, including the production of food, fiber, and fuel.

A good mental health is a fundamental part of women well-being, so the empowerment of women cannot be complete without their psychological empowerment (PE). There is a dearth of programs addressing mental health issues to secure PE for women (Yadav, 2019). It is generally agreed that empowerment is a process developed from the bottom-up and is not something that can be framed as a top-down strategy. Henceforth, any strategy focused on empowerment must support women to analytically evaluate their own situation and outline the necessary alterations within society (Batool *et al.*, 2016) [5]. Most importantly, from a psychological perspective, strategies must build upon the “psychological capital” of women. These approaches recognize that the vitality and resilience of women are “protective factors” that should be nurtured (Spreitzer and Doneson, 2005; Smalley *et al.*, 2010) [6, 7].

Literature shows that factors such as psychological empowerment, workplace motivation, and social capital have a positive influence on the job performance of employees (Chiang & Hsieh, 2012; Carmeli, Ben-Hador, Waldman, & Rupp, 2009) [9, 8]. Little is known about these factors for farmers, and specifically in the context of agriculture dominant economies. A great deal of research has been conducted on job performance in organizations and role women in farming sectors, but few studies have been carried out to discover the impact of psychological

empowerment and quality life of farm women. Hence this study is aims to examine the psychological empowerment of rural agrarian women.

Objectives

- To study the profile of rural agrarian women
- To study the psychological empowerment of rural agrarian women.

Review of Literature

Sudheendra *et al.* (2018) [2] studied on Psychological Empowerment through SHGs: Influence of Selected Demographic Factors. The results revealed that Scheme employed had a significant impact on the improving psychological empowerment of members. Further, demographic variables such as age, experience, and loan availed significantly influenced the psychological empowerment of the SHG members. However, other factors like number of children, income, and education of SHG members did not have significant influence over increasing psychological empowerment.

Dr. M. Emelda Lilian (2018) [12] had studied on Psychological Empowerment of Rural Women engaged in Informal Business, Gondar, Ethiopia. The study revealed that rural women entrepreneurs of the two villages have less psychological empowerment though they are economically empowered.

Jatin Pandey (2016) [13] had studied on Structural & Psychological Empowerment in Rural India. The study results revealed that self-efficacy is as important predicted psychological empowerment of women in rural areas.

Okyireh, M. A. A, & Simpeh, K. N. (2016) [5] in a study on Exploring the Nature of Psychological Empowerment of Women Entrepreneurs in a Rural Setting in Greater Accra, Ghana explored the four dimensions (meaning, competence, choice, impact) of psychological empowerment at Amhrahia-Otinibi, a village. The findings showed that the women had greater level of autonomy, independence and freedom to manage their business. The women entrepreneurs had control and influence in their business. The findings state that rural women engaged in entrepreneurial activities felt empowered. Ali Akbar Ahmadi, Mahdi Shahbazi and Sepideh Taghaboni (2013) [4] found in the study, on the Mediating Role of Spirituality between Psychological Empowerment and Entrepreneurial Behaviors that the course of psychological empowerment, entrepreneurial behaviors, and workplace spirituality had significant impact on each other.

Methodology

Farm women belonging to the age group of 18-60 years were selected for the study. Purposive sampling technique was adopted for the study. In the state of Telangana Ramchandraguda and Subhanpur villages were selected for the study. From each village 60 sample, total 120 sample were selected purposively. To examine the psychological empowerment of farm women, the investigator used Psychological empowerment inventory developed by Spreitzer, Gretchen M. (1995) [16] was used for this study. The collected data was coded and analyzed using frequency, percentages.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Study the profile of rural agrarian women (N=120)

S. No	Sociodemographic variables	Ramchandraguda		Subhanpur		Total	
		F	P	F	P	F	P
1	Age						
	18-39 years	33	55	35	58	68	57
	40-59 years	17	28	20	33	37	31
	≥60 years	10	17	5	9	15	12
2	No. of children						
	Single child	8	13	10	17	18	15
	Two children	42	35	38	63	80	67
	More than two children	10	17	12	20	22	18
3	Educational level						
	Lower Primary	8	13	11	18	19	16
	Upper Primary	12	20	18	30	30	25
	S.S.C	18	30	14	23	32	27
	Intermediate	15	25	11	18	26	21
	Degree	7	12	6	10	13	11
4	Annual Household income						
	1-4 lakhs	42	70	39	78	81	67
	5-8 lakhs	13	22	18	36	31	26
	Above 8 lakhs	5	8	3	60	8	6

Note: 'F' represents frequency and 'p' represents percentage

The above table-1 presents the details of demographic variables of rural agrarian women. It was revealed from table (1) that fifty seven percent of the women were in the age group of 18- 39 years followed by thirty one percent of them belonging to age range of 40-59 years. Only twelve percent were in the age range of 60 years.

Regarding educational qualification twenty seven percent of the sample (27%) were studied till 10th and only 21% of them were completed intermediate. Twenty five percent studied

only upper primary education. Less than half of the sample 30% of women were completed 10th standard from district one.

With regard to income, more than half (67%) of the sample were between 1to 4 lakhs. Less than one fourth of the sample (26%) were earning 5-8 lakhs. Very few (6%) earning yearly income of 8 lakhs above. Nearly less than half (36%) of the sample from district 2 income ranges between 5 to 8 lakhs.

Table 2: Study the psychological empowerment of rural agrarian women (N=120)

S. No	Dimensions	Low		Moderate		High	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Meaningfulness	43	36	69	57	8	7
2	Self Determination	89	74	21	17	10	8
3	Competence	79	66	26	22	15	12
4	Impact	82	68	38	32	0	0
	Total	85	71	32	22	13	2

Note: 'F' represents frequency and 'p' represents percentage

From the above table 2, it was observed that fifty-seven per cent of the sample were in moderate and thirty-six per cent of the sample were in low and remaining seven per cent of the sample were in high category on meaningfulness. These low scores indicated that women had less autonomy and lack of confidence in doing their jobs. This might be due illiterate and unskilled qualities may cause to felt less meaningfulness in women's life.

With regard to self-determination seventy-four per cent of the sample were in low category on self-determination and seventeen per cent of the sample were in moderate and remaining eight per cent of the sample were in low category.

Low scores on this category indicated that women had inability or no right to made one's own decisions without asking someone's opinion.

With regard to competence sixty-six per cent of the sample were in low category on competence domain and only twenty two per cent of the sample were moderate and remaining twelve per cent of the sample were high category. This might be due to women had less literacy levels, lack of abilities, skills and gender biases are make them to less confidence to succeed in job.

From the table 2, it was evident that more than half (68%) of women had scored low on impact and more than 38% were in moderate category. None of the sample had scored high on impact. These results indicate that women had scored low on impact. This might be due to women had less self-assured their own abilities. Women tend to be more sensitive to negative information and this temperament predicts lower self-esteem. Women appear to be more self-critical than men. The results of the study are in congruence with research conducted by Psychological Empowerment of Rural Women engaged in Informal Business, Gondar, Ethiopia. M. Lilian. E (2018) [3] that revealed Psychological empowerment among rural women is found to be low among all the dimensions.

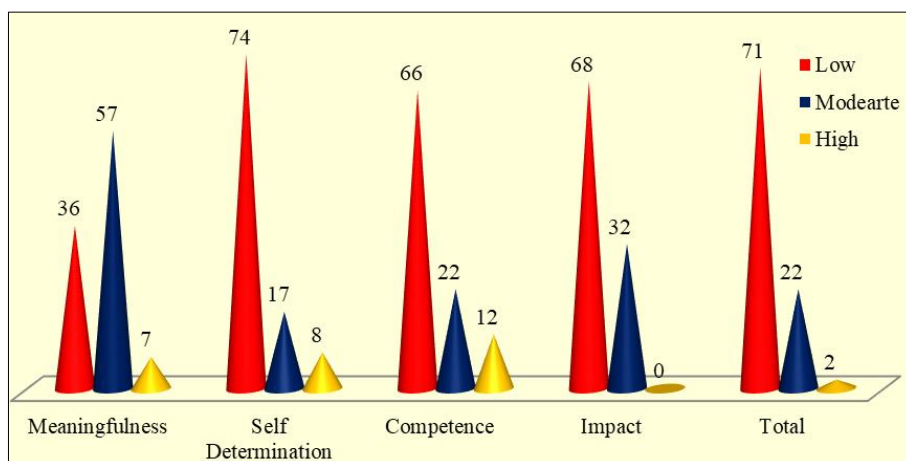


Fig 1: To study the psychological empowerment of rural agrarian women

Conclusion

Psychological empowerment refers to an "intrinsic task motivation reflecting a sense of self-control in relation to one's work and an active engagement with one's work role. The study results revealed that majority of the women sample had scored low category in psychological empowerment components. This might be due fear, lack of autonomy in decision making, lack of self-esteem, self-confidence, fear of failure and job related stress is the major contributor as a barrier in the path of psychological empowerment in farm women. The study recommends that appropriate intervention programme can help farm women to boost psychological empowerment. This would improve their well-being and happiness.

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